

FACULTY WELLNESS AT WORK

Energy, Boundaries, and What We Model

Supporting Sustainable Work and Professional Learning Across
the School of Health Professions

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30-minute faculty development session

**A sustainable workplace is both
personal practice and shared culture.**

OPENING CHECK-IN

A quick read on capacity before we talk about strategies.



100% High capacity



75% Doing okay



50% Functional, but stretched



25% Running on reserve

QUICK POLL

What is taking the most energy from faculty work right now?

- Workload + task switching
- Student needs + emotional labor
- Administrative complexity
- Always-on availability

Strain and Satisfaction Can Coexist

A national faculty survey shows why “burnout” and “loving the work” are not opposites.

64%

Felt burned out because
of work

faculty/instructors

47%

Said supporting students in
distress took a toll

same survey

58%

Said the job took a toll on
mental or emotional
health

faculty/instructors

67%

Still reported job
satisfaction

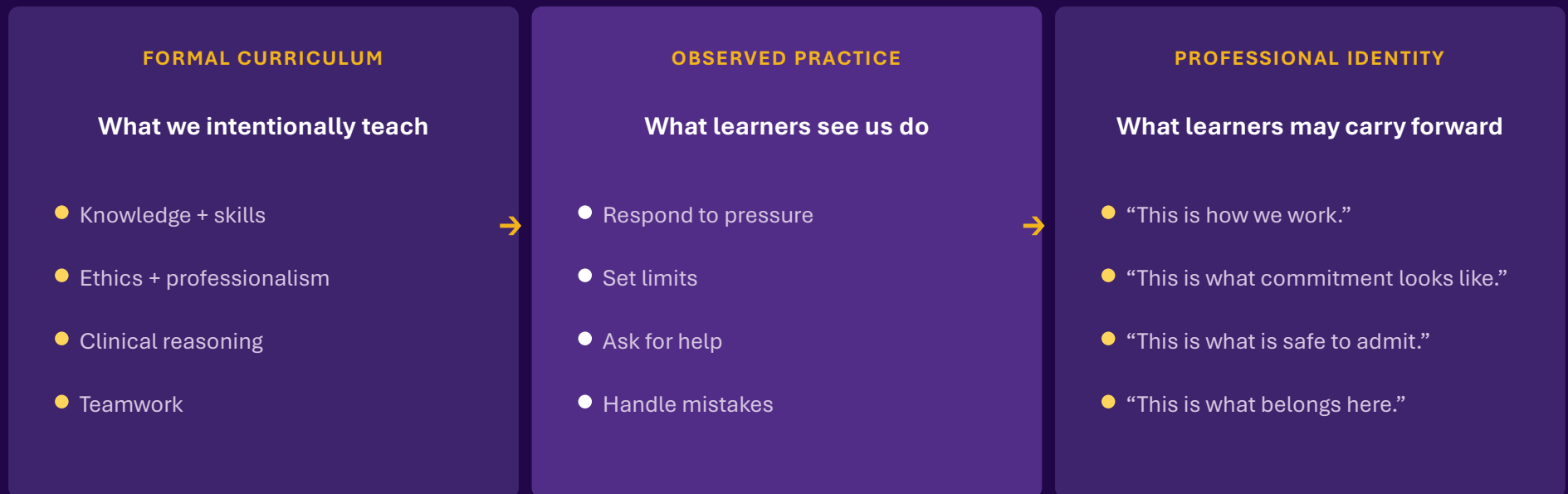
faculty/instructors

The useful takeaway is not “faculty are failing at wellness.”
**It is that meaningful work, competence, satisfaction,
and strain can all be true at the same time.**

Healthy Minds Faculty/Staff Survey, 2022–23: 1,003 faculty/instructors across 16 institutions. Vyletel et al. (2023), American Psychological Association.

Students Learn From More Than the Formal Curriculum

In health professions education, the hidden curriculum includes the norms learners observe in classrooms, labs, clinics, and teams.



