

Supporting Resilience in Healthcare Workers

Executive Summary

Resilience under stress—a coping skill that prevents burnout in demanding circumstances—is one of the most valuable attributes that an individual can have and one that is critically important for healthcare organizations to cultivate and safeguard among their providers and other staff members. Research confirms that physicians and other healthcare workers experience high levels of work-related distress. The findings identify the various sources of these challenges for the healthcare workforce and the costly impact on institutions, patients, and medical staff members themselves.

With the new focus on protecting against burnout and other behavioral-health issues seen widely among the healthcare workforce, new strategies for protecting and maintaining resilience have emerged. They involve organizational change as well as the provision of resources and tools to support individual providers and their coworkers. Such strategies permit institutions to make a plan that involves the input of the full range of their staff, create a shift in culture toward employee support, and generate activities to measure, acknowledge, and reward healthful approaches to personal well-being.

Resilience-centered efforts help to build better decision making, promote more effective habits, and protect personal health—all of which improve safety, collective morale, quality, and outcomes.

Action Recommendations

- Acknowledge the challenges and realities of job stress and resilience, and promote efforts to address them.
- Seek feedback regarding perceptions of staff resilience as well as organizational programs to foster resilience.
- Involve leadership and all staff members at all levels of the resilience initiative.
- Create a plan that allows for flexibility regarding scheduling and workload and for the development of resilience resources for staff.
- Be open to suggested changes to both the perceived and actual culture, particularly as it relates to employee support.
- Recognize good work and regularly celebrate positive values and commitment.
- Assess resilience and set reasonable expectations on a regular basis.

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