

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE FOR A HEALTHY WORKPLACE CLIMATE



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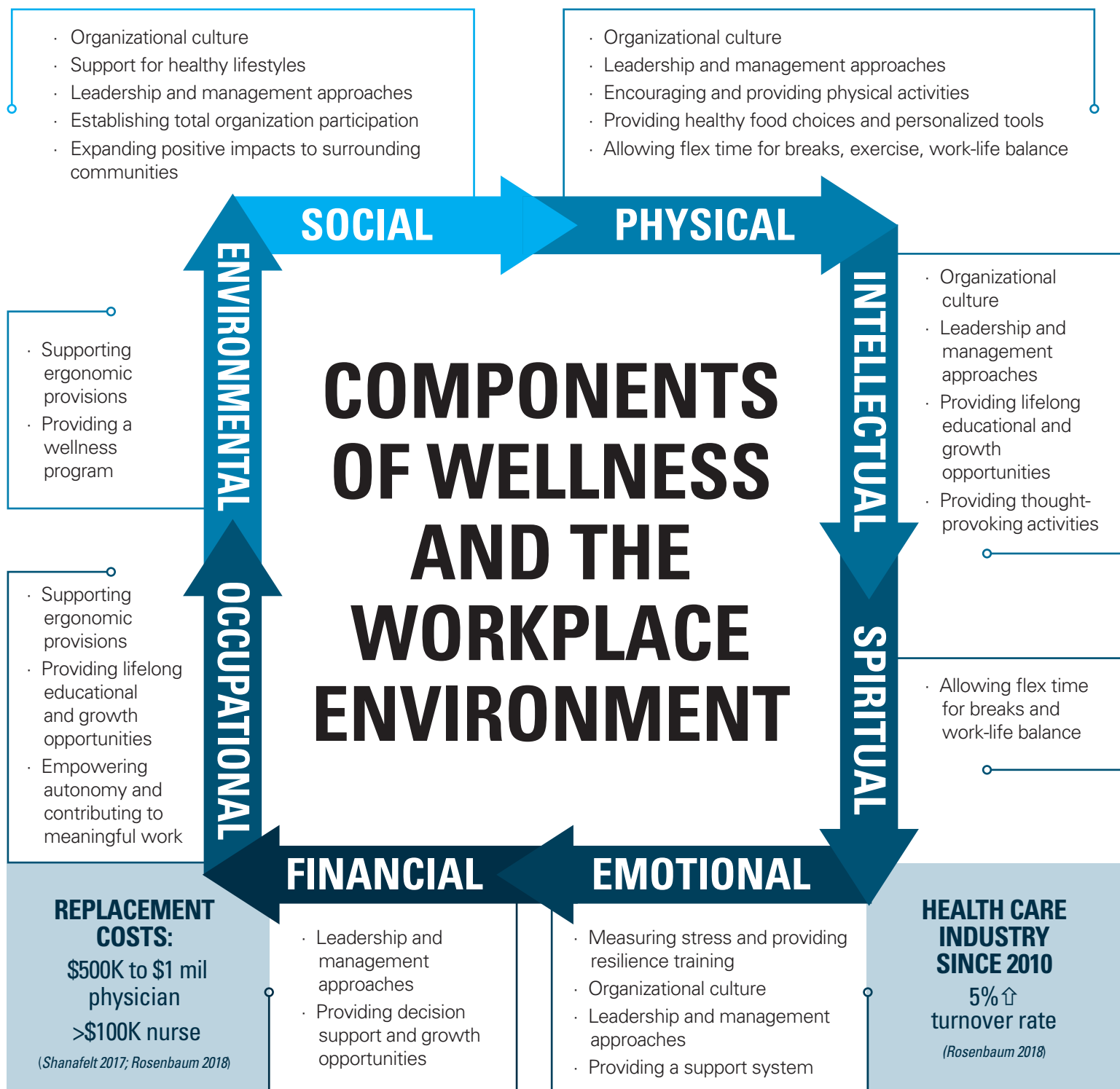
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I. The Interconnected Components of Wellness and the Workplace Environment

The third dimension is defined as a dimension that adds the effect of solidity to a two-dimensional system. Medical professionals are well aware health care is not a two-dimensional system; neither is individual well-being. How do you solidify the dimensions of wellness and a multifaceted health care system?



