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A study on the relationship between Psychological Capital, Flourishing and Work Engagement among Healthcare Professionals

Aditi Trikha, *Masters of Arts in psychology, Panjab University*

Aditi.trikha19@gmail.com

Abstract: Healthcare professionals serve as the backbone of the medical system, tirelessly ensuring the well-being of patients. However, their own psychological well-being is often overlooked. In the high-pressure environment of hospitals, maintaining a strong psychological capital (PsyCap), flourishing, and work engagement becomes crucial for their effectiveness and overall job satisfaction. The current study aimed to explore the relationship between Psychological Capital, Flourishing, and Work Engagement among healthcare professionals. A sample of 50 healthcare professionals from various hospitals in Chandigarh was selected for the study. Standardized tools were used to assess the variables of interest. Psychological Capital was measured using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), a 12-item self-assessment tool. This scale evaluates four psychological components, hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Work engagement was assessed using the Work and Well-being Survey-9 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale), which consists of nine items measuring vigor, dedication, and absorption. The Flourishing Scale, an 8-item measure was used to assess individuals' self-perceived success in key life domains such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between flourishing and resilience, flourishing also showed significant positive correlations with hope and efficacy. Resilience was also significantly positively correlated with efficacy whereas hope and

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optimism were also found to be significantly positively correlated. Additionally, a significant positive correlation was also observed between efficacy and work engagement (UWES). Exploring how psychological capital affects work engagement and flourishing, such as through stress management or job satisfaction, could offer insights into improving well-being in healthcare.

Keywords: *Psychological capital, flourishing, work engagement, healthcare professionals*

Introduction

"*The defining characteristic of happiness is engagement: the time we spend in the pursuit of an activity that is in itself rewarding"*

- Martin Seligman

Psychological capital is a developing concept in positive psychology, introduced by Luthans and his colleagues (Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).Luthans and his colleagues defined psychological capital as "a positive psychology construct with relevance to organizations." According to Luthans and Youssef (2004), psychological capital represents an individual's positive and growth-oriented state, characterized by hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007).

Hope refers "to an individual's perceived ability to achieve desired goals and self-motivate to pursue those goals. It is defined as a positive motivational state, stemming from an interactive sense of successful agency and pathways thinking" (Snyder et al., 1991). Snyder's cognitive model of hope (1994) identifies four key cognitive components: goals, pathway thoughts, agency thoughts, and barriers. Thus, hope is a positive motivational state based on two key elements: (a) agency—goal-directed energy, and (b) pathways—strategic planning to achieve goals. Strategies such as clear goal setting, active participation, advanced preparation,

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practicing flexibility, cognitive exercises, and goal realignment can enhance an individual's level of hope (He et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy refers to "an individual's strong belief in their own abilities and optimistic confidence in achieving desired outcomes" (Bandura, 1986). As a fundamental construct of positive psychology, self-efficacy plays a key role in personal development and motivation. It is sometimes equated with confidence or self-confidence, despite subtle differences (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is the "people's judgment of their ability to organize and execute required courses to attain a designated type of performance." It determines how people think, feel, motivate, behave, and perform to accomplish specific tasks with positive well-being. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behaviour, and social environment (Carey & Forsyth, 2009). Research suggests that self-efficacy is not related to the competences of an individual's capabilities, on the contrary, it is related to the belief in personal abilities. Self-efficacious individuals are likely to manage their work and problems as they set new challenges which in turn expand their experience base (Lewis, 2011).

Resilience is a "dynamic psychosocial process that involves an individual's response to adversity, actively engaging with challenges" (Tusaie & Dper, 2004). In this context, resilient individuals demonstrate the ability to maintain well-being, recover, or even thrive despite facing difficulties. According to Luthans (2002), resilience is "a positive psychological capacity to bounce back from uncertainty and conflict to progress and increased responsibility." Research has shown that resilience enhances willpower, aids in overcoming adversity, and facilitates recovery from mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, emotional instability, and depression. Additionally, it promotes work engagement, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (Moon et al., 2013; Mache et al., 2014; Richardson & Chew-Graham, 2016; Chow et al., 2018; García-León et al., 2019).

