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Stop Losing Great Staff

Build a Team That Stays

A PRACTICAL STAFF RETENTION GUIDE

FOR HEALTHCARE PRACTICE OWNERS
AND PRACTICE MANAGERS

INDIGO MEDICAL CONSULTING

A Little About This Resource

Keeping good people is about much more than recruitment. It is shaped by what employees experience from the moment they first hear about your practice, through their induction, everyday conversations, opportunities to develop and the way the team works together.

Through my work with healthcare practices, I often find that what appears to be a staffing issue has a few more layers to explore. A team may be feeling stretched, but the underlying cause could involve unclear responsibilities, inefficient workflows, communication or the support available to its leaders.

I have brought together this checklist to help you take a fresh look at the things that contribute to a workplace where people feel supported, valued and able to do their best work. It is not about finding fault or expecting every practice to operate in exactly the same way.

As you work through each area, I encourage you to consider not only what is in place, but how it is experienced by your team in everyday practice. You may find some reassuring strengths, along with a few questions that invite you to look a little further beneath the surface.

How To Use This Checklist

For each statement, tick it only when you feel it is consistently reflected in everyday practice. Leave it unticked if it is partly in place, not yet in place or you are unsure. Use the reflections and mini-audits to explore what the answers might be telling you.

The sections include practical ideas you can adapt to your own team. You do not need to tackle everything at once. Often one thoughtful conversation or a small improvement is a very good place to begin.

A note about the scores: The tally at the end is simply a prompt for reflection, not a validated measure of staff turnover risk. The conversations behind your answers matter much more than the number.

Stop Losing Great Staff

01 Leadership & Management

Consider what is consistently happening in your practice, not simply what is documented.

- ☐ I make time for regular, individual check-ins with team members.
- ☐ Feedback is timely, respectful and includes recognition as well as guidance.
- ☐ Workplace concerns and conflict are addressed early and fairly.
- ☐ Team members feel comfortable approaching leadership with questions or concerns.
- ☐ I invest time in developing my own leadership skills.
- ☐ I remain calm, fair and consistent when the practice is under pressure.
- ☐ Expectations for behaviour, performance and accountability are clear.
- ☐ I model healthy professional boundaries and sustainable working habits.
- ☐ I notice and acknowledge the contributions of different team members.

Something to Think About

Silence Doesn’t Always Mean Everything Is Okay

In the everyday running of a busy healthcare practice, it is natural for our attention to go towards the immediate needs of patients, employees and the business. When things seem to be running smoothly and no concerns are being raised, we may understandably feel that everyone is doing well.

But silence doesn’t always mean everything is okay. Some employees are comfortable sharing how they feel, while others quietly get on with their work, even when something is worrying them or they are feeling a little disconnected.

Sometimes a genuine conversation, a moment of recognition or simply making time to listen can help us understand what we may not otherwise see. How might we create more of these opportunities in everyday practice?

Stop Losing Great Staff

A Little Closer Look

- When did you last ask each team member how they are going, beyond the immediate tasks?
- What happens after someone raises a concern? Do they see a response or follow-up?

A Practical Place to Begin

- Schedule short, individual check-ins and follow through on what is raised.
- Recognise a specific contribution and explain why it mattered.

02 Culture & Communication

Consider what is consistently happening in your practice, not simply what is documented.

- ☐ Our team understands the practice values and what they mean in daily behaviour.
- ☐ Team meetings are regular, purposeful and include meaningful follow-up.
- ☐ Good work and shared achievements are acknowledged.
- ☐ Tension or unhelpful behaviours are addressed respectfully rather than allowed to build.
- ☐ Employees understand how their role contributes to the whole practice and patient experience.
- ☐ Important information is shared clearly and consistently.
- ☐ Respectful behaviour is expected across every role and level.
- ☐ Team members can offer ideas and raise concerns without fear of being dismissed.
- ☐ Our values are reflected in the behaviours we encourage and accept each day.

