



# DESIGNING A HUMAN-CENTERED WORKPLACE

A Guide for Employers



# WHAT'S IN THE ACTIVITY WORKBOOK

This workbook features activities for centering workers in job design. It will help you approach job design as a co-creation process with employees, not just for them. This workbook can be used alongside *Designing a Human-Centered Workplace*, available on the National Fund's website.

- 1 Planning for Job Outcomes**  
Focus job design efforts  
> **Activity:** Using the Job Quality Outcome Maps to Focus Job Design Work
- 2 Launching a Collaborative Workgroup**  
Approach job design creatively and inclusively  
> **Activity:** Team Charter
- 3 Learning from Employees**  
Center employees' voices to understand key issues  
> **Activity:** Running a Focus Group
- 4 Designing and Testing Solutions**  
Move ideas off "paper" and into testable prototypes  
> **Activity:** Design and Measure Your Prototype
- 5 Measuring the Impact on Business Outcomes**  
Measure the impact of your ideas against business outcomes  
> **Activity:** Measuring Your Impact

## > Activity

# Using The Job Quality Outcome Maps to Focus Job Design Work

The Job Quality Outcome Maps connect seven categories of job characteristics with five key business outcomes that impact organizational performance. You can use these maps to identify high-potential areas to focus job design efforts based on key outcomes you hope to impact. **You can find the key terms and job quality outcome maps at the end of this activity.**

This worksheet walks you through how to use the Job Quality Outcome Maps to focus your efforts in three steps:

1. Pick the business outcome you want to impact
2. Identify key job characteristics that influence your chosen outcomes
3. Reflect on how these issues impact your business and what you hope to learn or achieve through your job design efforts

*Set aside 60 minutes for this activity.*

### Step 1: Select

What are the core issues at your business? Which outcome(s) do you hope to impact? Circle below or write your own.

**Turnover  
Intention**

**Commitment to  
the Organization**

**Individual  
Performance**

**Engagement  
at Work**

**Burnout**

Other:

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### Step 2: Connect

Which job characteristic(s) can you influence to improve your chosen outcome(s)? Which characteristics do you want to learn more about? Which could you influence through a collaborative process? (Tips: Think of these characteristics as leverage points you can use to focus your job quality improvement efforts. Use the key on the maps to see which characteristics influence which outcomes.) Select as many as you like.

Elements of the Job Experience

Pay and Benefits

Health and Safety, Work Environment

Work-Life Balance

Terms of Employment

Representation and Voice

Supervision Quality

Comments:

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## Step 3: Reflect

What impact do these outcomes or characteristics have on your business? Why is this important? What changes do you hope to see through the job design work? (Tip: These insights can help guide your collaborative workgroup as they explore issues and create potential solutions.)

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## Key Terms

### Five Business Outcomes

#### Turnover Intention

Whether an employee plans to leave their job

#### Commitment to the Organization

How much an employee feels a sense of belonging and dedication to their organization

#### Individual Performance

An employee's self-assessment of the quality of their work on the job

#### Engagement at Work

How much attention and energy an employee dedicates to their work

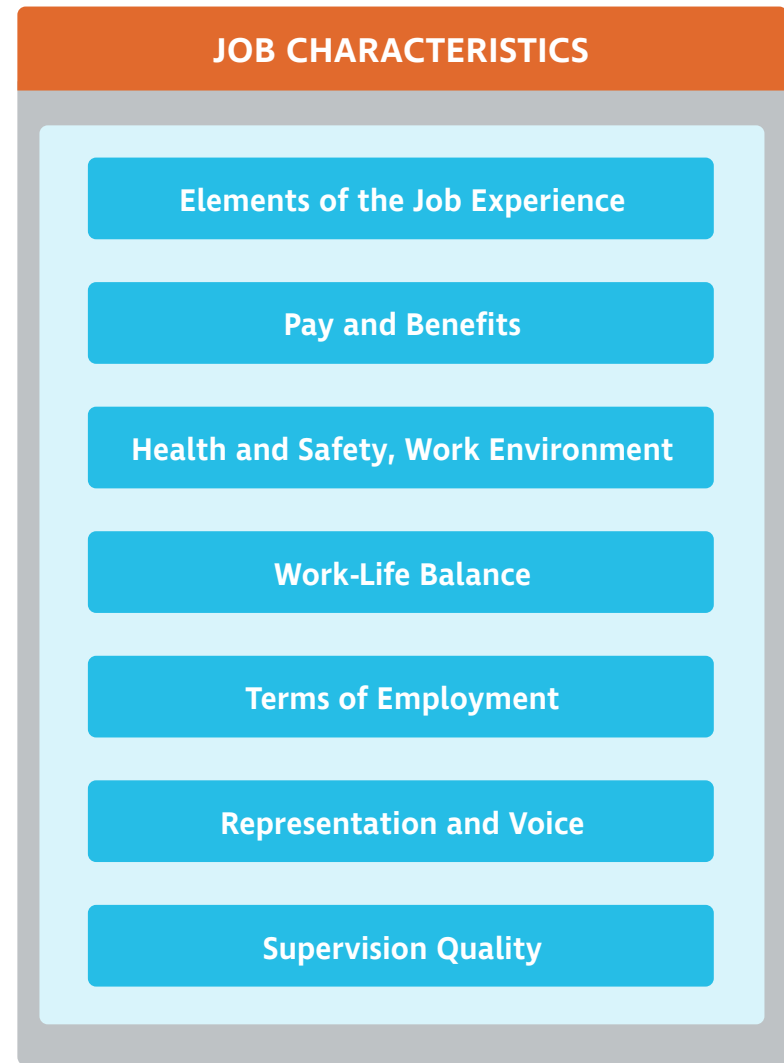
#### Burnout

How much an employee becomes mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted and drained by their work

Detailed Job Quality Outcome Maps and full glossary can be found in the Toolkit Activity Workbook appendix.

# JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAPS

## CONNECTING JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND EMPLOYER OUTCOMES



# Launching a Collaborative Workgroup

## > Activity

### Team Charter

One way to kick off your work together is through a team charter. You can use this tool to reflect together on key questions about what you want to work on and how you want to collaborate as a team. Co-creating this charter helps all team members understand what the group needs to be successful. Setting shared values, outcomes, or group agreements can set the tone for how the group operates — for example, listening with respect or making room for everyone’s voice. Use this tool to reflect with your project team about how you want to work together.

This worksheet offers questions you can work through as a team to get your work started, together. It includes:

1. Project Purpose
2. Key Players
3. Ways of Working
4. Shared Outcomes

*Set aside 30-60 minutes for collaborative discussion. Allow more time if you have a larger team or this is the first time this group will be collaborating.*

#### Project Purpose

What do we want to accomplish as a team?

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What are our shared goals?

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What are your boundaries?

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# Launching a Collaborative Workgroup

## Key Players

Who are the core team members?

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What are our strengths? What are our roles?

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Whose perspectives are missing? How should/will we engage along the way?

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## Ways of Working

How will we get the work done? (Meeting structure)

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What's our time commitment? Timeline?

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# Launching a Collaborative Workgroup

## Shared Outcomes

What kind of community do we want to create?

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What's important to us as individuals?

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What's important to us as a group?

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## > Activity

## How to Run a Focus Group

Hosting a focus group is one way to foster open dialogue with your employees about how you can improve their jobs. A focus group is essentially a group interview. This interactive research experience helps employees feel more comfortable sharing their honest opinions about work culture. And unlike staff surveys, those hosting the focus group can prompt and ask for details and stories that deepen the understanding of the staff experience. Use this tool to reflect with your project team about how you want to work together and run a focus group. It includes the following steps:

1. Determine who you want to talk to
2. Identify hosts
3. Prepare for the focus group
4. Host the focus group
5. Debrief and identify key takeaways

*Set aside 60-90 minutes to plan and draft questions plus time to engage participants and host the focus group.*

### Step 1: Determine Who to Talk To

Once you have identified the job outcome or the job characteristic you want to address, you want to consider who from the organization has a unique perspective on this issue. For example, if you want to improve perceived supervisor support, you will want to talk to those who are supervised and their supervisors.

Rule of thumb: Talk to at least 5–6 people from each user group to begin to hear themes. **A user group is a set of people that have shared goals, interests or concerns.** In this example, you would want to talk to 5–6 supervisors and 5–6 people who are supervised.

### Step 2: Identify Hosts

It is best if two people host a focus group. This allows one person to ask questions and the other to observe and take notes. It is important to carefully consider who has trust with those who are being interviewed. To ensure honest feedback, you will want to eliminate power dynamics as much as possible between the interviewee and interviewer. For instance, employees may be hesitant to be critical of leadership that has power over their day-to-day activities or paycheck.

### Step 3: Prepare for the Focus Group

*Each focus group will take 60-90 minutes, plus time for setup and debrief.*

### Develop an Interview Guide

An interview guide is a set of questions that will be explored during the focus group. Unlike a survey or questionnaire, the questions asked during the focus group should be open-ended and invoke storytelling. For a 60 minute focus group, it is suggested that you ask no more than 6–8 questions so that each person in the group gets a chance to respond.

# Learning from Employees

## Sample Questions

- > What does feeling valued look like to you at this organization?
- > Imagine you had a magic wand. If you could change one thing about our culture, what would it be?
- > Fill out this statement.
  - I would change \_\_\_\_\_ about our culture by doing \_\_\_\_\_.
  - When we do make this change, it will result in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - In your own words, what does collaboration at work mean to you? Why do you think collaboration at work is important?

### **Get Familiar with the Interview Guide**

Hosts should be familiar with the questions prior to the focus groups. This allows the host to adapt the questions to match their conversation style, creating a more authentic engagement with staff. Remember to practice empathy and be open to learning something new!

### **Step 4: Host the Focus Group**

Make sure that the focus group can be conducted in a private, comfortable space. Some employers offer a gift card to participants as a way to say thank you for their time — whether it's stepping away from the work midday or sticking around after a shift has ended.

### **Step 5: Debrief and Key Takeaways**

With a partner, block 30 minutes following the focus group to recap what you both heard. Take time to share key takeaways from the conversation and discuss how the focus group made you feel.

# Learning from Employees

## Focus Group Planning Guide

### Getting Started

Business issue(s) we want to learn about:

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Who will we interview? (Consider who will be most impacted by this issue. Do you have a variety of roles and perspectives?)

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### Roles

Interviewer (skilled at engaging dialogue, not in supervisory relationship with participants)

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Notetaker (good listener, good at capturing detailed notes)

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### What Questions Will We Ask?

#### Tips:

- Limit to 6-8 questions to allow everyone to respond
- Ask questions neutrally
- Ask open-ended questions
- Challenge the assumptions we are making.
- Get to the heart of what we really need to know.
- Probe on the challenges and hurdles we identified.
- Ask questions that lead to stories. "Tell me more..."

# Learning from Employees

## Focus Group Planning Guide

### **Debrief: What Did You Learn?**

What are your top five takeaways from the focus group?

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What attitudes or comments did you notice that were interesting or different?

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What short-term and long-term opportunities do you see to address your business issue?

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## > Activity

# Design and Test Your Prototype

This worksheet covers four steps to help you plan and test your idea:

1. Decide what to test
2. Conduct your test
3. Learn from your test
4. Iterate and repeat

*Set aside 30-60 minutes to plan, plus time to test.*

## Step 1: Decide What to Test

What idea are we testing?

