

Well-Being Best Practices Toolkit for Leaders

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WELL-BEING

Introduction

In recent years, much attention has been appropriately directed toward well-being as an area of opportunity and priority for sustaining excellence and joy in healthcare. The experiences we shared during COVID 19 magnified the significance of our roles within CUIMC while humbly reminding us of the importance of taking care of ourselves and of one another as human beings.

Under the leadership of Dr. Lou Baptista, Chief Well-Being Officer and Dr. Katrina Armstrong, Dean of the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, we embark on a new chapter to address our well-being; one that relies on our core values of equity and inclusion and that deploys best practices and tools that can better our daily work experiences. We aim to meet the vision set by Dean, Dr Armstrong, for “Columbia University Irving Medical Center to be the place where the very best people in their fields choose to join, decide to stay, thrive while they are here, and make lasting contributions to the way we are collectively changing medicine and improving health.”

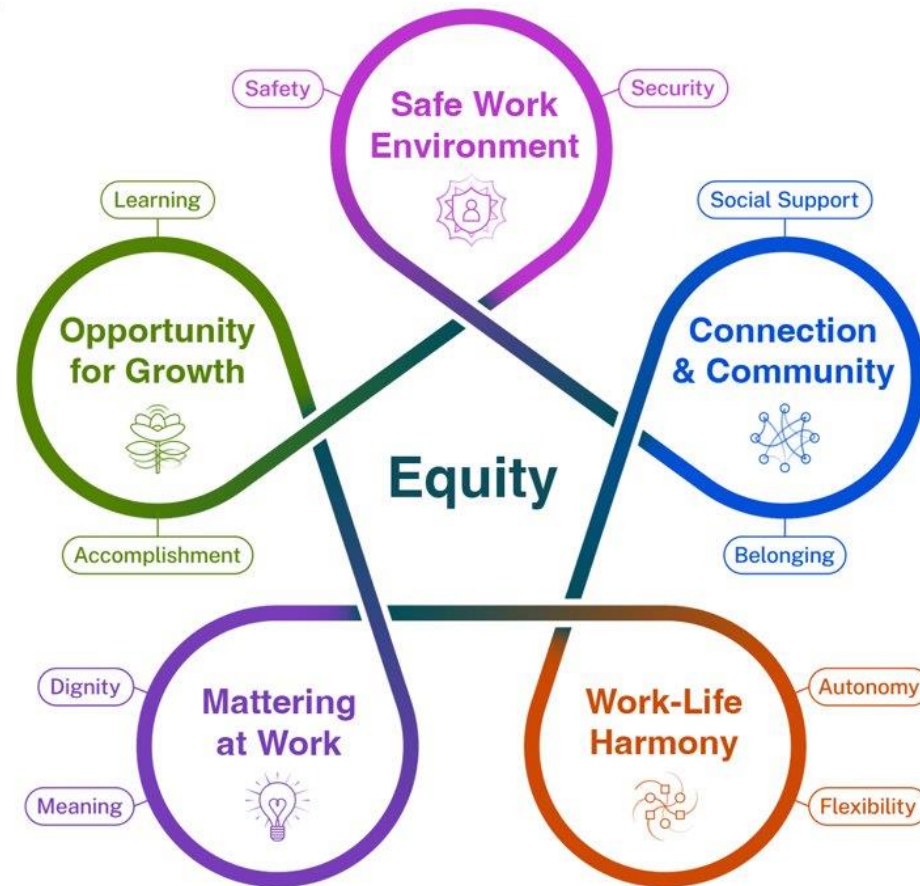
We recognize the importance of providing institutional initiatives that incorporate the voices of our community — your voices—as heard loudly and clearly during our recent CUIMC Well-Being Survey. Here, we start with our clinical departments, as we introduce to you a first set of Well-Being Best Practices Toolkit for Leaders. The toolkit is inspired by the [CUIMC Well-Being Framework](#), coupled with our Well-Being Survey results. We hope for this resource to continue to evolve as we learn more about the experiences of various groups across CUIMC. The toolkit uses a holistic approach that acknowledges the sophisticated realms of well-being for every individual and group of people. You may choose to use this toolkit in a step-by-step fashion as a map for creating well-being in your workplace, or you can use the toolkit as a reference guide for ideas as you implement specific local changes aiming at well-being improvement.