II. Self-Assessment

Limit the gap between expectations and acceptance to reduce stress. This toolkit assists employers in reaching their organizational wellness goals while boosting the individual with his or her personal goals.

Character Focus Exercise

An honest inventory begins with assessing your personality traits. Take a minute to check the most appropriate box for each. This is not a measureable test but a start to assessing your own personality traits

	NEVER	RARELY	OCCASIONALLY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	N/A
I embrace differences in others.						
I view failure as a teachable moment.						
I remove distractions from my daily routine (e.g., social media, personal emails).						
I listen attentively to staff recommendations and ideas.						
I have difficulty imagining hypothetical situations.						
I come up with innovative ways to manage my workday.						
I am a conversation starter.						
I feel angry when I have to repeat myself to staff.						
I would describe my life experiences as somewhat dull.						
I remain calm under pressure.						

Self-Assessment Exercise

Overload, or overstimulation, refers to the state in which the demands around you exceed your capacity to meet them. The four major factors in overload are (1) time pressures, (2) excessive responsibility or accountability, (3) lack of support, and (4) excessive expectations from you and those around you. Any one or a combination of these factors can result in stress from overload.

Some aspect(s) of your life are placing excessive demands on you. When these demands exceed your ability to comply with them, you experience distress.

Take the self-assessment exercise. Your total number of points on this exercise will help you assess how stressed you are by overload.

Review Your Assessment

- What is your stress level?
- Was it more than you expected?
- What changes might you want to make?

Choose the most appropriate answer. How often do you ...

(a) almost always=4 pts (b) often=3 pts (c) seldom=2 pts
(d) almost never=1 pt

- ___ 1. Find yourself with insufficient time to do things you really enjoy?
- ___ 2. Wish you had more support/assistance?
- ___ 3. Lack sufficient time to complete your work most effectively?
- ___ 4. Have difficulty falling asleep because you have too much on your mind?
- ___ 5. Feel people simply expect too much from you?
- ___ 6. Feel overwhelmed?
- ___ 7. Find yourself becoming forgetful or indecisive because you have too much on your mind?
- ___ 8. Consider yourself to be in a high-pressure situation?
- ___ 9. Feel you have too much responsibility for one person?
- ___ 10. Feel exhausted at the end of the day?

Calculate your total score.

Total = _____

A score of 25-40 indicates a high stress level, one that could be psychologically and physiologically debilitating.

Source: Girdano 1996

III. Practice Healthy Habits and Build a Positive Work Culture

Self-care exercises improve stress management, focus and clarity, and psychological and physical health, and help individuals deal with anxiety, depression, mental health issues, and addiction. How much time did you give yourself to practice a self-care activity? Not enough? Explore your self-care in the exercise below. Find out what areas you can improve upon. **Take care of yourself and boost your mood.**

Invite others to join you.

Place an X in the box next to the activity you are able to practice today and for the rest of the week. Now place a **G** next to five activities you would like to practice in the next month.

EMOTIONAL	PHYSICAL	SPIRITUAL	MENTAL
Receiving words of affirmation	8 hours of sleep	Meditation or praying	20 minutes of reading (not work-related)
Giving words of affirmation	20-minute nap	Attending a religious organization	Strategy games
Joining friends for dinner, outing, or activity	20-minute workout	Yoga	Yoga
Journaling	Yoga	Journaling	Meditation
Spending time with family (e.g., dinner, outing, or activity)	Hydrating and eating nutritional/ healthy food (e.g., vegetables, salads, foods rich in omega3s and fatty acids)	Practicing mindfulness	Journaling, drawing, painting, gardening, budgeting
Calling a friend	Getting a massage	Spending time in nature	Practicing positive self-talk
Blocking out 30 minutes for yourself that isn't considered a lunch break (i.e., setting boundaries)	Listening to music, gardening, singing, dancing	Asking for forgiveness; finding purpose and meaning	Blocking out 30 minutes for yourself that isn't considered a lunch break (i.e., setting boundaries)

Make a list of your G activities. Review the strategies below, and set a goal to achieve in the next month.

