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Transcending Boundaries by Reframing Human-Centered Leadership

Paper presented at the 2022 NCHL Conference

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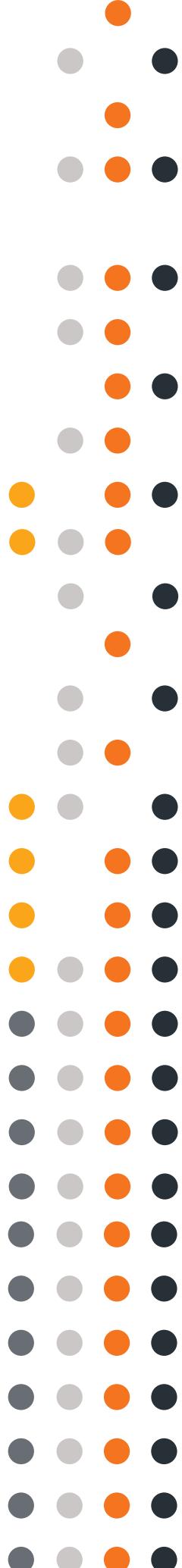
SUMMARY

Employee experience survey data combined with a psychometric algorithm provides insights into how organizations can support workforce development, foster employee engagement, improve retention, and address burnout.

Emerging data from a study of nurses in a large healthcare system finds that nurses with a powerful orientation stated higher levels of burnout than nurses with an adaptable orientation. Hypotheses for why this might be happening and recommendations to address root causes are shared.
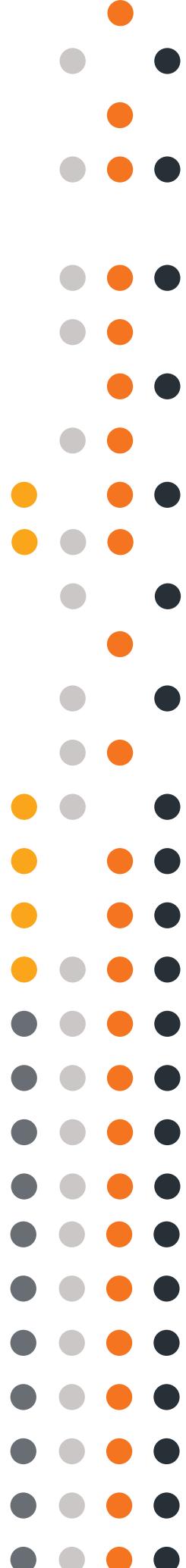
INTRODUCTION

The healthcare industry is facing significant challenges, including high levels of burnout among workers and difficulty in finding and retaining staff.

Staffing issues in healthcare can have significant impacts on patient care and satisfaction, as well as the overall functioning and efficiency of the healthcare system. To address the root causes of these issues, it is important to consider the perspectives and experiences of healthcare workers, as well as the organizational and systemic factors that may be contributing to the challenges they are facing.

HUMAN-CENTRIC LEADERSHIP

Leader and manager effectiveness tops the list of priorities for HR leaders, as reported by **Gartner**. In their report, the case is made that leaders must embrace human-centric leadership. Three traits central to human-centric leadership are:

- Authenticity: Enable true self-expression for themselves and their teams
- Empathy: Show genuine care, respect, and concern for employee well-being
- Adaptivity: Enable flexibility and support that fits the unique needs of team members

At SurePeople, we feel that human-centered leadership is a leadership style that focuses on the needs, well-being, and development of the individuals in organizations. It involves creating a positive work culture that supports and empowers employees while fostering a sense of community and collaboration within the organization. One way to address these challenges is through psychometric data, which can provide insights into how organizations can make decisions about workforce development, engagement, and retention.
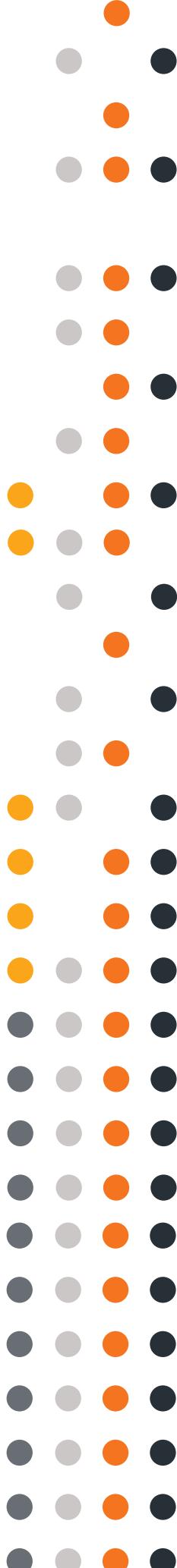
SOLUTION

