

Beyond Burnout

The Missing Strategy for Retaining Long Term Care Leaders

Building Whole-Person Wellness

Whole-person strategies to strengthen leaders, teams, and long term care organizations.



Research-
Informed

Practical

Reflective

Actionable

**From quick fixes to
whole-person wellness**

Why this conversation matters

Burnout is not simply a stress problem. It is a whole-person and workplace-culture challenge.

Burnout in long-term care requires more than:

- reducing stress alone
- higher wages or occasional perks
- marketing swag or one-time initiatives

Meaningful change requires:

- recognizing the whole person
- strengthening well-being at work and beyond
- creating cultures where people can thrive

Move beyond quick fixes.

What Dr. Jolynn Hunt's PhD Research Tells Us

How well-being, job satisfaction,
and turnover intention are connected

National quantitative
correlational, regression study

Study consisted of
109 Skilled Nursing
& Assisted Living
Administrators

Pearson Correlation results
indicated wellness is strongly
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Regression results indicated
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Beyond Burnout: The Research Lens

Preventing burnout requires intentionally building well-being and personal resources.

Why it matters

Burnout and leadership retention are significant concerns in long-term care.

What to connect

Leader well-being, engagement, effectiveness, and retention.

Key shift

Not only removing stressors, intentionally building well-being.

If we want leaders to remain effective and fulfilled over the long term, we need to consider the whole person.

WELLNESS MODEL

Whole-Person Wellness

Wellness works together. When one area is depleted, the whole system feels it negatively. When one area is improved, the whole system is enhanced.



ACTIVITY

Personal Wellness Reflection

A pause to honestly assess current well-being.

Where am I doing well right now?

Which area needs more attention?

What surprised me about my reflection?

What is one small change that could improve an area that feels depleted?

Whole-Person Wellness: **Physical**

Physical wellness includes how you care for your body through movement, sleep, nutrition, preventive care, recovery, safe environments, and attention to physical signals. It is the degree to which your routines help you feel capable, rested, nourished, and physically supported.

Signs this needs attention:

- **Persistent Fatigue, headaches, tension, disrupted sleep**
- **Skipping meals, relying heavily on stimulants**
- **Ignoring symptoms because there is “no time”**
- **Work patterns that make recovery, hydration, nutrition, or safety difficult**

Practices to strengthen this area: Walk on your lunch break; Use habit stacking: Pair hydration & stretching with an existing routine; Protect sleep time.

Whole-Person Wellness: **Emotional**

Emotional wellness is the ability to recognize and understand feelings, express them appropriately, regulate emotional reactions, and recover after difficult experiences. It does not mean feeling positive all the time. It means having the awareness and tools to move through the full range of emotions without being controlled by them.

Signs this needs attention:

- **Frequent irritability, emotional numbness, feeling “on edge”**
- **Avoiding difficult feelings through overwork, food, scrolling, isolation**
- **Explosive reactions, rumination**
- **Feeling unable to ask for support or explain what you need**
- **Practices to strengthen this area: Name the emotion before reacting; Notice what it is signaling/triggering and how it is shaping your behavior; Pause, breathe, shake it out, sleep it off, ground, walk, hum, communicate in time.**

Whole-Person Wellness: **Intellectual**

Intellectual wellness is the active use and development of curiosity, knowledge, creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. It includes opportunities to learn, teach, explore ideas, develop skills, and engage in mentally stimulating activities that contribute to confidence and growth.

Signs this needs attention:

- **Feeling mentally stagnant, disengaged, or underused**
- **Avoiding new challenges because of fear of failure**
- **Lacking access to mentoring, development, or meaningful problem-solving**

Practices to strengthen this area: Choose one learning goal and spend focused time on it 2-3 times a week; Attend a class, webinar, conference; Replace scrolling w/reading.

Whole-Person Wellness: **Social**

Social wellness is the quality of connection, belonging, communication, reciprocity, and support in your relationships and communities. It is not measured by the number of people you know. It is reflected in whether your relationships provide trust, respect, authenticity, healthy boundaries, and opportunities to give and receive support.

Signs this needs attention:

- **Loneliness, isolation, feeling unseen even when around people**
- **Avoiding connection because of exhaustion, conflict, fear of rejection**
- **Lack of connection in the workplace or at home**
- **Practices to strengthen this area: Protect one recurring check-in with a trusted peer; Make support specific: listening, problem-solving, or practical help; Build belonging through inclusion, recognition, and reliable follow-through.**

Whole-Person Wellness: **Spiritual**

Spiritual wellness reflects a sense of meaning, purpose, inner alignment, values, and connection. For some people it includes religion or faith; for others it may involve nature, service, creativity, reflection, community, or a deeply held life philosophy. Spiritual wellness helps answer, “What matters to me, and am I living in a way that reflects it?”

Signs this needs attention:

- **Feeling disconnected, empty, directionless**
- **Living in conflict with your personal values**
- **Losing a sense of purpose or feeling your efforts do not matter**
- **Having little space for reflection, gratitude, or inner stillness**

Practices to strengthen this area: Write your 5 core values and identify one weekly action that honors those; Practice mindfulness, prayer, meditation; Gratitude journal.

