

Workforce Well-being: Multilevel Strategies to Mitigate Burnout and Promote Retention



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EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Why Does It Matter?



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What are the biggest challenges to workforce well-being that you are seeing among your health center staff?



UNDERSTANDING BURNOUT



Occupational phenomenon, not a medical condition



Chronic workplace stress that is not well-managed



Fatigue, exhaustion



Negative feelings towards job, cynicism, mental distance from work



Reduced professional efficacy, feeling a lack of accomplishment

CAUSES OF BURNOUT

- Chronic Stress
- Excessive Workload
- Lack of Autonomy
- Insufficient Recognition
- Inadequate Support



*Burnout is a workplace and systems phenomenon.
Organizational change is needed to combat burnout.*

STAGES OF BURNOUT



STAGE 1: EXHAUSTION



- **Physical** – Stiff neck, sore back, strained muscles, constant headaches, persistent colds, and chronic aches and pains
- **Psychological** – Difficulty sleeping, obsessive worry, ruminating about work, increased use of alcohol or drugs, minor depression or anxiety (not at the level of a mental health diagnosis, unless symptoms persist for months or years)
- **Social** – Difficulty showing up in relationships
 - **Personal** – A lack of desire to connect with friends and family in meaningful ways and less patience for others
 - **Professional** – Difficulty empathizing and being present with patients and coworkers, especially those speaking about their pain or experiences
- It is helpful to take some time off from work and engage in enjoyable activities to find a path back to wellness



STAGE 2: SHAME, DOUBT, & GUILT



- **Shame, doubt, and guilt are psychological reactions** when someone's performance falls below their expectations
- Realizing that exhaustion is decreasing one's quality of work may lead to feelings of doubt
- Guilt usually accompanies doubt and turns into shame over time
- Exhaustion usually leads to working longer hours
 - Working longer hours does not mean more gets done (often, the opposite is true)
 - Exhaustion from the long hours further decreases energy
- Talking to an empathetic coworker, supervisor, or friend to process guilt and doubt may help
- Mental health therapy can help resolve shame
- Two or more weeks of time off may be needed to recover from exhaustion and regain mental well-being



STAGE 3: CYNICISM & CALLOUSNESS



- **Cynicism and callousness are natural reactions to continuous experiences of exhaustion and shame**
- The first two stages of burnout are emotional reactions to holding too much stress
- Cynicism and callousness become traits that transcend the work environment
- In this stage, individuals experience withdrawing empathy
 - Caring may dissolve into a cynical view of work and the world
- People in this stage often experience unhealthy levels of anxiety
 - Anxiety may lead to disrespecting patients and coworkers
- Usually, mental health services and considerable time away from work are needed
- It is critical to seek a path to wellness to avoid progressing to the crisis stage
 - The path back to wellness will take time and considerable effort



STAGE 4: CRISIS



- **People in the crisis stage are actively experiencing distress from work**
- Elevated levels of distress and allostatic overload over long periods hinder the ability to function personally or professionally
- Isolation from coworkers, family, and friends occurs
 - It is rare for a coworker to maintain a healthy working relationship with someone in so much pain
 - Distress transcends the work environment and prevents an individual from being a present partner, friend, parent, or community member
- Divorce, job loss, and other extreme relational issues often happen
- Some may use drugs or alcohol as a short-term escape from stress
 - Substance use disorder (SUD) may lead to a range of other personal and professional issues
- Mental health support/intervention is often needed, as well as substantial time off from work