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Optimism is a widely recognized concept in positive psychology, representing an individual's tendency to maintain positive expectations and emotions about the future. It reflects the belief that goal-directed efforts will lead to favourable outcomes. Anthropologist Lionel Tiger (1979) described optimism as "a mood or attitude associated with an expectation about the social or material future" (as cited in Peterson, 2000). Individuals with optimistic beliefs showed a higher level of confident and persuasive behaviour with emotional maturity, while pessimists are doubtful and hesitant and show emotional instability.

The 21st century is regarded as the era of positive psychology, with the field experiencing remarkable growth and advancement over the past two decades. Positive psychology seeks to help and empower individuals flourish (Seligman, 2001) and develop their inner potential and inherent strengths, enabling them to lead a fulfilling life (Giangrasso, 2021).

In the last 2 decades, flourishing has been recognised as the ideal state of mental health (Seligman, 2011). It encompasses both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Huppert, 2009). Thus, flourishing is defined as a state in which an individual experiences both hedonic pleasure and eudaimonic fulfilment simultaneously (Huppert et al., 2013). Flourishing is a multidimensional concept that includes aspects of both hedonic (emotional) and eudaimonic (psychological and social) well-being (Agenor et al. 2017). It refers to experiencing a feeling that life is going well (Huppert et al., 2013). Therefore, flourishing can be defined “as a pattern of positive feelings and emotions and effective functioning in life” (Keyes 2007).

The focus of work engagement is positive attitude towards work and its positive outcome (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) and is included under the positive psychology paradigm. An employee high on work engagement is likely to display physical, cognition and emotional engagement at work (Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990) was the first scholar and researcher to explain the concept of work engagement. According to the researcher, there is a dynamic relationship that exists between work engagement and these three aspects of engagements.

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There are two perspectives to the concept of work engagement. One is to examine it from the perspective of burnout in individuals. The other is, to from the perspective of viewing work engagements as an antipode of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Research on burn out with employees points out that employees who are motivated and show energy and dedication perform well in their work and their work engagement is good (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). It makes a true difference in the employee performance (Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005). Studies on work engagement and its relations to performance show that work engagement results in better performance (Bresó, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2011).

A study conducted by Zambrano and Guevara (2024) examined the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between psychological capital (PsyCap) and turnover intentions among healthcare professionals. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 320 healthcare professionals. The findings indicate that burnout has a significant positive effect on turnover intentions, while PsyCap has a significant negative effect on burnout. Furthermore, burnout fully mediates the relationship between PsyCap and turnover intentions. These results suggest that while PsyCap can help mitigate negative outcomes like burnout, its direct influence on turnover intentions may be limited.

A study conducted by Keykha et al. (2025) aimed to examine the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between work engagement and occupational stress among nurses working in paediatric wards. The research sample included 251 paediatric nurses. Data were collected using the Demographic Profile Form, Chen's Occupational Stress Questionnaire, Schaufeli et al.'s Work Engagement Questionnaire, and Luthans' Psychological Capital Questionnaire. The findings revealed a significant inverse relationship between work engagement and occupational stress among paediatric nurses ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = -0.22$). Additionally, a positive and significant association was found between work engagement and psychological capital ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.39$). Furthermore, the results indicated a significant

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inverse relationship between psychological capital and occupational stress ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = -0.23$).

A study conducted by Ture et al. (2025) which explored the influence of relationship-oriented leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour among hospital nurses, with a focus on the mediating role of workplace flourishing. Using a cross-sectional design, data were collected from 448 nurses at a university hospital through structured Likert-type scales. The results revealed that relationship-oriented leadership significantly impacts various dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour, including altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, and sportsmanship. Moreover, workplace flourishing was identified as a mediator in this relationship, demonstrating a strong positive effect on organizational citizenship behaviour dimensions.

The current study explored the relationship between Psychological Capital, Flourishing, and Work Engagement among healthcare professionals. The exploration of psychological capital, flourishing, and work engagement within the framework of positive psychology reveals their pivotal role in enhancing individual well-being and professional performance, especially in the healthcare sector. Psychological capital—comprised of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—serves as a foundation for flourishing and sustained work engagement. These traits not only help individuals navigate challenges and maintain motivation but also foster emotional stability, job satisfaction, and reduced stress. Flourishing, as the ideal state of mental health, integrates both emotional pleasure and purposeful functioning, while work engagement, rooted in positive emotional, cognitive, and physical investment in work, leads to greater productivity and resilience against burnout. Collectively, these constructs emphasize that internal psychological resources are essential for healthcare professionals to thrive both personally and professionally.