Prompt: What do students learn about “being a professional” by watching us?

Role modeling and the hidden curriculum are well-established influences on professional identity in health professions education (e.g., Bashir & McTaggart, 2022; Lee et al., 2023).

What we say • What they see • What they learn

Small inconsistencies can become powerful messages about professional life.

WHAT WE SAY

- Take care of yourself
- Ask for help early
- Maintain boundaries
- Use your team



WHAT THEY SEE

- Emails late at night
- Working through illness
- Everything treated as urgent
- Apologizing for limits



WHAT THEY MAY LEARN

- Availability = commitment
- Exhaustion = competence
- Boundaries disappoint people
- Help-seeking is risky

**Professional modeling does not require perfection.
It requires enough transparency for learners to see healthy judgment in action.**

Sustainable Work = Demands Balanced by Resources

Job Demands–Resources theory helps move the conversation beyond “just practice more self-care.”

DEMANDS

- Workload + deadlines
- Teaching + clinical demands
- Emotional labor
- Administrative complexity
- Task switching + interruptions



SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE

The goal is not “no stress.”
The problem is chronic mismatch.

RESOURCES + RECOVERY

- Autonomy + clarity
- Collegial support
- Protected focus
- Recovery opportunities
- Meaning + recognition

Conceptual lens: Job Demands–Resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Protect Capacity Without Making Wellness Another Task

Two levers that fit inside a real workday: boundaries and micro-recovery.

BOUNDARIES

Make capacity visible.

- Clarify what is truly urgent
- Delay before saying yes
- Protect focused work time
- Use “yes, with limits”
- Name realistic response times

MICRO-RECOVERY

Complete small stress cycles.

- 60 sec: breathe, unclench, reorient
- 5 min: move, step outside, reset
- 10–15 min: eat without working
- Close a task with a next-step note
- Use transition time intentionally

Neither requires a perfect schedule. Both protect attention, judgment, and relational presence.

My Faculty Permission Slip

One visible act of sustainable work can change what we normalize for ourselves, colleagues, and students.

I give myself permission to...

- Leave something until tomorrow
- Say no without overexplaining
- Close Outlook for focused work
- Take my lunch without multitasking
- Ask for help or consultation
- Protect time away from work

I give myself permission to...

Write one. Share only if you want to.

CLOSE



What We Normalize Becomes Part of the Culture

Faculty wellness is individual, relational, and organizational.

PERSONAL

Use boundaries and recovery
to protect capacity.

RELATIONAL

Make help-seeking, clean
handoffs, and realistic
expectations normal.

CULTURAL

Build norms where sustainable
work is compatible with
excellent work.

Students are learning not only what we teach, but what professional life looks like in practice.

Protect capacity. Model judgment. Build culture.

Health science faculty research highlights workload management, administrative support, and accessible wellness opportunities as supports for well-being (Koster & McHenry, 2023).

APPENDIX

Selected references

For academic grounding; not included in the 30-minute presentation.

- 1 Vyletel, B., Voichoski, E., Lipson, S. K., & Heinze, J. (2023). Exploring faculty burnout through the 2022–23 HMS Faculty/Staff Survey. American Psychological Association.
- 2 Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job Demands–Resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285.
- 3 Bashir, A., & McTaggart, I. J. (2022). Importance of faculty role modelling for teaching professionalism to medical students: Individual versus institutional responsibility. *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences*, 17(1), 112–119.
- 4 Lee, C. A., Wilkinson, T. J., Timmermans, J. A., Ali, A. N., & Anakin, M. G. (2023). Revealing the impact of the hidden curriculum on faculty teaching: A qualitative study. *Medical Education*, 57(8), 761–769.
- 5 Koster, M., & McHenry, K. (2023). Areas of work-life that contribute to burnout among higher education health science faculty and perception of institutional support. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 18(1), 2235129.