Strategies for Self-Care

1. Practice self-compassion and listen to your intuition and your body. Stay hydrated, eat healthy foods, and remember to rest.
2. Simplify your commitments and do things you enjoy by setting boundaries. Give yourself permission to do what you want and what feels good to you. Understand there will always be distractions. Learn to navigate through and around them.
3. Take time to celebrate the little things and encourage support.
4. Find out what renews your self-care. Maintain focus by creating instead of reacting in a negative way. Now, set a goal!

Practice Self-Awareness

With added stressors, self-awareness can become cloudy. Self-awareness is the ability to see oneself in the context of relations, thought, actions, and outcomes. Practice the exercises below to improve your self-awareness and maintain a positive cycle of self-care.

Positive Reframing

Write down two negative phrases you have heard at work.

Example: Does it really matter?

Now reframe each negative phrase as a positive.

Example: My ideas matter, and I have the right to communicate them. My ideas matter and could lead to positive change.

There is power in a pause. Delaying and rephrasing your reactionary responses can improve your positive talk. You can delay your response with a good distraction, for example, by focusing on something visual such as a color or view, or a pleasant sound. The positive distractions can be self-soothing and at the same time improve your communication skills.

Learn to let go and move on from the action or comment that caused the emotion. Vulnerability to negative emotions can lead to an impoverished individual well-being. Knowing where to place stress, shame, grief, and disappointment will improve your emotional competence. You do not have to face these emotions alone, but you do have to practice self-care in order to place them elsewhere. Home in on your skill – whether is to deflect or disengage, or to forge ahead to the next subject matter that is relevant but *not* subjectively relevant. Be accountable to yourself. Your expectations are not always everyone else's. Accept this and move on.

IV. Fusing Workplace Assessments With Positive Influence

How is appreciation demonstrated? The Medical Group Management Association noted the following practices as improving turnover rates:

- Wellness program,
- Fitness center,
- Paid health insurance premiums,
- 401K match, and
- Flex time (in addition to sick, personal, and vacation time).

Conduct an annual climate survey to assess morale and satisfaction. Need help developing a survey? Visit www.texmed.org/WellnessPlugins to learn more.

After assessing the satisfaction and morale of your organization, it is time to tackle the issues. Below is a list of other ways to promote individual well-being and wellness as a collective.

- **What's in your break room?** Stock the break room with healthy snacks (e.g., nuts [cashews], protein bars, fruit).
- **Strengthen your support system.** Organize team-building activities (e.g., lunchtime group activities – board games, weekly huddle with breakfast, Taco Tuesdays, group yoga, meditation, walks). Hold a welcome lunch for new employees.
- **What's on your mind?** Stress is in all facets of life, and building connections helps reduce it. Utilize leadership and key influencers to drive messages and gain participation.
- **Awareness is key.** Use virtual polls to facilitate organizational transparency. Keep physicians in the loop and represented in new policies, and the like.
- **Sleep for optimal energy.** Be more aware of shift-work schedules and reduce interference of circadian rhythms.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT STAFFING

8,760 hours of physician staffing per year
Reliance on locum tenens physicians

Source: MDSyncNet (accessed July 10, 2019)

Streamline Stressful and Time-Consuming Tasks

Turnover is stressful and time-consuming. Is your staff turnover high? The cost to replace a physician is astronomical. Physicians who report less satisfaction with their work also report (Morris 2014):

- Missing work frequently;
- Lower levels of productivity;
- Leaving medicine or retiring early;
- Anxiety;
- Depression;
- Lower self-esteem;
- Chronic fatigue;
- Illegal drug use, problematic alcohol or prescription drug use;



- Sleeping pattern changes;
- Impaired concentration and attention;
- Detachment from patients, colleagues, family, and friends;
- Feelings of isolation; and
- Suicidal ideation.

Craig Deao, consultant for Huron, estimated that “if the average cost of an employee is \$60,000 and an organization loses 20 percent of its 3,000 employees with an average salary of \$45,000, turnover’s hefty price tag tops out at \$27 million.”

