

June 2021

May is National Mental Health Month, and after the crazy year we have all experienced, this seems especially relevant. Mental health is something we always consider at House of Charity—we see our patrons struggle in many ways. As an admin team, we have also been tuned in to the needs of our staff. Witnessing and holding human suffering can take its toll, as is evident in high burnout rates leading to high staffing turnover.

As a team, we knew we could do better. We knew we could be more responsive to staff requests for training and find ways to acknowledge the impact of work-related stress on our employees. Thanks to a generous grant from the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA), we have implemented strategies that have helped us support the HOC staff in meaningful ways.

The impact of COVID has been tremendous on the folks we serve. As essential workers, this has only added to how we must support those accessing our services. Understanding that this is a pivotal time for our team, we contracted with TendHealth to provide emotional support and coaching in a group forum and individual sessions to dive deeper into issues that may need more personal attention. This group of licensed therapists has provided insight and strategies to cope with emotionally challenging situations and have provided resources to more intentional, long-term services when needed.

In response to employee surveys, we have also devoted a good deal of time to staff training. Staff members have engaged in De-escalation training, Motivational Interviewing training, and Suicide Prevention training, to name a few. Each training session builds both skills and confidence in helping staff feel they can better meet the needs of the vulnerable..

We have also taken time to celebrate as a team. Celebrating is essential to our sense of well-being because we are not alone in the hard work we do. We gather and enjoy the time to share food, stories, and fun. We are so grateful to FSPA and Sr. Kathy Roberg, who supported our application for this generous gift. Our team has remained healthy, intact, and happy to show up for our patrons every day.

With gratitude,
Dena