Psychometric assessments are ubiquitous – access to credible instruments is no longer an issue. Psychometrics are used across cultures, industries, teams, and levels, making them suitable for many one-off needs. Most assessments are completed online and provide instant, personalized feedback. Practicing the recommended actions and applying these skills when needed is invaluable. For many individuals, these insights are rarely used.

Prism is a "best hits" tool. It includes seven different assessments in a single instrument and is designed to integrate a variety of personality theories into an efficient, comprehensive instrument. It provides detailed and useful feedback to guide personal insight, growth, and development. Its dynamism also helps capture the complexity of one individual and the paradoxes and nuances that can exist within each person.

Prism is built upon the four-dimension theory of personality proposed by William Marston. The theory suggests that personality is best understood when considering the interaction between the four dimensions of personality: powerful, versatile, adaptable, and precise.

Based on Marston's theory, the four dimensions should exist along a two-factor continuum, with two of the dimensions existing at the opposite ends of each factor. Thus, based on the four-dimension theory, the Prism personality module would have two factors.
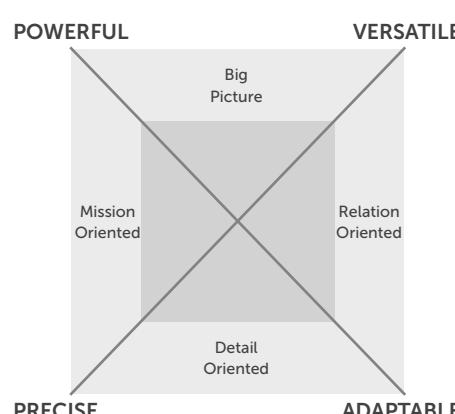
Figure 1. Four dimensions of personality

- The first factor includes the Powerful and Adaptable dimensions at opposing ends of the same scale. Individuals scoring high on Powerful typically score low on Adaptable.

- The second factor includes the Versatile and Precise dimensions at opposite ends of the same scale. Individuals scoring high on Versatile typically score low on Precise.

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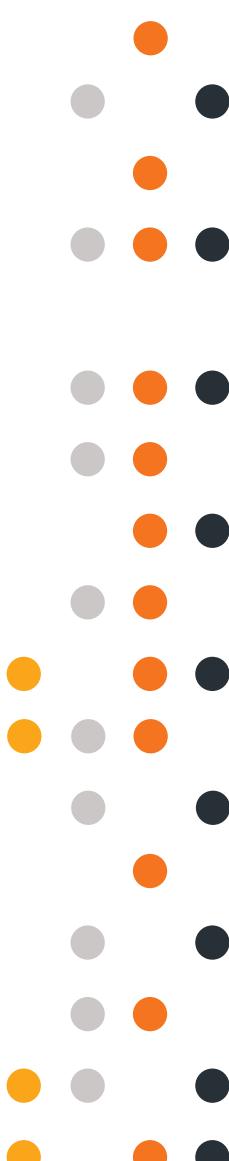
MACRO TRENDS IN HEALTHCARE

One trend we have noticed in a sample of 4,500 healthcare leaders is a high index on powerful and precise personality dimensions. The powerful and precise personality dimensions are each strongly correlated with a mission orientation, which represents individuals who are task-orientated.

Across the Prism dataset, healthcare leaders index higher on the powerful dimension, more so than managers and individual contributors (see below).

To recap, here is what we know about high-power people:

- Powerful is the strongest personality type; it denotes a natural leader and take-charge individual.

- Powerful people are not easily intimidated and apply the pressure necessary to get results.