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How will it work?

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What impact will it have? (Consider impact to frontline employees. Managers, and organizational leaders. What's in it for them?)

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# Designing and Testing Solutions

## Step 2: Conduct Your Test

Sometimes it is best to start small — with even one person or team — to test an idea. Use the following questions to design your first test.

What do we want to learn through our test? (Describe something you assume will happen during your idea, then test if it works.)

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Who is an ideal person to test this with? (Prioritize someone who will ultimately be impacted by the idea.)

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How can we easily test this idea with this person?

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How will we get feedback from this person?

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# Designing and Testing Solutions

## Step 3: Learn From Your Tests

What did we learn from our test?

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What worked?

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What didn't work?

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How will we change our idea to reflect what we've learned?

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## Step 4: Iterate and Repeat

Once you've refined your idea, test it again. This time, you can consider factors like how this idea connects to other organizational initiatives and what kind of support you might need to sustain it longer term.

# Measuring the Impact on Business Outcomes

## > Activity

### Measuring Your Impact

Now that you've worked out the kinks of your idea, you're ready to measure impact. This worksheet covers four steps to help you make a measurement plan that works for your organization.

1. Identify what you're measuring
2. Plan how you'll collect your data
3. Identify what questions you'll use to measure impact
4. Collect and learn from your data

Set aside 30-60 minutes for this activity, plus time to collect and analyze data.

#### Step 1: Identify What You're Measuring

What idea are you measuring?

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What business outcome or job characteristics do you want to assess? Circle one below or write your own.

Turnover  
Intention

Commitment to  
the Organization

Individual  
Performance

Engagement  
at Work

Burnout

Other:

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#### Step 2: Plan How You'll Collect Your Data

How will you collect your data? Circle one or write your own below.

Survey

One-on-One  
interviews

Other

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Who will we measure with? (Consider employees across levels and roles who have engaged with your idea.)

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How often will you measure? (Consider natural places where it might make sense to assess learning based on the specifics of your idea.)

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# Measuring the Impact on Business Outcomes

## Step 3: Identify Questions You'll Use to Measure Impact

Below are sample survey questions that you can use to assess impact. Select the questions that apply to your idea and your desired business outcomes. Feel free to add others! See below for an example of how you might create a survey from these questions.

*These survey items are adapted from studies published in peer-reviewed academic journals and are copyrighted by the authors and/or journals in which they were published. This content is not intended for commercial purposes.*

Employer Outcome	Question	Response Scale
<b>Turnover Intention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am seriously thinking about quitting my job.</li> <li>There's not much to be gained by staying with [EMPLOYER]</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> <li>Somewhat Disagree</li> <li>Somewhat Agree</li> <li>Strongly Agree</li> </ol>
<b>Commitment to Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I feel as if [EMPLOYER'S] problems are my own.</li> <li>I would be happy to work at [EMPLOYER] for at least the next two years</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> <li>Somewhat Disagree</li> <li>Somewhat Agree</li> <li>Strongly Agree</li> </ol>
<b>Individual Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I work harder than necessary.</li> <li>I take on extra duties or responsibilities at work</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not Likely</li> <li>Somewhat Likely</li> <li>Moderately Likely</li> <li>Extremely Likely</li> </ol>
<b>Engagement at Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I focus hard on my work</li> <li>I feel energetic about my work</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> <li>Somewhat Disagree</li> <li>Somewhat Agree</li> <li>Strongly Agree</li> </ol>
<b>Burnout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I feel physically exhausted at the end of the workday</li> <li>I feel mentally work out at the end of the workday</li> <li>I feel emotionally drained at the end of the workday</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Never</li> <li>Less than once a month</li> <li>At least once a month</li> <li>At least once a week</li> <li>Every day</li> </ol>

### Example:

#### Turnover Intent

Here are some feelings that people might have about the place they work. How much do you agree or disagree with each statement?

Statement:	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
"I am seriously thinking about quitting my job."	1	2	3	4

# ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY WORKBOOK

In 2019, the National Fund received funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to work with small- to medium-sized businesses to activate the National Fund's Job Design Framework and make jobs better. The National Fund invited Design Impact (DI) and the Workforce & Organizational Research Center (WORC) to engage five regional workforce collaboratives and eight employers to identify, develop, and test job quality interventions using an inclusive and collaborative Human-Centered Design process. This workbook and accompanying online guide was created with these partners based on learnings from this year-long effort.



