

STORY HIGHLIGHT

JAMES'S WELLBEING STORY



James is a Nurse Manager at a major healthcare organization in Arizona. He is a firm believer in the positive impact of leadership development on staff wellbeing

A Journey of Transformation: From Burnout to Brilliance

A few years ago, our organization was in turmoil. Staff were leaving almost every week, burnout was rampant, and the stress was palpable. As a Nurse Manager, I felt the weight of this every single day but **had no idea what to do**. The morale was low, and it was affecting our patients and each other. We were desperate for change.

In a meeting with the leadership team, I finally brought this up, and to my surprise, they decided to take a bold step. They invested in a wellbeing development program for all of us in managerial roles. **At first, I was skeptical.** *Could a program really change this?* But I was willing to try anything to bring back the joy we once had.

The program wasn't just about new strategies; it was about **changing our hearts and minds**. In this program, we learned how to create environments where our team members felt safe, valued, and heard. We practiced listening with empathy, communicating openly, and supporting each other's dreams and challenges.

One pivotal moment that stands out was during one of our training sessions. Our facilitator encouraged us to have a "brave" and share what we are really feeling. After a few seconds of silence, Sarah, one of our most dedicated nurses, stood up with tears in her eyes and said "I feel invisible."

She continued on to say "I come to work every day, give my all, **but I don't feel seen or appreciated**. I'm exhausted and I don't know how much longer I can keep doing this."

Her honesty **stunned me**. I think it stunned all of us sitting in that circle in that moment. And it was a turning point. People started to chime in and share that they felt the same as well, and added on other thoughts, feeling, and vulnerabilities. For the first time, it felt like we all listened, truly listened. It was raw, it was real, and **it changed everything**.

The atmosphere in our unit transformed. We started having regular check-ins, where everyone could speak their mind and share their feelings without fear of judgment. **Laughter returned, people were kinder, and the stress levels dropped.** Our patients noticed too. They often commented on the positive energy and how it made them feel more cared for.

This journey has changed me **profoundly**. I've become a better leader, more compassionate, and more connected to my team. It's not just about the job anymore; it's about creating a community at work. I go home with a sense of fulfillment, knowing we are making a difference **together**.

I encourage all of you; if you're feeling like you are struggling like we were, invest in your people, invest in wellbeing, and be **brave enough** to say the thing that needs to be said. And if you ever find yourself in a moment where someone is practicing bravery, **really listen to them!**