



KPCA
IMPROVING KENTUCKY'S CAPACITY TO CARE

2026
Annual
Conference

More Than a Manager: Building Leadership Capacity for Lasting Impact

Suzanne Speer, ACU



More Than a Manager: Building Leadership Capacity for Lasting Impact

Kentucky PCA Annual Conference
September 29, 2026

Suzanne Speer, VP of Workforce Development

Learn more about ACU



Access to Care & Clinician Support

Recruitment & Retention

National Health
Service Corps

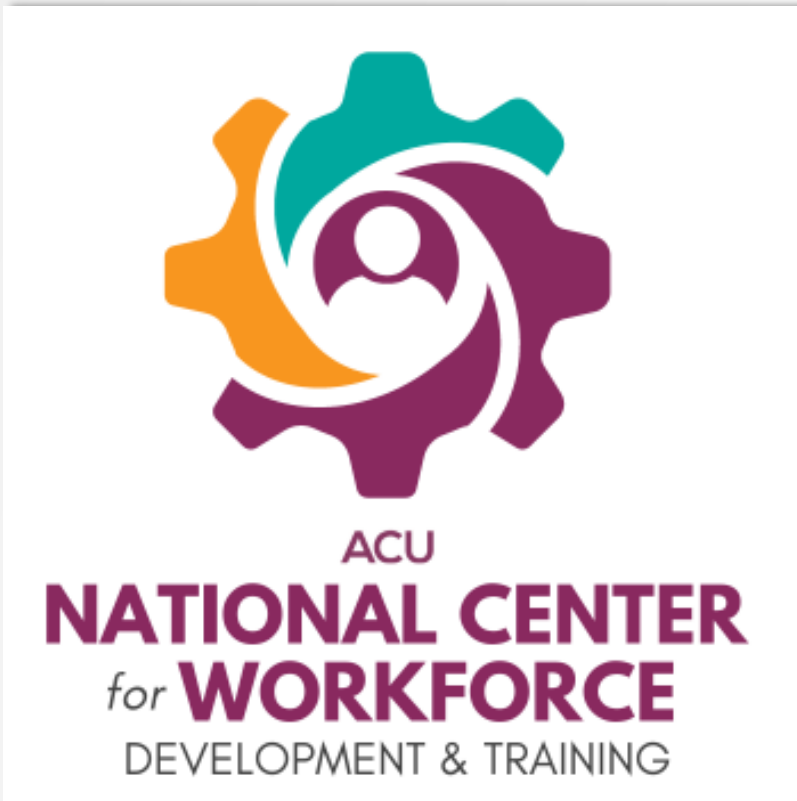
Resources

Training

Networking

www.clinicians.org

Who we are



- Comprehensive training, technical assistance, and consultation in all aspects of healthcare workforce development
- Serves as the hub for a variety of ongoing ACU workforce initiatives

