FOR LEADERS OF SMALL TEAMS

Thank Them, Act, Close the Loop

What you say decides if they speak up again.

1. **People ask two questions first.**
   Is it safe to share? Will it change anything? Saying "Thank you" answers the first. Action answers the second.

2. **Being heard isn't the same as a yes.**
   Say up front who decides. A "no" with a reason still counts as being heard.

3. **"Why?" can sound like blame.**
   "What are you seeing?" gets the same answer without putting them on trial.

4. **Being nice isn't the same as being kind.**
   Reassuring them and moving on skips the fix. Support the person, then dig into the cause.

5. **You can start on your own team.**
   Safety is created one team at a time. You don't need to wait for the whole organization to adopt these to start.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Start Here

1. Thank them for the act, not just the information.

"Thank you for raising this, let's look into this further."

2. Say it back before you answer.

"So patients are leaving the kiosk line?" After the summary repeat back, then ask, "Did I miss anything?"

3. Let the most junior person speak first.

Or have everyone jot down their thoughts before anyone talks.

4. Fix one small thing where people can see it.

Then say it's done. Visible fixes build trust faster than promises.

5. When the answer is no, say why.

Do it in person when you can. "Working on it" with no date or actions taken being shared feels like what was raised wasn't important.

If they stop telling you, the problems don't stop. You just stop hearing about them.

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Matt Humer · mhumer@adoptionlab.ai · AdoptionLab.AI