



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

In the Middle of Difficulty Lies Opportunity: A Staff-Led Approach to Decreasing Workplace Stress and Increasing Engagement

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Background

Mental health is an important part of a person's overall well-being and includes emotional, psychological, and social aspects. Mental and physical health are equally important components and are symbiotic with each other.

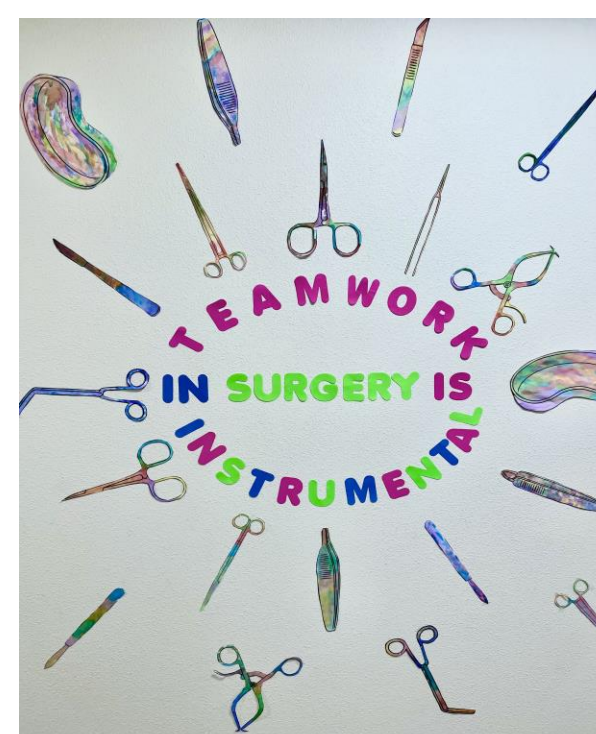
On a day-to-day basis, OR nurses and surgical technicians face a myriad of challenges including:

- anxiety
- compassion fatigue
- crisis situations

Stress amongst healthcare professionals is one of the most under-appreciated yet impactful issues they face.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the importance of mental health to the forefront. According to the NIH, a study from 2021 stated that nearly half of Americans surveyed reported recent symptoms of an anxiety or depressive disorder, and 10% of respondents felt their mental health needs were not being met.

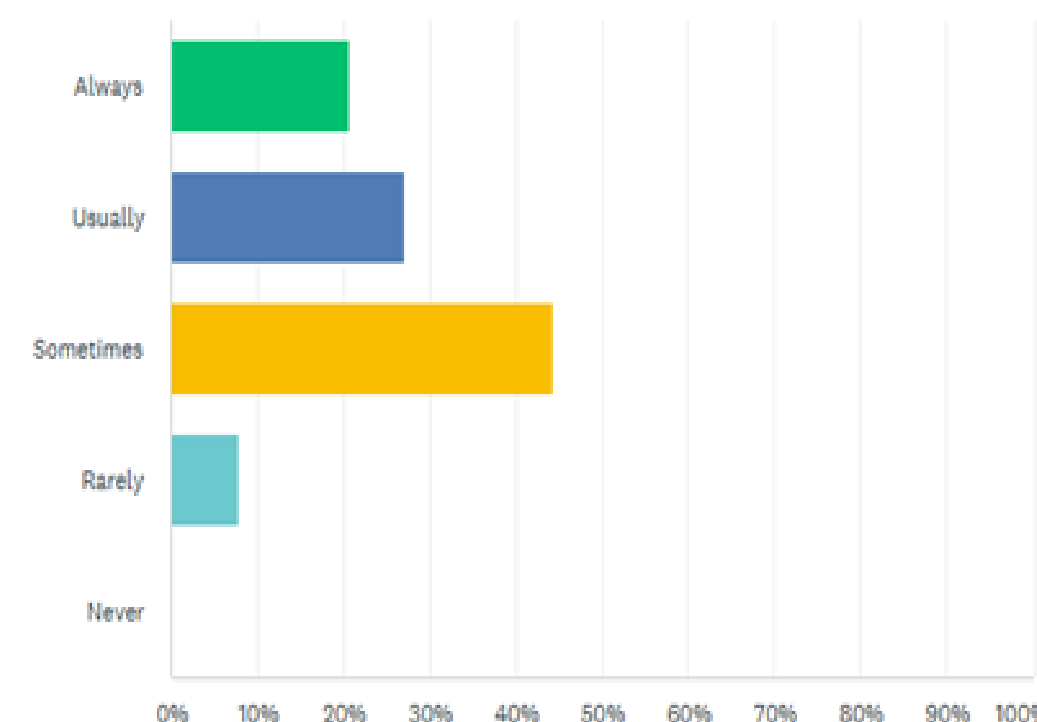
There is also strong evidence supporting links between job stress, safety, and health in general.



