

Creating Your Ideal Employee Avatar

From Burnout to Belonging – Practical Tool for Rural Healthcare Teams

Purpose

This exercise helps your team move from vague ideas like “we need better staff” to a **clear, shared definition of the ideal employee**—grounded in your real environment.

When done well, this tool supports:

- Hiring decisions
 - Onboarding strategies
 - Staff development
 - Retention efforts
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STEP 1: Create Your Employee Avatar

Give your ideal employee a **name and identity**.

Name: _____

Role: _____

Years of Experience: _____

Quick Description (1–2 sentences):

Who is this person?



STEP 2: Define Core Traits

Skills (What they can DO)

Examples:

- Cross-trained across departments
- Strong clinical judgment
- Clear communicator

Your Team's List:

- _____
 - _____
 - _____
-

Mindsets (How they THINK)

Examples:

- “We’re in this together” attitude
- Growth mindset
- Flexible and solution-oriented

Your Team's List:

- _____
 - _____
 - _____
-

Behaviors (What they SHOW daily)

Examples:

- Speaks up when concerned
- Supports teammates without being asked
- Stays calm under pressure

Your Team's List:

- _____
 - _____
 - _____
-

Values (What matters to them)

Examples:

- Patient-centered care
- Team collaboration
- Community connection

Your Team's List:

- _____
 - _____
 - _____
-

STEP 3: Make It Real (Daily Actions)

What does this employee do during a stressful shift?

How do they communicate with teammates?

How do they interact with patients and families?

STEP 4: Stress Test Your Avatar

Scenario:

Short staffing. High patient volume. Emotional family situation.

How does your employee respond?

- Emotionally: _____
- Behaviorally: _____
- Communication style: _____

STEP 5: Identify Support Needs

Even ideal employees need support.

What could cause this employee to struggle or burn out?

What support helps them succeed?

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- ---
- ---

STEP 6: Resource Mapping

How do we BUILD this employee using what we already have?

WHO can mentor or model this behavior?

WHAT systems already support this?

WHERE can we cross-train or develop skills?

HOW do we reinforce and reward these behaviors?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS (For Discussion or Leadership Use)

- Are we currently hiring for **skills only** or also for **mindset and behavior**?
 - Where do we already see pieces of this employee in our current team?
 - What's one barrier preventing this employee from thriving here?
 - What's one thing we could change immediately to better support this employee?
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FINAL COMMITMENT

One action I will take to help build this employee:

Key Insight to Remember

*“The goal is not to find perfect employees—
it’s to create environments where the right employees can thrive.”*