Be well,

[Well-Being Best Practice Workgroup](#)

CUIMC Well-Being Framework

Our efforts will be guided by what we have learned from our colleagues through the survey and anchored by [a conceptual framework developed by the U.S. Surgeon General](#)¹. Below is the framework our CUIMC Well-Being Initiative has adopted. Our actions will utilize an evidence-based approach that encompasses all components outlined in the framework.



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

Well-Being Best Practices Toolkit for Leaders

The Well-Being Best Practices Toolkit was developed to assist in the multi-level approach to achieving an overarching culture of well-being at CUIMC by working with our leaders.

This toolkit provides recommended strategies for fostering an environment conducive to well-being.

Feel free to go through the recommendations step-by-step or jump to a section by selecting it from the menu on the right.



Click on a section to jump to that component of the toolkit.



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1

The Commitment



The Commitment

Best Practice: Align with CUIMC values & our commitment to improve the well-being of all CUIMC faculty & staff

Leaders are influential figures in an organization and their actions can set the foundation of the work culture. Leadership is not defined by rank or title. In fact, anyone in the organization can be a leader. An essential element of leadership is role modeling. Leadership behavior and values alignment is shown to impact satisfaction of the individual providers.^{2,3} Based on recent survey at CUIMC, most individuals expressed alignment with CUIMC values.



Self-Reflection:

- How do my actions and behaviors as a leader align with CUIMC values?
- How does my leadership demonstrate my commitment to my team's Well-Being?
- In what ways do I currently display positive role modeling?



Consider this:

- Role model values alignment and reference CUIMC values in your communication and decisions
 - Click [here](#) to learn more about CUIMC CARES code of values.
- Sponsor and organize a diverse well-being committee
- Require managers to attend Well-being Leadership Training (contact the [Well-Being Office](#) for upcoming trainings)
- Plan, study and measure well-being improvement projects
- Host department Grand Rounds conferences to share well-being research and literature

CUIMC CARES: Civility Acceptance Respect Ethics Support



2

The Culture & the Environment



The Culture & The Environment

Best Practice: Build human connection and trust within your team

The majority of CUIMC who responded to the well-being survey identified their colleagues as one of their job's most rewarding features. Promoting social connection is shown to facilitate problem solving, validation of emotions and reactions, and serves as a support for effective coping.⁴



Self-Reflection

- How do my current leadership behaviors foster trust for my team?
- What actions do I take to build connection within my team?
- In what ways do I currently foster a sense of community within my team?



Consider this:

- [Create a psychologically safe space](#) for transparent dialogue and active listening (e.g., “leadership listening rounds”)
- Send well-being “pulse checks” to your team members through impromptu in-person or remote check-ins
- Create a peer support or “buddy” system during onboarding ⁴
- Designate “reset” and networking spaces for your teams where they work
- Prioritize and protect meeting times with your team members
- Consider organizing creative team events, such as a workshop or other offerings through [Narrative Medicine](#)
- Utilize performance reviews as an opportunity to connect with your team and cultivate engagement ⁵ (Table 1)



Table 1

Annual Performance Review Format ⁵

Leader	Dimension
<p>“I want to begin by thanking you for your dedication to our patients and the sacrifices you make to help the division be successful over the last year. I <i>particularly</i> want to recognize . . .”^a</p>	<p>Recognize Individual Contributions and Achievements</p>
<p>“I hope we can spend most our time together discussing some of your personal goals and ideas on what we can do to improve things as a division. Before we get to that, I need to share with you some of the productivity and performance measures that the organization routinely tracks on each of us. These metrics don’t capture all the important ways in which you contribute to our division, but they are a partial appraisal of some of the things that can be readily measured.”</p>	<p>Transparent Communication</p>
<p>“We are trying to identify ways we could work more effectively as a division. What do you see as our biggest challenges right now? Have you had any ideas on how we might make progress in that area? Adding more support staff would be helpful, but we do have to go through formal institutional channels and make a business case to do so. We are working on that but it takes time. Short of hiring more people, are there other ways we could improve efficiency or work differently to make progress in the near term?”</p>	<p>Humble Inquiry</p>
<p>“I’d like to spend our remaining time discussing some of your goals. What aspect of work are you finding most fulfilling right now? What specifically about that has been particularly meaningful lately? Is that a new direction you see your career going? What additional skills or training do you think would help you get there? Are there 2-3 tangible things we could work on over the next 12 months to make progress along that line? How could I help you pursue that?”</p>	<p>Facilitate Professional Development</p>

^a Be personal and specific.

