



# A Holistic Framework for Child Welfare Worker Well-Being

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## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

The authors of this article developed a holistic child welfare worker well-being framework identifying three key dimensions that make up worker well-being and how leaders within child welfare organizations can strategically and comprehensively support these dimensions.

## WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

The authors developed a workforce well-being framework specific to the child welfare workforce based on George Engel's 1978 biopsychosocial model that proposes there is an interplay among an individual's physical, psychological, and social environments. The authors identify three dimensions salient to the child welfare workforce: physical, psychological, and social workplace experiences.

**Physical well-being** consists of a worker's overall health and well-being (general physical health such as sleep disturbances, headaches, respiratory infections), workplace safety (e.g., workplace violence, verbal or physical threats), and secondary traumatic stress.

**Psychological well-being** includes job satisfaction, psychological safety, and feeling able to show one's self without negative consequences to self-image, career, or status. It also includes job burnout, work engagement, and inclusion.

**Social well-being** includes social support and work-life effectiveness.

These dimensions work together within the framework to make up the workplace well-being of a child welfare worker.



## WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Strategies to support workforce well-being across the dimensions include:

- **Physical:** Take precautions to maintain staff's physical safety; identify and address secondary traumatic stress; develop staff self-care plans with concrete actions
- **Psychological:** Encourage all staff to make decisions and learn from mistakes without shaming or blaming; ensure staff who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color are emotionally supported; support a mobile, flexible workforce
- **Social:** Create an inclusive and equitable organizational climate through problem-based workgroups and distributive leadership; ensure all staff have access to work supports; facilitate social gatherings and celebrations