POWERFUL

| DIRECTORS & ABOVE	MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS
n=1235	n=636	n=2562
55%	40%	39%
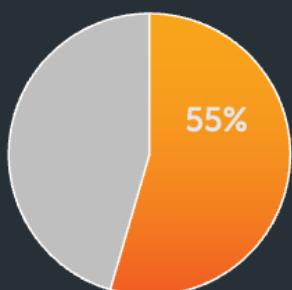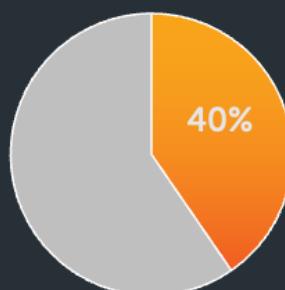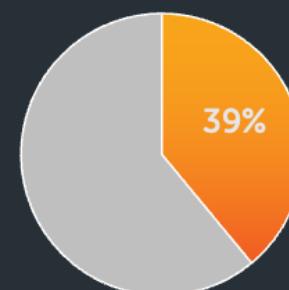
Figure 2. Powerful personality trait (Prism) across the healthforce.
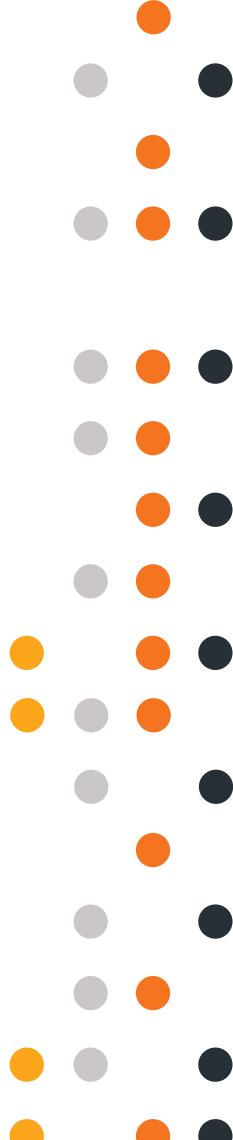
In contrast, versatile and adaptable personality dimensions are strongly correlated with a relational orientation.

Across the Prism dataset, individual contributors index high on adaptability. Likewise, managers and supervisors also index high on adaptability. Conversely, leaders reflect lower levels of adaptability (see below).

To recap, here is what we know about highly adaptable people:

• Adaptability distinguishes reliable and peaceable individuals.

• Adaptable people are averse to conflict but make friends easily and authentically by being dependable and loyal.

ADAPTABLE

| DIRECTORS & ABOVE	MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS
n=1235	n=636	n=2562
28%	42%	44%

Figure 3. Adaptable personality trait (Prism) across the healthforce.
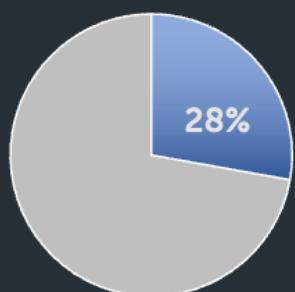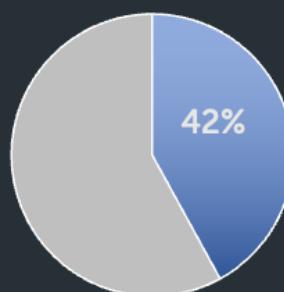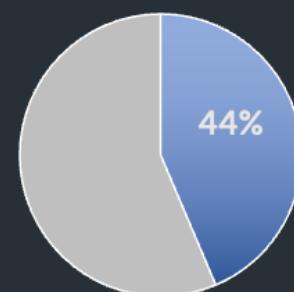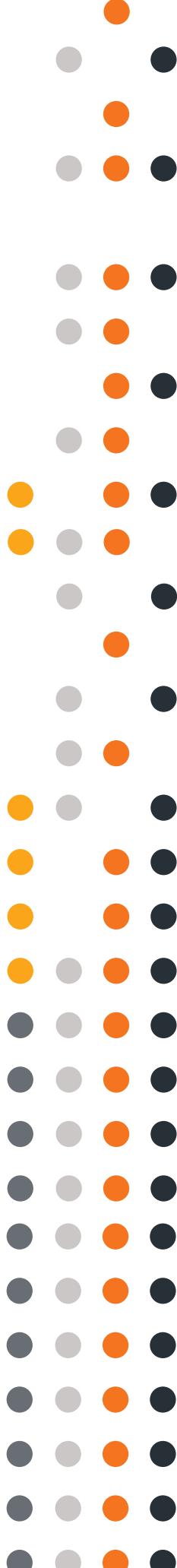
NURSE RETENTION PROJECT

