LEADING WITH LAUGHTER

A NEW LEADERSHIP TOOL OR JUST STAND-UP COMEDY

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Our session outcome

- Choose appropriate uses of humor.
- Recognize moments that need seriousness.
- Identify one practice to bring back to your team.

A LEADER YOU REMEMBER

Who made a difficult day easier — and what did they do?

The Emotional Load of Leadership

Competing priorities

Limited resources

Difficult decisions

The tone we bring

What do people feel when we enter the room?

BENEFITS TO USING...
LAUGHTER VERSUS HUMOUR

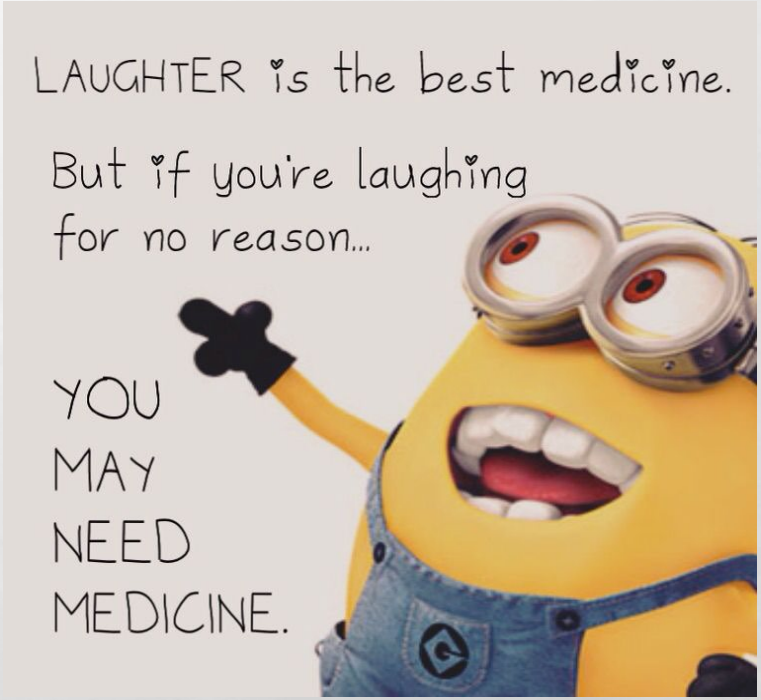
LAUGHTER

- PHYSIOLOGICAL FEEDBACK TO HUMOR
- FORM OF EXERCISE
  - BURNS CALORIES
- DIFFERENT FORMS OF LAUGHTER

HUMOR

- QUALITY OF BEING AMUSING
  - FUNNY, AMUSING, PRODUCES LAUGHTER

LAUGHTER…THE BEST MEDICINE!



WHY LAUGHTER?

...IN THE OFFICE

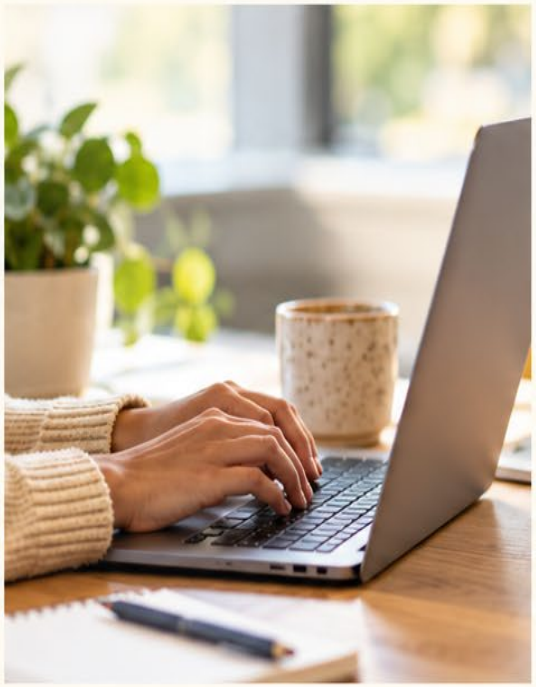
- OFFERS RELIEF DURING DEMANDING TIMES
- ENHANCES RESILIENCE
- STRESS BUSTER
- BOOSTS CREATIVITY

...IN THE CLASSROOM

- DECREASES ANXIETY
- STIMULATES RECEPTORS IN THE BRAIN = IMPROVED LEARNING
- CONNECTS PEOPLE
- ENHANCES TEAMWORK

Warmth with Clear Expectations

Friendly meetings.
Clear decisions.