WORKFORCE IS THE FUEL

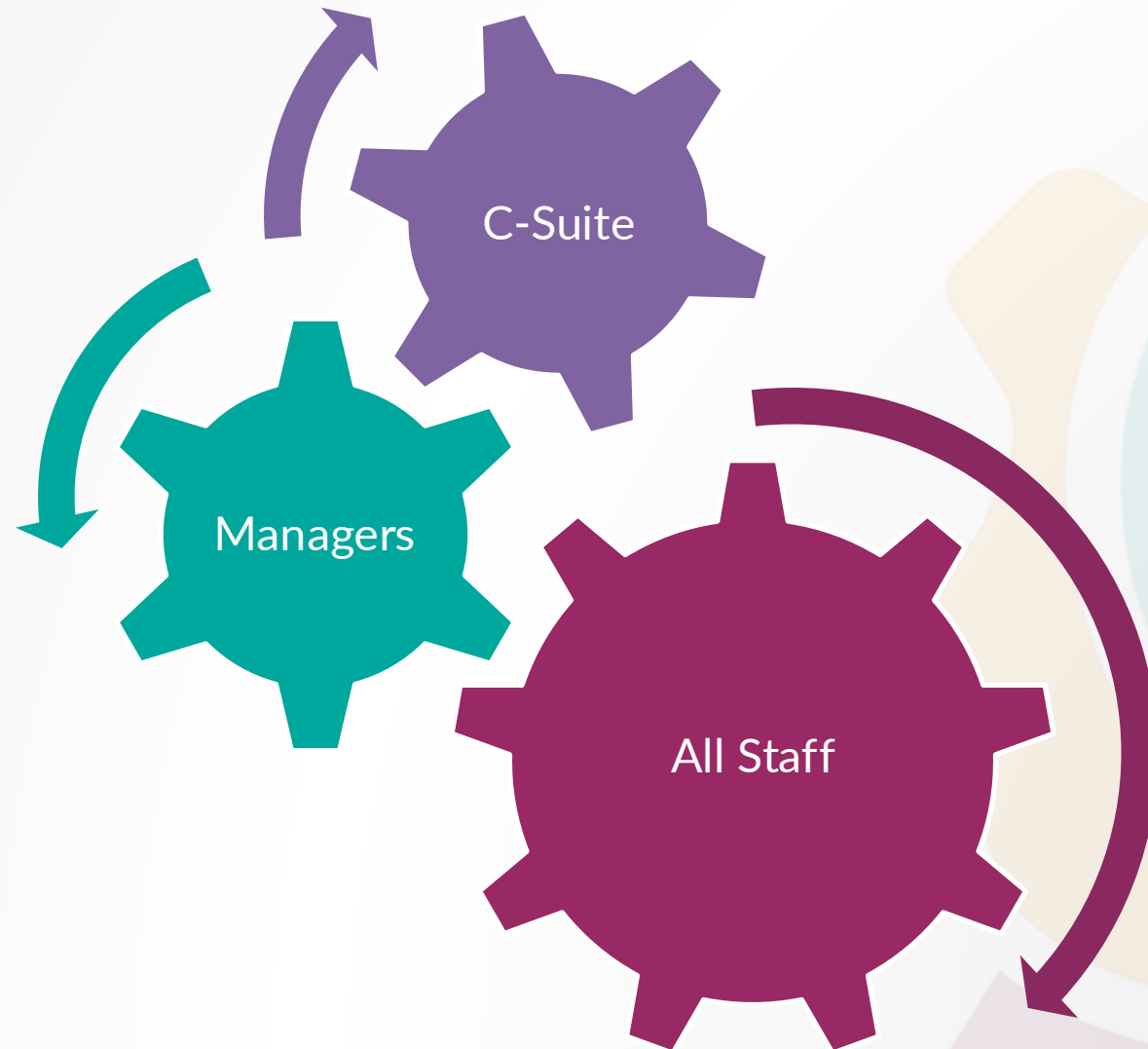


A health center with a **full tank** identifies workforce as an essential organizational issue, invests in appropriate operational and staffing resources.



FRAMING THE CHALLENGE

MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE



MANAGERS: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND JOB SATISFACTION

Health center managers play a critical role in organizational success, including staff retention.

- 86% of employees site their relationships with management as a critical factor of their overall satisfaction.

MANAGERS ROLE IN RETENTION

75% of employees considered their direct boss to be “the worst part of their job”