Whole-Person Wellness: **Psychological**

Psychological wellness involves how you think about yourself, cope with demands, solve problems, maintain perspective, and believe in your ability to influence your life. It includes resilience, self-acceptance, autonomy, realistic optimism, boundaries, and a willingness to seek professional support when needed.

Signs this needs attention:

- **Hopelessness, harsh self-criticism, helplessness or persistent worry**
- **Feeling stuck in patterns that would benefit from counseling or clinical support**
- **Perfectionism that prevents rest or asking for help**
- **Practices to strengthen this area: Identify through self-reflection what you can control, influence, or release; Set realistic boundaries and seek support before distress becomes a crisis. Recognize cycling thought patterns, trends, and resilience levels. Befriend yourself.**

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Part 2: Reflect & Reconnect

Create space to assess wellness, meaning, values, and purpose.

PURPOSE

Spiritual Wellness: Meaning & Purpose

Not necessarily religion — it can include values, connection, and what matters most.

What gives my life a sense of meaning and purpose?

Which values do I want reflected in how I lead?

What originally drew me to this work?

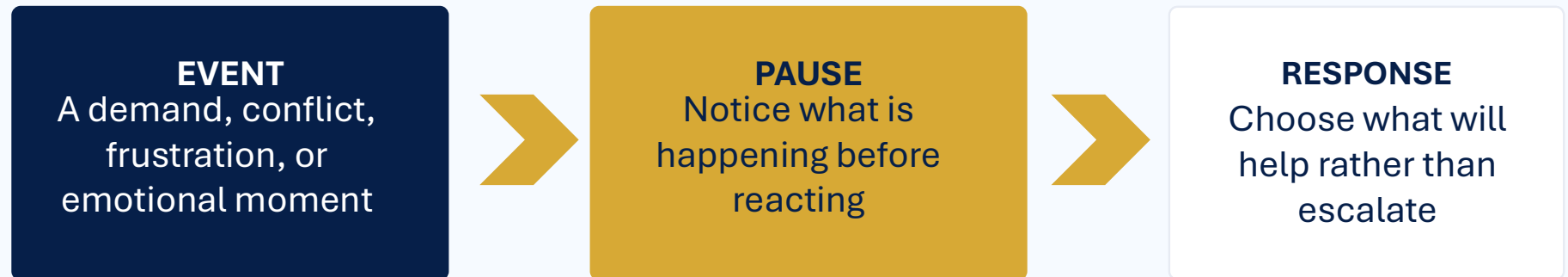
When work becomes difficult, what helps me remember why my work matters?

Part 3: Practicing the Pause

Mindfulness, box breathing, and responding with intention.

Mindfulness as Leadership Practice

Creating space between what happens and how we respond.



SCENARIO

Apply It at Work

A realistic leadership scenario.

An angry employee or family member approaches you. Their voice is raised. They are frustrated and expect an immediate response.

Instead of matching their intensity:

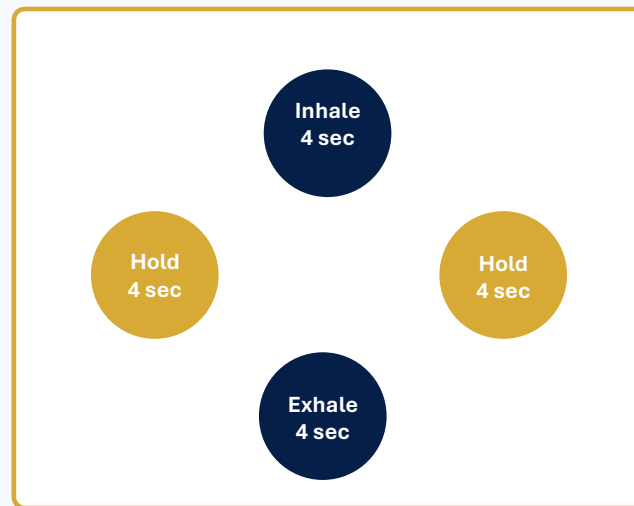
Pause → Breathe → Notice → Respond

- What am I feeling right now?
- What emotion am I experiencing?
- What does this person need from me?
- What response will help?

SKILL PRACTICE

Box Breathing: A 4-4-4-4 Pause

A simple reset leaders can use during stressful moments.



Repeat for several cycles. Focus attention on your breathing.

Part 4: Wellness as Leadership Practice

Small practices repeated consistently can strengthen leaders, teams, and organizations.

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INTEGRATION

From Personal Wellness to Leadership Practice

Choose one practice you could realistically begin using this week.

Intentional breathing pauses

A few minutes for reflection

Attention to a neglected wellness dimension

Reconnect with purpose

Check in with team well-being

Model healthy boundaries

Small. Specific. Sustainable.

CLOSING

Wellness Is a Leadership Practice

It is something we intentionally build and maintain.

Burnout and fatigue rarely happen because of one difficult day. They build over time, and wellness works the same way.

Small practices, repeated consistently, can strengthen overall well-being, stress management, productivity, and leadership capacity.

How leaders manage stress, establish boundaries, and care for themselves influences everyone around them.

Healthier leaders. Healthier teams. Healthier Residents. Healthier organizations.

Your Opportunity

Take one practice from today and intentionally bring it into your life.

Then consider how you can help the people you lead do the same.

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When wellness becomes part of how we live and how we lead, we create healthier leaders, healthier teams, healthier residents, and healthier organizations.