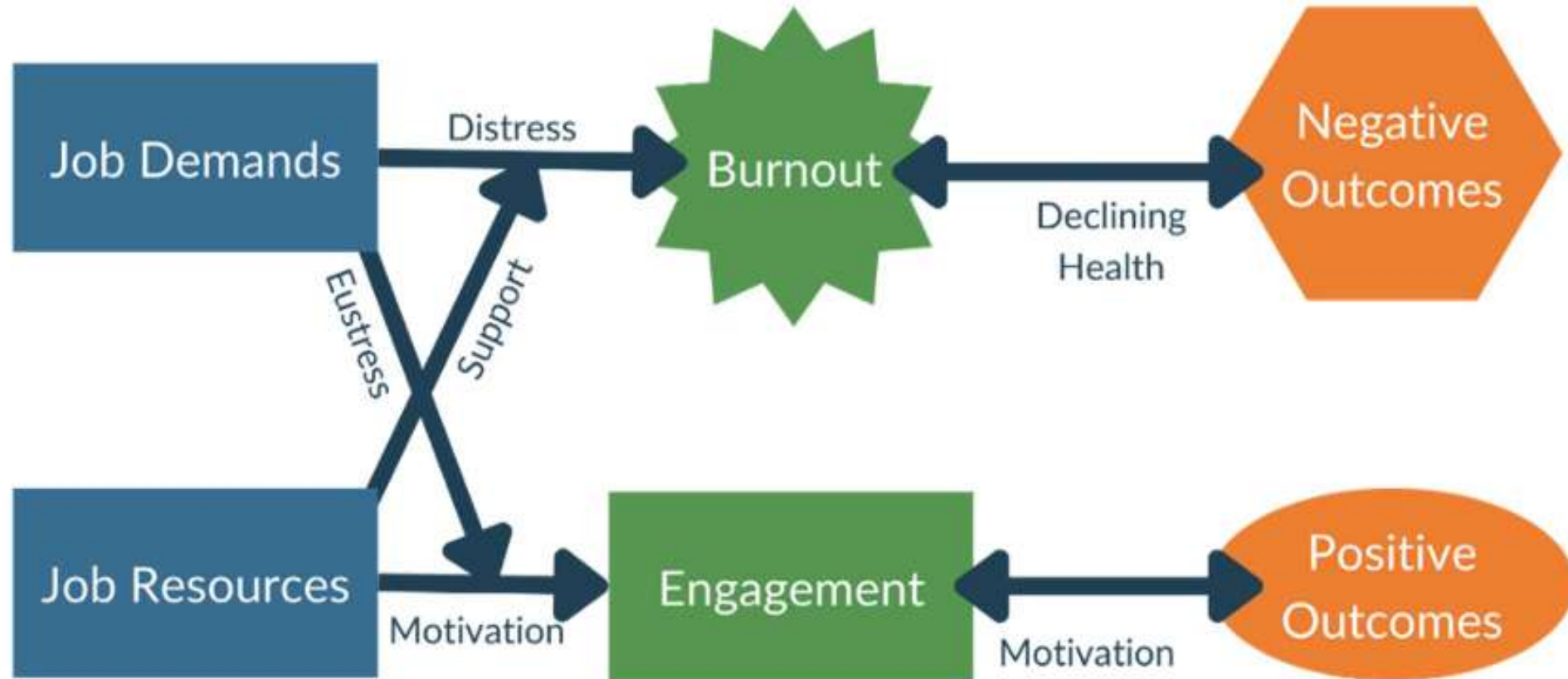
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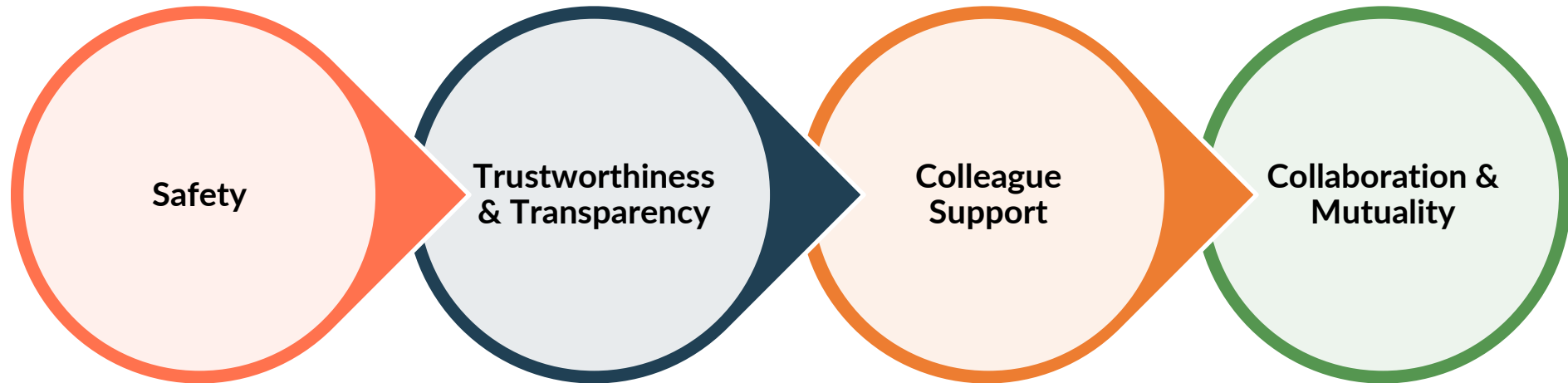
What strategies does
your health center
use to identify and
mitigate burnout
among staff?



