

 PsychometricsST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL
AND HEALTH NETWORK

Bolstering Staff Soft Skills Helps Hospital Face Major Challenges

MBTI® Tool makes an impact in the trauma and emergency departments

Fast-paced, constantly changing, and with a high rate of mortal cases, Trauma has one of the highest reported stress levels of any department. Staffed with five male surgeons and 20 female nurses, it has been using the MBTI assessment since 2002. Sharing a small common workspace under highly stressful conditions, staff members use the assessment as a way to deal with interpersonal issues. Understanding type gives the team the building blocks to create workable ground rules for using the common space and resolving conflict. The doctors who work in Trauma have benefited considerably from their exposure to type. "Due to the very stressful conditions under which they work, they tended to shut down emotionally," explains Kay Marsteller, R.N., Director of Emergency Services and Inpatient Access. "I know several doctors who found the MBTI tool useful in dealing with families. It helped them be empathetic and understanding, especially when they had to share bad news."

The MBTI assessment has also helped individuals in that department improve the way they deal with stress. "Learning our type helps us understand how we handle stress and why we have the reactions we do. Some of us clamp down, others go home and cry, others laugh off some horrible things, just by the nature of our personalities," says Marsteller. "The MBTI tool allows us all to learn what some of our coping methods are and gives us the opportunity to find ways we can deal with stress a little bit better."

In 2003, a new Emergency Department director arrived who had a markedly different work style from that of the current nurse manager. After taking the MBTI instrument and learning about type, the two were able to work better together. "Since that time I've seen those two individuals partner more effectively because they have a better understanding of their own, and each other's, personality type," explains Lisa Dutterer, Associate Vice President of Administration.



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How St. Luke's HR administers the MBTI® Instrument

At St. Luke's the MBTI assessment was first offered to managers. So now, when those managers want to offer the assessment to their staff members, how is it administered? The HR department at St. Luke's wants each individual who takes the assessment to benefit as much as possible from using the "lens of type." To achieve this, assessment takers receive some training on personality type theory and how their type relates to their job and coworkers. The MBTI administrator also presents the idea of "typeflexing"—looking for clues to another person's type and adjusting one's communication style to better communicate with that person. "We think the biggest benefit of the MBTI tool is this ability to type-flex and adapt to changing situations and all kinds of people," explains Robert Weigand, Director of Management Training and Development.

Responding to the challenges

Today's hospitals monitor their performance by evaluating their Press Ganey scores. Press Ganey surveys patients as they leave the hospital, soliciting ratings in areas such as friendliness of the staff, courtesy of nurses, and waiting times. With these survey results, hospitals can benchmark against one another and better understand their strengths and weaknesses in terms of customer service. Assessing the St. Luke's survey results, the leadership committee recognized several areas to target for improvement.

Results

For St. Luke's, becoming an MBTI organization is an ongoing process, a constant striving for better communication resulting in better customer service. Yet, within the four years of experience St. Luke's has garnered with type, there is ample evidence that the MBTI instrument has had a positive impact on the organization and its Press Ganey scores.

Implementing the MBTI® Assessment

Exhibit A: St. Luke's Emergency Department Press Ganey Scores Report				
Item	Mean score 1/1/05-3/31/05	Mean score 4/1/05-6/30/05	Mean score 7/1/05-9/30/05	Change
Nurses took time to listen	80.3	83.3	88.1	+7.8
Nurses' attention to your needs	78.8	82.0	86.5	+7.7
Doctor informative re treatment	78.3	79.8	84.8	+6.5
Doctor's concern for comfort	80.6	80.5	85.1	+4.5
Courtesy of person who took blood	82.1	84.8	88.0	+5.9
Courtesy shown family/friends	83.3	85.8	88.4	+5.1
Staff cared about you as a person	76.1	78.7	83.3	+7.2
How well pain was controlled	71.2	73.9	80.2	+9.0



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