Something to Think About

The Culture We Experience Every Day

Culture is often found in the little things: the way people welcome one another, offer help during a busy clinic and respond when the day does not go to plan.
We may have a clear picture of the culture we hope to create, while employees experience it through hundreds of small interactions. Both perspectives are valuable, and sometimes they are not quite the same.

It can be worthwhile inviting the team to share what helps them feel connected and supported, and what might make working together a little easier. What might we learn by listening to their everyday experiences?

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A Little Closer Look

- Do your meetings invite genuine contribution, or mainly pass on information?
- How are practice values made visible through everyday decisions and behaviour?

A Practical Place to Begin

- Invite the team to share one example of a value being lived in practice.
- At the end of each meeting, agree who will follow up and when.

03 Onboarding & Expectations

Consider what is consistently happening in your practice, not simply what is documented.

- ☐ New employees receive useful information before their first day.
- ☐ Roles, responsibilities and expectations are explained clearly.
- ☐ Induction is structured rather than left to chance or a busy shift.
- ☐ New employees have planned check-ins during their first weeks.
- ☐ Employees understand the standards expected in their roles.
- ☐ We invite feedback from departing employees and consider what we can learn.
- ☐ New team members know who to approach when they need help.
- ☐ Procedures and learning resources are easy to find and use.
- ☐ We check progress and provide guidance before small misunderstandings grow.

Something to Think About

A Welcome Is Only the Beginning

Welcoming a new employee is an exciting time, particularly after the effort involved in finding the right person. In a busy practice, it can also be easy for structured support to gradually give way to the normal demands of the day.

A new employee may appear to be settling in while still wondering whether they are meeting expectations, who to approach or whether it is okay to ask another question.

Little conversations throughout the first few weeks and months can make a lasting difference. If we asked a recent new starter how their induction felt from their perspective, what might they tell us?

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A Little Closer Look

- Could a recent recruit describe what they were expected to know by the end of their first month?
- Where do new employees most often become unsure or overwhelmed?

A Practical Place to Begin

- Create simple first-week, first-month and follow-up milestones.
- Ask a recent recruit what would have made their induction easier.

04 Burnout, Workload & Staff Support

Consider what is consistently happening in your practice, not simply what is documented.

- ☐ Workloads and responsibilities are reviewed for fairness and sustainability.
- ☐ Employee wellbeing is treated as an important part of workplace leadership.
- ☐ Leave and recovery time are respected and planned for.
- ☐ Team members can say when their workload is becoming difficult to manage.
- ☐ Flexible arrangements are considered fairly where operationally possible.
- ☐ Employees know what support is available and how to access it.
- ☐ Patterns of stress, overtime or repeated absence are noticed and explored.
- ☐ Workflows and staffing arrangements are reviewed when pressure becomes ongoing.

Something to Think About

Looking Beyond a Busy Day

Busy periods are part of healthcare, and many employees take pride in helping the practice through them. It is often the dependable people who quietly take on extra tasks or step in when someone needs support.

Over time, what began as an occasional helping hand can become part of their everyday workload without anyone deliberately planning it that way.

Taking time to understand where pressure is building, and inviting the team to suggest what could work better, can help protect both wellbeing and the patient experience. Are there small changes that could make a busy day feel more manageable?

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A Little Closer Look

- Which tasks regularly cause pressure or require overtime?
- Do staff feel comfortable saying when something is no longer manageable?

A Practical Place to Begin

- Ask each team member which part of their day creates unnecessary pressure.
- Choose one recurring workflow frustration to review together.

05 Compliance, Operations & Stability

Consider what is consistently happening in your practice, not simply what is documented.

- ☐ Employment and operational policies are current and appropriate to the practice.
- ☐ Key tasks have clear, accessible standard operating procedures.
- ☐ Employees receive training and opportunities to demonstrate competence.
- ☐ Compliance and operational risks are reviewed regularly.
- ☐ Privacy and other relevant regulatory responsibilities are understood and followed.
- ☐ Employees know where to find procedures when they need them.
- ☐ Processes are reviewed as the practice and its services change.
- ☐ Contingency and emergency arrangements are documented, communicated and practised where appropriate.