65% of employees would rather have a new manager RATHER than a pay raise

About half of employees said they’ve quit a job because of a bad manager

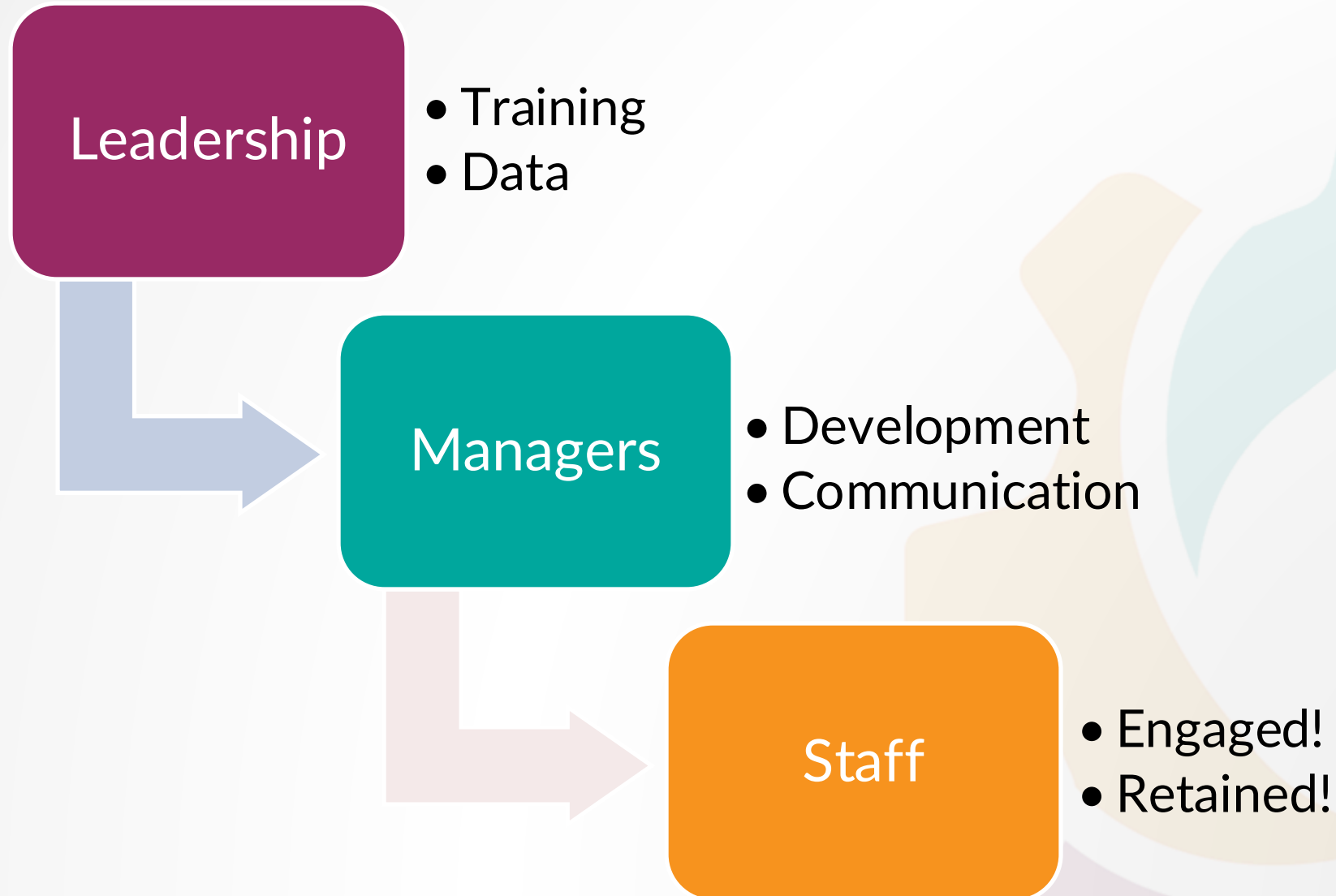
The background is a solid dark purple color. It features faint, white line-art illustrations. On the left, there is a profile of a person's head and shoulders, with gears visible inside the head. In the center and right, there are several interlocking gears of different sizes. On the far right, there is a faint outline of a building with a pointed roof.

What's your biggest challenge
with manager training right
now?

High-Functioning Managers

Identifies the key role of managers in developing and engaging staff and invests in their training with the expectation of staff retention.

HIGH-FUNCTIONING MANAGERS



KEY COMPETENCIES FOR MANAGERS

Communication

Trust Building

Staff Development

Emotional
Intelligence/Conflict
Management

“Good communication is a fundamental leadership skill and a key characteristic of a good leader. Leaders must be skilled at communicating with others in countless settings and relationships — with individuals and at the organizational level, in communities and groups, and sometimes even on a global scale — in order to achieve results through others..”

-Maggie Sass, PhD and Andre Keil, MA, PCC at the Center for Creative Leadership

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/communication-1-idea-3-facts-5-tips/>

MANAGERS NEED TO BE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS



Open
communication
fosters trust and
engagement



Poor communication
contributes to
burnout and
turnover

COMMON COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Siloed teams or sites

Infrequent or unclear messaging

Lack of structured feedback

Overreliance on top-down communication

Lack of communication

STRATEGIES FOR STREAMLINED COMMUNICATIONS

Responsiveness Expectations

- Beware of “email urgency bias”
- Establish clear norms across communication channels

Specific Channels for Specific Uses

- Avoid having to check every platform and missing information
- Explicitly align on norms and expectations – be consistent!

Make Reading Easy

- Make information easy to grasp, even for “skimmers”
- Less is more! Fewer words = faster response times

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

Words and Actions Matter

- What you say and what you do matters
- How you say it and the actions you take matter
- Practice multi-directional communication
 - Create a dialogue
 - Don't be dismissive
 - Be open – listen, learn, adapt
- Take a strengths-based perspective
- Appreciation goes a long way!



PYSCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

At its core, psychological safety is the belief that a team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, that you can ask a question, admit a mistake, or challenge an idea without fear of embarrassment or retribution.

