

Macdonald Residence Nursing and Support Staff Wellness Initiative



CHALLENGES

Staff serve medically fragile residents in Old Town/Chinatown with frequent behavioral and physical care demands; short staffing and injuries are common. Engagement time for wellness was limited, and administrative burden and HR turnover complicated tracking and delivery.

SOLUTIONS

The project proposed a wellness initiative for roughly 60 nursing and support staff, centered on ergonomic upgrades, individual wellness stipends, and monthly trainings. Nursing leadership and People & Culture were to coordinate vendors for massage, acupuncture, and related services, while tracking stress and turnover using HR data and recurring wellness surveys.



Chair Massage
and
Acupuncture



Ergonomic
Equipment
Upgrades



Monthly
Wellness
Workshops



Increased
Communication

LESSONS LEARNED

Short, low-burden offerings such as 15-minute chair massage were the only wellness activities staff could reliably use during busy shifts; longer classes (for example, Zumba or yoga) were repeatedly canceled because ongoing crises and short staffing left nurses without time to participate. Staff described massage and acupuncture as genuinely helpful in the moment, but leaders observed that these comforts did not change stress driven by workload, staffing levels, and time imbalance. Administering surveys, coordinating vendors, and managing the grant also added work for already stretched managers. The team concluded that future efforts must pair “feel-good” benefits with structural changes that reduce workload and protect time, and must budget dedicated coordination so wellness initiatives do not become another source of stress for staff and leaders.

AT A GLANCE

Macdonald Residence implemented a multipronged wellness initiative combining ergonomic upgrades, brief wellness activities, and skill-building sessions to reduce workplace stress and improve retention among nursing and support staff. The project also introduced regular surveys to gauge impact and adjust offerings. Participation varied—short, low-burden options like chair massage drew steady use, while most classes had limited engagement. Turnover rose and stress reductions were modest, reflecting the heavy demands of the care environment.

Key Outcomes

The project aimed to reduce turnover and workplace stress by 10%, but measured outcomes fell short. Participation in most wellness activities remained low, limiting their overall impact. Chair massage was the only consistently used and effective offering, with all appointment slots routinely filled.



28%

Increase in staff turnover.



6%

Reduction in stress

Participation varied... we concluded that staff did not see the wellness offerings as a priority to engage in.

Workplace Well-Being and Safety Infrastructure