

# A Starting Place



August 22, 2017

The following is a recommendation of the professional consulting and training that was provided by Michael Jason Sherman, MA to the leadership and staff of A Starting Place, a non-profit preschool program for children of all developmental levels and abilities. Michael worked with us from December of 2015 to September of 2016.

We are a facility that provides educational care to children between the ages of 3 weeks to 6 years who have a variety of behavioral and mental health needs. Because of intense nature of the work, our loyal staff of more than 100 has a tendency to experience stress on the job.

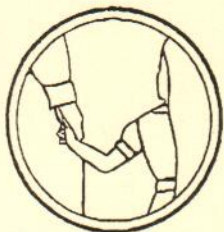
We felt a need to bring in someone like Michael, who is an expert in transformative communication, to help with these and other issues. We hired him to train all of us on his curriculum he calls "The Power of Mirroring."

Our leadership, which includes an Executive Director, Assistant Director and lead social worker, sought out Michael's services to see if he could help us find solutions to the kind of issues that an organization such as ourselves would normally face, including how to demonstrate to staff a better presence as leaders who listen, how to communicate in ways that open the doors to innovative solutions in the workplace, how to develop a compelling vision for our future, and how to transform our organization into a place that helps our staff experience more relief and less stress while at work on a daily basis.

Michael focused solely consulting the leadership team for the first six weeks, teaching us the practice of mirroring as way to not only listen better, but also to process challenging interpersonal issues, to relieve stress for ourselves, to accurately validate the problems faced by our staff, to better demonstrate to them our care and appreciation of them, and to design a plan for an improved tone in our organization, both for now and for the future.



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Following these consultations, Michael trained the entire staff in groups of 20 how to use the skills of mirroring communication in the following ways - to communicate with other staff in ways that demonstrates clearer understanding, to take more responsibility about negative emotional reactivity triggered by the stress of the work environment, and to feel an increased sense of worthiness as a valued member of the community.

After further consultations with leadership and a full staff in service provided in September at the beginning of the school year, it was clear that Michael's training had a positive effect on our staff and organization. Communication issues that previously would have developed into chronic problems have been far easier to clear up. Staff who may have been unwilling or unable to come to leadership for support have been doing so more leading to better resolutions. Overall, the stress level of the work environment, while still present because of the demands of the job, has lowered as a result of Michael's teaching and staff's embracing of these lessons.

We highly recommend Michael and his "Power of Mirroring" curriculum as a program of professional communications training and consulting. His teaching manner is friendly and empowering, and the material continues to be engaging and energizing as we return to it again and again. Michael naturally elevates the mood, creates a sense of calm and ease and helps us find solutions that we previously couldn't see because of the pressure of the work environment.

He would be an asset to your leadership and staff.

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A Starting Place

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A Starting Place