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Psychological Capital

According to Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007), Psychological Capital is "an individual's positive psychological state of development" characterized by self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. This definition highlights PsyCap as a developmental resource that can be nurtured and enhanced, distinguishing it from static traits like personality.

Luthans and Youssef (2004) describe PsyCap as "who you are" and "what you can become," emphasizing the dynamic and developmental nature of these psychological resources.

Luthans et al. (2015, p. 2) defined PsyCap as "an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeed-ing now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and when necessary, redirecting paths togoals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success."

A meta-analysis was conducted by Avey et al. (2011), to examine the impact of positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on employee attitudes, behaviours, and performance. This analysis included 51 independent samples (representing a total of N = 12,567 employees). The findings revealed significant positive relationships between PsyCap and favourable employee attitudes, positive employee behaviours and various performance measures (self-assessments, supervisor evaluations, and objective performance metrics). Additionally, PsyCap demonstrated a significant negative relationship with unfavourable employee attitudes and negative employee behaviours (workplace deviance).

Liu et al. (2021) aimed to examine the structural relationships between nurses' occupational burnout, job stress, psychological capital, and perceived social support. A cross-sectional design was employed to gather data from 766 registered nurses across three general

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tertiary Class A hospitals between March and August 2018. The findings supported the proposed model, indicating that psychological capital, job stress, and perceived social support significantly impacted occupational burnout. Additionally, job stress indirectly influenced burnout through perceived social support and psychological capital. These factors collectively accounted for 49% of the variance in explaining burnout.

According to Khan and Nagar (2022), a study was conducted to examine the relationship between psychological capital and job engagement among healthcare providers. A correlational research design was employed with a total sample of 300 healthcare providers. The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24) and the Utrecht Job Engagement Scale (UWES-17) were utilized to assess the study variables. Correlation analysis results indicated a positive relationship between all components of PsyCap (hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism) and job engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption).

Flourishing

Flourishing is a combination of a set of hedonic and eudaimonic indicators, with overlap in the areas of: 1) positive relationships, 2) positive affect (interested) and engagement, and 3) meaning and purpose (Hone et al., 2014).

Diener et al. (2010) conceptualized flourishing as the fulfilment of the needs of competence, relatedness and self-acceptance as well as the possession of psychological capital such as flow and engagement

According to Roos (2016), a study was carried out which examined the relationship between perceived creative leadership and employee flourishing within an agricultural business. Data was collected from full-time employees using the Creative Leadership Scale and the Flourishing at Work Scale (FAWS). The survey was conducted on a convenience sample of 253 employees, representing a 60% response rate from an initial sample of 421. The

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findings revealed a statistically significant correlation between managers' creative leadership styles and employees' levels of flourishing in the organization.

According to Peethambaran et al. (2024), a study explores both contextual and individual factors that contribute to employee flourishing, with a particular emphasis on the impact of innovative HR practices, such as high-performance work systems (HPWS), on overall employee well-being (flourishing at work). The findings indicate a positive relationship between HPWS and psychological capital, as well as a positive link between psychological capital and employees' flourishing at work. Additionally, the study highlights that the indirect relationship between HPWS and flourishing at work is stronger when the level of organizational trust (OT) is higher.

According to Bossard et al. (2024), a study was conducted which aimed to address this gap by examining the mediating role of psychological flourishing in the relationship between oncologists' perceptions of their professional social context and their positive work attitudes. Conducted as a cross-sectional study, it included 541 French oncologists who completed a self-report questionnaire. The analysis revealed that perceptions of workplace isolation and organizational support were associated with work engagement, task adjustment, and empathy. Furthermore, psychological flourishing partially mediated the relationship between these professional social context perceptions and oncologists' work-related attitudes.

Work Engagement

Employee engagement is defined "as the emotional and intellectual commitment of employees to their work, organization, and goals" (Kahn, 1990).

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), work engagement encompasses aspects such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and discretionary effort, all of which contribute to employees' willingness to invest their energy and resources in achieving organizational objectives.

