

HEARD!

A **#FairKitchens** initiative powered by **Unilever Food Solutions** and **Chefs with Issues**

HEARD! NYC May 16, 2018

Our first ever HEARD! Local event took place in NYC and our panellists shared some great advice on how to create a sustainable environment and manage crisis.

Executive Chef, Michael Anthony, of Gramercy Tavern:

- It's all about relationships and reactions. We have a power to take in what happens. Take a moment and envision where you would like for this to go next.
- It's more than just words themselves but about giving people life tools. Get people in the restaurant aware that the staff is working hard.
- Signs of success are chefs coming out the other side of training and having learned something about feeling good about myself.
- Take time with your team to talk about roles. Mike shared that he always asks his team to call him "Mike" vs "Chef" but this idea always struggled to take hold and he'd get the response "Oui, Chef". At the end, he understood people should call him what they feel comfortable calling him. It's each of our responsibility to look out for people with a smaller voice and everyone should be approachable, even at the top level.
- Look on a daily for those who struggle to have a voice. Mike shared that he'd often had long conversations with those on his team who were a minority and how that stress just in itself was a lot on their shoulders.
- Mike also shared about the importance of overcoming the language barrier and giving access to language courses for his team. It's a priority to have fluency in the kitchen.
- It can be hard within the course of a day to take notice but look for small ways to check in with people.
- If someone on the team is acting "less present" then let them know. Yes, they may be good at hiding it but we are good at not noticing. Let them know "my door is always open" and create an environment that's conducive for them to communicate that.
- Sometimes it can be hard to navigate getting to a place of caring but also walking on egg shells to protect privacy. Advice that always resonated with Michael was something he heard from Danny Myer "We take care of each other first." Make it a *real statement* and not a feel good one

Kat Kinsman of "Chefs with Issues"

- Recommended people Google "Anxiety Gif" for a quick calming exercise.



- Another great resource mentioned is <https://seizetheawkward.org/>
- Not knowing that someone is in trouble can be due in part to fact that many are very good at hiding their situation early on.
- **Crisis Hotline 741-741**

Alexander Hardy from goetsomejoy.com

- Liven up the conversation about wellness and make it less clinical. Be open and avoid making the topic seem taboo.
- Avoid an accusatory tone when you approach someone who may be having a problem. Always start with "I" rather than "you". Alex shared, "I talk about how I feel like I talk about what I had for dinner".
- Leading by example can make it easier for staff to speak up and relate to you. Focus on human level interaction. Something as simple as looking someone in the eye can go a long way. Chefs should treat their team members as other humans not just an employee.
- <https://selfcarecheckin.com/> Check-in with yourself is critical. How often do we take a moment to do this?
- When you ask someone "How are you?", then actually stick around for the response. Something as simple as helping people make an appointment can be a huge burden lifted. There are health department resources in the city with a sliding scale of access to therapy depending on your insurance. New York can be a wonderful place to struggle as there are so many resources.
- Local NYC Resources:
 - <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/>
 - More resources on <http://goetsomejoy.com/#>
- Having an accountability partner can also be beneficial. Look for those opportunities to earn trust.

Errol Rodriguez Ph.D., CRC, MAC of Adelphia University:

- Some key questions to ask
 - "Do I use despite consequences?"
 - "Do I think about drinking most of the day?"

- “Do I use medicinally to tranquilize?”
- There’s a fine line between using once in a while and where those who use frequently day in and day out and it’s a vicious cycle.
- 18% of population in given year suffer some sort of mental health condition. 10% of the population struggles with an addiction.
- Restaurant industry is #1 when it comes to alcohol addiction. 16% in the industry using alcohol and 19% using illicit drugs like heroin or cocaine. There’s a heroin epidemic right now in the restaurant industry. Heroin is a drug that many use for emotional and physical numbing. Continues to increase in the industry.
- How can we take one for the team and look at those around us in how we can improve mental health in the kitchen? T
- here are many in the industry who would say
 - 1) I love my kitchen 2) BUT I get crazy in my kitchen.
 - This is scary because it can be the answer to the question 1) Where am I most like my true self 2) Where am I most alive? It is important to identify your trigger emotions. Which emotions are the ones to watch out for? Anger? Sad? Disappointed?
 - You should have this conversation with yourself and if the answer is I am not happy or I don’t know how to feel most alive – you should have this conversation with someone else.
- There are so many resources that can be accessed with and without insurance.
- Careful about your choice of words that are dehumanizing. Decide as a team on “what are the words we are casually using that we shouldn’t be” and destigmatize the environment. It’s your obligation as a leader to remove those words.
- NARCAN® – is a mist for reversing the effects of opioids. The kits are free and can save someone’s life. <https://www.narcan.com/>
- Have a “go-to” person on your team. This is the individual who is balanced...there are people who internalize (this last part does not go with the rest of the sentence)
- Use a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing feeling very little anxiety and 10 extreme anxiety. Each day, it’s important to make a mental note of how you feel. It is an important step in creating a “mindful kitchen.” Errol shared a study where participants who simply changed their breathing where able to bring their anxiety level from an 8 to a 6.
- “Mindful kitchen” – everyone here is good at what they do...what are the things I need to do? Look up and make eye contact...humanize. Treat your staff like you treat your customers. Take care of my inside folks as well as my outside and bring those together. Often chefs focus so intently on the dish they are plating-give that same focus to someone when they speak to you.
- A great resource is SAMHSA <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline> Has lots of info on where to find help and treatment including where to find Detox centers. Alcohol detox can take 5 days. Cocaine usually out of the system in 24 hours but often taken with alcohol so important to keep that in mind.