**To**: Dr. Erika Paterson

**From**: Alicia DeGelder

**Date**: 26 January 2019

**Subject**: Proposal for Identifying Rates of Job Burnout in Hospital Staff and Establishing Coping Mechanisms.

**Audience**: This proposal will be prepared for the individual leaders of the prospective departments included in the survey process. These leaders will have the ability to order educational materials via on online printer through Interior Health (IH) and book time for employees to learn coping mechanisms. In addition, the leaders of each department hold daily huddles at which this topic could be broached.

**Introduction**:

Job burnout is a specific type of work-related stress characterized by a state of physical and/or emotional exhaustion. This condition may be triggered by long-term work conditions including a lack of autonomy and work overload. Long-term exposure to stress may result in the occurrence of physical manifestations.

Healthcare is an endless job that requires staff to constantly be present to meet the needs of patients. This may include front line staff such as nurses and doctors, or ‘behind the scenes’ staff such as specialized technicians. Regardless of the job title, burnout can affect anyone who is experiencing daily stressors.

**Statement of Problem**:

Symptoms of job burnout include fatigue, cynicism, detachment, and under prolonged conditions may manifest into physical presentations. Anxiety, cynicism and detachment all contribute to decreased teamwork and employee efficiency, which may lead to other staff members compensating for decreased production. This leads to an entire workplace culture shift which can mean increased employee sick time. An increase in employee absence rates further contribute to the stress by leaving employees to work understaffed. Clearly, the issue of job burnout can be self-perpetuating unless solutions can be implemented to stop the cycle.

**Proposed Solution**:

The first step in fixing a problem is first identifying the problem. An initial solution may include an informative brochure summarizing the issue of job burnout. This material could define job burnout, list factors contributing to this phenomenon and include ways to cope with symptoms. A second solution may include employee wellness sessions, break-time guided meditation sessions or other employer provided coping methods.

**Scope**:

To assess the feasibility of addressing job burnout in healthcare, I plan to pursue the following areas of inquiry:

1. What are the main environmental contributors to job-burnout?
2. What are the symptoms and physical manifestations of job-burnout?
3. What number of employees feel their job contributes to their stress?
4. What number of employees feel they are affected by stressors in the workplace?
5. How many employees are currently participating in self-care strategies?
6. What coping mechanisms can be used to deal with burnout?
7. What resources are available currently at KGH to help employees?
8. What new employer-provided options can feasibly be implemented?

**Methods**:

Primary sources will include an anonymous survey distributed to healthcare employees (including office staff, and technicians) which will identify risk factors, levels of burnout, and current use of self-care techniques. The survey will be made using google docs and distributed via email to departments including the lab and MDR.

Secondary material will include research on job-burnout, including internet searches and reading of primary literature on the topic.

**My Qualifications**:

I am a science undergrad at UBC-O in my third year of studies. I am the author of one research paper and am listed as contributor for many more, in collaboration with lab staff at KGH. I have been an employee in the KGH MDR Dept for over 10 years and am currently employed as an administrative assistant for KGH Microbiology.

**Conclusion**:

Symptoms of job burnout contribute to a negative work environment. Significant stress levels can contribute to cynicism and detachment, which in turn can lead to decreased work efficiently and work ethic. Lack of team involvement can then further contribute to workplace stress, passing on the stress to more and more employees. Increased stress can then lead to physical symptoms, leading to an increase in employee absenteeism.

Job burnout is recognized by psychological science and appears to be a self-perpetuating phenomenon. This cycle requires a break in the chain of stressors in order to begin healing the culture. The first step is identifying the underlying issue and then providing resources for people to learn how to counteract these daily stressors. Thank you for considering my proposal, upon your approval I will begin my research immediately.