Things get interesting when we start to layer psychometric data with engagement feedback. Another study across nursing roles at a hospital in a large healthcare system included combining nurses' survey feedback with their Prism data. We found that nurses with a powerful orientation stated higher levels of burnout than nurses with an adaptable orientation. Some hypotheses for why this might be happening are:

1. High-power nurses might be burning out because they are asked to be more relational in the new healthcare context

2. Relational people might have more strategies to decompress and connect with others, leading to greater resilience

3. High-power people are goal-oriented and driven by results. It can be draining and frustrating when nurses are overwhelmed by the system without feelings of accomplishment or results.

In addition, we found that nurses who feel valued and recognized for their contributions are less likely to experience burnout and feel more balanced in their work and personal lives. This suggests that addressing issues of recognition and appreciation may be an important factor in remedying staffing challenges in healthcare.

These findings show marked differences when we look at employees' feedback through the lens of their personality (Prism orientation). Next, we will walk you through the details of the project that led to these findings.
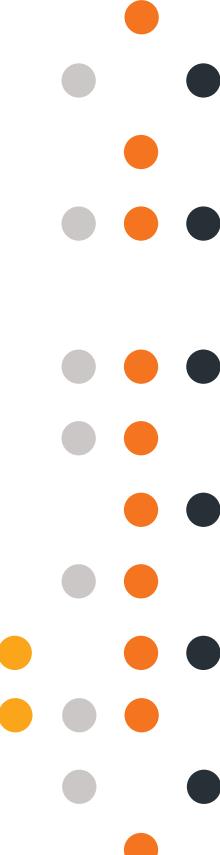
HEALTHFORCEX INDEX

We launched the HealthforceX Index, an employee experience survey, to 1,000 nurses in a large healthcare system located on the east coast in the U.S. When reviewing the results from the survey alone, we found that nearly all nurses (96% of respondents) agreed that the work they do is meaningful (see below). However, only slightly more than half said they feel valued and recognized for their contributions (by their organization). Perhaps not surprising, roughly just one-third of nurses said they have work-life balance and seldom feel burnt out.

Nurses say

THE WORK I DO IS MEANINGFUL
96%
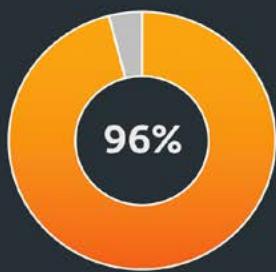
RECOGNIZED / FEELING VALUED
54%
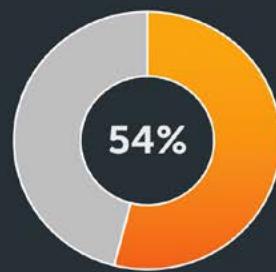
BURNOUT / BALANCE
35%
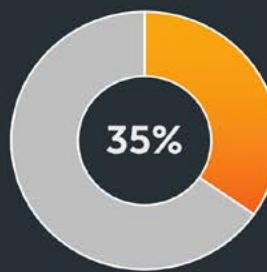
Figure 4. Survey responses from the HealthforceX Index.
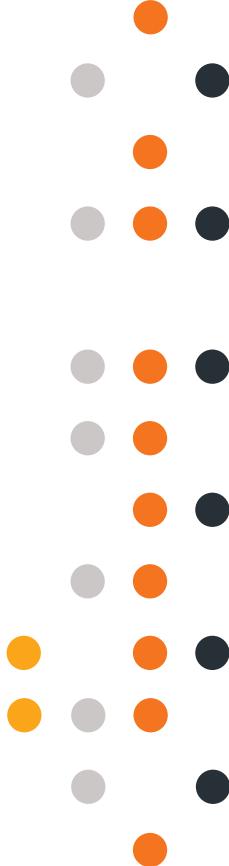
SYNTHESIZING PEOPLE DATA

As mentioned earlier, 54% of nurses overall said they feel recognized by their organization and feel valued for their work. However, 41% of mission-oriented nurses said they feel valued/recognized, compared to 86% of relation-oriented nurses (see below). There is a marked difference when you look at the nurses' feedback by their Prism orientation.