The Culture & The Environment

Best Practice: Exercise a culture of safety and invest in efforts to reduce workplace violence

A safe workspace is fundamental to the delivery of high-quality care and work. The [Public Safety office](#) is a great resource for keeping your team safe. Additionally, ColumbiaDoctors has policies and trainings available to ensure a work environment that is free of violence and discrimination.



Self-Reflection:

- What do I currently do as a leader to promote safety in the workplace?
- How do I communicate with my team to check-in on their sense of safety?
- When was the last unsafe incident in my workspace? What actions have I taken to prevent similar events from occurring?



Consider this:

- Request Public Safety presentations and representation at new hire, new student, refresher training, tabling events, and similar opportunities.
- Share and reference the information available on the [Public Safety](#) website (e.g., Lion Safe App, future training, safety tips and videos, and emergency protocols)
- Partner and meet regularly with the Quality and Safety teams
- Record, analyze and make local modifications to respond to safety events
- Require [Zero-Tolerance Policy training](#) during team members' onboarding
- Display the [Patient Code of Conduct](#) in patient-facing spaces
- Encourage *See something, Say something*- safety is our collective responsibility.



The Culture & The Environment

Best Practice: Develop a platform for recognition, appreciation & reward

Recognition is an important part of engagement and a way to show employees they are seen and valued. Employee recognition plays a major role in employee well-being as it increases employee engagement, helps retain employees, improves performance and fosters a strong & healthy work culture.



Self-Reflection:

- How often do I recognize my team members for their efforts?
- In what ways do I currently show appreciation to my team?
- Am I familiar with CUIMC's recommendations and resources for [employee recognition](#)?



Consider this:

- Provide formal and informal expressions of appreciation to your employees, such as:
 - Consider starting meetings with “shout outs” to your team members for a job well-done
 - Provide a thank you note with positive feedback from direct leader figures⁶
- Advocate for incentive structures that reward excellence in performance
- Encourage nominations for CUIMC's [Employee Spotlight](#)
- Celebrate personal accomplishments and professional milestones



The Culture & The Environment

Best Practice: Foster an inclusive and fair work culture

Inclusion in the workplace fosters a culture of respect and safety. When employees have a sense of belonging, they can bring their authentic selves to work and are physically and mentally better prepared to support our CUIMC goals. The workplace experience can be different for everyone and therefore it is important to ensure equity in access to development and opportunities.



Self-Reflection:

- In what ways do I currently promote a diverse and inclusive work environment?
- Am I familiar with the initiatives through [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at CUIMC](#)?
- How do I promote and sustain a climate of connectedness and inclusivity within my team?
- Am I familiar with the [CUIMC CARES](#) code of values? Do I role model these values for my team?



Consider this:

- Educate team on CUIMC [Employee Resource Groups](#) and support participation
- Create safe and open space for dialogue and to learn about [anti-racism](#) in the workplace
- Measure and desegregate data in your department to identify impacts of race or gender on well-being and patient outcomes
- Facilitate opportunities for growth and development for underrepresented groups
- Host trainings to reduce bias and micro aggression in the workplace
- Connect with the Office of Professionalism (professionalism@cumc.columbia.edu) if you have a concern.



3

Promoting Self-Care



Promoting Self-Care

Best Practice: Promote self-care, work/life integration, and access to health & well-being resources

Practicing routine self-care and work/life integration can improve health, enhance well-being, and encourage social connection & cohesion within our community. Leaders play a key role in modeling these practices for their teams by encouraging colleagues to take time for themselves, sharing CUIMC and external resources, and supporting departmental well-being initiatives.



