



Toolbox: Multilevel Holistic Approach to Building Resilience in Healthcare Workers

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Background

- Burnout, emotional exhaustion, and high stress are typical in the healthcare environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these conditions and illuminated the disparate capacity of healthcare organizations to support healthcare workers (HCW) in the workplace. The resilience of HCWs sustain health care organizations who in turn, must be prepared to build, nurture and maintain a resilient workforce.
- **Resilience or Resiliency** is "the ability to bounce back and respond to pressure, unpredictability, or adversity in an adaptive and effective manner that leads to learning and positive outcomes".¹ Resilience can be a learned behavior and cultivated by developing strategies for reducing personal vulnerabilities in the face of workplace adversity.^{1,2}
- Facilitators: team approach, team cohesiveness, buffers, the ability to say no, time for reflection, support from friends, family and leisure activities.^{2,3}
- Barriers: overload, time pressures, environmental issues in rural locations, workload, poor communication and challenging patients.^{2,3}

Multilevel Model

A multilevel approach to building resilience allows organizations to tailor interventions according to individual and organizational needs.

Individual level interventions are based on individual characteristics and experiences and are often self administered.

Interpersonal interventions are relationship based and more likely to be implemented in groups.

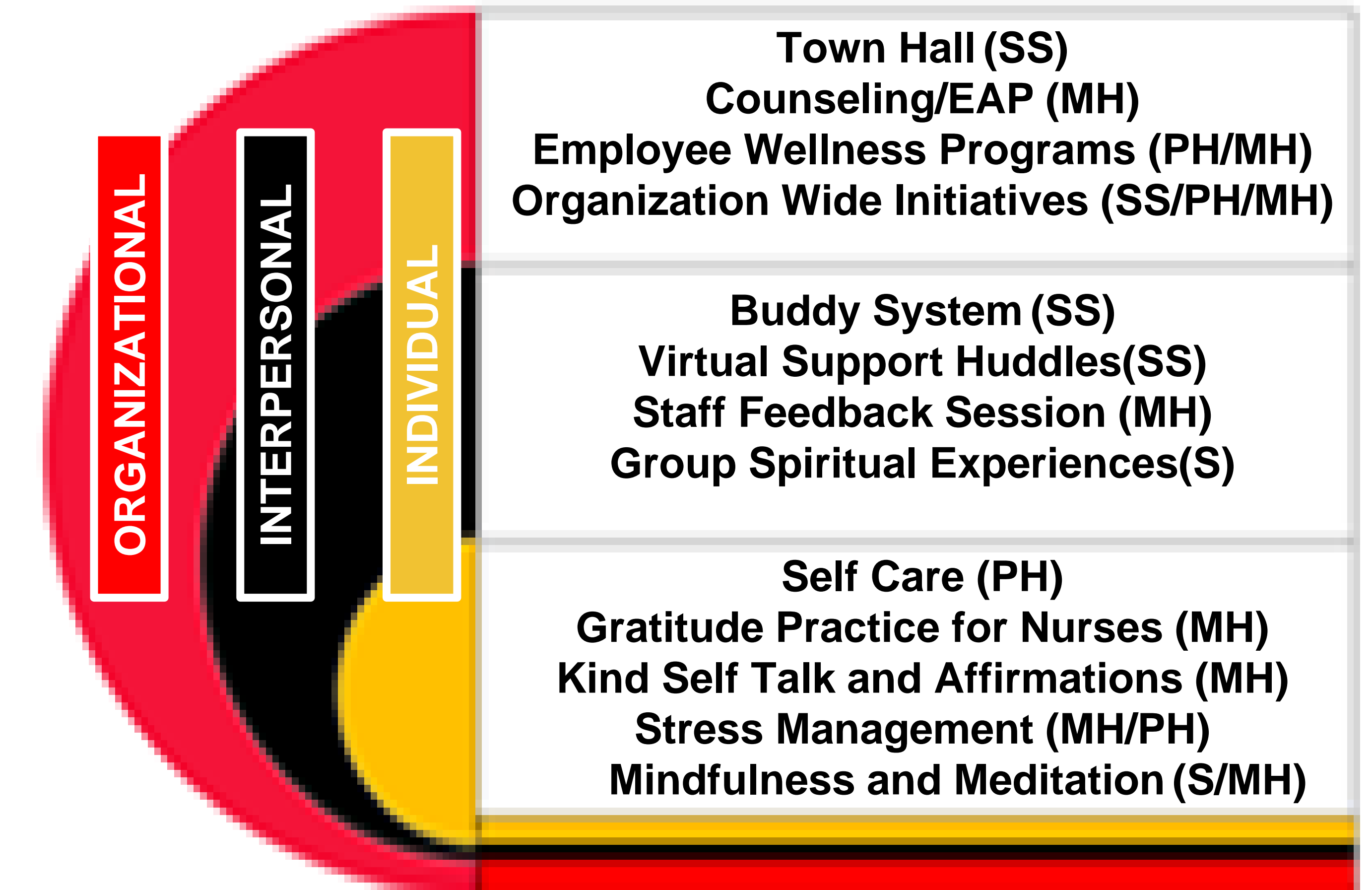
Organizational interventions are implemented throughout the organization or may include interventions that require resources that are not easily accessed by individuals or groups.⁴