# APPENDIX:

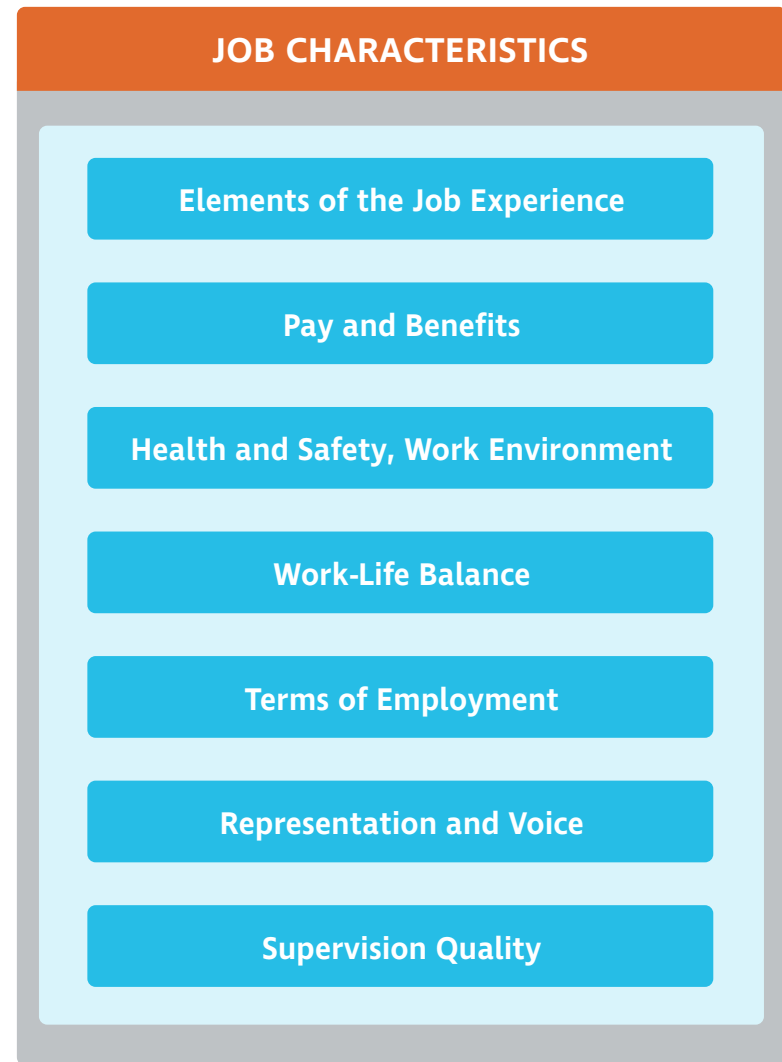
## JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAPS AND GLOSSARY OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Using results from over 3,000 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, our partners at WORC designed the Job Quality Outcome Maps to visualize ways to make frontline jobs better for competitive advantage. Their analysis identified five business outcomes that impact organizational performance.

These business outcomes are related to many common issues that job design efforts can address. With that, the WORC analysis also points to seven categories of job characteristics that employers can influence as they work to make frontline jobs better. The Job Quality Outcome Maps link specific job characteristics that influence particular employer outcomes. These detailed maps can help you identify job characteristics that you can change or leverage to achieve your desired business outcomes.

# JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAPS

## CONNECTING JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND EMPLOYER OUTCOMES



# GOOD JOBS MEAN GOOD BUSINESS

## EMPLOYER OUTCOMES

Turnover Intent



Commitment to the Organization



Individual Performance  
(In-role, Extra-role)



Engagement at Work



Burnout



Organizational  
Performance



## JOB CHARACTERISTICS

### ELEMENTS OF THE JOB EXPERIENCE

Role Stressors  
(Role Conflict, Role Clarity, Role Overload)



Task Variety, Role of Task in  
Final Product, Importance of the Task



Meaningfulness



Feedback from Doing the Work



Skill Level Required, Skill Variety



Autonomy/Control/Independence



Perceived Support  
(Organization, Co-workers)



### PAY AND BENEFITS

Wage Level and Type  
(Measured by Satisfaction)



Benefits  
(Measured by Satisfaction)



### HEALTH AND SAFETY, WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work Conditions  
(Physical, Psychosocial)



Physical Demands



Safety



### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Scheduling Practices  
(Stability, Predictability)



Work-Life Conflict



Work Hours Required  
(Mandatory Overtime, Work Intensity)



### TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Opportunities for Training and Development  
(Formal, Informal, Incidental)