Figure 5. Survey responses to the recognition and feeling valued questions.
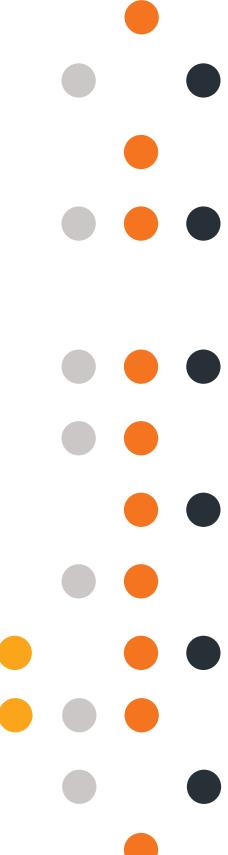
Overall, 35% of nurses said they have work-life balance and that they rarely feel burnt out. However, 26% of mission-oriented nurses said they have balance/are not burnt out, compared to 57% of relation-oriented nurses (see below). Again, there is a marked difference when you look at the feedback by their Prism orientation.

Burnout / Balance
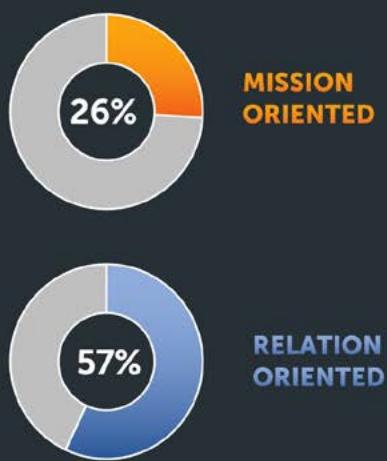
Figure 6. Survey responses to the burnout and work-life balance questions.
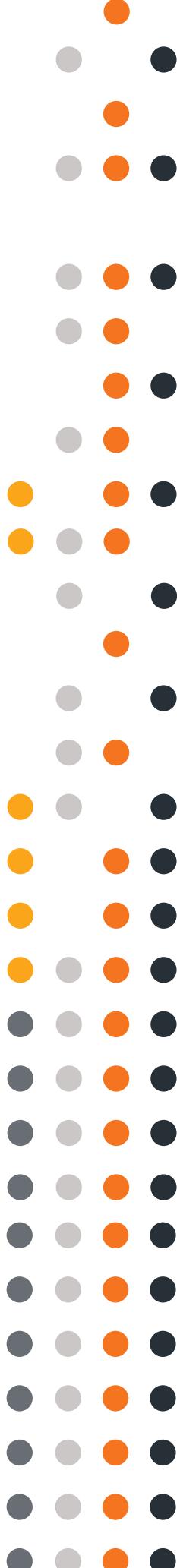
WHAT HEALTHCARE LEADERS SAY

Last November, we met with healthcare leaders at the National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL) conference to discuss the major challenges in the industry. They reinforced what we identified as growing struggles for many systems and their leaders - workers are burnt out, they're having a hard time recruiting staff, etc.

By layering this psychometric data with engagement feedback, we gained a deeper understanding of the factors that may be contributing to burnout and other challenges. We shared these findings with the leaders; here are a couple of the hypotheses they offered:

- We are seeing that high-power nurses may be burning out at a higher rate, while nurses who are more relational may have more strategies to decompress and connect with others, leading to greater resilience and reduced levels of burnout.

