

# Transforming Culture – Creating a Well-Being Friendly Residency



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## Background

The importance of resident well-being is clear – how to foster it is not as obvious. We believe it is imperative to create a culture that clearly demands that residents take care of themselves, that encourages residents to communicate their well-being concerns, and that empowers residents to discuss and manage well-being for their peers and even supervisors. To achieve a ‘well-being’ friendly culture, we implemented a multi-faceted well-being performance management approach.

## Aims

- To change well-being perceptions
- To identify well-being stressors
- To improve resident well-being

## Process

We have employed a multi-faceted (360+) well-being assessment system. We are assessing well-being from multiple perspectives, including faculty, an annual full scale self-report, weekly self-reports, peer reports, nurse reports, and even resident assessments of faculty well-being. We have also created a strong team of well-being advocates to manage the results and enact change– from shifting chief resident priorities to well-being, to having weekly communications from the PD addressing well-being issues, to empowering residents to discuss these issues in various ways.

### Resident Self-Report

“I do not know what has happened, but over the last week or so I have just been very weak and exhausted both mentally and physically. I had been doing so well, but I think the rigor and front loadedness of my schedule has started to catch up to me...”

## Results

Initially we implemented the faculty assessment of resident well-being. Attendings provided extensive well-being comments, but most surprisingly, the assessment had impacted the way that residents were being perceived. Prior to the well-being assessment, attendings commonly made dispositional comments (e.g., this resident seems ‘lazy’) whereas these comments have now transformed to focusing on well-being behaviors (e.g., this resident needs to stop ‘pre-rounding’ and sleep more).

Framing is important. The implementation of the resident fuel gauge has been one of our most powerful tools. Residents now commonly use the term “refuel” and refer to their “tank”. The vehicle analogy facilitates understanding the importance of taking care of oneself (and discussing when they need some fuel!).

The largest sources of burnout/well-being issues that we have identified to date are sleep deprivation (typically observed from the cumulative effects of back-to-back difficult rotations), faculty well-being issues, and lack of social interactions.

Letting residents know you hear their concerns and are there to support them may be the most important antidote. In this vein, program director (PD) communications are imperative. Residents oftentimes feel disconnected – and weekly ‘fireside chat’ emails can give them a direct connection. PDs should discuss some of the comments, program updates (many times residents are unaware of changes that are coming based on their feedback!), and personal experiences.

Most importantly, we have observed some important changes (due in part to better well-being) – including marked improvements in board scores (to 100% pass), fewer and less concerning CCC events, and ironically a change in the nature of resident concerns (as we like to refer to it, “first-world” residency problems have become a new challenge!).

### Faculty of Resident

“...I encouraged him to seek out social engagement with his peers and offered my personal support were he to feel he was struggling with adapting to the program ....”

### Nurse of Resident

“...I advised him that he cannot take care of any patients if he first does not take care of himself.”

## Conclusion

The most important goal of an evaluation system is to make expectations clear. Employment of a multi-source assessment system can facilitate needed culture change.

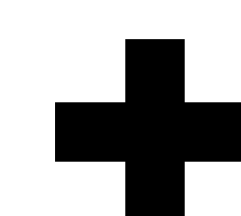
**Reframe Well-Being: Change Perceptions**  
**Pit Crew: Your Well-Being Team**  
**Pit Stops: Assessments**  
**Make it a Round Trip: Communicate**  
**Win the Race: Better Outcomes!!**

Moreover, it is imperative to recognize that ‘well-being’ is the byproduct of skills. Well-being skills must be trained in residency (e.g., communicating needs, taking care of oneself, recognizing personal triggers, etc.) to ensure effective physicians in the future.

In summary, reframing, assigning a well-being team, conducting the assessments, and finally creating communication channels are necessary elements to creating a well-being friendly culture.

### Resident of Attending

“...She was always available and dedicated to our well-being and education.”



Maintenance

Or...



**FUEL**  
 RECHARGE  
 YOURSELF