Happy Staff, Happy Residents and Patients: Is there a Correlation?

Presented by:

Sherry Thomas, BS, RN, QCP, IPCO
Alisa Tag, MS ACC/EDU CADDCT CD

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UNDERSTANDING THE LINK
BETWEEN STAFF
HAPPINESS/ENGAGEMENT
AND CARE QUALITY

Objectives:

- Understand employee well-being/happiness and engagement

- Understand the correlation between staff happiness and resident care

- Utilize strategies to enhance staff well-being and resident care

- Implementing a positive work environment

- Measuring the impact on patient satisfaction

Understanding Employee Well-Being

Threats to Employee Happiness and Engagement

- Aging population with increasingly hectic lifestyles and several years of working through a pandemic means employees have too much emotionally and physically on their plates
  - o Exhausted
  - o Cynical
  - o Overwhelmed
- Triple Threats: Burnout, Disengagement and Low Morale
  - o Long hours, stress and constant change
  - o Effects of burnout can be disastrous
  - o Unhappy employees cost the industry billions of dollars each year in lost productivity

Know the Signs and What to Look Out For

- Increased absenteeism or tardiness

- Decreased productivity

- More accidents or errors

- Increased health complaints

- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

- Memory Problems

- Withdrawal from work activities

Know the Signs and What to Look Out For (cont'd)

- Chronic fatigue or exhaustion

- Isolation from co-workers

- Moodiness or irritability

Definition and Components of Well-Being

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a critical component of employee well-being, impacting their morale and productivity at work.

Work-Life Balance

Achieving a healthy work-life balance is essential for employee well-being, ensuring time for personal and family life.
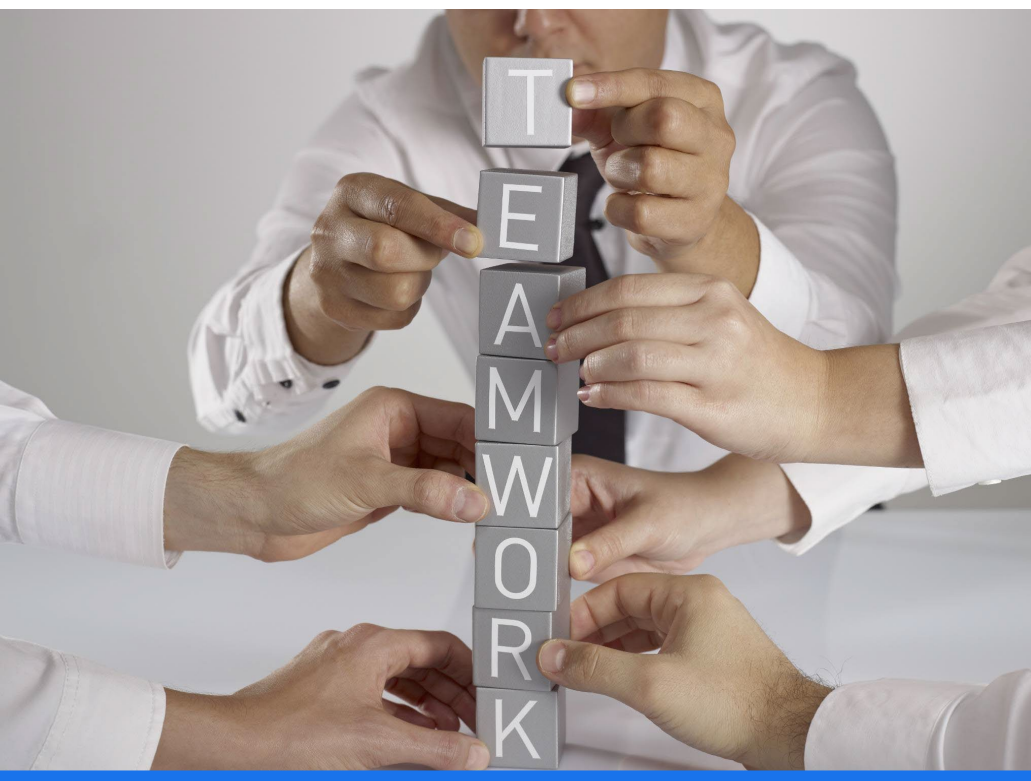
Health and Wellness

Physical health and wellness significantly contribute to an employee's overall well-being and effectiveness in the workplace.

Emotional Security

Emotional security in the workplace fosters trust and open communication, vital for employee well-being and satisfaction.

Factors Affecting Staff Happiness

Workload Management

Balancing workload is crucial for maintaining staff happiness and preventing burnout among employees.

