

## Meeting Advancing Excellence Goals with The Eden Alternative®

### *Process Goal: Improve Staff Stability*

*by Denise Hyde*

**Description & rationale:** A stable workforce is fundamental to providing the highest quality care and life in nursing homes and sustaining performance improvement. Working on this goal will provide nursing home staff with resources and tools to improve staff stability, especially by reducing staff turnover. The result will be better care for the resident and a more satisfied workforce. Working on this goal may also reduce costs that are associated with high turnover rates.



**How The Eden Alternative strengthens this goal:** Becoming well-known is a core value for those implementing The Eden Alternative. Elders cannot become well-known to their care partners, if employee turnover is high. High employee turnover exacerbates the loneliness, helplessness, and boredom experienced by Elders who live in institutionally driven organizations. A caring community – where care partners are well-known to each other – facilitates reciprocal relationships, promotes mutual growth, and strengthens optimism, trust and generosity. These are all characteristics of a warm organization. People tend to stay and succeed in warm organizations where relationships come first. Caring relationships create the loving companionship needed to alleviate loneliness in the lives Elder care partners (Principle Three).

To support the growth of a caring community and reduce turnover of employee care partners, The Eden Alternative has incorporated steps into the [Path to Mastery: The Art of Creating a Caring Community](#) and developed supportive resources to help organizations be successful. These steps and resources include:

- [Milestone 1](#) steps, such as (1) Formal leaders developing a plan to replace temporary employees with permanent care partners; (2) Formal leaders having a plan to strengthen relationships in the organization; and (3) Leaders ‘warming the soil’ in the organization.
- Milestone 1 Toolkit tools, such as (1) A Registry Member’s story on reducing agency staff; (2) A comprehensive list of resources organizations can access with ideas to reduce turnover; and (3) Ideas to ‘warm the soil’ of the organization.
- [Milestone 2](#) steps, such as (1) The organization stabilizing staffing and ending agency staff utilization; (2) Developing conflict resolution skills in all care partners; (3) Formal leaders building relationships with all care partners; (4) All care partners being introduced to the use of Learning Circles; and (5) All care partners (employees, family members, and the Elder herself) creating a caring community.
- Milestone 2 Toolkit tools, such as (1) A team tool to create 360 degree feedback; (2) Conflict Resolution 101; and (3) Ideas on how to grow a caring community.
- Annual data collection on turnover rates from Registry Members for benchmarking.
- [Eden Alternative Warmth Surveys](#) and analysis tools. Surveys are recommended for use annually to assess the levels of optimism, trust and generosity among all the care partners.

- [Milestone 3](#) steps, such as (1) Care partners using conflict resolution skills; (2) Formal leaders caring for the employees, as they want them to care for the Elders; (3) Formal leaders using an empowering, servant leadership style; (4) Growing empowered teams, moving decision-making closer to the Elders; (5) Everyone using Learning Circles to improve communication and problem-solving; and (6) Employee care partners developing skills in interviewing, hiring and welcoming new team members.
- Milestone 3 Toolkit tools, such as (1) Implementing consistent assignment; (2) Person-directed approaches to interviewing, hiring, and growing the team; and (3) A resource guide to grow empowered teams.
- [Milestone 4](#) steps, such as (1) Aligning employee evaluations with the Ten Principles, (2) Openly accepting every individual; (3) Promoting the well-being of all, (4) All care partners having strong caring relationships and being accountable to each other; (5) All care partners enjoying their simple pleasures; (6) All care partners having growth plans; and (7) Caring for each other (helping each other to grow) is a core value in the organization.
- [The GROWTH Model](#), a six step process model to help teams identify and develop a plan to improve employee retention.
- [Eden Alternative Paradigm Buster: “The Role of Job Descriptions in Person-Directed Care,”](#) a resource full of examples and templates to assist organizations in redesigning job descriptions and performance evaluations that promote ongoing growth for all care partners.
- [The PHI Coaching Approach](#) for leader growth, communication, and teamwork.
- [Neighborhood Guide Training](#), which focuses on the development of empowered teams via a 30-module curriculum. This resource strengthens the internal motivation of employees by increasing their autonomy, purpose, and mastery (skill development). Employees that are empowered and motivated stay with the organization.

Take advantage of the many resources offered by The Eden Alternative designed to help organizations improve employee retention. Eden Registry Members consistently demonstrate high employee care partner retention that grows stronger as the Principles and practices are more deeply embedded within the organizational culture. Consider these many options when striving for this Advancing Excellence Goal.