



ANCC Well-Being Excellence™

An Evidence-Based Framework for
Improving Workforce Well-Being





At a Glance:

ANCC Well-Being Excellence™ Offers

- **An evidence-based framework** that helps organizations strengthen workforce well-being beyond acute care settings
- **Proven strategies** to boost employee engagement, strengthen retention, and foster a healthier, more supportive work culture
- **Global recognition and cross-industry relevance**, designed for organizations in every sector
- **A practical approach** for organizations to support their workforce well-being in meaningful and measurable ways
- **A free Organizational Well-Being Excellence Assessment**, grounded in evidence-based criteria

Well-Being Excellence

Executive Summary

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) has introduced **Well-Being Excellence**—an evidence-based framework designed to help organizations strengthen workforce well-being across all sectors, **not just healthcare**. All organizations are invited to explore this practical approach to supporting their teams in more meaningful, measurable ways.

What it Does

Well-Being Excellence helps organizations evaluate how effectively they support workforce well-being and builds on existing efforts with clear, actionable guidance to strengthen policies, practices, and workplace culture. The framework is built on evidence-based criteria, introduced in the free **Organizational Well-Being Excellence Assessment**.

Why it Matters

Well-Being Excellence responds to the growing need for structured, organization-wide solutions to improve workforce well-being in all industries. Burnout and chronic health conditions cost U.S. employers hundreds of billions of dollars annually.^{1,2} This framework helps improve the employee experience and reduce avoidable costs.



The Current State of Workforce Well-Being

In today's fast-paced, high-pressure work environments, workforce well-being is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of organizational success. Yet across industries, organizations continue to face rising burnout, high turnover, and widespread disengagement—signs that current well-being efforts are not fully aligned with the needs and realities of today's workforce. ^{3, 20, 26}

Well-Being Instability Across Industries and Its Consequences

The impact of insufficient well-being support varies by industry, yet across all sectors the consequences are significant:

Higher Education:

- Staff struggle with heavy workloads and low institutional support, affecting both retention and student outcomes. ^{27, 28, 29}
- Burnout among nursing students often carries into their professional practice, further compounding workforce instability. ²³

Early Childhood Education:

- Educators in early childhood settings face high emotional demands, limited resources, psychological distress, and limited workplace support, affecting classroom quality and child development. ^{30, 31}
- Despite these challenges, most interventions in childhood education focus narrowly on individual coping rather than systemic change, limiting their effectiveness. ⁴

Corporate Workplaces:

- Many workers report mental health symptoms linked to emotionally demanding roles and lack of recognition. ³²

Information Technology (IT):

- IT professionals often face long hours, constantly evolving technology, and limited work-life balance. These pressures drive emotional fatigue and high turnover, especially when company values don't match employee experience. ³³

Human Resources (HR):

- HR professionals are often responsible for overseeing well-being programs, yet they themselves frequently experience high stress, unclear expectations, and insufficient support. ³⁴

Research & Laboratory Settings:

- In laboratory and diagnostic environments, high burnout rates among cytology staff have been linked to delays and errors in test results, directly impacting patient care quality. ³⁵

Healthcare:

- Burnout among nurses, physicians, and pharmacists continues to drive medical errors, safety concerns, and workforce attrition, costing health systems billions of dollars annually. ^{1, 3, 12, 20, 36, 37, 38, 39}



The Case for a Comprehensive Well-Being Strategy

Although many organizations recognize the importance of workforce well-being, their efforts often fall short—limited to one-off events such as wellness weeks or awareness campaigns that are disconnected from employee needs. Without a broader strategy, well-intentioned programs may struggle to create meaningful or lasting impact.

Well-being, as defined by ANCC, is “striving toward positive **physical, mental, social, environmental,** and **professional** well-being. The presence of positive emotions and moods (e.g., contentment, happiness), the absence of negative emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfillment, and positive functioning”.

Just as well-being is multi-layered in nature, the solutions to support it must be equally comprehensive—spanning individual, team, and organizational levels to create lasting impact.

The **Well-Being Excellence** framework was designed to meet this need. Drawing from evidence-based models like the National Plan for Improving Health Workforce Well-Being and NIOSH principles—and informed by well-being experts and pilot organizations—the framework offers a flexible, system-level approach that organizations across industries can use to reduce burnout, improve retention, and build a more engaged workforce.