- High-power individuals may also be particularly goal-oriented and focused on getting results, which can be draining and frustrating when the healthcare system is already overwhelmed. Also, high-powered individuals may experience additional tension because they are asked to be more relational in the current healthcare context, which may contribute to higher levels of burnout.
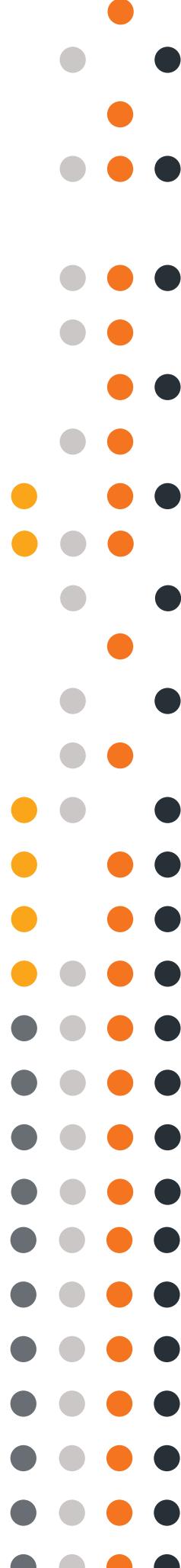
NEXT STEPS

There are several potential strategies that leaders and organizations can consider to better support and engage their healthcare workforce.

1. Improving communication and transparency: Ensuring that healthcare workers have access to clear information and communication channels can help to build trust and foster a sense of inclusion and belonging.

2. Providing opportunities for growth and development: Offering training and development opportunities can help keep workers engaged and motivated while also helping them build valuable skills for meeting patient needs.

3. Encouraging a culture of collaboration and teamwork: Building a culture that values collaboration and teamwork can help foster a sense of community and support among healthcare workers, which can be critical in helping them cope with the demands and stresses of their work.

4. Addressing issues of workload and time management: Implementing strategies such as time management training or restructuring work schedules can help reduce burnout and improve work-life balance.

5. Supporting the emotional and mental well-being of healthcare workers: Providing access to resources such as coaching, counseling, and support groups can help remedy issues of burnout and improve overall well-being.

Overall, the use of psychometric data can provide a new lens through which healthcare leaders can make sense of the challenges they face and empower them to more effectively support their people. By leveraging the wealth of data that many organizations already have, they can make more strategic decisions about how to develop, engage, and retain their workforce.

By taking a holistic approach that addresses both the individual and organizational factors that contribute to staffing challenges, leaders and organizations can work to create a more supportive and engaging environment for their healthcare workforce.
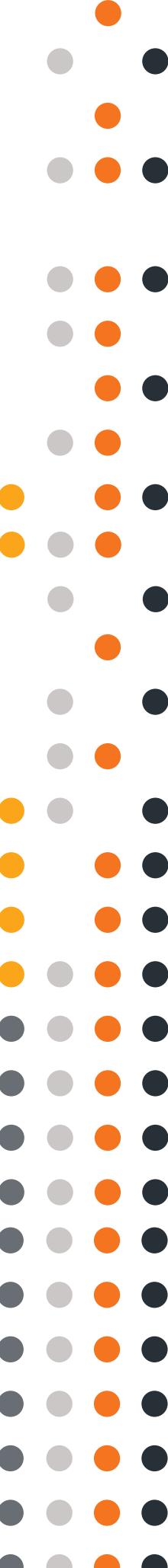
THANK YOU

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

SurePeople launched the HealthforceX Index, an employee experience survey, in September 2022 to nearly 1,000 nurses in a large healthcare system located on the east coast in the U.S. In October 2022, after the survey closed, the nurses began their Prism assessments. By November, the SurePeople Science team combined the Prism profile data and evaluated the survey responses.

ABOUT SUREPEOPLE

SurePeople is a technology innovator specializing in People Science. SurePeople's patented People Science OS powers the Company's five distinct brands, including SureAthlete, for professional and collegiate sports organizations; HealthforceX, for hospitals and health systems; WorkforceX, for medium and large businesses; Better Us, for unions and membership organizations; and Prism, for consultants, executive coaches and trainers. The SurePeople brands' solutions – across employee experience, leadership development, team optimization, talent strategy, digital transformation and mergers & acquisitions – have been recognized for innovation and impact by leading research and analyst firms such as Brandon Hall Group, Deloitte Consulting and Training Industry.

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