Self-Reflection:

- In what ways do I role model self-care?
- How familiar am I with CUIMC's benefits and healthcare/well-being resources? How often do I share this information with my team?
- In what ways am I supporting my team in managing work/life integration and responsibilities?



Consider this:

- Share [CopeColumbia](#) programs and resources that support mental health, well-being, and resilience
- Facilitate access to Columbia University [mental health](#) resources
- Leverage [Work/Life](#) resources and contact their office to see how they can assist your team
- Build or support a work schedule that allows for stable but flexible work hours
- Promote processes that ensure appropriate rest time (e.g., schedule meetings during work hours, measure and reduce clinical work outside work hours)





Growth, Innovation, & Sustainability



Growth, Innovation and Sustainability

Best Practice: Promote efficiency in practice and team-based care delivery

Inefficiency in daily workflows can lead to unnecessary increases in workload burden. A sustainable workload is essential and working in teams can lend to efficiency. Team-based delivery of care has been linked to improved patient outcomes and can improve health professionals' sense of well-being.⁷



Self-Reflection:

- Where is there redundant work being done in my department?
- Are the roles and expectations of each member of my team optimized and clearly defined?



Consider this:

- Conduct a [Practice Assessment](#) to identify opportunities for improvement
- Invest in training high performing teams (see [Table 2](#))
- Query your team for practices that can be simplified or eliminated⁸
- Partner with EPIC optimization initiatives to enhance your team's use of EHR
- Dedicate a team for redesigning daily operational and clinical workflows
- Establish a consistent check-in process to assess team communication & satisfaction



Table 2

Principles of High Performing Teams

Principle	Definition	Impact on Clinician Well-Being
Shared Goals	The team establishes shared goals that can be clearly articulated, understood, and supported by all members [a]	
Clear Roles	Clear expectations for each team member's functions, responsibilities, and accountabilities to optimize team efficiency and effectiveness [a]	Role clarity has been associated with improved clinician well-being [b] A fully staffed team that is not over patient capacity is associated with decreased burnout [c]
Mutual Trust (psychological safety)	Team members trust one another and feel safe enough within the team to admit a mistake, ask a question, offer new data, or try a new skill without fear of embarrassment or punishment [a]	A strong team climate promotes clinician well-being and member retention [d,e]
Effective Communication	The team prioritizes and continuously refines its communications skills and has consistent channels for efficient, bidirectional communication [a]	Effective communication is associated with decreased clinician burnout [f] Participatory decision making is associated with lower burnout scores [g]
Measurable Processes and Outcomes	Reliable and ongoing assessment of team structure, function, and performance that is provided as actionable feedback to all team members to improve performance [a]	Emotional exhaustion is associated with low personal accomplishment, so reiteration of accomplishments could decrease burnout [h]

Source: Smith et al., "Implementing optimal team-based care to reduce clinician burnout," National Academy of Medicine.



Growth, Innovation and Sustainability

Best Practice: Empower and transform CUIMC professionals to become leaders

Healthcare organizations are complex environments that require strong, comprehensive and collaborative leadership. Leveraging the skill sets of our employees and empowering them to become leaders can improve individual well-being and creates opportunities for innovation and advancement in work designs and patient care.



Self-Reflection:

- Am I familiar with my team's skill sets and interests?
- How do I encourage creativity and innovation in the workplace?



Consider this:

- [Empower your team](#) to develop professional goals and act as a coach, mentor, or sponsor
- Starting with onboarding, schedule time to meet and facilitate professional growth for everyone (e.g., outline professional skill sets, interests and develop a plan for fulfilling professional goals)
- Sponsor high performers to participate in leadership and skill enhancing trainings
- Encourage and facilitate ways for your team to identify and select mentors
- Provide team members opportunities to utilize their advanced degrees, where applicable (MBA, MPH, PhD)
- Encourage your team to apply for grants for innovation, participate in research and engage in community events



Next Steps

Thank you for reviewing the well-being Best Practice Toolkit for Leaders. You may have reached the end of the toolkit, but we now start the journey of reshaping the future of well-being in the CUIMC workplace together!

