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Culture Change in Practice

Weighted Voting

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"Culture Change in Practice" is our own weblog where people can become involved in a conversation about Culture Change as it is practiced by professionals in real nursing homes. Feel free to join the conversation, or post a comment about something you have learned on your journey.

www.culturechangenow.com/weblog.html

If you have ever tried to decide with a group of friends or family where to go or what to have for dinner, you know it is rarely a "yay/nay" decision. That is usually the case with any group decision when there are multiple outcome options. When an organization makes the move from top-down decisions to a team process, it may be tempting to go back to the hierarchical way as it seems quicker and easier. But this doesn't mean you'll end up with the best outcome for the organization – an outcome that will best serve elders and can best be carried out by those closest to them. So, here's a little tool to help teams make decisions.

The process is called "weighted voting" and it takes into account that people may have preferences that vary more than "like" and "dislike." Let's use the simple decision of wallpaper borders in a bathroom make over for an example. There are three to choose from: flowers, checked and ocean themed. Each option is written on a piece of paper and posted where all who are involved in the

decision can see. Each person (in this case, you would certainly be involving elders) gets five sticker dots (available at office supply stores). Now, someone may like the ocean scene best but also doesn't mind the flowers. So, that person may put three stickers on the ocean scene paper and two on the flowers. Maybe somebody really likes the checked one and puts all five of her stickers there. The idea is that each person gets to distribute her five votes however she would like to best express her preferences within the options.

Three options of wallpaper is pretty cut and dried, but this system works well for more complex decisions that come about in the organization as well. If there are more options, you may want to give voters more votes to use. Also, weighted voting is a way to narrow down options for further discussion as well. But the bottom line is that everyone's opinions hold the same "weight."

I'd love to hear and share stories of how this process has worked in your organization. Email me at: steph@actionpact.com