JOB DEMAND & RESOURCE MODEL



GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT WELL-BEING



WHAT IS WORKFORCE WELL-BEING?



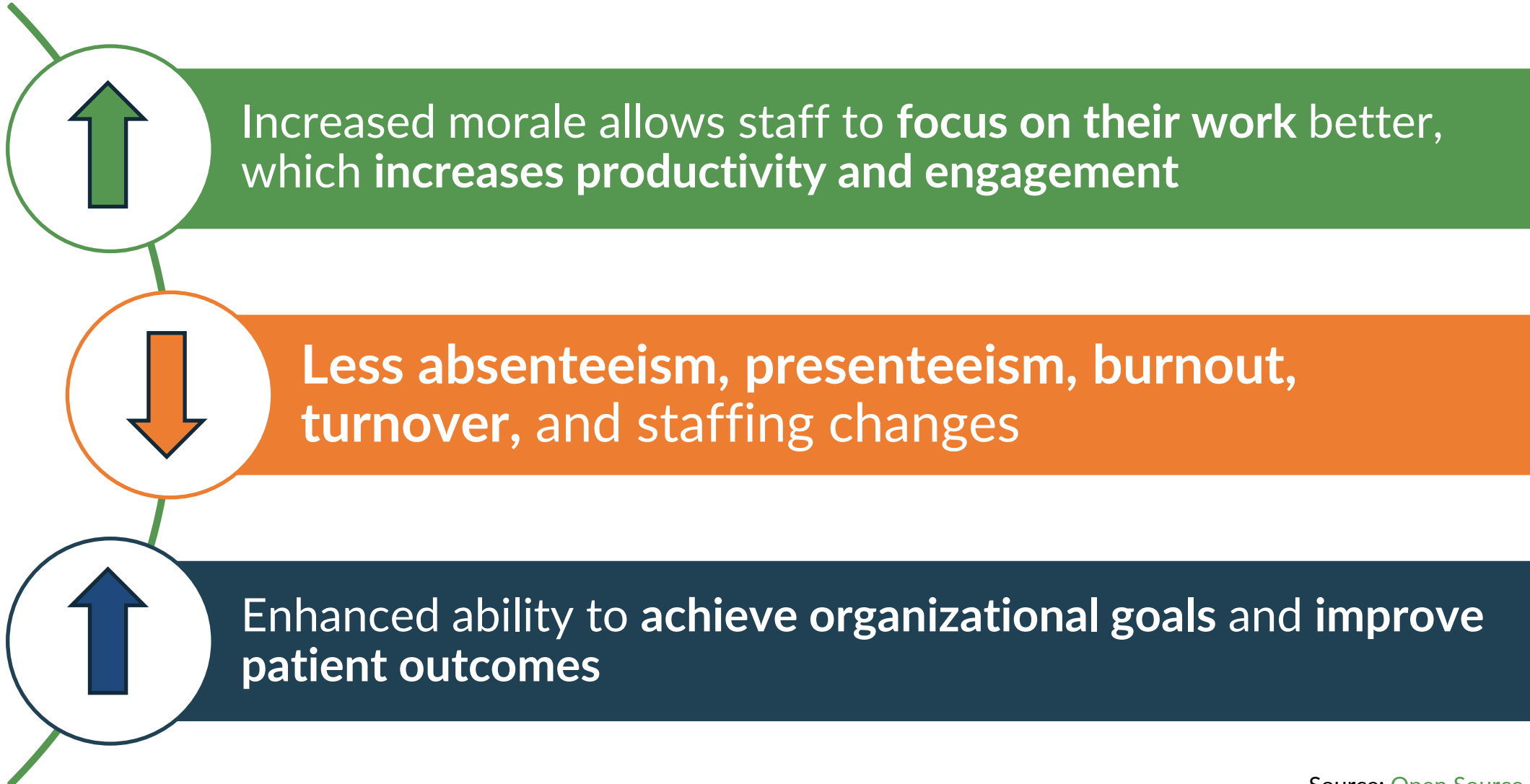
There is no one solution to keep every employee and team member well and happy.

What is important is offering a variety of services and making it easy for employees to use the offerings that will *benefit them the most*.

Build norms around utilizing these services regularly!



WHY INVEST IN WORKFORCE WELL-BEING?