As you consider making modifications in your local work environment, identify opportunities for growth, set goals, and develop a plan to measure the impact of the changes you have made. We have provided examples on how to get started in the [Additional Resources](#) section.



Tell us how things are going!

We want to know what works, what did not work, and what your own toolkit ideas are that we need to add to our collection.



Have an idea for a new or existing well-being improvement project?

Contact the Well-Being Office at well-being@cumc.columbia.edu. We are happy to work with your team to discuss opportunities and collaborate as you determine a local action plan for your department.



Additional Resources



Psychological Safety Strategy

Leaders can promote psychological safety by:

- Encouraging contributions from all team members
- Inviting all team members to share their input
- Promoting active listening & learning from each other
- Acknowledging and respecting the limits of one's knowledge
- Celebrating trials, pass or fail, and providing positive reinforcement for innovations

In Team Settings



Create psychologically safe environment during team meetings by using phrases, such as:

- *I appreciate your feedback. Let's go around and hear everyone's thoughts.*
- *It's important that each of us is on the same page, so let's get everyone's input.*
- *It's fine to disagree. That's why we're talking about this together.*
- *Maybe someone has a different perspective and I would like to hear. Would anyone like to share?*
- *What do you all think about [idea]? I'm interested to hear your thoughts.*

In 1:1 Interactions



Create psychological safety one-to-one in the ways you speak directly to your colleagues:

- *That's a good point. Do you mind bringing that up during our team meeting next week so that everyone can hear that?*
- *As long as I'm not with a patient, feel free to grab me at anytime. There's no such thing as a stupid question.*
- *I hear you. Please tell me more.*
- *I'm not sure I've done this right. Can someone help me?*
- *What a great observation! I've never noticed that.*

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2018. Creating Psychological Safety in Teams.



Narrative Medicine Offerings

Narrative Medicine StudioLab

Campus-wide gathering place for faculty, staff, and students with interests in humanities, creative work, and the arts:

- Monthly meet-ups for large groups to present their work, hear about projects, collaborative opportunities, network. These have been virtual since COVID, and we are considering resuming in-person meetings.
- Intensive short-term workshops for groups of selected participants in medical journalism, fiction-writing, poetry-writing, photography, sketching, cartooning.
- Museum and gallery tours guided by professional artists

Intensive Short-Term Team-Building workshops

Departments, divisions, or units can request short-term narrative medicine workshops for multi-disciplinary groups that build team cohesion, cultivate individual creative development, and establish a sense of belonging.

Individual Creative Projects for Units

A group may request a design and execution partnership to plan an event for a department or division

- Guided museum trips
- Installation of visual art in their space
- Musical performances in their space
- Bespoke workshops in creative work for members of the group. Could be of any length and intensity desired from one-off workshop to series of meetings.

For more information on Narrative Medicine events and offerings, please visit their [website](#) or contact Renee Russas, Administrative Manager, at rs3970@cumc.columbia.edu.

Practice Assessment Strategy

Recommended workflow:

- Identify departmental resources & establish internal assessment workgroup.
- Conduct current state assessment on all dimensions (see below) and evaluate current workflows.
- Assess staff structure & responsibilities.
- Create, distribute, & complete tools to mitigate maps.

Assessment Dimensions:

- **Analytics**
 - Epic Dashboards, Press-Ganey, Signal
- **Communication Workflows**
 - Observations, workflow mapping
- **Clinical/Operational Workflows**
 - Observations, workflow mapping
- **Staffing**
 - Practice assessment
- **Scheduling Templates**
 - Booking guidelines, clinical scripts, schedule utilization
- **Space Utilization**
 - Space analysis, schedule utilization



Please contact the [Well-Being Office](#) to request support for conducting a Practice Assessment for your team or department.