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Fujita et al. (2016), conducted a study which aimed to investigate the cross-sectional multilevel relationship between unit-level workplace social capital and individual-level work engagement among healthcare employees. Data was collected from employees of a Japanese healthcare corporation. After controlling for demographic variables, unit-level workplace social capital was found to have a significant positive association with employees' work engagement ($p<0.001$). This relationship remained significant even after further adjusting for individual-level perceptions of workplace social capital ($p<0.001$).

Bakertzis and Myloni (2021), conducted a study to investigate the impact of work engagement on job performance among employees in the Greek healthcare sector, with a secondary aim of examining its correlation with demographic factors. Data was collected from 269 participants, including 85 doctors, 139 nurses, and 45 administrative staff. The results revealed a strong correlation between work engagement and job performance among doctors, while this relationship was weaker among nurses and administrative staff. Additionally, doctors demonstrated higher engagement but lower job performance compared to the other two groups, which exhibited the opposite trend. Furthermore, engagement levels were found to increase with age, though not necessarily with years of experience.

According to George, Okon, and Akaighe (2021), a study investigated the impact of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on work engagement and explore the mediating role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in this relationship among public sector employees. Data was gathered from a sample of 557 public sector employees in Nigeria. The findings revealed that PsyCap significantly and positively influences work engagement. Furthermore, EI was found to fully mediate the relationship between PsyCap and work engagement.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between psychological capital, flourishing, and work engagement among healthcare professionals.

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Hypotheses

- **H1:** There is a significant relationship between psychological capital (hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism) and work engagement.
- **H2:** There is a significant relationship between flourishing and work engagement.
- **H3:** There is a significant relationship between psychological capital (hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism) and flourishing.

Methodology

Sample

A total sample of 50 healthcare professionals was collected from various hospitals across Chandigarh.

Measures

To assess psychological capital, flourishing and work engagement, the following standardised scales were used:

- ***Psychological Capital Questionnaire*** **(PCQ-12):** The psychological capital questionnaire is a 12 item self-assessment tool, as developed by Luthans, Avolio, and Avey was used to measure an individual's psychological capital. It encompasses four psychological components- hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism. The scale consists of 12 items, each rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).
- ***Work and well-being survey-9*****:** The work and wellbeing survey is a concise 9 item self-report instrument, developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) which is designed to assess work engagement across three dimensions- vigor, dedication and absorptions. The scale consists of 9 items, each rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always).

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- ***The Flourishing Scale***: The Flourishing Scale is a brief 8-item summary measure of the respondent's self-perceived success in important areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism. It was developed by Diener et al., (2009). The scale consists of 8 items, each rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Procedure

The data was collected through google forms, with the use of standardised scales. After their consent, the participants were thanked for their cooperation and for taking out their time for filling up this form.

RESULTS

Table 1: *Showing Descriptive Statistics*

	FLOURISHING	EFFICACY	HOPE	RESILIENCE	OPTIMISM	UWES
N	50	50	50	50	50	50
Mean	48.0	13.5	18.7	13.6	9.98	40.3
Std. Error Mean	1.02	0.457	0.599	0.469	0.345	1.26
Standard Deviation	7.20	3.23	4.24	3.31	2.44	8.91

Table 2: *Correlation between Flourishing, Psychological Capital and Work Engagement*

	FLOURISHING	EFFICACY	HOPE	RESILIENCE	OPTIMISM	UWES
FLOURISHING	—					
EFFICACY	0.298*	—				
HOPE	0.341*	0.163	—			
RESILIENCE	0.414**	0.345*	0.041	—		
OPTIMISM	0.275	0.266	0.359*	-0.054	—	
UWES	0.123	0.293*	0.196	0.008	0.272	—
Note. *** p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001**						

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Discussion of Results

This study investigates the relationship between psychological capital, flourishing, and work engagement among healthcare professionals. A sample of 50 healthcare professionals from hospitals across Chandigarh was selected using a correlational research design. Data was collected using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), the Flourishing Scale, and the Work and Well-Being Survey-9 (UWES-9), to assess psychological capital, flourishing, and work engagement respectively. The study aims to understand how these psychological factors contribute to overall well-being and engagement at work.

