



Easing Burnout for Healthcare Workers

3 WAYS TO MITIGATE EMPLOYEE BURNOUT
AND IMPROVE THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE





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It's difficult to relax and try to turn yourself off when you've spent the entire shift bottling up so many emotions. ... I try not to bring a lot of baggage home, but it's difficult when this is all you see.

JEN MILLER

Critical Care Nurse Practitioner in the New York
Hospital System



The global pandemic did not create feelings of burnout amidst the nursing workforce. It exposed and exacerbated them. Even before the pandemic, nursing shortages were far too common in the U.S. According to the 2019 National Nursing Engagement Report: “15.6 of all nurses reported feelings of burnout, with the percentage rising to 41% of ‘unengaged’ nurses.” Still, 50% of nurses who experienced burnout had no plans to leave their organization — pointing, the report continued, “to the importance of supporting and meeting nurses where they are at in the workforce.”

Due to unsolved staffing shortages, nurses in many intensive care units today are caring for five patients at a time, more than twice their normal workload.

More than ever, it’s up to organizations and their leaders to create a more human workplace so healthcare employees can provide the best care possible – for both their patients and themselves.

Here are three ways to help minimize employee burnout.





People who work in healthcare don't go looking for praise, but it really helps when they receive it. Through recognition, they can refill their wells so they can come in the next day and do it all again.

JENNIFER FAULKNER
Vice President, Team Member
Experience, Diversity
& Inclusion and Talent
Management, Baystate Health

ONE:

Recognize the good, often.

In the Spring 2021 Future of Work in Nursing survey, 22% of the nursing workforce reported they may leave their role providing direct care in the next year. The uncertainty of the job market is making it even more important for organizations to retain the employees they have.

Recognizing employees for the work they do is proven to increase engagement, satisfaction, and productivity in the workplace. For healthcare organizations struggling to minimize burnout and maintain productivity in times of crisis, authentic appreciation may be a solution.

At Baystate Health, a not-for-profit, integrated healthcare system serving over 800,000 people throughout Western New England, the power of recognition can be seen firsthand.

For nurses receiving three or more recognition moments, there was a turnover rate 7x less than those receiving no recognition. And for physicians receiving three or more recognition moments, a 6% turnover rate dropped to zero in just one year.

While there are countless reasons to recognize these front-line workers for the care they provide, here are three examples of situations worthy of recognition:

- **Getting through a particularly strenuous shift**
- **Having a difficult conversation with a patient's family**
- **Going out of their way to help a colleague in need**



70%

Managers account for at least 70% of variance in employee engagement scores. During COVID-19, managers received an average 65/100 score from their employees for how well they boosted motivation and engagement.

TWO:

Make time to listen.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality defines burnout as “a long-term stress reaction marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of sense of personal accomplishment.”

So, it’s no surprise that when burnout hits, employees often feel alone, likely leading them into a spiral of disengagement and exhaustion. To prevent this, managers should conduct frequent check-ins with their employees to create a sense of trust, connection, and belonging.

The good news? According to Gallup:

- Only 11% of healthcare workers say they have not touched base with their manager one-on-one during the pandemic.
- Most have checked in weekly (37%) or monthly (31%), and some check in daily (22%).

Healthcare moves quickly, but weekly, even daily check-ins give employees the chance to slow down, ask questions, raise concerns, and most importantly, feel heard. Rather than facing burnout alone, frequent check-ins ensure employees that they have the support and guidance they need.

Three questions to use to start an authentic dialogue:

- **What can I do to help you do your best?**
- **What conversations do we need to be having to get through this? What am I missing?**
- **What are ways that you think you could help that we might not know about?**



[The] physical, mental, and emotional health of our employees has to be at the core of everything we do. If they're not taken care of, they cannot take care of others.

KRISTIN MORALES-LEMIEUX
SVP and CHRO,
Baystate Health

THREE:

Embrace the whole human.

Employee safety is more than just providing the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).

While physical safety is extremely important for healthcare workers, the mental health challenges employees are experiencing right now are contributing heavily to burnout.

We are all human, yet when healthcare professionals spend their days providing selfless care for others, it's easy for them to forget to care for their own needs. This emotional toll can be extremely draining, so healthcare organizations should do everything possible to embrace and support their humans.

Here are three ways organizations can provide support to their employees:

- **Conduct pulse surveys to gauge the well-being of the team.**
- **Offer mental health support, such as on-site counseling, meditation exercises, and employee resource groups.**
- **Provide guaranteed sick time for both physical and mental health needs.**

Forward-thinking leaders know:

Now is the time to think about what we've learned during the pandemic and consider how to apply it in the future to mitigate burnout and support healthcare professionals. Our Social Recognition® and Continuous Performance Development platforms help improve engagement, satisfaction, and productivity.



**Reduce burnout with help from the
Workhuman Cloud®. Get started now.**

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