Source: CUIMC People & Organization Development - Optimization



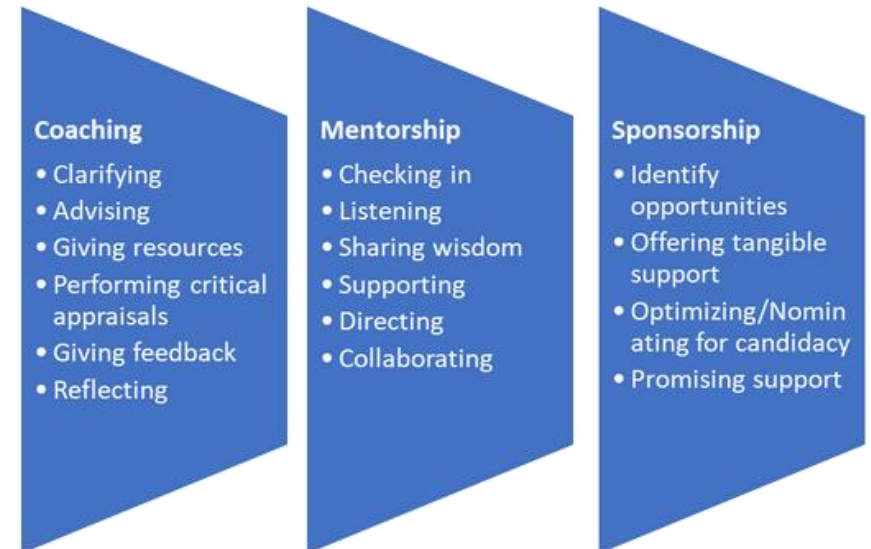
Empowering CUIMC Professionals Strategy

A strategy for professional development can contribute to the development of diversity for future healthcare leaders. Coaching, mentorship and sponsorship are interlinked and must be core components of every leader's role. Formal training maybe necessary to ensure consistency in delivery.

Recommended workflow:

- Schedule 1:1 time with every team member to learn their areas of interest, professional short- & long-term career aspirations
- Ask your team to set yearly professional goals with associated action plans
- Review professional goals' progress yearly and individualize your approach to coach, mentor or sponsor

	Coaching	Mentorship	Sponsorship
Goal	Skill improvement	Career guidance	Career advancement
Time Frame	Periodic	Longitudinal	Episodic
Method	Focused	Broad-based dialogue	Specific advocacy



Source: Al Achkar M, Rogers TS, Weidner A, Seehusen DA, South-Paul JE. How to Sponsor, Coach, and Mentor: A Qualitative Study With Family Medicine Department Chairs. Fam Med. 2023;55(3):143-151

Resource

Setting SMART Goals

Specific

- Set well-defined and clear goals.
- *What do I want to accomplish?*

Measurable

- Determine criteria for measuring your progress.
- *How will I know when I've reached my goal?*

Achievable

- Set goals that are possible to accomplish.
- *Do I have the resources to achieve my goal?*

Relevant

- Identify goals that are aligned with the vision.
- *Is my goal aligned with my overall objective?*

Time Bound

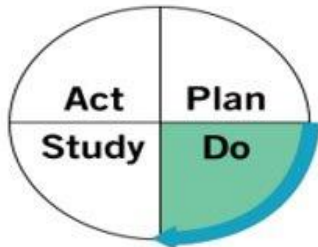
- Determine a deadline and set milestones.
- *When will I accomplish my goal?*

Resource

Well-Being Improvement Projects (using IHI QI Essential Toolkit)⁹



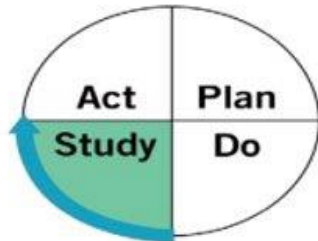
- Identify the well-being intervention you want to implement and include predicted outcome
- Develop a plan for well-being project (what, who, where, when)
- Identify the data you intend to collect to measure your impact



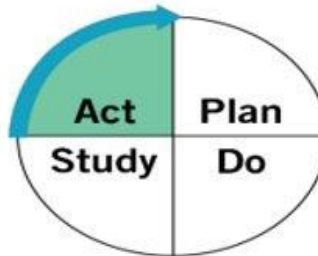
- Run the well-being project
- Collect data and observations



[Click here to download a Project Planning Form](#)



- Analyze the data collected and compare to prediction
- Summarize and reflect on findings