In addition, Tait Shanafelt, MD, reported that most academic medical centers “do not recognize that they control many of the factors that drive burnout.” To combat turnover and cost miscalculations, Dr. Shanafelt [has provided a free worksheet to project organizational cost of physician burnout.](#)

SHOULD YOU HAVE AN OPEN DOOR POLICY?

Consider an open door schedule to increase productivity, decrease stress, and prevent fatigue.

Source: Toren 2015

The factors listed above affect everyone in health care. Creating an environment that actively engages all employees proves to cultivate talent, leadership, and personal connection. Setting boundaries such as an open-door schedule instead of an open-door policy reminds others of the similarities between each other and the importance of reducing stress and leading by example.

Most employees work with what they have (i.e., equipment, staff, space, and resources). It is not the available resources that disrupt workflow but the perspective of an individual’s mindset. Although an efficient office design/layout would provide the ability to improve workflow, this may not be an option for everyone. J. Eckleberry-Hunt et al. reported, “A sense of career meaning and accomplishment, along with a lack of distress, are important factors in determining physician happiness. The number of hours a physician works is not related to happiness, but the perceived ability to manage workload was significantly related to happiness.”

An individual’s perspectives can determine:

- Meeting agendas (and how they are run);
- How conflicts are assessed and resolved;
- Hiring practices (e.g., staff training, outsource to a call center, hire more staff); and
- Practice operations.

It is important to gain the perspective of others who may be affected by these tasks when determining how to do them. Acknowledging others in the process improves organizational social culture.

Assessing Workflow

Time management is crucial when taking on a task of this magnitude. For expert assistance, contact Texas Medical Association Practice Consulting at www.texmed.org/Consulting to request a proposal. TMA consultants can help you with the following components:

- Accounts receivable analysis,
- Review of billing/collections processes,
- Patient flow analysis,
- Internal controls review,
- Managed care process analysis,
- Review of medical records systems,
- Review of practice management software,
- Overhead analysis,
- Human resources/personnel issues, and
- Clinical staff operations.

Begin Your Assessment

The chart on page 8 does not define the specific elements of a unique checklist for a specific process. Evaluating the workflow may differ for large groups (hospitals and clinics), small practices, and solo practices. For example, larger groups may need to assess workflow in phases.

Making the wrong appointment can interrupt the workflow schedule for the entire organizational staff. Remember, be inclusive – form a workgroup to observe each other (clinicians and staff) to collect ideas. This is an opportunity to connect. Then hold a brainstorming session (and include a risk assessment, e.g., safety issues, potential violations, and liabilities). Take this time to add in some appreciation and wellness – provide a healthy lunch for the workgroup. Where are potential problems or delays likely to occur in the current process? Below is a list of steps the work group should take to make an accurate assessment.

- Construct a workflow diagram of the existing process.
- Create an existing average patient exam cycle time from check-in to checkout.

- Review each physician's existing appointment templates.
 - Identify patient exam cycle time goal.
 - Design a new appointment template for each physician:
 - » Base it on the new exam cycle time, and
 - » Include potential diagnostic testing time, walk-ins, and emergency visits.
 - Make a list of materials and equipment that will improve efficiency.
 - Provide a risk assessment.
 - Organize a new workflow diagram and share it with the entire organization.
-

V. Favoring Positivity to Fulfill a Lifelong Dedication

It is easy to point out things that cause stress, but it is important to acknowledge that you are not in control of certain aspects of a process, whereas of other aspects you are. Forging through these detractors will help your well-being and improve your performance.

Suspending your thoughts about others is part of adopting a healthy and mature perspective. What happens when you shift your expectations to intentions? Practicing creativity, openness, and receptiveness sets your intentions to empower each individual as a valued organizational contributor.

VI. Plug Into Wellness

The Texas Medical Association is your health and wellness resource outlet. You will find resources regarding well-being, dimensions of meaning in work, burnout, stress, work-life integrations, fatigue, mental/emotional quality of life, and physical quality of life.

Visit www.texmed.org/WellnessPlugins and take advantage of the following free resources:

- Occupational Toolkit;
- Emotional, Spiritual, and Social Toolkit;
- Financial Toolkit;
- Environmental Toolkit; and
- Intellectual and Physical Toolkit.