Management Support

Support from management fosters a sense of belonging and security, significantly contributing to staff happiness.

Recognition and Rewards

Recognizing achievements and rewarding efforts boosts morale and enhances overall job satisfaction.

Workplace Relationships

Strong workplace relationships promote collaboration and communication, which are essential for a happy work environment.

The Role of Workplace Culture

Impact on Employee Well-Being

A positive workplace culture fosters employee well-being, leading to higher morale and job satisfaction.

Promoting Respect and Inclusiveness

Cultivating respect and inclusiveness in the workplace enhances team collaboration and strengthens relationships among colleagues.

Improvement in Patient Care

An inclusive and supportive culture can lead to better job performance, which ultimately improves patient care quality.

Why Improve the Patient Experience?

✓ Forces Driving the Need to Improve

- Public reporting of survey scores in some instances

- Various initiatives to build measures of the patient experience into performance-based compensation systems/value-based systems

- Board certification and licensing

- Practice recognition program

- Growing demand among patients for an enhanced service experience and greater participation in their health care placing further pressure on health care systems to become more patient-centered

Strategies to Enhance Staff Well-Being

Create a healthier, happier workplace

✓ Understand the root cause

- o Unmanageable workloads, lack of control over one's work and insufficient support from leaders
- o Feeling undervalued or unsupported
- o Poor working environment
- o Feeling like one's contributions not making a difference

Prevention Strategies

✓ Create a culture of wellness where employees feel supported and valued

✓ Assess workloads and make sure they are reasonable and manageable

✓ Give caregivers a sense of control over their work

✓ Provide employees with regular feedback

✓ Encourage staff to take breaks

✓ Offer opportunities for growth and development

✓ Ensure adequate resources and training

✓ Promote health work-life balance
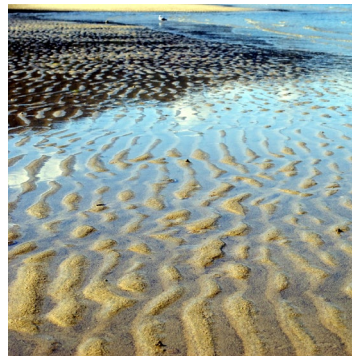
Work-Life Balance Initiatives

Flexible Schedules

Implementing flexible schedules allows employees to manage their time effectively, leading to improved job satisfaction and productivity.

Remote Work Options

Offering remote work options enables employees to work from home, reducing commuting stress and enhancing work-life balance.
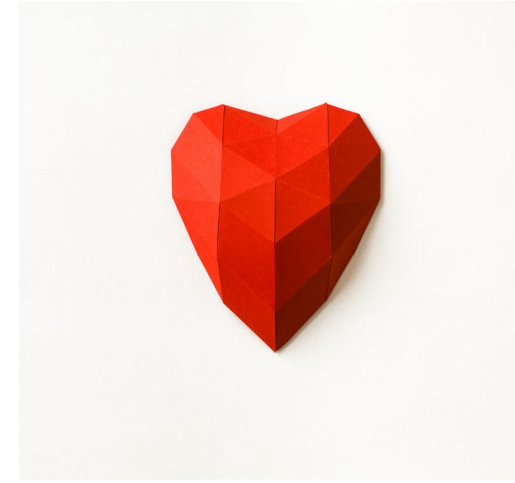

Adequate Time Off

Providing adequate time off supports employee well-being, allowing them to recharge and return to work more focused and engaged.

Correlation Between Staff Happiness and Patient Care

What's Love Got to Do With It?

✔ 1955 article in *New England Journal of Medicine* posed the question

✔ Concept analysis of love in nursing described it as "the combination of nursing care with a sense of responsibility, benevolence, attention and concern, respect, and understanding of others as a human being

✔ Positively influences employees' experiences but also patient outcomes and satisfaction

✔ Healthcare has been slower to embrace customer love to this extent than some other industries

✔ Experience suggests that customers and employees who feel loved are more satisfied and loyal and loyal customers and employees who reinforce one another, create a virtuous cycle that benefits everyone

Studies and Evidence on the Correlation

Link Between Happiness and Care

Research indicates a strong correlation between staff happiness and the quality of patient care provided.

Impact of Satisfied Employees

Satisfied employees are more likely to provide exceptional care, improving patient outcomes significantly.

