

Hallmarks of a Supportive Work Environment: More than a WISH

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The Well-Being Influencers Survey for Healthcare Inventory (WISH) is a validated survey that measures perceptions of modifiable workplace dimensions [“influencers”] that impact healthcare professionals’ well-being.¹ While the survey is designed to assess workplace influencers, it can also serve as a lens for evaluating *prospective* workplaces. We explore several “influencers” and offer some relevant questions when exploring new job opportunities.

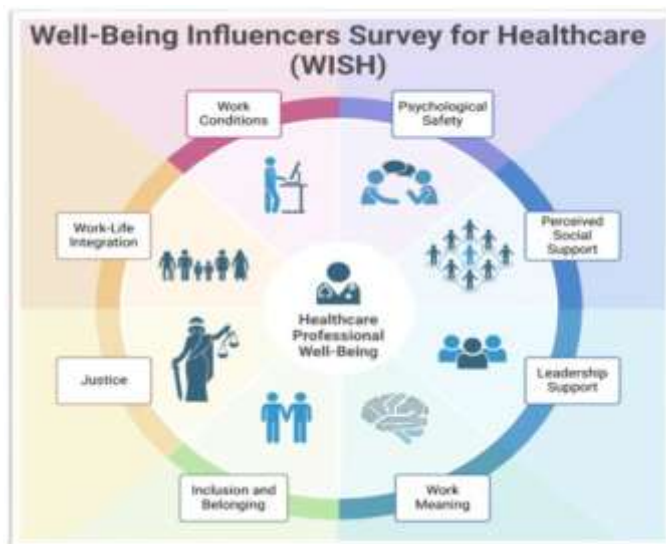


Figure: Measuring Well-being Influencers: Development and validation of the Well-Being Influencers Survey for Healthcare Influencers of Well-Being. Adapted with permission from Higgins KE et al. Anesthesiology 2025.142(6): 1025-1037

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety has historically been defined as the belief that one’s workplace is safe enough to feel that one can “grow, learn, contribute, and perform effectively” while exploring new ways to engage in one’s work roles without fear of retaliation or guilt. Research in this area identifies psychological safety as a key determinant of high-quality communication.²

Psychological Safety Questions:

What kinds of concerns have you brought up, and how were they addressed?

How does the department handle scenarios involving medical errors?

Is communication respectful?

Work-Life Integration

Work-life integration describes the feeling that one’s work schedule leaves enough time for personal/family life. Higgins et al. expand this definition to include flexibility in work scheduling and the ability to participate in life outside of work.¹

Work-Life Integration Questions:

Do I see a diversity of ages working here? A broad range of ages likely meets a broad range of work-life integration needs.

What time does the operating room schedule get published each day?

What is the process for securing time to get to personal medical appointments? Are you expected to use your post-call day for all of these, or is it possible to schedule these with some advanced notice?

Leadership

The supervisor leadership behavior score used by Mete et al. in their study asked participants to evaluate their supervisors based on their ability to treat everyone with respect, keep people informed, solicit input, empower team members, nurture professional development, and provide feedback and recognition.³

Leadership Questions:

Can you describe a project that you’re pursuing?

How has that work been encouraged and supported?

References:

- Higgins KE et al. Measuring Well-being Influencers: Development and validation of the Well-Being Influencers Survey for Healthcare (WISH) Inventory. *Anesthesiology*. 2025;142(6): 1025-37.
- Jain AK et al. Moving toward improved teamwork in cancer care: The role of psychological safety in team communication. *Journal of Oncology Practice*. 2016; 12 (11): 1000-13.
- Mete M, Goldman C, Shanafelt T, et al. Impact of leadership behaviour on physician well-being, burnout, professional fulfillment, and intent to leave: a multicentre cross-sectional survey study. *BMJ Open*. 2022; 12:e057554.