

## “Encourage development of the best habits & qualities possible”

*It's never too early to begin nurturing the social-emotional skills that employers seek*

### **Bob Miller, Vice President of Operations** Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, Normal

The people who work at our hospitals are experts in their fields; that's a given. We hire them because they have the technical experience necessary to be successful at their jobs. Yet we're also seeking other, less quantifiable abilities that are just as important to helping advance our mission work in the community we serve.

Integrity is probably at the top of the list of vital, social-emotional skills. If you don't have that, no matter how talented you are, you won't be successful in your organization. Creative thinking and emotional intelligence – there's so much that goes into that. Possessing a level temperament such that you don't overreact to inevitably difficult situations and conversations required is fundamental. There's active listening, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Also, the ability to demonstrate a little humility lets others know that you don't take yourself too seriously.

Many of these critical qualities begin to form even before the kindergarten level of kids' development, and they need to be nurtured. For example, you've got to be able to work as a team, to show-up on time and consistently prepared to contribute. Those are lessons that children hopefully start to learn very, very early

in life. It's much more difficult to pick them up later, after habits are fairly established.

We're looking to encourage development of the best habits and qualities possible. Performance improvement is so important in our line of work. That requires consistency of practice, fortitude and perseverance. In health care, not showing-up on time and not paying attention to detail are incompatible with our core business. We work in life-saving situations and patient safety is critical, whether your job is running the ICU, being a physical therapist, cath-lab nurse, supply technician, or housekeeper.

At all of our Advocate Health Care hospital and clinic locations, we operate by what we call “the Advocate Experience,” which embodies behaviors of excellence that are assessed each day and are embedded in each staff member's job description. These behaviors are a key component of each staff member's evaluation every year: Be safe, responsive, respectful, collaborative, accountable (to our patients and each other), and professional – from the front of the house to the back of the house, it doesn't matter. It strikes me that every one of these involves important “character” or “soft” skills.