Something to Think About

When a Procedure Becomes Everyday Practice

Policies and procedures provide important guidance, but their real value is seen in how confidently employees can apply them in everyday situations.

Sometimes different ways of working develop gradually, not because people are unwilling to follow a process, but because they have learned from different colleagues or have not had the opportunity to revisit it together.

A short team conversation about how a common situation is handled can be a helpful place to start. What might we discover by exploring how the work is actually being done?

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A Little Closer Look

- Ask two team members to explain how they would handle the same common situation. Are their approaches consistent?
- When was the last policy change discussed and followed up with the team?

A Practical Place to Begin

- Choose one high-use procedure and walk through it with the people who use it.
- When updating a policy, record how it was communicated and how understanding was checked.

06 Mini-Audits & Quick Wins

Consider what is consistently happening in your practice, not simply what is documented.

- ☐ We set aside time to review staff retention and engagement.
- ☐ We invite regular, constructive feedback about the workplace.
- ☐ We check how new employees are settling in.
- ☐ We notice when workloads are becoming difficult to sustain.
- ☐ Leaders reflect on their own behaviours and opportunities to improve.
- ☐ We consider whether recognition is shared across the whole team.
- ☐ We keep track of small improvements and whether they have made a difference.

Something to Think About

The Value of Small Improvements

Some of the most helpful improvements begin with an employee noticing that something could be easier, clearer or more supportive for the team and patients.

In a busy practice, even good ideas can be lost amongst the day's priorities. Making space to listen, try a small change and return to see how it worked helps employees know their contributions matter.

Is there an idea your team has shared that could be revisited, or a recent change worth celebrating because it has made everyday work a little better?

Stop Losing Great Staff

A Little Closer Look

- What is one recurring frustration that the team has raised more than once?
- Which recent improvement have you checked to see whether it actually worked?

A Practical Place to Begin

- Choose one small improvement and give it an owner and review date.
- Share with the team what changed as a result of their feedback.

07 Understanding Staff Turnover

Consider what is consistently happening in your practice, not simply what is documented.

- ☐ We review patterns in resignations and staff movement.
- ☐ We notice early signs of disengagement and explore them thoughtfully.
- ☐ Exit feedback is considered alongside other information rather than in isolation.
- ☐ Concerns involving culture or leadership are explored respectfully and promptly.
- ☐ Relevant themes are discussed by practice leadership and followed through.
- ☐ We revisit our approach to staff retention as the practice changes.

Something to Think About

What We Can Learn Before Someone Leaves

When a valued employee moves on, there may be many reasons behind their decision, including personal circumstances and opportunities outside the practice. Not every departure is something we could or should have prevented.

Even so, each departure can invite thoughtful reflection. Just as importantly, we can learn a great deal from the employees who choose to stay: what they enjoy, what makes them feel supported and what they hope for in the future.

Perhaps some of our most valuable retention conversations are the gentle, everyday ones we have long before anyone considers leaving. How could we make more room for them?

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A Little Closer Look

- Looking across recent departures, are there any recurring themes worth exploring?
- Do you also ask existing employees what they value about staying and what could improve?

A Practical Place to Begin

- Invite voluntary, confidential stay conversations with employees about what helps them enjoy their work.
- Review any themes from exit feedback without assuming one person's experience represents everyone.

08 Leadership Deep Dive

Leadership influences every part of the employee experience. This additional reflection is for Practice Owners and Practice Managers alike: how we lead, communicate and follow through helps shape the workplace our people experience.

Leadership Presence & Emotional Stability

- ☐ I remain steady and respectful under pressure.
- ☐ I am mindful of how my reactions affect others.
- ☐ My team can rely on my professionalism.
- ☐ Employees feel able to approach me.

Communication

- ☐ I explain expectations clearly.
- ☐ I check for understanding rather than assume.
- ☐ I communicate important matters in ways the team can access later.
- ☐ I make space for questions and different perspectives.