Literature Review

HOLISTIC APPROACH	<p>PHYSICAL HEALTH</p> <p>Prime contributors to physical health are nutrition, physical activity and sleep. Healthcare workers are challenged to maintain healthy lifestyles and as a result, commonly suffer from chronic illness, poor nutrition and sleep pattern disturbances.^{5,6,7,8,9} Healthcare crises, scheduling demands, work hours & position, burnout and limited time exacerbate already tenuous health status resulting in worse outcomes for health care workers.^{8,10,11}</p>
	<p>MENTAL HEALTH</p> <p>With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers, are at increased risk for mental illness. The problem is most severe among front line workers who are experiencing high rates of anxiety, depression, acute and post-traumatic stress reactions, and moral injury.^{6,12} High stress conditions, uncertainty, unprecedented death and guilt have compromised resilience.⁶</p>
	<p>SOCIAL SUPPORT</p> <p>Social support is "support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups and the larger community, that is available to provide "psychological, physical and financial help" during difficult times.¹¹ Social support, a protective factor, builds resilience and has demonstrated effectiveness against HCW stress and burnout before and during the most difficult periods of the pandemic.^{14, 15}</p>
	<p>SPIRITUALITY</p> <p>Spirituality is defined as "an individual daily experience with feelings and sensations of awe, deep inner peace, giving and receiving compassionate love, and feeling thankful for blessings, and the roles of the constructs in daily life".¹⁴ Mindfulness is a "quietening and calming of the mind by staying in the present moment".^{16,17} Both spirituality and mindfulness have been shown to decrease stress and burnout and build resiliency and have been used with HCWs even before the pandemic.^{14,18-24}</p>

Interventions



Synthesis/Recommendations

- **Physical Health.** HCWs do not practice self-care, especially in the face of crises or burnout.^{8,11,25,26} Healthy nutrition, adequate sleep and physical activity are recommended for HCWs to promote resilience and work-life harmony.^{8,9,11,26-30}
- **Mental Health.** Mental health wellness is important for HCWs, enabling them to care for others. Stress management approaches reduce burnout and promote resilience in clinicians.^{17,22,31} Individual and organizational strategies for HCW mental health wellness is critical for a healthy workforce.^{17,22,31}
- **Social Support.** Social support can be demonstrated at the organizational level through town halls and at the interpersonal level through peer support from family, friends, and coworkers.³³ Perceived social support is a predictor of higher resilience levels.¹⁴
- **Spirituality.** Spirituality and mindfulness interventions build resilience using strategies that are implemented throughout the day or during specific times during the day.^{16,18-24,33}

References



References



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