"Nursing Home Employee, Resident Satisfaction & Resident Care Outcomes"

✓ Conducted by three researchers from University of Massachusetts

✓ Hypothesis – caregivers' work environment is a fundamentally important predictor of the resident experience as measured by:

- Incidence of falls

- Pressure injuries

- Weight loss

- Resident satisfaction surveys

✓ Results supported hypotheses: employee satisfaction inversely associated with residents' risk of adverse outcomes and found positive associations between employees' overall satisfaction with their work environment and nursing home residents' overall satisfaction with their nursing home experience

"Nursing Home Employee, Resident Satisfaction & Resident Care Outcomes"

✓ Separately, high turnover among nursing assistants predicted higher odds of pressure injuries, pain and UTIs in a nationally representative sample of nursing homes

✓ In other words, turnover has been independently associated with both predictor and outcome and its potential mediation effect should be formally investigated in future research

✓ If employee dissatisfaction is indeed a major impetus behind high turnover, and consequently, a significant contributor to diminished quality of care, then nursing homes that aspire to higher standards must make their employees' needs a priority

Which Adjustments to Work Environment Most Effectively Improve Employee Well-Being?

✓ Domain most strongly associated with employee job stress, and staff-to-staff communication most strongly associated with resident satisfaction with quality of care

- Another variable was satisfaction with pay but may have a less direct role in regard to resident care

✓ Taken together, these results suggest nursing home residents appear to be more satisfied when their caregivers are compensated fairly, supported by their managers, provided with stress assistance and working in an environment that values communication

✓ At a time when rising health-care costs and stagnant reimbursement rates place real constraints on increasing wages, a supportive work environment may become even more crucial to employee retention and increased quality of care

Limitations of the Study

✓ Work environment is measured only through elements of employee satisfaction

✓ Other issues such as physical strain from job tasks, worker participation in shift scheduling or other decision-making, and the degree to which employees' knowledge is respected by supervisors are not measured

✓ Any of these job features might affect resident outcomes, therefore future studies should consider adding data collected with instruments that measure these aspects of the job

✓ Conclusion of study: Relationship between the well-being of health care workers and that of patients or residents has been frequently posited, but still infrequently studied

✓ Present results add to the growing body of evidence that the environment of care is also a work environment and that both nursing home workers and residents would benefit from improvements in that work environment

Does Leadership Style Matter?

✓ Based on doctoral dissertation study by Richard Lazarus Nwaorgau (2021) this project found:

- Leadership plays a role in influencing an environment that can encourage positive outcomes and can instill nursing staff empowerment that can support job satisfaction, retention, and improve patient health outcomes

- Evidence supports the utilization of a transformational and/or transactional leadership style (transformational leadership styles enhance skills that improve job satisfaction and retention of nursing staff and ensures efficient patient care delivery

- When combined, transformational and transactional leadership styles lead to improved job satisfaction, nurse retention, and improved patient care outcomes

- Findings suggested both leadership styles should be considered for use among nursing leaders and managers to install commitment and structural empowerment in healthcare environments

The Health Care Challenge

In the U.S. healthcare system, virtuous cycle is broken

- Staff work long hours under significant pressure

- At the same time, they often face cumbersome systems with high administrative burden, with the dehumanizing effect of stealing time and energy from caregiving, contributing to fatigue and burnout

- In parallel, patients have come to expect the convenience, ease, and personalization of everyday service experiences (to get the healthcare they need, they often face long wait times, unanswered questions, and overly complex, redundant processes

- Encounter burned-out staff who often feel unequipped or unempowered to fulfill their mission of delivering high-quality care and experiences

The Health Care Challenge (cont'd)

- Patient's pain points regularly go unaddressed – Bain survey found that 78% of nurses report that their organizations solicit patients' feedback through their care journey, yet only 53% say that the feedback system in place helps solve recurring pain points for patient

- In the U.S., return rates for satisfaction surveys are, on average, around 30%, leaving many voices unheard

- Most healthcare system leaders appreciate the importance of the patient experience and want to do "right" by their employees – given industry complexities, they've struggled to make meaningful progress

Consequences of missing the mark

- Recent meta-analysis found that staff engagement has a positive correlation to patient safety outcomes

- Research shows that on average, health care facilities with higher nurse burnout scores have higher odds of patient mortality as well as prolonged lengths of stay

How Can Providers Enrich Employee and Patient Lives with Love?

