



Expert Insights From Holly Rhodenhizer, A Serendipitous But Satisfying Path to Leadership

Sometimes the most serendipitous situations change people's paths, and lives are touched in unimaginable ways. That is true of Holly Rhodenhizer, MBA, vice president of program operations of developmental services at enCircle. She said, "I got an undergraduate degree in psychology and wanted to work in juvenile justice; but I couldn't get a job without experience. I was able to get a job in I/DD, and 20 years later I am still here. I fell in love with the field." She added, "It's very rewarding. We really make a difference, and we see that in our work every day."

Diverse Services and Support

Rhodenhizer admits that she didn't know much about enCircle before she went to work there. But it didn't take her long to see what a good fit it was for her. "We are well staffed and structured; and the organization has a commitment to excellence but also a focus on work-life balance." She adds, "We provide diverse services and support people at various levels as their needs change. We help people to engage in life and become contributing members of society," she said.

She noted that whether people need more or fewer services and supports over time, enCircle is there to help them. Some clients have been with the organization for 30 years.

A Passion for Leadership

A passion for leadership and excellent communication skills have helped Rhodenhizer to build a team that works well together. "We have a diverse group, but we come together as family. Everyone leaves our monthly team meetings on a high note," she said, adding, "The best thing I can

offer is leadership. My team reads books about leadership, we watch podcasts, and we have discussions. We make decisions as a group, and we put plans before the team and get their buy-in before we implement new policies, initiatives, or changes."

When they decide they need to go in a different direction on something, they discuss how they will pivot or make this change. However, the teamwork doesn't stop at the organization's doors. "We work to align with local and national advocacy groups. When we band together, we have a stronger voice and can be heard," said Rhodenhizer.

Prioritizing Staff Support

While some organizations are scaling back as they struggle with staffing, enCircle is growing. "We value employees at all levels, and we listen to them and look for ways to support them," Rhodenhizer said. The organization serves over 1,000 people currently, and they are looking for these numbers to grow. Because of their focus on engaging and meeting the needs of their teams, they are confident that they will have the staff to provide quality care and service to every single person. "Our motto is that we want this to be the best workplace you've ever experienced. Our direct support professionals can reach out to anyone in leadership, including the CEO, and get a response," Rhodenhizer noted.

Rhodenhizer's path to the executive suite has given her unique insights as a leader. Because she started on the front lines and worked her way through the ranks of the organization, she has hands-on knowledge of how people work, their roles, and their challenges. As a result, she can relate to staff and use her experience to improve staff engagement and satisfaction at all levels.