WORKFORCE WELL-BEING

Pillars of Wellness



Physical

Emotional

Financial

Communication

HOW TO INVEST IN WORKFORCE WELLNESS



PHYSICAL

- Offer free **wellness screenings** and health **risk assessments**
- Host speakers and training opportunities (utilize your own staff if they are interested)
- Host a **learning session** with your health insurance provider (especially around open enrollment)
- Have flyers, posters, TV monitor announcements, intranet articles about seasonal wellness topics (can inspire and remind your team to stay active and safe)
- Onsite gym or discount to local fitness centers
- Schedule walking meetings when possible or just **offer space/time** to get moving

HOW TO INVEST IN WORKFORCE WELLNESS



EMOTIONAL

- Put **work-life balance** programs into place
- Offer flexible work schedules and hybrid work when possible
- Consider intentionally crafted benefits and leave packages that are responsive to employee needs
- Provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Work to **encourage mental health support** and offer emotional wellness tips and strategies visibly
- Be mindful of capacities – don't **demand overtime work** in a high-pressure environment

HOW TO INVEST IN WORKFORCE WELLNESS



FINANCIAL

- Provide **financial literacy classes**
- Host speakers and training opportunities for employees
- Offer solutions to ease your employee's financial stress
- Hold annual workshops for retirement planning help and setting long-term financial goals
- Pay employees a **thriving wage**

HOW TO INVEST IN WORKFORCE WELLNESS



COMMUNICATION

- What you say and what you do matters
- How you say it and the actions you take matter
- When and where you say it matters
- Practice **multi-directional communication** that is clear, concise, direct, and mindful
 - Create a dialogue
 - Don't be dismissive
 - Be open – listen, learn, adapt
- Take a **strengths-based perspective**
- Appreciation goes a long way!

Leadership needs to
reflect the
organization's values in
its day-to-day actions

Alignment of a health
center's mission with
the beliefs and values
of its workforce is
critical



ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING PLAN

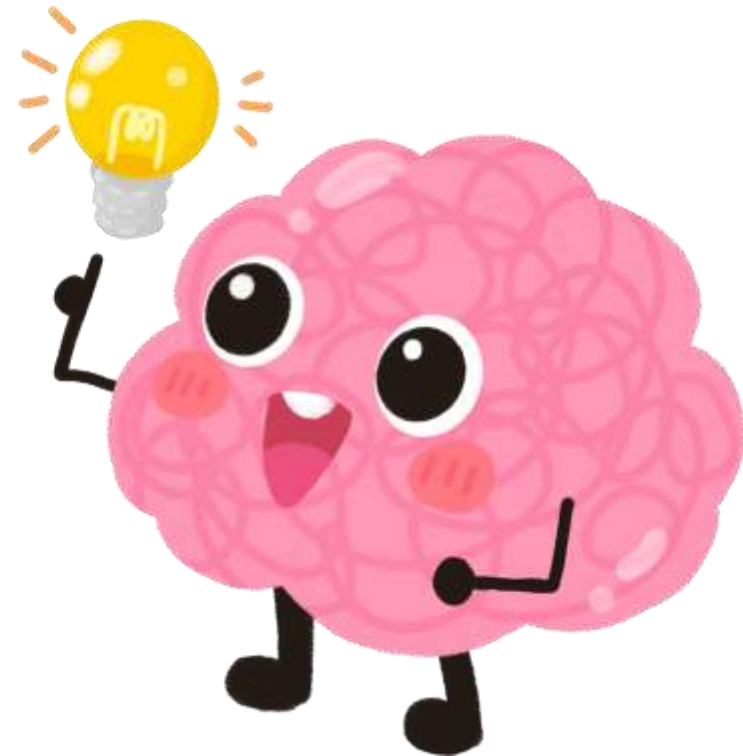


WORKFORCE WELL-BEING

Strategies & Ideas



- Paid time off (PTO) including benefits such as bereavement and parental leave
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Health benefits including wellness programs and mental health coverage
- Compensation and benefits structures
- Financial management benefits
- Design and usage of physical spaces
- Communication structures



BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE

Define the Value of Retention with Data



Turnover is **EXPENSIVE!**

*Calculate your health center's turnover costs by using the [STAR² Center Financial Assessment Tool](#)

Therefore, use data to make a business case for well-being:

- What's the actual cost of turnover?
- What's the cost of a provider vacancy?
- How much does it cost to recruit?
- How much money is your organization losing to these workforce issues?
- How can you better invest money to retain staff and minimize losses?

QUESTIONS



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