

Reducing turnover through Trauma informed leadership strategies

By Maegen Pegues

Like many organizations in long term care, my community has been challenged by employee turnover. Employee turnover can be a vicious cycle that impacts the residents we serve, the staff we lead, and our financial performance.

As an industry we have heard it over and over, “employees don’t quit jobs, they quit managers.” If you are anything like me, you often find yourself saying, “where did that go wrong?” or “I thought things were fine a few days ago? What happened?” When I use my long term care brain, and complete my ever so perfected root cause analysis, many voluntary terminations are the direct result of a relationship between employee and manager. Furthermore, poor or miscommunication is a common factor that fuels an adverse relationship.

Research shows that experiencing trauma, especially during childhood, significantly increases the risk of serious health conditions. Furthermore, the HHS Public Access suggests that 50-75% of the general population experiences substantial exposure to traumatic events. It is essential to educate our workforce, most importantly, direct supervisors and leadership, to recognize and respond to those individuals affected by trauma. This can be accomplished building positive relationships that promote safety and positive hope for the future.

As an industry we have been doing this for the residents we serve, and it is time to apply it to the employees that serve them. My Action Learning Process will take a closer look in to ways to educate your managers on the concept of trauma informed leadership, specifically recognizing employees affected by trauma and how to build a positive relationship to maximize employee morale and safety.