CHAPTER · FOUR

Motivating the Eeyores

Roberta M. Barber, PharmD, MPH; Staci A. Hermann, MS, PharmD

Introduction

What is an Eeyore? Some of you may recognize the reference to the story Winnie-the-Pooh. Eeyore is a donkey and a stubborn one at that. He is generally characterized as a pessimistic, melancholic, depressed, and miserable donkey—always seeing the gloomy side of things. Well, some of you, in your professional career as a student, pharmacist, or leader may recognize the "Eeyores" in your school, workplace, and community.

This chapter discusses how to motivate these people to accomplish goals and contribute to the success of whatever project, program, or organization you have been charged to lead. Motivation is an abstract concept, but it is essential to getting a task, job, or project completed. Per *Webster's New College Dictionary*, *Third Edition*, motivation is "the act or an instance of motivating or the state or condition of being motivated or something that motivates; inducement; incentive."[1] Every day, decisions are made that impact one's ability to maintain or digress from one's own internal motivation—decisions such as working on a project for class so that tomorrow's group meeting is more productive; volunteering to take the lead in a committee to help advance the practice of pharmacy; or finding the information that a physician colleague requested so he doesn't have to remind you that you were charged with looking up the information.

At various points in a professional career, motivating oneself and others can prove to be a challenge. Some actions a motivated professional may take include completing projects by the appointed deadline, working well in teams, having a high impact on patient care, and providing leadership on every shift. It is not uncommon for students and new practitioners to fall into the unmotivated category in order to spend time on activities that are perceived to be more fun. A motivated individual, however, can recognize when they are doing this and can correct their behavior to meet the requirements of their responsibilities. Chronic or perceived lack of motivation can have detrimental effects on students and new practitioners as well as others around them.

Correcting one's behavior is relatively easier than influencing the behavior of others. This does not mean, however, one cannot influence the behavior of others. Some of the ways one can influence others are through the following:

1. Leading by example

2. Sharing your passion with others

3. Inspiring others to achieve a common vision

4. Developing relationships

5. Holding people accountable for their performance

6. Recognizing the importance of the "fit" of an individual to the department/organization

7. Emphasizing the importance of individual contributions to the team

Throughout this chapter, these seven basic leadership skills will be examined by way of case presentation and analysis. This introduction is intended as an overview of these leadership basics, which can be referred to while reading the following cases.