Perceived Job Security



Opportunities for Advancement



### REPRESENTATION AND VOICE

Unionization/Representation



### SUPERVISION QUALITY

Type of Leadership



Perceived Supervisor Support



Mutual Helping

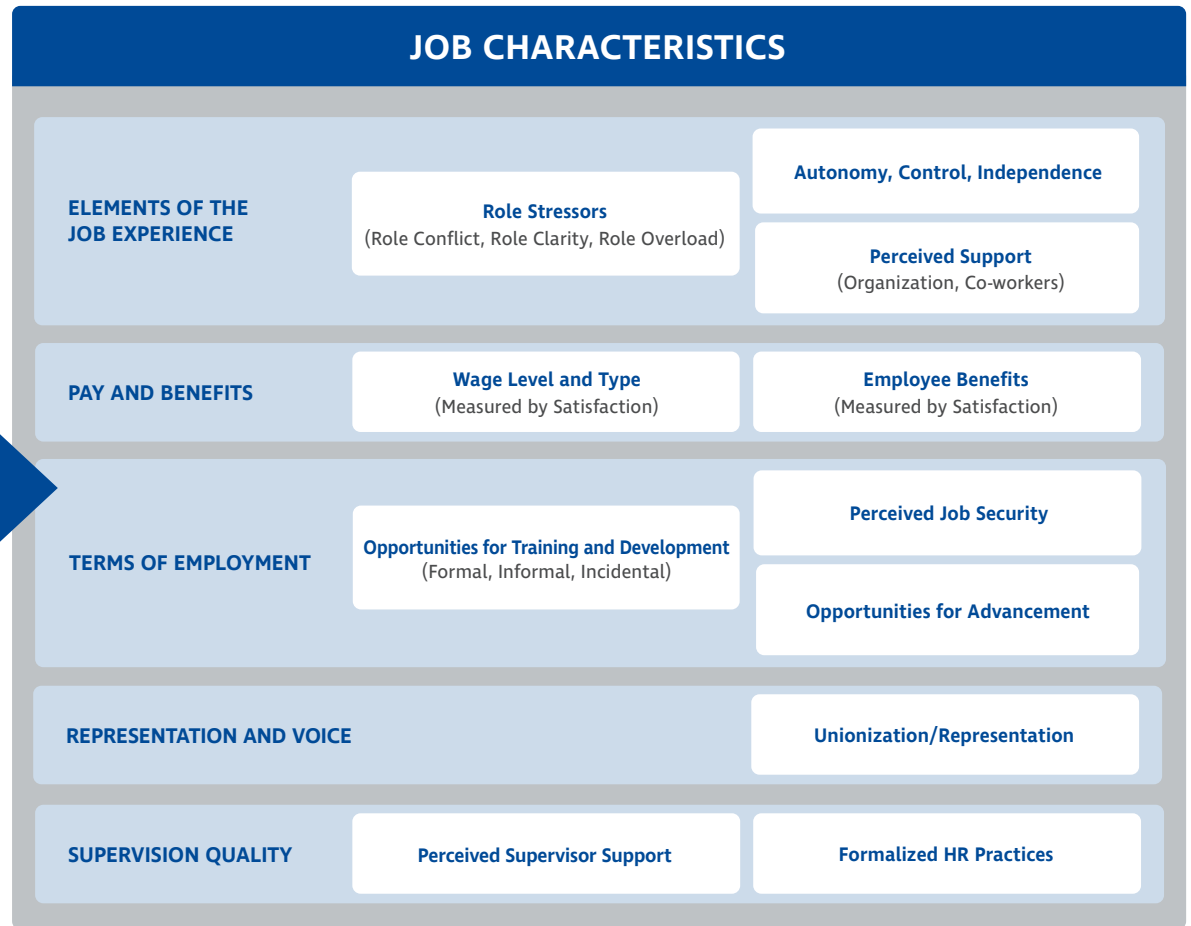


Formalized HR Practices



Total number of peer-reviewed studies represented: 3,000+

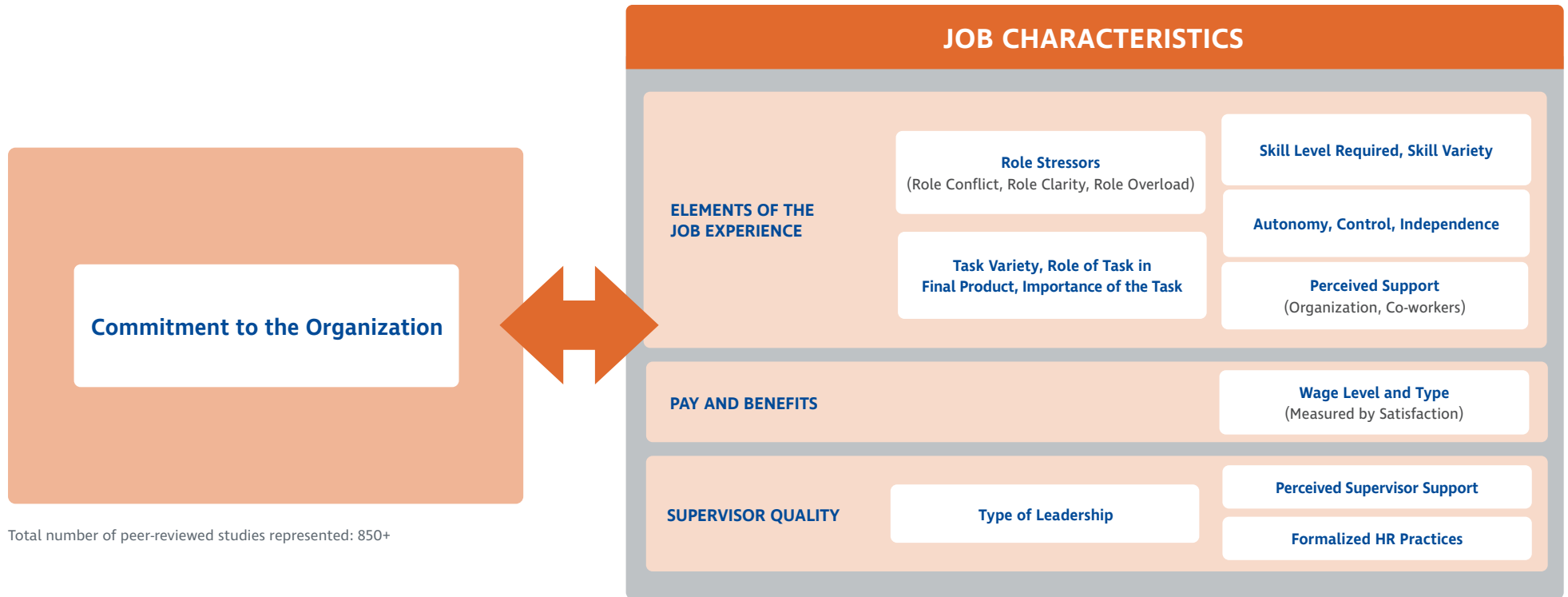
# JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAP: *TURNOVER INTENTION*



Total number of peer-reviewed studies represented: 850+

Frank-Miller E.G., Fox-Dichter, S.R. (2020)  
Social Policy Institute at Washington University in St. Louis

# JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAP: *COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION*



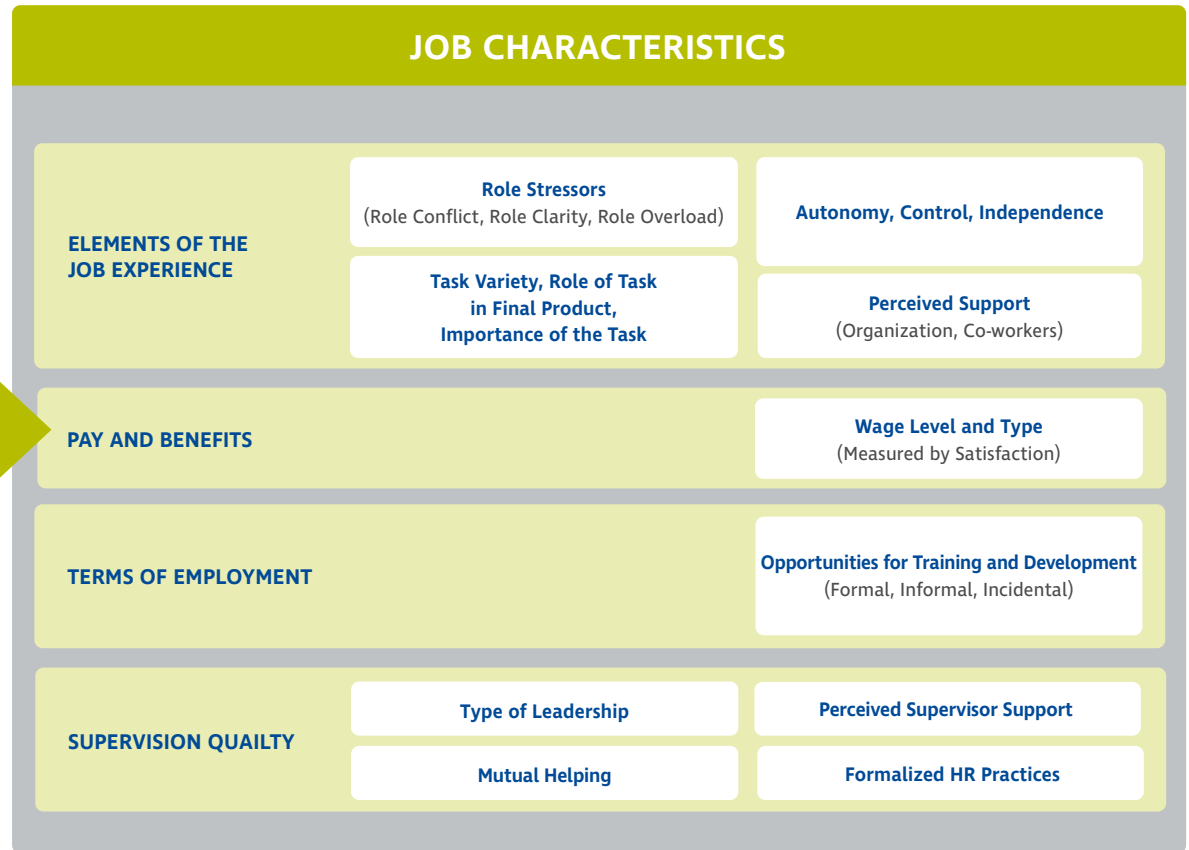
Total number of peer-reviewed studies represented: 850+

Frank-Miller E.G., Fox-Dichter, S.R. (2020)  
Social Policy Institute at Washington University in St. Louis

# JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAP: *INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE*



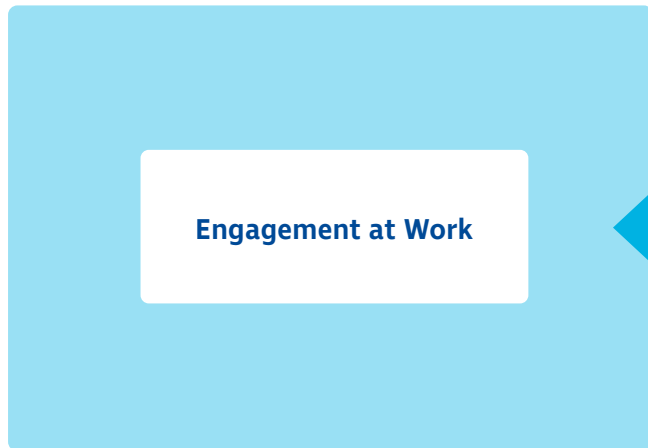
Total number of peer-reviewed studies represented: 800+



