

**Principle 9:
Morale and job satisfaction are
improved**

#choosepaediatrics

Me: Paeds is a serious and difficult acute speciality.

Also me: Declaring myself king conducting handover from atop my castle.

#choosepaeds

So many reasons; all of medicine & surgery in one, general & speciality options, diseases find them rarely them the disease, superb multidis teams, holistic & family orientated, mahoosive age range, bouncy babies, cheeky children, enterprising YP #theyarethefuture #paedsrocks

I decided to #ChoosePaediatrics because why would you want to work anywhere that doesn't have bright colourful wards, bubbles, 4am baby cuddles, prescriptions for doughnuts, stickers, feel better teddies, the funniest & cutest patients, and breakfast tummy hunts? #paedsrocks

But, sometimes, the reality is..

- Staff shortages
- Cancelled teaching
- Cancelled admin
- High pressures
- Emotional burden
- Reduced study budgets
- Exam pressures



Strategies to maximise job satisfaction

Individual: ideas explored:

Happiness Drivers

Core Values

Connection

When core values compete

Work-Life Balance

Happiness Advantage

Reframing work

Boosting Energy

Time Famine and how to counteract

Systems:

Training Department/Team

School/Deanery

HEE/BMA

RCPCH

Where to get support

Us as individuals

Everyone is different

- We all have different loads
- We all process in different ways
- We are all on our own independent path to consultancy

Acknowledging openly that our clinical experiences can be emotionally and psychologically challenging is paramount.

Understanding that training can be challenging is essential.

AND there needs to be systems in place that prove we are valued, ensure support for our physical and psychological health and optimise our training and working environment.

Firstly we explore how, as individuals, we can boost our own morale and then we will look at the systems in place to improve our job satisfaction.

Happiness Drivers – Laughology

CONFIDENCE

Sense of self
Self efficacy
Self reliance
Self actualisation

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self- awareness
Setting and achieving goals
Seize opportunities, stretch
yourself
Purposeful work

SUPPORT

Heard and hear
Your opinion matters
You make a difference
Sharing knowledge

POSTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Your role in relationships
Empathy
Fun/Laughter/Play

COPING SKILLS

Be resilient
Creating perspective
Solution
focused/optimism/good
at problem solving
Facing challenges

CORE VALUES

Sense of self

The root to improving our own morale lies in understanding our own core values

Core values: 'the inner compass that guides us to those things, people and places that fulfill us'

- Truly understanding your values takes some work and effort
- Once understood using your core values can drive your intention and help you to evaluate offers, opportunities and projects effectively
- When we honour our values consistently we experience fulfillment
- When we don't, we are incongruent and are more likely to escape into bad habits

Starting point:

- <https://scottjeffrey.com/personal-core-values/>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/act-worksheets/>

Core Values: Examples

1. Acceptance: to be open to and accepting of myself, others, life etc
2. Adventure: to be adventurous; to actively seek, create, or explore novel or stimulating experiences
3. Assertiveness: to respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want
4. Authenticity: to be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself
5. Beauty: to appreciate, create, nurture or cultivate beauty in myself, others, the environment etc
6. Caring: to be caring towards myself, others, the environment etc
7. Challenge: to keep challenging myself to grow, learn, improve
8. Compassion: to act with kindness towards those who are suffering
9. Connection: to engage fully in whatever I am doing, and be fully present with others
10. Contribution: to contribute, help, assist, or make a positive difference to myself or others
11. Conformity: to be respectful and obedient of rules and obligations
12. Cooperation: to be cooperative and collaborative with others
13. Courage: to be courageous or brave; to persist in the face of fear, threat, or difficulty
14. Creativity: to be creative or innovative
15. Curiosity: to be curious, open-minded and interested; to explore and discover
16. Encouragement: to encourage and reward behaviour that I value in myself or others
17. Equality: to treat others as equal to myself, and vice-versa
18. Excitement: to seek, create and engage in activities that are exciting, stimulating or thrilling
19. Fairness: to be fair to myself or others
20. Fitness: to maintain or improve my fitness; to look after my physical and mental health and wellbeing
21. Flexibility: to adjust and adapt readily to changing circumstances
22. Freedom: to live freely; to choose how I live and behave, or help others do likewise
23. Friendliness: to be friendly, companionable, or agreeable towards others
24. Forgiveness: to be forgiving towards myself or others
25. Fun: to be fun-loving; to seek, create, and engage in fun-filled activities
26. Generosity: to be generous, sharing and giving, to myself or others
27. Gratitude: to be grateful for and appreciative of the positive aspects of myself, others and life
28. Honesty: to be honest, truthful, and sincere with myself and others
29. Humour: to see and appreciate the humorous side of life
30. Humility: to be humble or modest; to let my achievements speak for themselves



Core Value: Connection

- Many feel human connection gives the true enjoyment in life.
- A study entitled Very Happy People, sought out the characteristics of the happiest 10 percent of us. Only one characteristic distinguishes the happiest 10 percent from everybody else. The strength of their social relationships.
- Yale scientists have shown that shared experiences amplify their impact. Together you are more likely to be absorbed and present in the experience.
- A paediatric consultant has connection as one of their top core values. Every day they make the effort to connect with their trainees and children/families they care for. 'Connection is the foundation for trust and then allows you to proceed with treatment and advice'.
- Others have understood this core value and it drives their passion for family integrated care and shared decision making as a principle of the care they provide.
- It has helped many colleagues travel the emotional path with a family focusing on their supportive role in a sometimes very difficult journey.