PROCESS	ASSESSMENT
Call-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the operator know which physician to schedule with? ▪ Is the operator scheduling the right appointment? How often are mistakes made? ▪ How long does it take him/her to schedule an appointment? ▪ Do you need to develop an online scheduling application (or promote an existing one)? ▪ How often does staff train for insurance procedures and updates? ▪ What is the average amount of time spent on explaining the benefits of the patient portal? ▪ Do you use push notifications for on-call physician schedules? Does your EHR system offer this type of feature?
Check-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are your busiest times? ▪ What is the average number of patients waiting to be checked in per morning/afternoon? ▪ How is insurance causing delays? ▪ What are areas of patient confusion?
Waiting room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the average wait time to see a staff member? ▪ Re: logistics – How often are patients confused about where they are going?
Preliminary testing or examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the average preliminary testing and examination time prior to seeing the physician? ▪ What could help the provider meet requirements to gain the maximum benefit? ▪ What could help the provider with meeting the exam criteria to correlate with the type of exam? ▪ How many times has the patient moved? Would it decrease the exam time to have the physician come to the patient?
Physician exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the average number of no-shows and cancellations per morning/afternoon/year? ▪ What type of cases does this physician see (e.g., broad range or limited)? ▪ How many exam rooms are available for the physician? How many handicap-accessible rooms are available per physician? ▪ Are difficult cases divided among physicians? What is the average time spent on difficult cases per physician? ▪ Would the practice, physician, and patient benefit from a scribe? ▪ Does the physician's schedule have room for accepting walk-ins and emergencies?
Hand-offs/Move to check-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the average wait time for additional diagnostic testing? ▪ What is the average wait time for lab tests (patient, physician, and staff) and results? ▪ Would it benefit patients for a staff member to walk them to checkout or towards the exit? ▪ Would it benefit patients if the staff member handed them resources and handouts regarding their exam? How can you promote the use of a patient portal to free up staff time?
Check-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If there were no checkout procedures, would this benefit staff time? Consider web-based portal features and automated reminder calls. ▪ How does this affect the patient? ▪ How can patients access resources and handouts regarding their diagnosis? ▪ Would it benefit the payment process, staff, and physicians' time to go completely paperless? Does your EHR system offer this type of feature?
Follow-up and follow-through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the average patient wait time for lab results? Can the practice save time by posting to a patient portal? ▪ Does the physician have enough time to call patients to relay their results? ▪ How much time does staff spend on various tasks, triage (refill requests/phone calls), physician and provider interruptions?

Other TMA Resources

A list of toolkits, modules, scales, surveys, and inventories: well-being measures, questionnaires, tools, and more

TMA Practice Medical Association Consulting
www.texmed.org/Consulting/

TMA Educational Loans and Scholarships
www.TMALoanFunds.com/

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Texas Medical Association Committee on Physician Health and Wellness

*Providing Health and Wellness Education for
Physicians, Residents and Medical Students*



The **Physician Health and Wellness Committee** is interested in the health and well-being of physicians, patients, and their families. The committee offers education and literature to help medical students, residents, and physicians who may need assistance or know of a peer who needs assistance. Committee-developed resources help hospitals respond to Joint Commission requirements related to physician health.

Physician Assistance

The Physicians Benevolent Fund offers financial assistance through the newly established PBF Wellness Fund. Visit www.texmed.org/hope for details.

Education Programs

The PHW Committee offers continuing medical education courses on a wide range of topics regarding individual health and wellness and how physician well-being affects patients. Physicians, medical students, physician spouses, hospital administrations, and others can benefit from these courses.

Education Team

Live presentations of PHW courses are available at meetings of county medical societies, hospitals, and other entities for a fee plus speaker travel. To ensure speaker availability for scheduled live presentations, please submit individual requests at least two months prior to the scheduled event. Contact TMA's PHW staff at (800) 880-1300, ext. 1608, or phw@texmed.org for information.

The PHW Committee also offers annual training for new and returning team members.

PLUG INTO

Join Us in 2020!

THE PHYSICIAN HEALTH AND WELLNESS EXCHANGE

www.texmed.org/PHWExchange