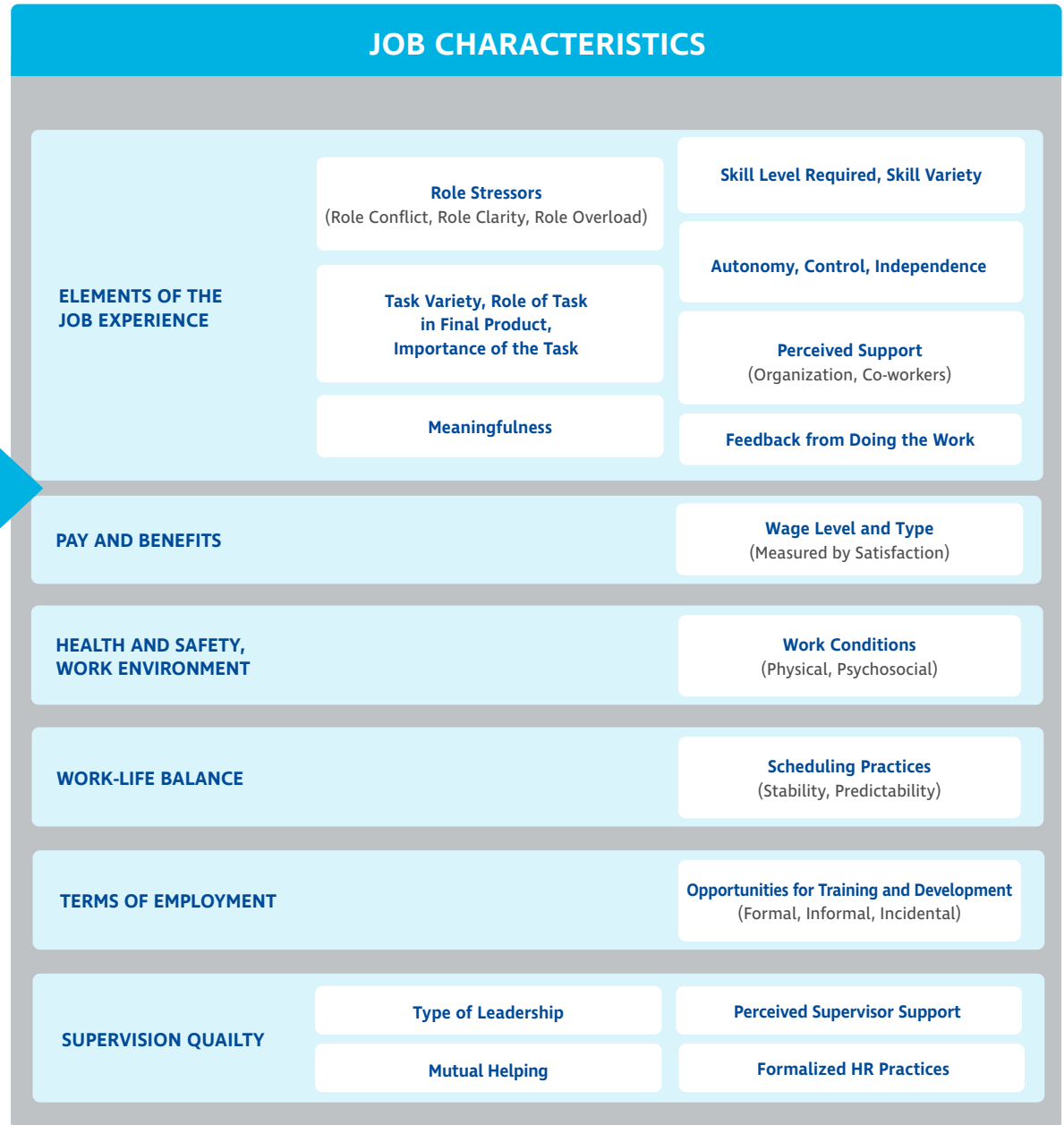
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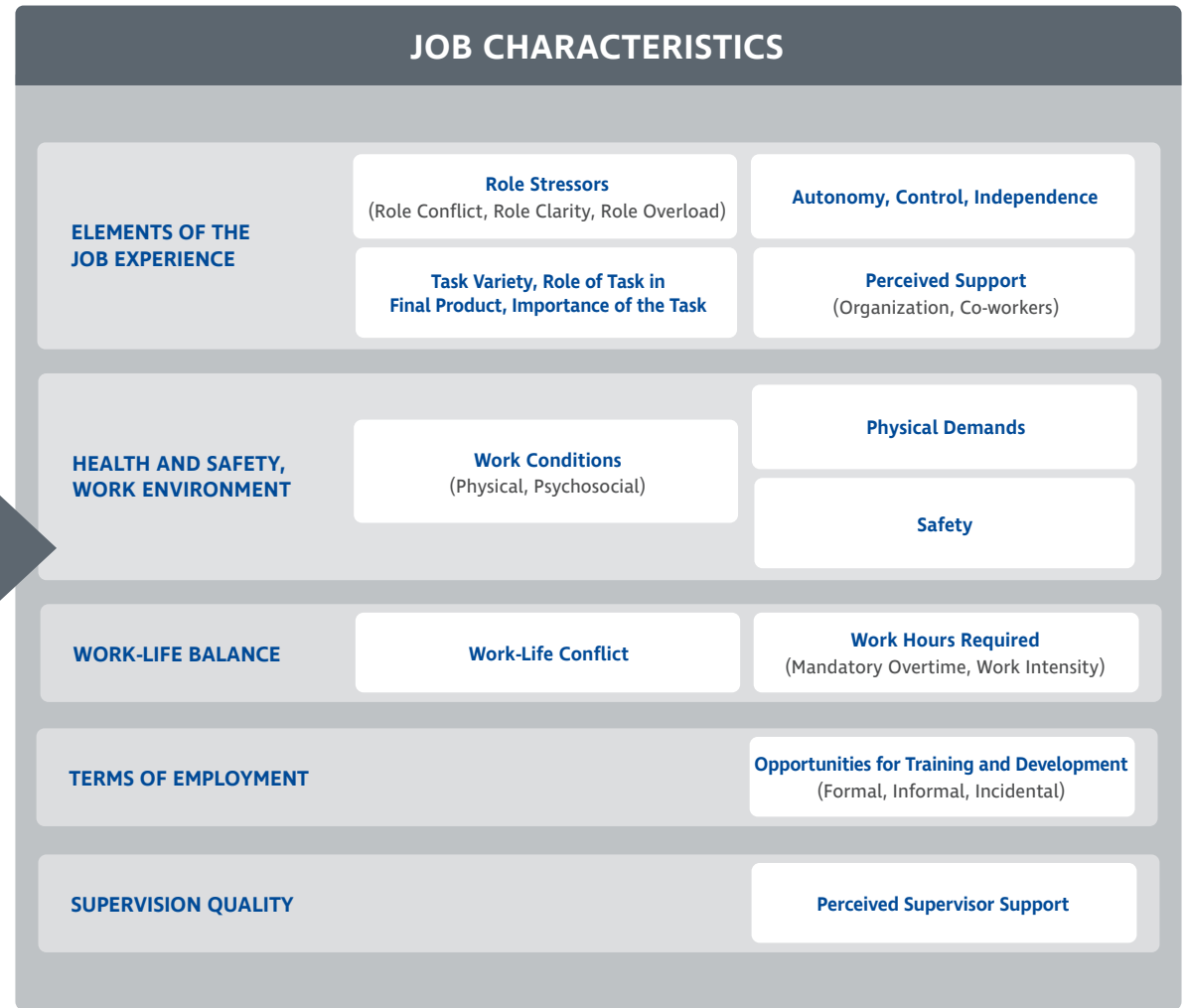
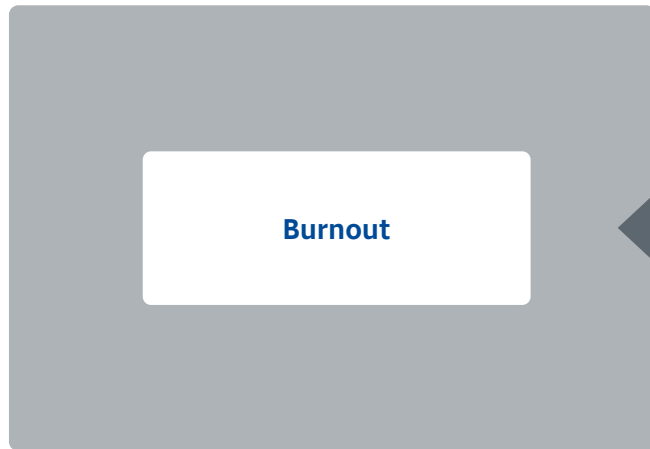
# JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAP: *ENGAGEMENT AT WORK*