Coaching & Development

- ☐ I support people to grow, not only correct mistakes.
- ☐ My feedback is specific and useful.
- ☐ I follow up after development conversations.
- ☐ I recognise individual strengths and contributions.

Accountability & Fairness

- ☐ I apply expectations consistently.
- ☐ I do not leave difficult conversations unresolved.
- ☐ I address performance concerns early and constructively.
- ☐ People can see that decisions are fair and explained.

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Confidence & Boundaries

- ☐ I make considered decisions and seek advice when needed.
- ☐ I maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- ☐ I can be clear and firm while remaining respectful.
- ☐ I understand the difference between being supportive and avoiding accountability.

Self-Leadership

- ☐ I manage my workload and priorities thoughtfully.
- ☐ I model the behaviours I ask of others.
- ☐ I invest in developing my own leadership capability.
- ☐ I recognise when I need guidance or support.

Something to Think About

The Everyday Example We Set

Leadership is not only found in formal meetings or important decisions. It is also reflected in how we respond to a busy morning, make time for a question and acknowledge the contribution of others.

No one gets every moment right. What matters is remaining open to learning, reflecting and making small adjustments as the practice and its people grow.

If we considered our leadership through the everyday experiences of the team, what would we be pleased to see, and where might there be an opportunity to do something a little differently?

Your Retention Reflection

This is a simple tally of the statements you feel are consistently in place. It is not a prediction of whether employees will leave, and the sections have different numbers of questions. Use the results to notice patterns and guide conversations, rather than compare sections by raw scores alone.

Area	Statements in Place
Leadership & Management	/ 9
Culture & Communication	/ 9
Onboarding & Expectations	/ 9
Burnout, Workload & Staff Support	/ 8
Compliance, Operations & Stability	/ 8
Mini-Audits & Quick Wins	/ 7
Understanding Staff Turnover	/ 6
Leadership Deep Dive	/ 24
Total:	/ 80

An unticked statement might mean something is missing, only partly implemented or simply needs a closer look. Those are different situations, and each deserves a thoughtful response.

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What Have You Noticed?

Which areas feel strongest, and what has helped them work well?

Where do you notice a difference between what is documented and what people experience?

What might your team tell you that you cannot see from your own perspective?

What one area would be most valuable to explore further?

Your Practical Action Plan

You do not need to change everything at once. Choose one or two areas where a little more understanding or a practical improvement could make a meaningful difference.

Priority 1

What have we noticed?

What do we need to understand before deciding on a solution?

What small step will we take?

Who will lead it, and when will we review?

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Priority 2

What have we noticed?

What do we need to understand before deciding on a solution?

What small step will we take?

Who will lead it, and when will we review?

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Priority 3

What have we noticed?

What do we need to understand before deciding on a solution?

What small step will we take?

Who will lead it, and when will we review?

A Final Thought

A workplace where people want to stay is built through many everyday experiences: feeling heard, knowing what is expected, being supported to grow, seeing values lived and knowing that leadership will follow through.

You may already be doing many of these things beautifully. I hope this resource has helped you recognise those strengths and perhaps look at a few familiar situations from a different perspective.

Explore How Indigo Can Support Your Practice

Whether you're looking to strengthen your workplace culture, improve employee retention, navigate HR challenges or simply have someone to turn to for ongoing guidance, Indigo Medical Consulting offers practical support tailored to your practice.

Healthcare HR, Team & Workplace Support

Explore our HR consulting services, workplace guidance and support for Practice Owners and Practice Managers.

https://indigoconsulting.com.au/business-consulting-services/hr-compliance/

Healthcare Hiring & Team Support

Discover how we can assist with recruitment, onboarding, staff retention and building stronger, more stable healthcare teams.

https://indigoconsulting.com.au/healthcare-hiring-team-support/

Let's Have a Conversation

If you've identified an area you'd like to explore further, we'd welcome the opportunity to have a conversation about how we can support your practice.

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