A culture of care: Beyond the Basics

What does a better employee experience aligned to a mission of a better patient experience look like?

o   Four critical areas of employee advocacy, leading to a halo effect that extends to patients

- o   **Congruence with values**: Staff who are proud of their organization's mission of enriching patient lives and who see how their work fits into that mission are far more satisfied with their employers and jobs. Today, around a quarter of U.S. clinicians are considering switching careers primarily because of burnout (those who aren't – around 55% report their biggest reason for staying is their positive impact

- o   **Empowerment:** Provide staff with the necessary autonomy, tools and processes to do right by patients

- o   **Recognition and gratitude**: Recognition and gratitude go a long way in making employees feel valued and reinforce efforts to provide an exceptional experience (distribute patient feedback so staff can directly hear stories of their own impact and receive recognition accordingly

- o   **Professional and personal growth:** Almost 60% of clinicians say they don't get the coaching and mentorship they need (Mayo Clinic study – For each 1-point increase in a supervisor's leadership score, a 3.3% decrease in the likelihood of employee burnout and 9% increase in likelihood of employee satisfaction)

Operations and Processes That Support Loving Care

- **Listen to and assess emotions, efforts and experiences:** Pioneering organizations using unstructured and unsolicited data – no survey required. AI tools can collect information on experiences real time, in multiple languages

- **Explore relationships in the data:** Loving organizations don't look at the employee experience and the patient experience as distinct data sets – they understand the relationship between the two and explore the links between data and important clinical, operational and financial metrics

- **Move from measurement to actions that demonstrate love:** Empower employees to act on feedback and improve patients' experiences. Doesn't feel "loving" to constantly ask depleted employees to do more – important to delineate which feedback needs to be directly addressed at the human level and which requires deeper change
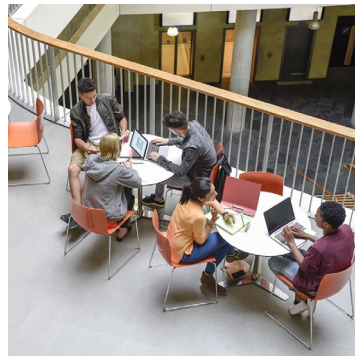
Building Supportive Leadership

Active Listening

This emphasizes the importance of leaders actively listening to their staff to foster trust and understanding.

Constructive Feedback

Providing constructive feedback is essential for employee growth and maintaining a positive atmosphere.

Open Communication

Promoting open communication encourages transparency and collaboration within the team.

Encouraging Teamwork and Collaboration

Enhancing Employee Morale

Teamwork and collaboration significantly boost employee morale, leading to a more motivated workforce.

Stronger Relationships

Collaborative efforts foster stronger relationships among staff, enhancing communication and trust within the team.

Improved Patient Care

A collaborative atmosphere directly contributes to improved patient care and better outcomes in healthcare settings.

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Workplace

Valued Employees

Creating a culture where employees feel valued is crucial for their motivation and productivity. Inclusivity fosters a sense of belonging.

Promoting Well-being

A safe workplace promotes mental and emotional well-being, which is essential for a healthy work environment. Employees thrive when they feel secure.

Encouraging Engagement

An inclusive culture encourages staff engagement and collaboration, leading to innovative ideas and successful outcomes for the organization.

Mental Health Support and Resources

Importance of Mental Health

Mental health is essential for overall well-being and productivity, especially in the workplace. Supporting mental health helps employees feel valued.

Counseling Services

Access to counseling services allows employees to address personal challenges and provides a safe space for expressing feelings and concerns.

Wellness Programs

Wellness programs promote healthy lifestyle choices, reduce stress, and improve overall mental health, leading to a happier workplace.

Professional Development and Recognition

Benefits of Professional Development

Investing in professional development enhances employee skills and knowledge, driving growth and performance within the organization.

Importance of Recognition

Recognizing staff contributions boosts morale and fosters a sense of belonging, leading to higher employee satisfaction.

Creating a Positive Culture

A culture of appreciation cultivates motivation and loyalty among employees, resulting in a more engaged workforce.

Managerial Support, Better Communication, and Stress Assistance

✓ What do these look like in practice?

- According to this study, nursing assistants reported that lack of time and staff contributed to a rushed and stressful workplace climate which in turn increased resident wait times for care and reduced one-on-one time with each individual resident

- Failure of the administration to respect the experience and expertise of nursing aides was believed to increase the likelihood that treatment errors could occur as the opinions of the primary caregivers were frequently ignored

- In such a situation, "stress assistance" could take the form of implementing policies that ensure adequate, consistent staffing and good communication between the professionals on duty

- "Managerial support" might mean cultivating a greater respect for the input of nursing aides, actively soliciting their opinion and allowing them greater decision-making autonomy in certain aspects of day-to-day resident care

- Participatory teams could be created, in which nursing assistants, nurses and doctors jointly decide on procedures for resident care

Measuring the Impact on Patient Satisfaction

Methods for Assessing Patient Satisfaction

Surveys

Surveys are a common method for gathering quantitative data on patient satisfaction and experiences.