Total number of peer-reviewed studies represented: 600+



# JOB QUALITY OUTCOME MAP: *BURNOUT*



Total number of peer-reviewed studies represented: 800+

Frank-Miller E.G., Fox-Dichter, S.R. (2020)  
 Social Policy Institute at Washington University in St. Louis

# GLOSSARY OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Term	Definition
<b>Autonomy, Control, Independence</b>	The degree to which a job is designed to include decision making authority about the best way to get the work done
<b>Benefits</b>	Employee benefits offered, such as health insurance, retirement plans, tuition reimbursement programs; <i>measured by satisfaction with benefits</i>
<b>Burnout</b>	The degree to which employees become mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted and drained by their work
<b>Commitment to the Organization</b>	The extent to which employees feel a sense of belonging and dedication to the organization
<b>Engagement at Work</b>	The extent to which employees dedicate their full attention and energy into their work
<b>Feedback from Doing the Work</b>	The degree to which employees receive feedback just from doing tasks involved in their jobs
<b>Formalized HR Practices</b>	The extent to which human resource practices, such as hiring, performance reviews, promotions, or disciplinary action, are standardized processes that are clearly stated in organizational policies

# GLOSSARY OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Term	Definition
<b>Importance of the Task</b>	The degree to which employees perceive a task for which they are responsible as being important to organizational success
<b>Individual Performance</b>	An employees' self-assessments of the quality of their work on the job
<b>Meaningfulness</b>	The extent to which employees find the work they do personally meaningful
<b>Mutual Helping</b>	The nature of the relationship between an employee and their supervisor and the degree to which each person makes an effort to meet the needs of the other
<b>Opportunities for Advancement</b>	The extent to which employees see the availability of opportunities to move up within the organization or to move into better jobs (e.g., better pay or working hours, more enjoyable tasks)
<b>Opportunities for Training and Development – Formal</b>	The existence of opportunities to receive formal training (e.g., attending classes, participating in apprenticeship programs) at work
<b>Opportunities for Training and Development – Informal, Incidental</b>	The existence of opportunities to receive informal coaching or training from more experienced peers or supervisors; can be an explicit goal in the workplace (e.g., learning culture)

# GLOSSARY OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Term	Definition
<b>Perceived Job Security</b>	The degree to which employees perceive the risk of losing their job to be high or low
<b>Perceived Supervisor Support</b>	The extent to which employees perceive that their supervisors value them and the work they do; the degree to which employees experience their supervisors as being supportive and able to meet their needs in the workplace
<b>Perceived Support – Co-workers</b>	The degree to which employees experience their co-workers as encouraging, willing to help them, and open to sharing expertise and knowledge
<b>Perceived Support – Organization</b>	The extent to which employees feel that their organization cares about them, values their contributions, and gives them what they need to be successful on the job
<b>Physical Demands</b>	The amount of physical exertion required to complete job-related tasks
<b>Role Clarity</b>	The extent to which employees' jobs include clearly defined and specific responsibilities
<b>Role Conflict</b>	The degree to which employees' jobs include responsibilities or tasks that in some way negate each other; the extent to which successfully completing one task interferes with successfully completing another task for which they are also responsible

# GLOSSARY OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Term	Definition
<b>Task Variety</b>	The range or number of different tasks employees routinely complete in their day-to-day work
<b>Turnover Intention</b>	Employees' plans to leave their job
<b>Type of Leadership</b>	The nature of senior management's leadership styles (e.g., laissez-faire, transactional, transformational, inspirational)
<b>Unionization/Representation</b>	The presence or absence of formal collective bargaining within an organization and/or the presence of organizational structures that facilitate direct employee input into organizational decision-making
<b>Wage Level and Type</b>	Wage/salary rates and compensation structure (e.g., hourly wages, salaries, commissions, bonuses); measured by satisfaction with wages
<b>Work Conditions – Physical</b>	The physical work environment (e.g., a patient's home, a warehouse, a truck)
<b>Work Conditions – Psychosocial</b>	The degree and nature of the psychosocial stressors present in the workplace (e.g., frequent interactions with irate customers, screening/viewing of disturbing images on the internet)

# GLOSSARY OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Term	Definition
<b>Work Hours Required – Mandatory Overtime</b>	The extent to which employees are compelled to work more than a standard workweek
<b>Work Hours Required – Work Intensity</b>	The energy, speed, and effort employees must expend to complete their tasks
<b>Work-Life Conflict</b>	A situation in which employees' responsibilities at work and in their personal lives interfere with one another, causing stress