The descriptive statistics in **Table 1** highlight the psychological profile of 50 participants across six variables: Flourishing, Efficacy, Hope, Resilience, Optimism, and Work Engagement (UWES). Flourishing (M = 48.0) and UWES (M = 40.3) had the highest mean scores, indicating strong well-being and engagement. Efficacy (M = 13.5), Resilience (M = 13.6), and Hope (M = 18.7) showed moderate mean scores, reflecting balanced but not exceptionally high levels of these traits. Optimism had the lowest mean (M = 9.98) and the least variability (SD = 2.44), while UWES showed the most variation (SD = 8.91). Overall, the data suggests that participants reported generally positive psychological states, with particular strengths in flourishing and work engagement, and consistent responses across most variables as indicated by low standard errors.

Table 2 shows the correlation between flourishing, psychological capital components (efficacy, hope, resilience, optimism), and work engagement (UWES). A significant positive correlation was found between **flourishing and resilience ($r = 0.414$, $p < 0.01$)**, indicating that individuals with higher resilience tend to flourish more. **Flourishing** also showed significant positive correlations with **hope ($r = 0.341$, $p < 0.05$)** and **efficacy ($r = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$)**, suggesting that individuals with greater hope and confidence in their abilities experience higher well-being.

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Resilience was also significantly positively correlated with **efficacy (r = 0.345, p < 0.05)**, reflecting that more resilient individuals are also likely to feel more efficacious. Additionally, **hope and optimism** were significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.359$, $p < 0.05$), implying that hopeful individuals also tend to be more optimistic. A significant positive correlation was also observed between **efficacy and work engagement (UWES) (r = 0.293, p < 0.05)**, suggesting that individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to be engaged at work.

Other correlations, such as between flourishing and optimism, or between UWES and other variables, were positive but not statistically significant. Overall, the results highlight meaningful associations between psychological capital components, flourishing, and work engagement among healthcare professionals.

A study by Zhang et al. (2023) investigated the differences in psychological capital, job satisfaction, and work engagement between nurse specialists and general nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers also examined whether job satisfaction mediated the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement. Utilizing convenience sampling, the study surveyed 372 nurse specialists and 318 general nurses from nine provincial general hospitals in China through self-report questionnaires. Findings indicated that nurse specialists reported higher levels of psychological capital, job satisfaction, and work engagement compared to general nurses. Moreover, job satisfaction partially mediated the positive relationship between psychological capital and work engagement, with the indirect effect being more pronounced among nurse specialists during the pandemic.

In a study involving 132 hospital nurses, Park and Ha (2025) found that positive psychological capital significantly predicted work engagement ($\beta = 0.29$, 95% CI = 0.12 to 0.41). Moreover, job crafting was identified as a significant mediator in this relationship ($\beta =$

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0.35, 95% CI = 0.24 to 0.48), suggesting that nurses with higher psychological capital are more likely to engage in job crafting behaviours, which in turn enhance their work engagement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant role of psychological capital—comprising efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, in enhancing flourishing and work engagement among healthcare professionals. The data revealed that higher levels of resilience, hope, and efficacy are positively associated with greater well-being, while efficacy also correlates with increased work engagement. These findings align with previous research, such as the study by Park and Ha (2025), which demonstrated that positive psychological capital significantly influences work engagement among clinical nurses, with job crafting serving as a mediating factor. Similarly, Xue et al. (2023) found that psychological capital mediates the relationship between a healthy work environment and work engagement in ICU nurses. Collectively, these insights highlight the importance of fostering psychological resources to promote well-being and engagement in healthcare settings.

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between psychological capital, flourishing, and work engagement among healthcare professionals, there are several limitations to consider. First, the sample size of 50 participants is relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study was conducted in hospitals across Chandigarh, and the results may not fully represent healthcare professionals in other regions or settings. The cross-sectional design of the study also prevents the establishment of causal relationships between psychological capital and work engagement, and future research could benefit from longitudinal studies to explore these relationships over time.

Furthermore, the study relied on self-report measures, which are subject to response biases such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment. Future research could

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incorporate objective measures or multi-source data to strengthen the validity of the findings. It would also be useful to explore how other factors, such as organizational culture, job demands, and social support, might interact with psychological capital to influence work engagement and well-being.

Future directions for research could include expanding the sample size, conducting research across different healthcare settings, and examining the role of interventions designed to enhance psychological capital. Additionally, investigating the specific mechanisms through which psychological capital influences work engagement and flourishing, such as through stress management or job satisfaction, could provide more detailed insights into how to improve well-being in the healthcare profession.

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