

“Does Anybody See Me?” How Helping Organizations Create Hopeless Helpers

Step 1 – After joining the Breakout Room Participants read, *“If the assumptions of the daily work are”* below.

If the assumptions about the daily work are:

What I’m doing is for somebody else, not for me, and
What I’m doing right now is important and can’t be postponed, and
There are so many people to help that our work will never be done, and
I agree to sacrifice my own needs in the moment to serve another, and
Because we’re so busy there is little time during the day for me to recharge and reflect.

Step 2 – Each Breakout Room participant will ask their partner, *“Do any of the assumptions about the daily work describe your experience where you work / have worked in the past?”* Please limit this portion of the discussion to no more than 3-5 minutes.

If this is the case, individual helpers may respond by:

Assuming this is how it’s going to be, and I have little power to change it.
Feeling increasingly unseen and unappreciated.
Making the choice to either leave the organization or exhibit unhealthy behaviors in an attempt to get noticed.

Step 3 - Each Breakout Room participant will quickly review the list of behaviors below and identify one or two that best describe what behavior(s) they exhibit when feeling a bit “crispy” (i.e., burned out – A Friday afternoon perhaps?) Please limit this portion of the discussion to no more than 2-3 minutes.

Helpers who don’t leave an organization often develop one or more of these typical behaviors in an attempt to be seen:

Hiding Out:

*“If you’re not going to see what good work I am doing,
I’ll show you how I can disappear. You’re going to miss me!”*

Working too much:

“Does anyone see how hard I am trying?”

Being overly compassionate:

“Look at how much I care. Doesn’t anybody care about me?”

Become rigid and authoritarian with customers and other helpers:

“Maybe they’ll start noticing me if I start becoming inflexible.”

Become excessively irritable and angry:

“If you aren’t going to appreciate me, I’ll show you how unpleasant I can be.”

Trying to be the smart one:

“If you people would listen to me, everything would be a lot better around here.”

Step 4 - Once each Breakout Room participant has identified the one or two behaviors they exhibit when feeling a bit “crispy”, Participant 1 will ask Participant 2 the questions below.

- 1) Which behavior are you most likely to exhibit when feeling a bit “crispy”? (i.e., Friday afternoon following a long week of work). When Participant 2 is finished responding, Participant 1 will ask the next question.
- 2) What do you want / need when you are in this state of “crispiness”? When Participant 2 is finished responding, switch roles with Participant 2 asking the questions and Participant 1 responding.

Return to the Main Room when time expires for debrief.