



## Is your team stressed out?

When the work is stressful, people are more likely to call in sick. Some may call it burnout or needing a “mental health day.” You may see the signs in employee frustration, cynicism or resignation. While our jobs at Kaiser Permanente are inherently stressful, there often are issues that cause more stress than necessary. The trick is to identify these additional stressors and minimize them as much as possible. Use these tips to help.



### IDENTIFY THE STRESS

- [ ✓ ] Create a list with your team of things that contribute to their stress at work.
- [ ✓ ] Identify and prioritize which stressors team members can control, and which they cannot.
- [ ✓ ] Start with one item that is a high priority, where a relatively simple change might help. Test the change using the Rapid Improvement Model (RIM) to see whether it results in less stress.

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**TRY THIS**

- [ ✓ ] Ask team members, *“How stressful does this process make you feel on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high)”?* Get a baseline measure.
- [ ✓ ] Ask for ideas on how to improve the process. Discuss as a team and decide in consensus to revamp the process.
- [ ✓ ] Try it for 2–3 weeks; take another survey of team members: *“How stressful does this process make you feel now?”*
- [ ✓ ] Keep tweaking the process until the team feels the work as efficient and stress-free as possible.
- [ ✓ ] With one success complete, continue to monitor success and modify if necessary. Move on to the next challenge.

**IDENTIFY BARRIERS**

- [ ✓ ] Keep records of work being done.
- [ ✓ ] Revamp processes if staff members cannot keep up with the work. Can the team find ways to be more efficient?
- [ ✓ ] Report up the chain if the data show the unit is understaffed.
- [ ✓ ] Report if you find the team needs more equipment, training, support, etc.

**SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER**

- [ ✓ ] As a team, discuss ways in which you can help each other on busy days. When you were stressed, what would have helped?
- [ ✓ ] Agree as a team on plans to approach the work while short-staffed, so everyone knows what to do and what the lower priorities are.
- [ ✓ ] Discuss as a team how you will all support a co-worker who is not feeling his or her best. (Please ask team members not to come to work if they are ill or contagious!) Have a plan in place, so someone can say, *“I am not doing my best today, here is how people can help me.”*

**TRY THIS**

- [ ✓ ] Hold huddles near the beginning of every shift.
- [ ✓ ] If the unit is short-staffed, discuss the plan for the shift. Revert to the previously discussed plans for how to prioritize tasks when short-handed.
- [ ✓ ] If someone isn't feeling 100% and needs support, the huddle is a great time to bring it up. Let people know what they can do that day to help the team get through the shift as productively as possible. Return the favor when asked!