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# Children Health Queensland Oncology Staff Wellbeing Program

Initiative Type

Education and Training

Status

Deliver

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<https://cnxp3cuvtvrn68yjaibaht5ywrxspj7m.clinicalexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/chq-oncology-wellbeing>

## Summary

Challenges experienced by staff in the Oncology Services Group at Lady Cilento Children's Hospital resulted in issues with staff retention, wellbeing and stress on the team culture. To support them a

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multi-faceted wellbeing program was put in place and staff were facilitated and encouraged to shape their wellbeing according to a variety of strategies. The project was a finalist in the Promoting Wellbeing Category at the 2017 Queensland Health Awards for Excellence.

## Key dates

Feb 2018

Feb 2018

## Implementation sites

Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service

## Partnerships

Optum EAP service Penny Gordon and Associates Michelle McQuaid People and Culture, Children's Health Queensland

# Key Contacts

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## Aim

Provide a multidimensional approach for supporting and sustaining paediatric oncology staff wellbeing and resilience at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital.

## Benefits

Flourishing at work including:

- Positive emotions – feeling good
- Engagement – being completely absorbed in activities
- Relationships – being authentically connected to others
- Meaning – purposeful existence
- Achievement – a sense of accomplishment and success

Staff wellbeing has been shown to have a positive impact on service outcomes, including quality of patient care, patient satisfaction, and reduction in errors. It also assists staff productivity, efficiency, engagement, decision making and retention.

## Background

The Oncology Staff Wellbeing Program was initiated to assist oncology staff at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital with resilience and retention issues following a challenging period of change and complexity. A needs analysis was informed through staff interviews, an organisational staff survey and surveys regarding work related stressors and rewards; leading to the development of a customised program.

## Solutions Implemented

Program strategies were aligned to Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework; 1. Positive emotion

- Several one-hour "Coping with Critical Incidents" Workshops and longer "Managing Vicarious Trauma and Building Resilience" and "Sustaining Resilience" Workshops delivered by a psychologist, in addition to existing education sessions focused on wellbeing.
- Wellbeing resources available electronically and physically.
- Protective Services information on de-escalating poor behaviour.
- On site sessions with an Employee Assistance psychologist.
- Mindfulness sessions in the clinical areas.

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- Debriefing on critical incidents more consistent and sustainable.
  - Self-care plans developed in workshops with team leader follow up.

## 2. Engagement

- Exploration of the use of individual character strengths at work.
- Equipment and design frustrations addressed.
- Better communication processes in the service.
- Support innovation through mentoring of improvement projects.

## 3. Relationships

- Strategies to improve team culture and integration.
- Team building session for multi-disciplinary team with psychologist.
- Leadership development opportunities.

## 4. Meaning

- Connect staff to the meaning of their work through updates from families, inclusion in family visits and end of treatment celebrations.
- Identification of common goals.

## 5. Accomplishments

- Line managers practicing gratitude with staff.
- Staff achievements and innovations acknowledged.
- Staff motivated by publicising positive outcomes.

# Evaluation and Results

Evaluation to date has included participation data, evaluation of education and mindfulness sessions, staff surveys on the outcomes of the program, retention data and a subsequent organisational (Working for Queensland) staff survey. The evaluation has shown appreciation from staff that their needs were being addressed and they were supported to sustain their resilience. The program has made a positive difference to staff wellbeing, including raising awareness of personal self care, addressing risks to wellbeing, and improving connections with trusted colleagues. Staff retention has increased and measures of work/life balance and wellbeing support have improved.

# Lessons Learnt

Any effort to improve wellbeing is appreciated by the staff. A wellbeing program needs to be multifaceted and delivered in a number of modes to cover the full team, and be supported by

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strategies to improve team culture and integration. The program will be ongoing and delve into widening areas (eg team culture) to ensure lasting impact.

## References

Seligman, M.E. (2011). Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

## Further Reading

What is [PERMA IHI Framework for Improving Joy at Work](#)

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