When Core Values compete - Tips

- Example: Wanting to focus on family vs desire to contribute at work.
- Contribution at work may be covering on calls and rota gaps, it may be taking on QI/Audit, it may be running the rota or staying late to finish clinic letters because you ran to get endoscopy experience. Everyday we contribute in so many ways. Our personal development is a core ingredient for happiness and job satisfaction. So is surrounding yourself with family and positive relationships.
- **Tip:** Recognise the importance of both core values
- Be hyperalert to when you take on more that is a 'yes act' for people pleasing, for face value, and does not align with your core value.
- Try to say no to these and focus on the work that boosts you. To help:
- consider the projects you are involved in and block time for focused productive work
- Utilise your SPA, utilise study time (talk with your ES on how to do this)
- Communicate with your family
- Don't compromise on sleep
- Be boundaried: [The Art of Saying No - Continuum Loop Inc.](#) (5 fab tips on how to say no)
- Be kind to yourself, it is ok to not always get it right

Work life balance

“The term work-life balance balance has never resonated for me – it feels simplistic and precarious. Instead, I like to imagine we each have a DJ’s mixer with hundreds of tiny dials representing friendships, family, love, work, health, spirituality, fun and more. Every minute, we’re representing friendships, family, love, work, health, spirituality, fun and more. Every minute, we’re twisting and tweaking those knobs, making micro-adjustments to account for our evolving dreams, dynamic priorities, and shifting circumstances.

For me, applying an optimizer’s mindset has helped remove the shame and guilt that can come with tough trade-offs or bumps in the road. I no longer bother looking for that elusive work-life balance, but rather seek to adjust all those tiny dials on my mixer to create a compelling and pleasurable track that ebbs and flows, just like life.”

Colleen White - <https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-be-happier-at-work-according-to-optimization-manager>

The Happiness Advantage

‘We need to raise the possibility of happiness in the present’

NOT beyond the cognitive horizon

Cognitive Horizon: If I work harder I’ll be more successful.

If I get a paediatric ST1 training post I’ll be happy, when I pass the exams I’ll be happy, If I get the right training location, If I can just get GRID, If I can just get through START...etc’

We often synonymize ‘success’ with ‘happiness’ but then when we succeed we push the goal post further away (Cognitive Horizon)

The Happiness Advantage is about doing small things that improve our wellbeing -> shown to improve creativity, cognition and learning.

[YouTube: The Happiness Advantage Shawn Achor](#)

Reframe work to boost fulfilment

- Through training we may have expectations on how our day should go, how the post should develop our skills, and ultimately an expectation of how we will be as consultants.
- Filling sickness gaps and covering on calls can be exhausting and detract from training goals/personal development
- Leaving us to feel unfulfilled and worn out
- Reframe the experience: There is always learning and development (every encounter is a learning opportunity)

Example: Reframe covering gaps

Consider how it can work in your favour, what are you learning/developing:

- Leadership skills
- Communication skills
- Vast exposure to acute presentations
- Prioritisation skills
- Develop your interest
- How you would do it better
- How you would support trainees
- Sparks you into QI work
- It might spark your interest in campaign work
- Local, regional, national rep
- BMA rep
- Specific interest group

Boost Your Energy – health core value

- Invest in your health
- Better sleep, nutrition, hydration, exercise
- Strengthen relaxation response
- List activities at work that can help you relax
- Identify and use your strengths
- Consider a time when you were able to overcome or handle a major challenge in life, what strengths did you draw upon?
- Increase daily positive emotions
- Identify sources of joy/humour
- Express gratitude

But what about Time Famine?

Time famine is the feeling of not having enough time to do everything you want to do.

Consequently we often multitask, prioritise based on stress, we're not present in the moment, we compromise on our core values and ultimately we feel stressed.

This can lead to a vicious cycle of bad habits, poor sleep and lead us to burnout.

Think about a busy on-call week. Do you consistently provide your best self for your own family, your patients and your own health?

There is a trend to counteract time famine through technology, this is not always helpful. Consider:

- Whatsapp groups
- Virtual meetings

Listen to this great podcast by the inventor of the ATM

Many of these 'time-saving' hacks leave us less connected and more isolated and often more bombarded with requests.