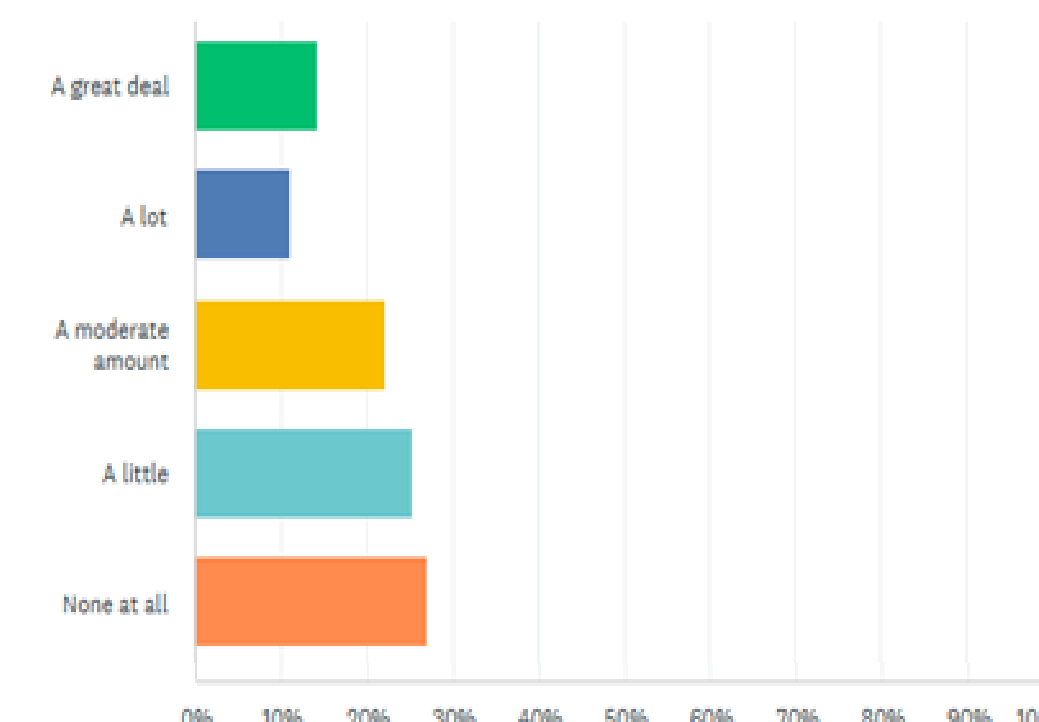
Assessment

- Covid-19 shed light on the importance of mental health amongst healthcare workers, and just as hospitals had to be ingenious in a new era of pandemic-medicine, so too did their staff.
- A staff satisfaction survey geared towards RRR initiatives was sent to all employees who worked in the OR.
- The survey was meant to gauge the stress levels of the OR staff and which RRR initiatives made a difference in employee satisfaction and engagement.

How often do you feel stressed on the job?



Rate how the RRR initiatives and events help to destress you and/or improve staff satisfaction



Description of Team

The Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition (RRR) Committee is part of the hospital council system and shared governance structure within the Department of Nursing.

The Operating Room RRR Committee consists of nurses and surgical technicians. Together they focus on exploring strategies that lead to engagement for the development of an environment that is based on:

- mutual respect
- caring
- communication

Outcomes

The RRR survey was designed to ascertain various data:

- How stressed staff were on the job
- Did the initiatives and events sponsored by RRR help to destress staff and improve satisfaction
- Which initiatives staff were already familiar with
- Which initiatives staff wanted more information on
- Any staff requested initiatives

Per the survey results, staff reported feeling highly stressed on the job 92.05% of the time (specifically sometimes/usually/and always), with 73.02% reporting that the RRR initiatives help to destress them/improve satisfaction (specifically a little/moderate/a lot/a great deal). Based on the results of the survey, several initiatives, included those listed, have been introduced to combat workplace stress and promote a more mindful, well-being environment.

Perioperative Implications

Supporting mental and physical health for healthcare workers is as important as ever. The different initiatives have allowed staff members both on and off the committee to participate in activities that fit their individual needs.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to all members of the RRR committee who have worked tirelessly throughout the years to implement these initiatives. Your passion and dedication have not gone unnoticed.

RRR Initiatives Include:

- Annual Employee Recognition Day
- Honoring specific professions (Certified Nurses Day, Doctor's Day, Surgical Tech Week, etc.)
- Staff supported & maintained indoor garden
- Holiday decorations
- Celebrating national love your pet day & pet therapy
- Bake sales/craft fairs
- Rotating artwork (tree of gratitude, rainbow of hope, etc.)
- Aromatherapy

