



Implementing the National Institute of Health’s Wellness Program to Reduce Burnout among Mental Health Professionals



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BACKGROUND

- The emotional toll from frequently caring for those with mental illnesses predisposes mental health workers to burnout.
- Burnout among healthcare workers can affect their mental and physical well-being, manifesting in substandard patient care practices and medical errors that lead to poor patient outcomes. Other ramifications of burnout are low morale, absenteeism, reduced commitment to work, turnover of staff, and patient dissatisfaction (Søvold et al., 2021).
- The project lead implemented the National Institute of Health’s wellness program to reduce burnout in the mental health workers.

PURPOSE

Project Aim: The aim of this project is to reduce burnout among mental health workers by implementing an evidence-based wellness program.

Project Objectives

- Educate mental health workers on the importance and impact of a wellness program in reducing burnout and provide project details
- Implement a wellness program using the National Institute of Health’s emotional wellness toolkit
- Evaluate the participants’ burnout symptoms using an informal survey, comparing self-reported symptoms pre- and post-intervention.

METHODS

- Using the National Institute of Health (NIH) emotional wellness toolkit, a workplace program was implemented. A 15-minute weekly session involving education and mindfulness/meditation practicing was carried out for 5 weeks.
- The Iowa Model of evidence-based practice (EBP) provided a framework for implementing the wellness program aimed at reducing burnout among mental health workers.
- Six healthcare workers participated in the National Institute of Health’s wellness program. The Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) was used to measure the participants' burnout symptoms pre and post intervention.

RESULTS

- Results of the paired-t test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between Pre-Intervention (M = 2.8, SD = 0.2) and Post-Intervention (M = 2.5, SD = 0.04), $t(5) = 3.8, p = .013$. Analysis of the scores indicated a reduction in burnout symptoms of the participants, post-interventions.
- The results support the earlier findings that wellness programs can reduce burnout among mental health workers. The findings of this project support the review and analysis findings from Salvado et al. (2021) that indicated that implementing mindfulness-based interventions in healthcare professionals will reduce burnout and enhance well-being, compassion for themselves and others, and lead to sustainable healthcare organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

- This DNP project lead implemented an evidence-based wellness program for mental health workers.
- Results showed that the program significantly reduced participants’ burnout symptoms.
- This project holds promise in addressing and reducing burnout at the site. It can also help address and reduce turnover related to burnout.
- The project has significant implications for practice. It builds on previous findings that wellness programs can help to reduce burnout in healthcare workers (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022; Klein et al., 2020; Song & Baicker, 2019)
- This project can be sustained at the site if included in the organization’s orientation program. This project can be scaled up and used at other sites as an annual education for staff.

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