Southeast (HHS Region 4)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

This infographic outlines mental health workforce retention in the behavioral health setting. For more information, watch the on-demand recording, "Why People Stay: Workforce Retention in Community Behavioral Health" presented by Dr. Michelle Salyers.

Workforce Retention in Community Behavioral Health

Staff turnover is defined as the continuous process of loss and replacement of employees in a workforce. Staff turnover has been a growing problem, with many calling 2021 the 'Great Resignation' as approximately 47.4 million employees quit their jobs. Most job sectors continue to struggle with recruiting and retaining employees; however, the behavioral health care system often has one of the highest staff turnover rates: 30%−35% annual turnover.[1]

30-35% ANNUAL TURNOVER IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

COMMON REASONS EMPLOYEES LEAVE

Reasons for leaving vary from employee to employee and is usually influenced by family, community, work, and personal passions. Common reasons include:

- Job satisfaction
- Work-life logistical conflict
- Personal changes in health, family, values shift
- Work changes in responsibilities, management, work location
- Other, better job opportunities

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTS TO STAFF TURNOVER

Advantages	**Disadvantages**
- New energy	- Cost of recruiting and training
- Welcomes fresh perspectives	- Practices that require fidelity
- Opportunities for internal staff promotions	- Burden on remaining staff
	- Less continuity of care

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

REASONS EMPLOYEES STAY

Values

Values are the fit or compatibility with an organization and the alignment of an individual's passions, including:

- Compatible mission and vision with organization
- Responsibility to people served
- Deep commitments or sense of calling
- Training for supervisors; person-centered supervision practices
- Personal or familial reasons that encouraged them to enter this field
- Personal passion for the work

Relationships

Relationships are the formal and informal links or support networks within the organization, including:

- Social support
- Supportive relationship that foster trust
- Friendships at work
- Rapport and social capital
- Feeling valued as an employee
- Feeling connected at work especially during difficult times

Benefits

Benefits are the advantages and opportunities of staying within the organization, including:

- Health benefits
- Child health and educational benefits
- Self-image of working at the organization
- Strong family ties to organization
- Offered new position or training

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE RETENTION

Explore the alignment of employee passion and organizational values

- Explore employee's driving factors and passions
- Consider ways to discuss and honor employee's values
- Encourage sharing success stories within the organization
- Find creative ways to promote organizational values during meetings/retreats

Enhance relationships with employees

- Nurture relationships and links
- Spend time during meetings getting to know each other
- Foster trust and supportive relationships
- Schedule in-person or virtual social gatherings
- Encourage autonomy over projects
- Make employees feel valued and trusted

Highlight available employee benefits

- Opportunities for new skills-based training
- Effective trainings stress management or crucial conversations
- Opportunities for promotions
- Highlight employee autonomy
- Support creative solutions from staff
- Inquire what encourages employees to stay and leave

References
1. Southeast MHTTC, Why People Stay Workforce Retention Community Behavioral Health webinar, June 2022.

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration