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ENHANCING WELLNESS  
AND RETENTION  
AMONG  
PSYCHOLOGISTS USING  
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS  
SURVEYS

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the current context and the need for organizational and supervisory actions that enhance clinical employees' perception of support.
2. Understand why a local employee wellness survey is an important tool for VHA psychologists and VHA leaders.
3. Understand how to translate employee feedback into actionable next steps.

# WHY WELLNESS & RETENTION?

- Healthcare Provider Burnout and Turnover:
  - Are at crisis levels.
  - Are systemic challenges that respond to leadership interventions.
  - Are *not* inevitable outcomes of the current global situation.

# WHY VHA PSYCHOLOGISTS?

- VHA Psychologists:
  - Understand human needs for certainty, safety, and organizational support.
  - Have expertise in shaping human centered policies.
  - Ask the right questions, identify critical themes, and take responsive actions.

# WHY LOCAL SURVEYS?

- AES plus local surveys provide:
  - Increased specificity, quality, and applicability of survey feedback.
  - Clear feedback loop between employees and local leadership.
  - Forum for employee priorities to influence local policy development and implementation.

# CASE EXAMPLE

VA Puget Sound Health Care System (VAPSHCS), PCMHI section

- Employee Wellness Survey
  - Assessed PCMHI employees' perception of:
    - Quantitative - Psychological safety, burnout, organizational support, team environment, intent to leave
    - Qualitative - Concerns, strengths, priorities
  - Administered annually – 2015 – 2019, 2022.

# CASE EXAMPLE

- Survey results informed section-wide policy changes:
  - **Flexible and alternative TODs** → more than 70% PCMHI staff on nontraditional tours
  - **Enhanced communication between service lines** → section-wide service line agreement
  - **Increased focus on safety of employees at rural CBOCs** → security on site, doors installed between waiting room and clinical area
  - **Increased staffing** → current staffing levels are now consistent with national recommendations

# STEP BY STEP HOW-TO

**Step 1:** If frontline staff, seek leadership support and approval

**Step 2:** Design a mixed methods survey to answer your key questions

**Step 3:** Obtain union approval

**Step 4:** Obtain facility authorization from IRB and/or Research Development Committee to administer the survey as a quality improvement project

# STEP BY STEP HOW-TO

**Step 5:** Administer the survey in a way to maximize engagement (e.g., dedicate time during a meeting, make it easy and anonymous, limit or eliminate any questions required for completion)

**Step 6:** Analyze data and qualitative themes at the department *and team* level (if possible)

**Step 7:** Consider what leadership has the power to influence and develop action items

**Step 8:** Share the survey results and planned actions with the department and/or team

**Step 9:** Use a PDSA cycle to implement and assess the effectiveness and acceptability of your response to employee concerns

# RESOURCES

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# THANK YOU!

- Questions or interested in additional resources?
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