

Straight A Leadership by Quint Studer

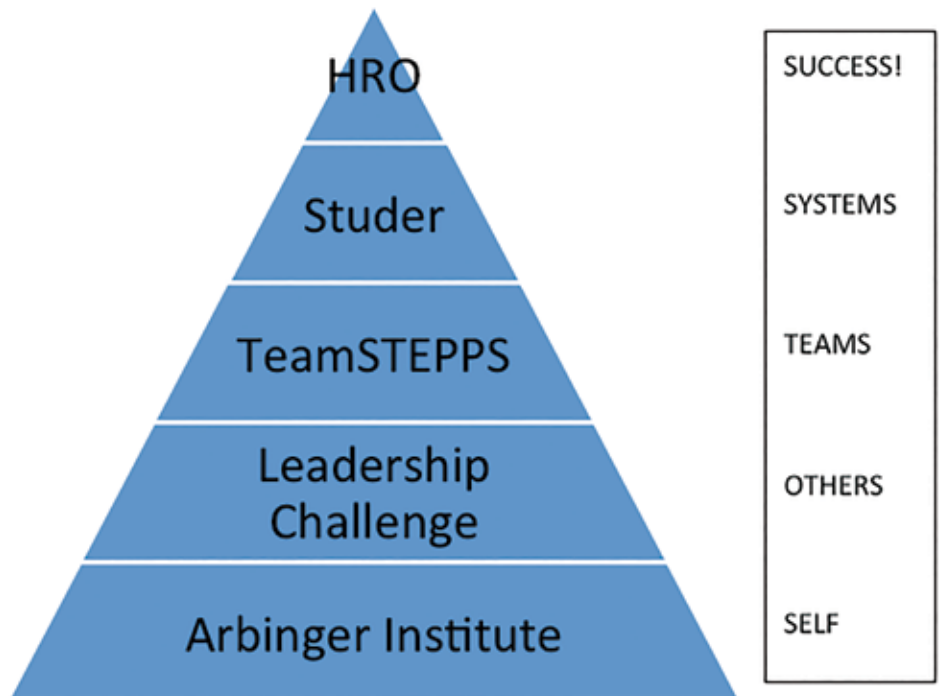
In the last few years, we have heard a great deal of discussion about how to make our hospitals into an HRO, a Highly Reliable Organization that consistently provides top quality, safe medical care to all of our patients.

If Madigan Army Medical Center is anything like your organization, we share the challenge of being a system that has its “pockets of excellence” and overall very good healthcare delivery, but some frustrating difficulties achieving across the board excellence for every patient at every encounter.

Fortunately, I think our command leadership has developed a winning strategy in the form of our “Journey to HRO” Leadership pyramid that has great potential to move us in the right direction:

The foundation of the pyramid is Self-Leadership, an essential requirement before a Leader can effectively lead others. At MAMC, we have adopted the Arbinger framework, to focus our attention on developing an Outward Mindset. This excellent program is reflected in the Arbinger Institute’s books Leadership and Self-Deception, The Anatomy of Peace, and its newest, the Outward Mindset.

Once we have progressed along the self-leadership continuum, we must then work effectively with others, and utilize the training contained in Kouzes and Posner’s The Leadership Challenge course. Other excellent options can be found in Stephen Covey’s or John Maxwell’s large selection of leadership books.



The next level focuses on developing highly functioning teams, building on the levels below. TeamSTEPPS provides a familiar framework that teams across our organization are utilizing to make all team members into engaged, productive participants in the care for our patients.

The final level, just below the peak goal of “moving towards becoming an HRO” (since you never really get there), is the adoption of Systems, our “team of teams” that lead to consistent excellent results. To achieve this, MAMC has contracted with the Studer Group, and it is amazing to watch the transformative results of this partnership in a very short period of time. The work that MAMC leaders are doing can be found in Quint Studer’s books Hardwiring Excellence and Straight A Leadership.

Quint Studer demonstrated his

winning formula nearly 2 decades ago when, as CEO of the Baptist Healthcare System in Pensacola FL, his hospital was the first healthcare organization to receive the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige Award for excellence, and since then, he has been helping other healthcare entities achieve similar results.

“Straight A” Leadership has 3 essential “A” elements:

1. **“Alignment”**: Many healthcare organizations are embracing the “best practices” that lead to success, but they are finding a troubling inability to move these “best practices” quickly enough throughout the entire hospital to survive in our rapidly changing environment. We can no longer afford to have just a handful of

high-performing leaders; we need ALL leaders to turn in a winning performance. All senior leaders need to be aligned, and all leaders under the senior leaders need to be aligned as well. When even one leader is out of sync with the organization's goals, his or her actions will cascade downward throughout the organization, sending hundreds of people off course. The Studer Hardwiring Excellence model helps organizations identify a small number of key goals that will have maximal impact on hospital performance, and establishes clear, "SMART," stretch goals for the organization to aspire to achieve.

2. **"Action"**: Action is essential for organizations to be successful. With a rapidly changing external healthcare environment, one might assume that the key to success is to take action as soon as new changes occur. Actually, we have an even more difficult task: anticipate the outcomes of this changing environment, and respond to them while they are happening. Early Adaptors with the correct skill set are required! A key area of focus in this section is that leaders in most healthcare organizations do not feel like they have been properly prepared to act in their current role; in fact, the average healthcare leader only gets 6.5 hours of pure leadership training per year, compared to over 55 hours/year in Fortune 500 companies. Healthcare organizations need to do a better job of preparing their front line leaders for rapid tactical responses to support the organization's strategic goals.

3. **"Accountability"**: Leaders need to be held accountable. In too many

organizations, most leaders are given a "substantially exceeds expectations" rating on their evaluations, which often doesn't match the organization's results in meeting its yearly goals. And while most organizations have some version of Employee Standards of Behavior, they aren't truly holding their people accountable for following them. Without accountability at all levels, you cannot become a high performing hospital.

Two sections that I strongly recommend even if your organization doesn't adopt the entire Studer model are the sections on overcoming the barriers to sharing Best Practices, and the recommendations and tools to aid when you conduct "leader rounding" on your subordinate leaders and staff.

Thanks to the visionary leadership of our Command Group at MAMC, led by USAFP Past President COL Mike Place, our hospital's key leaders down to the Department/Service/Clinic level are given the opportunity to attend the following leadership training:

- Arbinger Institute Training, 2 day course (16 hours)
- Leadership Challenge, 2 day course (16 hours)
- Team STEPPS, Initial and Annual Training (2 hours)
- Studer/HRO quarterly day-long offsites (32 hours)

This investment of 66 hours of leadership training matches the Fortune 500 companies, and we expect this investment in our team will pay huge dividends over the coming years.

Check back in a year to see where MAMC's HRO Journey takes us, and we will happily share our best practices across the DHA!