

Burnout and Employee Well-Being the Focus of New Quality Improvement Project

By Mary Boutette, Chief Operating Officer

We want our staff to be the best they can be, for themselves, their families, and above all, for our residents and clients. It is why we are here.

Every day, our employees give their entire self to serve our residents and clients. It takes a special, selfless kind of person to do this, because the people we care for often depend completely on us, and meeting their needs can be very challenging. When staff members give their entire selves to others, it can take its toll, especially if staff feel they can't meet the needs they see, or really make a difference in residents'/clients' lives. We all want to make a difference.

If a person experiences emotional exhaustion, lacks empathy towards other people, and can't accomplish what needs to be done, they often describe themselves as feeling "burned out". "Burnout" in health care workers has been identified as an issue. We are launching a Quality Improvement project at Perley Rideau to investigate and address this. Employees who feel burned out can lack the empathy, resilience, and commitment to provide the excellent care that our residents and clients deserve and need. Even more troubling, employee burnout in Long Term Care has been linked to things like resident/client neglect, abuse, absenteeism, turnover, poor health, difficult family lives, and overall well-being. We want and need our employees to be the best selves that they can be.

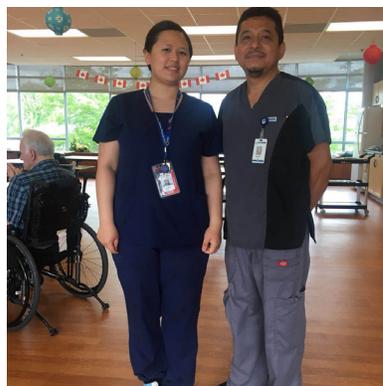
As a first step, we are launching a pilot study on G2S and G2N to understand burnout in Personal Support Workers and to explore ways to prevent it. Dementia is more prevalent on those two units which research suggests to be

related to caregiver burnout. We are hosting a focus group with a small group of PSWs to help us brainstorm change ideas. Once the change ideas have been identified, we will implement them in small improvement cycles and closely monitor the outcomes. This project is supported by Health Quality Ontario's IDEAS program, and we are fortunate to benefit from many leading researchers in this area. Their approval of our application further explains the importance of this issue.

The project is starting this summer and to be completed by Feb. 2019. Currently the study is limited to PSWs on these two units. However, our findings will be applied wherever they are relevant, as soon as possible. We understand the urgency and will keep you updated on our progress through upcoming newsletters and shared through our social media channels and emails. Here are the four members of the IDEAS project team should you wish to contact us.

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre: A Great Place to Work For People Dedicated To Enriching the Lives of Seniors.

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Watch for the 3 personal accounts of the Day in Scrubs in upcoming newsletters