Playful tone.
Clear requests.

Shared laughter.
Everyone included.

Boundaries and approval

- Listen carefully.
- Explain your decision.
- Stay open to useful feedback.
- Allow room for disagreement.

RECLAIM YOUR PERSONALITY

FIND YOUR VOICE

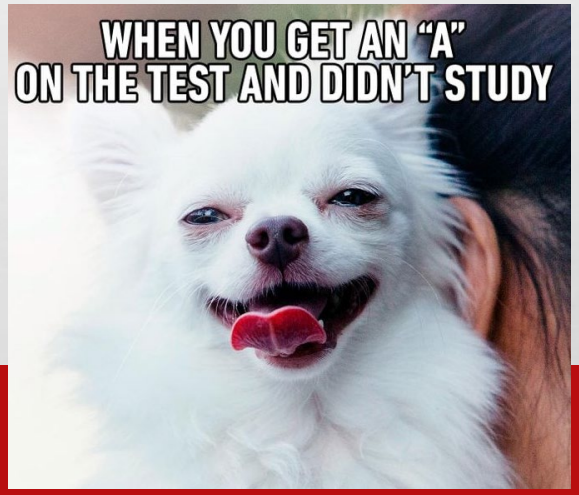
- DIRECT COMMUNICATION
- RESPECTFUL DISAGREEMENT
- CONSISTENCY IN EXPECTATIONS
- COMFORT WITH YOUR OWN PERSONALITY

LET GO OF WHAT NO LONGER SERVES YOU

- A MISTAKE YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM
- AN OLD CONFLICT YOU KEEP REPLAYING
- A RESPONSE YOU CANNOT CONTROL

STRATEGIES TO INTEGRATE LAUGHTER

- KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE
- CREATE A SAFE SPACE
- ENCOURAGE SPONTANEITY
- LEAD BY EXAMPLE



Small moments of levity

A story about your own harmless mistake
A playful opening question
A celebration that includes everyone

HUMOR IS A HABIT

- TRAIN YOUR BRAIN TO HAVE A FUNNY FOCUS
  - COMEDY COMMUTE
  - THREE FUNNY THINGS INTERVENTION
  - "WHAT COULD I HAVE SAID" GAME
  - 5 MINUTE FUNNY
  - FOLLOW FUNNY
  - HUMOR BY CHOICE, NOT CHANCE

Before the Punchline

The power difference

A laugh does not always mean comfort.
Leave room to disagree.

Different humor styles

Sarcasm can land differently.
Check how it was received.

A pause before the punchline

Who is the subject?
Is this the right moment?

Will this comment help people feel included?

Accountability with Dignity

Humor, not humiliation

Share the laugh. Preserve dignity.
Address concerns directly.

Accountability without embarrassment

Describe the concern.
Explain the impact.
State the expectation.
Agree on the next step.

Warmth in the conversation. Clarity in the expectations.

WHEN HUMOR MISSES…

ACKNOWLEDGE

APOLOGIZE

LISTEN

ADJUST

WOULD HUMOR HELP—AND WHAT WILL YOU TRY?

WOULD HUMOR HELP HERE?

- YOUR SLIDES FREEZE DURING A MEETING.
- A FACULTY MEMBER SAYS WORKLOAD CONCERNS GO UNHEARD.
- A STUDENT IS UPSET ABOUT A MISSED REQUIRED LAB.

ONE ACTION FOR THIS WEEK

- BRING WARMTH TO _____.
- PAUSE BEFORE JOKING ABOUT _____.
- TRY _____.

SHARED RESILIENCE

- TAKE THE WORK SERIOUSLY
- BRING WARMTH TO THE PEOPLE DOING IT

Questions and discussion

SO……LAUGH MORE…DIE OLD.