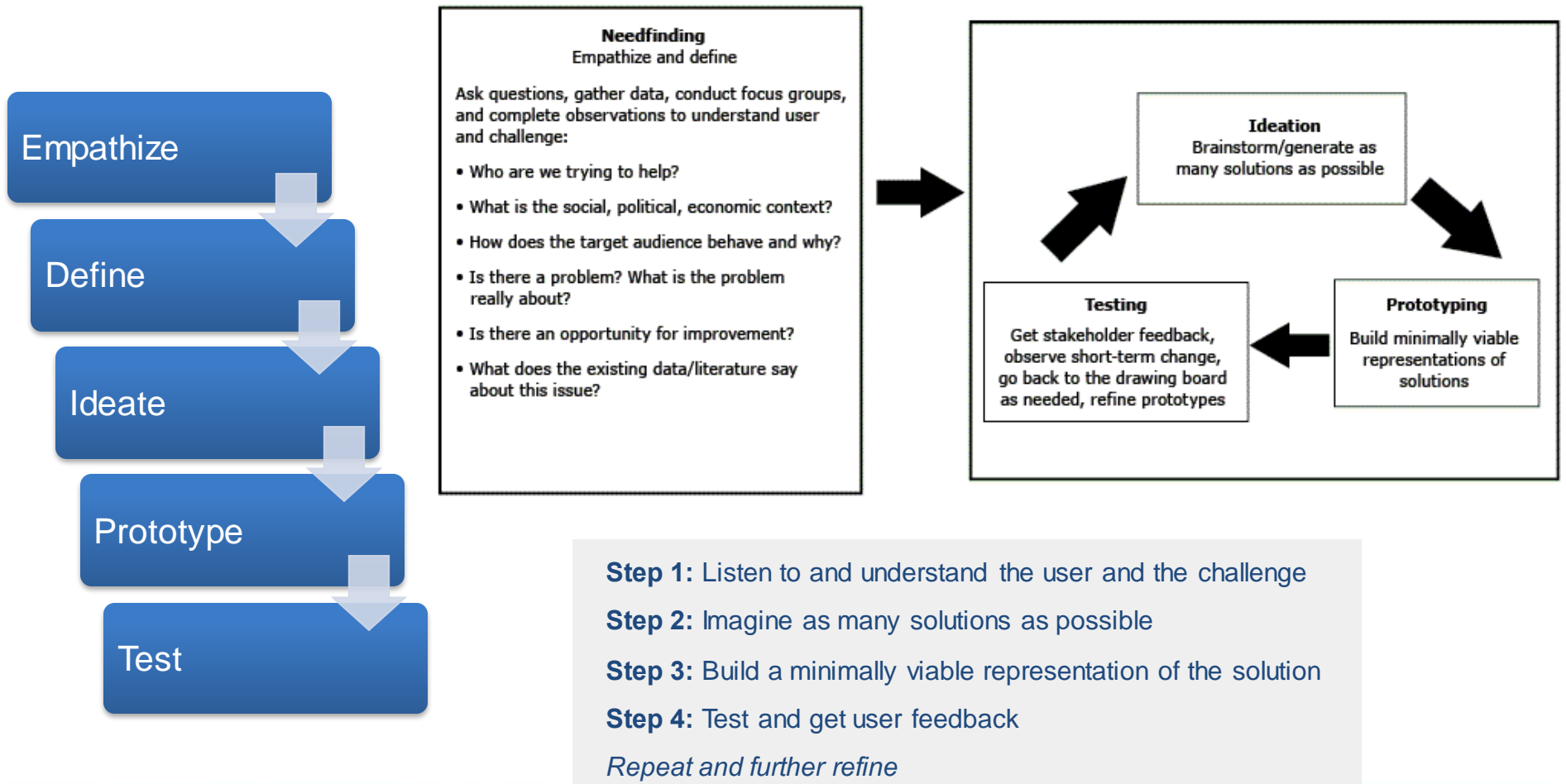


- Develop a plan for next steps, based on what is learned from prior well-being initiative (adapt, adopt or abandon)

Resource

Consider Design Thinking¹⁰

Design thinking is a problem-solving approach that is centered on human needs and behaviors. Starting an open conversation with the individuals we work with to understand their needs and desires can likely provide inspiration for the best local solutions.



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