The Lone Wolf Joins the Pack; Developing Effective Clinical Team Integration & Cohesion

Jim Gamache, LICSW, MLADC, ICAADC
Gordon Woods, AS
Lone Wolf- A Positive & Negative
“We have doomed the wolf not for what it is, but for what we deliberately and mistakenly perceive it to be— the mythologized epitome of a savage ruthless killer—which is, in reality, no more than a reflected image of ourselves.”

From: Farley Mowat; Never Cry Wolf: The Amazing Story of Life Among Arctic Wolves, McClelland & Stewart, 1963
Is the Lone Wolf becoming an endangered species?
The Lone Wolf Facts cont...

- In the wild, yes it is in danger of becoming extinct—support your local sanctuaries!
- In the work we do, NO, it is truly alive!
- Our presentation will refer to the Lone Wolf analogy as a metaphor. A worker among workers!
Ice Breaker

LONE WOLF ASSESSMENT
OBJECTIVES:

- What is a healthy team process & environment.
- What are the characteristics of a “Lone Wolf”
- Advantages and Disadvantages of being a “Lone Wolf”
- Characteristics of the Lone Wolf that both challenge and support clinical team cohesion
- Integrating the Lone Wolf into the pack
- Lone Wolf/Wolf Pack warning signs, solutions and self help
- Q&A
Lone Wolf McQuade Examples
The Presence of the Wolf
We Qualify

Why this resonates for us!
Healthcare systems consists of many teams:

- Residential Packs
- Outpatient Packs
- Inpatient Packs
- Medical Packs
- Administrative Packs
- Marketing Packs
Rationale for Teams “Packs”

- Shared responsibility
- Shared accountability
- Shared outcomes
- Multi discipline care/treatment approach
- Interventions are well thought out
- Consultation
- Can you think of others?
Healthy Pack Environment

- Trust
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Accountability/commitment
- Attention to results
The Effective Pack Process “Clinical”

- Individual and mutual accountability
- Frequently come together for decision making, problem solving, and planning in acute/crisis situations.
- Consultation/case review
- Share in the clinical work/coverage
- Focus on team goals “how can I contribute”
The Effective Pack Process “Clinical”

- Produce collective treatment interventions
- The three C’s: Collaboration, Communication, & Cohesiveness
- Everyone contributes
- Team process improves over time
- Everyone has specific strengths and assets
- Everyone has growth opportunities
Effective Pack Process, cont. “Team”.

- Defines individual roles, responsibilities, and tasks to help the team complete their overall objectives.
- Focused on the outcomes of the organization.
- Come together to address “Team dynamics”
- Accountability, Transparency
- Purpose, goals, and approach to work shaped by the director/team leader with team members input/feedback
ABC’s model of Team Work

- ABCs of teamwork: the attitudes, behaviors and cognitive states that collectively influence whether a team achieves its goals.
- Team composition “Dream Team 1992 Olympics”.
- It’s all about the ABC’s to create strong cohesion
- Strong Leadership

The Presence of the Wolf
What are Lone Wolf characteristics
The Lone Wolf Characteristics

- Self-sufficient
- Reliable
- Dedicated
- Great sense of pride and integrity in their work
- Passionate
- Survivor
- Willing to go over and above in the line of duty
- Strong self-will
- Skillful
- Learn by experience
- Can you think of other characteristics?
What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of being a Lone Wolf
Advantages

- Lone Wolf is comfortable making day to day decisions
- Ability to problem solve in the moment
- Intuitive and posses heightened awareness
- Works well under pressure
- Comfortable with conflict resolution
- Takes initiative
- Seeks perfection in work
Advantages cont.

- Take charge in emergent situations.
- Are comfortable responding to crisis situations to insure safety, liability and wellness.
- May have the ability to develop and foster working relationships with people
- Highly organized and can multitask based on priorities
- Get it done attitude
- Can you think of other examples?
Disadvantages

- A well intentioned individual w/ strong characteristics
- May not be challenged by their peers.
- A developed mistrust or a lack of confidence in others. “If I want this done, I will have to do it all myself”.
- Seeks immediate results and may be impatient with the team process.
- Unaddressed Trauma
Disadvantages

- Prefers to work alone, and can be resistance to the team process other clinical viewpoint.
- Survival is the key
- May be driven by their own ambitions, EGO or a sense of self-importance.
- Difficulty integrating/acclimating to a team culture
- Perfectionism
- Uncomfortable asking for help
- Can you think of other examples?
# Lone Wolf Vs Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lone Wolf</th>
<th>Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on individual goals</td>
<td>Focus on team goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce individual work products</td>
<td>Produce collective work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define individual roles, responsibilities, and tasks</td>
<td>Define individual roles, responsibilities, and tasks to help team do its work; often share and rotate them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern with one's own outcome and challenges</td>
<td>Concern with outcomes of everyone and challenges the team faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose, goals, approach to work shaped by manager</td>
<td>Purpose, goals, approach to work shaped by team leader/director with team members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wolf Crossing
Characteristics of the Lone Wolf that both support and challenge clinical team cohesion

- What happens when there is a Lone Wolf on a clinical team?
Advantages to the team when the Lone Wolf is incorporated into the pack

How the Pack benefits:

- Staff that takes initiative and lead
- Communication continuously improves
- Staff are dependable & go above and beyond
- Staff are committed & invested in the mission
- Staff are aware and openly the address Pack dynamics
- Pack is goal orientated
Advantages to the team when the Lone Wolf is incorporated into the pack cont.