What Organizations Stand to Gain for Investing in Workforce Well-being

- Reduced turnover and absenteeism. ^{3, 4}
- Higher engagement and job satisfaction. ^{5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 49}
- Enhanced organizational performance and productivity. ^{10, 11, 12, 13, 14}
- Measurable cost savings. ^{15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20}
- Improved health and resilience across the workforce. ^{21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26}
- Reputation as a well-being-focused employer recognized by the ANCC.

Competitive Advantage

Organizations that invest in workforce well-being gain a competitive edge by strengthening retention, resilience, and operational performance. ^{20, 40} Prioritizing well-being differentiates organizations, fosters a healthier, more engaged workforce, and leads to improved consumer and patient outcomes.

The following table highlights key competitive advantages of applying the principles of **Well-Being Excellence:**

Beneficiaries	Key Advantage	Supporting Evidence
Organizations	Return on Investment (ROI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson & Johnson saved \$250M in healthcare costs over a decade; ROI of \$2.71 per \$1 spent on wellness programs.^{17, 41} For every \$1 invested in wellness programs, organizations saved \$3.27 in healthcare costs and \$2.73 in reduced absenteeism.¹⁵ ROI of \$2.53 per \$1 spent on health promotion programs in academic workplaces.⁴² ROI of \$2.18 for mental health programs driven by reduced disability claims, lower presenteeism (working while unwell), and improved retention.⁴³
	Financial Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies with strong health cultures consistently outperformed the S&P 500.^{16, 19} Well-being investment was linked to 325% higher stock value growth compared to 105% for peers.¹³
	Retention & Workforce Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-being investments are associated with improved retention and reduced turnover.^{8, 15, 18} Organizational support directly improves well-being and reduces turnover intent among nurses.⁴⁹
	Reputation & Market Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition for workforce well-being positions the organization as an industry leader—enhancing employer branding and attracting top talent.⁴⁹
Employees	Work-Life Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational efforts to create flexibility in scheduling, rest breaks, and psychological support increase perceived work-life balance and engagement.^{40, 45}
	Reduced Burnout, Increased Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher safety culture and team cohesion reduce workplace violence and burnout.⁴⁶ Psychological interventions significantly improved resilience and decreased depression and anxiety in healthcare workers.²⁴
	Engagement and Job Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive well-being predicts better job performance, driven by satisfaction and organizational commitment.¹⁴ Wellness programs show measurable gains in staff morale and perceived organizational support.²⁶
Patients/ Consumers	Improved Patient Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger nurse well-being is associated with lower rates of patient falls, infections, and medical errors.^{37, 47} Staffing stability contributes to higher patient satisfaction, improved safety, and overall care quality.^{20, 48} Well-being-focused environments improve communication, responsiveness, and overall experience.⁴⁰

Getting Started with Well-Being Excellence

Any organization can benefit from the **Well-Being Excellence** framework. Whether you're building from the ground up or enhancing existing initiatives, start here:

- **Begin with the Assessment:** The free **Organizational Well-Being Excellence Assessment** will guide you through the 20 Foundational Elements— core, evidence-based criteria that define an effective well-being program. It helps organizations identify strengths, uncover gaps, and outline the next steps.
- **Apply the Foundational Elements:** These Elements reflect key strategies that promote psychological safety, inclusion, and sustainable workforce engagement. *Organizations ready to advance further may implement optional Advanced Elements, which highlight exemplary practices and make them eligible for higher-tier recognition from ANCC.*

As you evaluate your organization's current approach, consider:

- Engaging employees in discussions regarding well-being along with initiatives that address it.
- Exploring whether current well-being efforts are making the intended impact.
- Asking employees to name a time when they identified a barrier and saw it meaningfully addressed.

The free **Organizational Well-Being Excellence Assessment** offers a clear starting point. This practical tool is designed to identify organizational strengths, uncover gaps, and highlight opportunities to better support the workforce and foster a healthier work environment.





Take the First Step Today

Lead the charge toward a thriving workplace—every step you take brings your organization closer to lasting well-being:

- **Access** the **Organizational Well-Being Excellence Assessment**.
- **Explore** the Well-Being Foundational Elements.
- **Establish strategies** to close the identified gaps.
- Connect with us at **wellbeingexcellence@ana.org** for guidance and support.



For a detailed overview of the framework's development—including why it extends beyond nurses and clinical settings—refer to the article *Well-Being Excellence™: A Holistic Approach to Elevating Employee Health in All Settings*.⁵⁰

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