MANAGEMENT BEHAVIORS

Create Conditions for Psychological Safety

Frame the Work

- Reframe challenges as learning opportunities, not tests of competence. For example, “We’ve never done this before, and we’ll need everyone’s input to get it right.”

Invite Participation

- Ask good questions—like “Who has a different perspective?”—to signal that dissent is not only welcomed but needed.

Respond Productively

- React with appreciation and forward-thinking, even when the news is hard. Instead of “How did this happen?” say, “Thanks for that insight. How can we help?”

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR MANAGERS

Implement “stay interviews” to understand what motivates staff.

Use short, frequent coaching sessions instead of annual reviews.

Recognize strengths and provide clear pathways for growth.

STAY INTERVIEWS BUILD TRUST

Trust...



The number one reason employees stay or leave...or for that matter engage or disengage...is how much they trust their immediate supervisors



This does NOT mean each time an employee quits it is because she doesn't trust her boss...though that might be true



It DOES mean each individual leader becomes your very best employee retention solution

CAREER PATHWAYS vs. CAREER LADDERS



Career paths encompass varied forms of career progression, including the traditional vertical career ladders, dual career ladders, horizontal career lattices, career progression outside the organization and encore careers.

Career ladders are the progression of jobs in an organization's specific occupational fields ranked from highest to lowest based on level of responsibility and pay.



Source: [SHRM](#);
Images: [Flaticon](#)

CAREER PATHS – KEY STEPS



Disclose skills- and competency-based career paths



Determine the required skills and competencies to reach various roles or career stages



Identify available training and professional development resources for employees to gain those skills



Clearly and consistently communicate that information to employees



How often do you or your
organization conduct
intentional development
conversations with staff?

“A skillful manager with good conflict resolution skills can successfully resolve tense workplace situations in a way that leaves all team members feeling heard, respected, and motivated to continue doing their best.”

CONFLICT RESOLUTION & MANAGERS

“Aside from good communication, managers should be curious. They need a high degree of emotional intelligence in which they are able to empathize and understand a team member’s point of view. This emotional IQ should extend to treating people with integrity and respect, being patient, and not rushing to judgment, asking thoughtful questions, and staying calm when under pressure. The best leaders are also good problem-solvers who don’t take sides but look to find solutions that work for everyone.”



BUILDING MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

INVEST IN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



Continuing Education (CE) Dollars



Travel Dollars



Mobile Content



Online Courses

TRAINING PLAN: DEVELOP YOUR OWN



Identify Core Skills



Develop Training Plan



Plan, Do Study, Act
(PDSA)

WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

Assess
Current Plan

Feedback
from
Managers

Identify
Immediate
Opportunities

TRAINING PLANS TO BUILD CAPACITY

Manager Training Plan Sample

Mission:

ABC Health Center believes in giving people the tools to lead happy, healthy lives.

Timeframe:

February 2025 – February 2026

Person reviewing this plan with you:

Chief Operating Officer



Competencies <i>What skills do all managers need to be successful?</i>	Resources <i>What resources do we offer to support their learning?</i>	Time <i>How do we account for the time necessary for this learning?</i>	Outputs <i>What learning activities will happen?</i>	Outcomes <i>What impact will these learning activities make?</i>
Giving and receiving feedback	Continuing Education funding	Protected admin time	Engage in at least one training activity	Decreased annual turnover of Patient Service Reps by 3%
Motivational interviewing	Online certification program	Protected admin time	Engage in at least one training activity	
Reviewing turnover data	Quarterly lunch and learn State PCA webinar	Professional Development PTO	Develop annual projection and trends for team	Increased forecasting for the staffing plan
Communicating our strategic goals	All Staff Meeting Strategic Plan Website	Monthly manager meetings	Participate in at least 8 manager meetings	Increased employee satisfaction with admin communication on annual survey
Staff's Choice! Fill out this line with one of your personal goals				



QUESTIONS



Upcoming Trainings: Registration Open!



- October: Manager Training Series
- Monthly Leadership Labs

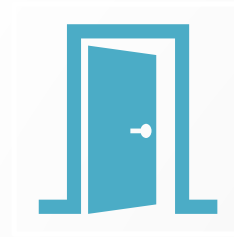
Upcoming Trainings: Registration Coming Soon!



Mentoring and Coaching
Toolkit Intro Webinar



Mentoring and Coaching
Cohort



Onboarding Cohort



Workforce Symposium:
March 16-17, 2027

We'd love to hear from you!



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