Feedback Forms

Feedback forms allow patients to provide their insights and comments regarding their healthcare experience.

Direct Interviews

Direct interviews provide qualitative data and in-depth understanding of patient satisfaction and individual experiences.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Tracking Patient Satisfaction

Establishing KPIs helps organizations monitor patient satisfaction levels effectively, allowing for targeted improvements.

Identifying Improvement Areas

KPIs can highlight specific areas where patient care and services need enhancement, guiding organizational strategies.

Quality Metrics

Service quality metrics are essential KPIs that measure the effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare services.

# Continuous Improvement Processes

Adaptation Based on Feedback

Organizations can thrive by leveraging patient feedback and employee insights to enhance their services and workflows.

Employee Engagement

Involving employees in continuous improvement processes fosters a culture of engagement, leading to better service delivery and staff satisfaction.

Patient Satisfaction

Continuous improvement processes are crucial for maintaining high levels of patient satisfaction through responsive and quality care.
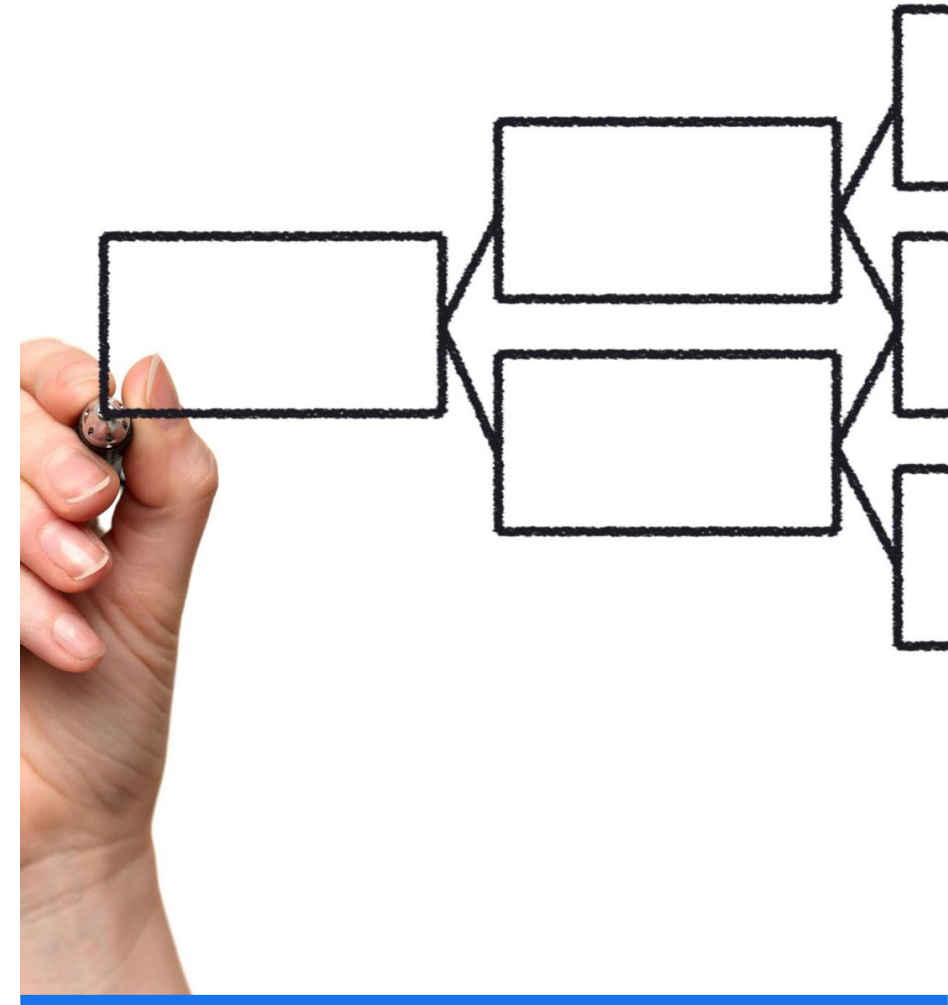
Conclusion

Employee Well-Being

Enhancing employee well-being is crucial for fostering a positive work environment in healthcare settings.

Improving Patient Care

Prioritizing staff happiness leads to improved patient care and satisfaction, benefiting the entire healthcare system.

Healthier Work Environment

Creating a healthier work environment is essential for the well-being of both employees and patients in healthcare organizations.

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