- Staff willing to make sacrifices to support the Pack
- Staff willingness to speak up and contribute
- Comfortable with participant intoxication and increase psychosis
- Staff conflict is addressed and resolved within the team
- Speaking up when the Pack is drifting from primary purpose
- When the Pack is functioning well so are the clients served “Parallel Process!”
The Presence of the Wolf
Disadvantages of the Lone Wolf on a Team

The Team Member Lone Wolf is not incorporated into the Pack:

- Acts independently from the Pack
- Does not regularly check in
- May work against the team decisions
- May not enforce policies and procedures
- Does not see the “big picture.”
- Does not communicate effectively
- May engage in water cooler conversations “Toxic”
Disadvantages of the Lone Wolf on a Pack cont.

- Individual not open to feedback/direction
- Does not readily volunteer to complete tasks that support the Pack
- Is only focused on what s/he needs to do and nothing more
- Takes on more than they can complete
- Reluctant to ask for help
All parties consume the energy when the Pack concept is not employed.
Consequences of unaddressed Lone Wolf behaviors on a Pack

- Erode trusting relations with Pack members.
- Not sharing in the moment what we are thinking or feeling about decisions.
- The Pack becomes stagnant and unable to make decisions.
- Martyr syndromes are develop.
- Pack becomes fearful of conflict.
Consequences of unaddressed Lone Wolf behaviors on a Pack cont.

- The Pack becomes emotionally and mentally exhausted
- Feedback becomes personalized
- The Pack members work against each other.
- Scapegoat syndrome
- Disempowers the Pack and creates an us vs. them dynamic
Consequences of unaddressed Lone Wolf behaviors on a Pack cont.

- Pack becomes task orientated vs creative
- The Pack becomes fragmented and disorganized
- The Pack loses the focus of evidenced based practices/accepted clinical practices
- Increasing liability
- The Pack is struggling & the clients are struggling “Parallel Process!”
- Can you think of other examples?
Integrating the Lone Wolf into the Pack

The Lencioni Pyramid – 5 layers / behaviors

Cohesive Team
- Trust
- Conflict
- Commitment
- Accountability
- Results

Dysfunctional Team
- Absence of Trust
- Fear of Conflict
- Lack of Commitment
- Avoidance of Accountability
- Inattention to Results
- Status and Ego
- Low Standards
- Ambiguity
- Artificial Harmony
- Invulnerability

Read more: www.toolshero.com
Establishing trust with strong supervision and Leadership

Leadership needs to role model trust

Orientation and ongoing training

Clear expectations

Role model taking risks/team process
Integrating the Lone Wolf into the Pack cont.

- Buddy system
- Individual and Pack feedback in the moment
- Play to the individual strengths
- Holding the Lone Wolf accountable
- Willingness to make the investment
- Pack provides positive reinforcement
- Reward the Pack “Pack acknowledgment of a job well done”
- Experiential “Lone Wolf experiences the benefits”
Lone Wolf Adapting to the Pack

- Willingness to experience being uncomfortable
- Feedback: “opportunities to grow”
- Don’t look for an out
- Do the internal work
- Trust is a two way street
- Take risks
- Give it time
- Do I want to be part of the pack?
- Self inventory
Lone Wolf integrated into the pack

The benefits to the Pack:
- Pack cohesion
- Better outcomes of care
- Development of successful interventions
- Positive energy
- Solution focused
- Work is creative and enjoyable
- Improved morale
- Everyone's strengths contribute to the goals
- Pack commitment, dedication, and investment
- Mission centered/accomplishment
Lone Wolf/Wolf Pack warning signs, solutions and self help for the individual

- What are the chances that Lone Wolf behaviors will return to the individual?
Individual warning signs that Lone Wolf behavior returns

- Individual shuts down emotionally
- Trapped-believing that we have no choices, no decisions-not being heard by others
- Impulsive decision making returns
- “Endurance mode” kicks in, work is not creative, but something to get through
- Lone Wolf victim self-image returns
- Self worth drops and self neglect starts
Individual warning signs that Lone Wolf behavior returns cont.

Over / Under

- Over tired, over worked, over committed, over extended, overly sensitive
- Under appreciated, under spent, under fed, under the weather and under paid

From: “Beyond Codependency; And Getting Better All the Time” by Melody Beattie, Copy Right 1989, Hazelden Publishing., Center City Minnesota 55012.
Lone Wolf solutions and Self-help

“We continued to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along.”

Simple—“oops I am doing it again”

Simply accept and get honest

Recognize and accept that at times it will return—“It’s ok”

Be open to feedback

Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. New York City 1976. page 84
Lone Wolf solutions and Self Help cont.

- Self care outside of work
- QTIP “Quit Taking It Personal”
- It’s about the work we do, not the person doing the work
- Be transparent
- Make repairs
- If you’re not willing or it’s not working then move on and find another pack “It’s OK”
Wolf Pack Solutions when the Lone Wolf returns!

- Pack acknowledges that the Lone Wolf behavior will return “normalize this”
- Supporting each other but avoid enabling
- Be transparent
- Hold each other accountable
- Encourage self care
- Engage in conflict
- Maybe this is not the right pack!
Questions and Answers
Famous Quote

“For the strength of the pack is the wolf and the strength of the wolf is the pack”
Rudyard Kipling