

# Code Lavender<sup>®</sup> program



## A quick start guide

This quick start kit outlines how a Code Lavender program can be implemented to support the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of patients, families and care team members.

Heart of Safety  
**Coalition**

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Inspiring transformation for care team safety and wellbeing

# Executive summary

In today's healthcare ecosystem, the definition for exceptional care has expanded from only meeting quality and safety standards to creating a healing ecosystem that meets both the physical and emotional needs of patients, family members, physicians, nurses and staff.

That's why more organizations are investing in programs such as **Code Lavender**. A Code Lavender program is a formalized rapid response designed to support patients, families, physicians, nurses and staff members in times of emotional distress. When a stressful event occurs, care team members, patients or families may call upon a Code Lavender response team, typically comprised of pastoral care, wellness or integrative medicine, social work, palliative care or other support services teams. The Code Lavender responders provide support that may include healing presence, comforting resources, emotional or spiritual counseling and connection to additional support as needed.

Organizations investing in Code Lavender programs have seen positive results, including improved nurse and physician wellbeing, staff experience, patient-family experience and quality/safety outcomes.

A Code Lavender program is a simple yet powerful way for organizations to invest in the wellbeing of care team members, patients and families. Nevertheless, it requires a thoughtful approach to ensure appropriate communication, resources and cultural shift to produce its intended effect. This toolkit was created to help you design, launch and spread a Code Lavender program at your organization.

Supporting patient, family and care team member emotional wellbeing through approaches such as Code Lavender programs is foundational to transforming healthcare and achieving the Quadruple Aim of improved outcomes, lower costs, a better patient-family experience and restoring joy to healthcare.

## What you'll learn in this toolkit

- How a Code Lavender program supports an optimal human experience
- How to co-design and implement an effective Code Lavender program
- Resources and examples from organizations with successful programs

“ In a perfect world, for every Code Blue called to resuscitate the heart and lungs there is a Code Lavender called directly after to resuscitate the mind, body and spirit. ”

~ M. Bridget Duffy, MD

# Why emotional wellbeing matters

## Impact of emotional wellbeing on care team members

The caring professions demand a lot of doctors, nurses and other care team members. Healthcare professionals tap into their intellectual, emotional and physical resources to deliver exceptional care to their patients. Continually giving to others without renewal leads to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and loss of self-efficacy.<sup>1</sup> Burnout symptoms among physicians are widespread and rising.

Care team members who are unable to renew their personal emotional resources are likely to develop apathy, treat patients and family members inappropriately, become dissatisfied with their work and suffer in both personal and professional relationships.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, low levels of clinician stress and burnout have been linked to:

- **Reduced medical errors.** Surgeons with lower levels of emotional exhaustion report fewer major medical errors.<sup>3</sup>
- **Improved patient adherence.** Physician job satisfaction is directly correlated with medical treatment adherence for patients with major chronic diseases.<sup>4</sup>
- **Increased patient satisfaction.** The patients of physicians who consider themselves “very or extremely satisfied” with work show higher satisfaction scores. When nurses are dissatisfied or report burnout, their patients are more likely to report lower satisfaction levels.<sup>5</sup>
- **Reduced turnover.** Physicians experiencing lower levels of burnout are less than half as likely to change jobs than those experiencing higher levels of burnout.<sup>6</sup>
- **Lower medical liability.** Burnout has been linked to increased risk of lawsuits.<sup>7</sup>

## Impact of care team emotional wellbeing on patients and families

Several studies link patient perception of provider empathy with improved patient satisfaction.<sup>8,9</sup> A New England Journal of Medicine Catalyst article notes most definitions of patient-centered care specify that “care focuses on physical comfort as well as emotional wellbeing.”<sup>10</sup> And one study found that nurses in clinics where compassion practices were commonly used reported less emotional exhaustion and felt more energized than those in clinics without regular compassion practices. Patients in the former group of clinics reported more positive interactions with nurses and of their care experience overall.<sup>11</sup>

# Quick start guide

**A Code Lavender program is a formalized rapid response designed to support patients, families, physicians, nurses and staff members in times of emotional distress.**

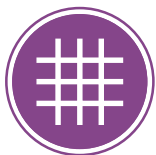
When a stressful event occurs, care team members, patients or families may call upon a Code Lavender response team, typically comprised of pastoral care, wellness or integrative medicine, social work, palliative care or other support services teams. The responders provide support that may include healing presence, comforting resources, emotional or spiritual counseling and connection to additional resources as needed.

Here are brief instructions to help you design, launch and spread a Code Lavender program at your organization. If you want a copy of the Code Lavender toolkit with detailed use cases of the program implemented at other hospitals and health systems, please email [heartofsafetycoalition@stryker.com](mailto:heartofsafetycoalition@stryker.com).



## Align

- **Recruit program champions:** Engage an executive sponsor and a multidisciplinary team to co-design the Code Lavender program.
- **Inventory existing resources:** Discover and consider resources that already exist to support the emotional wellbeing of care team members, patients and families at your organization.



## Co-design

- **Enlist your program responders:** Identify who will be on the Code Lavender responder team and what their roles and responsibilities are.
- **Determine when to deploy:** Decide in which situations and events someone can activate a Code Lavender response.
- **Map your workflow:** Create a process map to plan what happens when a Code Lavender response is called.



## Test

- **Design your pilots:** Draw up a small pilot of the program, launch the pilot and use observational research and survey tools to capture pre- and post-pilot data.
- **Define your metrics:** Choose process and outcomes metrics to measure and determine the frequency and method of measurement.



## Spread

- **Plan your rollout:** Assess the program pilot, determine your communication strategy, decide where and how to spread and scale the program and refine your measurement approach.

## Endnotes

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# About the **Heart of Safety Coalition**

The Heart of Safety Coalition places care team member safety at the heart of healthcare. This national community of industry leaders, learners and advocates ensures that voices are heard, connections are made, and standards are raised to inspire systemic, team and individual change that improves working and healing environments. The Coalition's three pillars of care team safety advance the Heart of Safety Declaration, which intersects the essential wellbeing principles of dignity and inclusion, physical safety, and psychological and emotional safety. Driven by its mission to make healthcare better, Stryker supports and manages the Coalition. Learn more at [www.HeartofSafetyCoalition.com](http://www.HeartofSafetyCoalition.com).