How to counteract

Delegate

- Many people believe they have to do everything themselves to be successful. But a failure to leverage the help around you can lead to overload and fatigue. If you're in a position to delegate or outsource tasks, then do so whenever you have the opportunity.

Sleep

- A lack of sleep affects your productivity and creativity.
- Get sleep hygiene right, we need 7-8hours a night.

Learn to say no

- [The Art of Saying No - Continuum Loop Inc.](#) (5 fab tips on how to say no)

Set boundaries

- Turn off notifications and be present
- Take your breaks. Stopping can be hard, lead and remind the team of the importance of a refresh.

Use your values

- Focus on what relaxes you
- What grounds you to your values
- What boosts your happiness advantage

How the trainee environment should help.

The Trainee Charter: The hallmark of outstanding training

- Bleep free teaching
- Facilitated study leave
- Intelligent rota designs to ensure adequate rest
- Education on healthy lifestyle, sleep and risks of fatigue
- Appropriate rest facilities, especially if not feeling safe to travel home
- Access to hot food and hydration
- Opportunity to reflect with access to psychological support as necessary
- Adequate time in work to complete supporting professional activity (SPA)
- See more here: [The Trainee Charter](#)

What if its not...

- Discuss with your ES and/or college tutor, consider a QI project.
- Exception reports are there to help! So is the Guardian of safe-working. Find yours and raise concerns when needed.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Team and Psychological safety

At work we all need colleagues that we can lean on, learn from and smile with.

- Trainee environments should ensure support for traumatic clinical experiences and understand that interventions are useful for supporting staff in processing events.
- Many departments provide this through fab educational supervisors, through clinically led debriefs and other educational meetings. Some provide formal psychology support.
- [Read: Psychological safety and how to digest our work together.](#)
- Consider developing this as a QI project or bring the request to the college tutor if not formally provided already.

Where is the help?

- Training department/ team
- School/ Deanery
- HEE/ BMA
- RCPCH

Deaneries

Our HOS' are there to develop, deliver and quality manage paediatric specialty training in the UK. They are a great source of support and can point you in the right direction.

See the RCPCH website for the contact details for you HoS -

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/membership/committees/heads-school-committee>

HEE & BMA

In June 2020 HEE published the fourth [Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives progress report](#).

[The BMA](#) has been involved since the start of this work and engages in order to improve non-contractual conditions for us.

This includes:

- Recognition of the pandemic on our training
- Expanding access to LTFT
- Out of programme pause
- Supported return to training

The BMA is in our corner representing our views. Although there remains many frustrations in our recognition and training. There have been huge steps forward. Read [here](#)

RCPCH

Progress+

- The royal college have responded to Shape of Training with a new two-level run through specialty training programme that is flexible, fit for purport and fulfilling. See [here](#)
- Watch our VP for Training & Assessment Dr Cathryn Chadwick detail [Progress+](#)

Paediatricians of the future: [Delivering really good training](#).

- Describes how principles can be applied in existing training settings.

Morale and Job Satisfaction are improved

Examples indicative of good practice:

- Schools and Deaneries take an active part in encouraging Trusts to implement the recommendations of the 'Improving doctor's working lives' working group.
- Schools and Deaneries actively promote diversity and value all trainees career choices+ Senior nurses support the triage of paediatricians' bleeps
- Trusts consider the introduction of a taxi service to transport staff home late at night.
- A dedicated pastoral lead is available for each training location.
- Peer-led coaching and mentoring is promoted within the School.
- Tailored resilience and stress management training is available within the School.
- Mindfulness awareness sessions for trainees are available within the School.
- Critical incident debriefs are held in training units.
- Excellence reporting with positive feedback being a core part of all working teams.

It's all too much

Never feel alone

- Speak to your people
- Speak to your educational supervisor/confidant at work
- Pastoral support through your trust
- Your GP

Training distress contact:

- ES, College Tutor, Training Programme Director, Head of school, your trainee reps local, regional and national

Other links

- [Second victim](#): support for professionals involved in patient safety incidents
- [NHS leadership academy resources](#)
- [BMA support services nationwide directory](#)

Here to support NHS and social care workers in England



Samaritans has launched a new confidential support line for NHS and social care workers.

Our volunteers are here to support you when you've had a tough day, are feeling worried or overwhelmed, or just have a lot on your mind and need to talk it through.

Call our free confidential support line

0800 069 6222

7am to 11pm, 7 days a week

Samaritans is a registered charity

Working in
partnership

SAMARITANS

NHS

Grab a book or listen to more!

Simon Sinek- Find your why

Jay Shetty- Think like a monk

Brene Brown- Atlas of the heart

Shawn Achor- The Happiness Advantage & The Big Potential

James Clear- Atomic Habits

The Happiness Lab podcast

Check out [Laughology](#)- loads of fab videos

Find out more on the
RCPCH website

www.rcpch.ac.uk/progressplus

