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Paramedic Flourishing at Work: A Way Forward

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This session will be recorded, and a link will be available on
paramedicchiefs.ca/webinars



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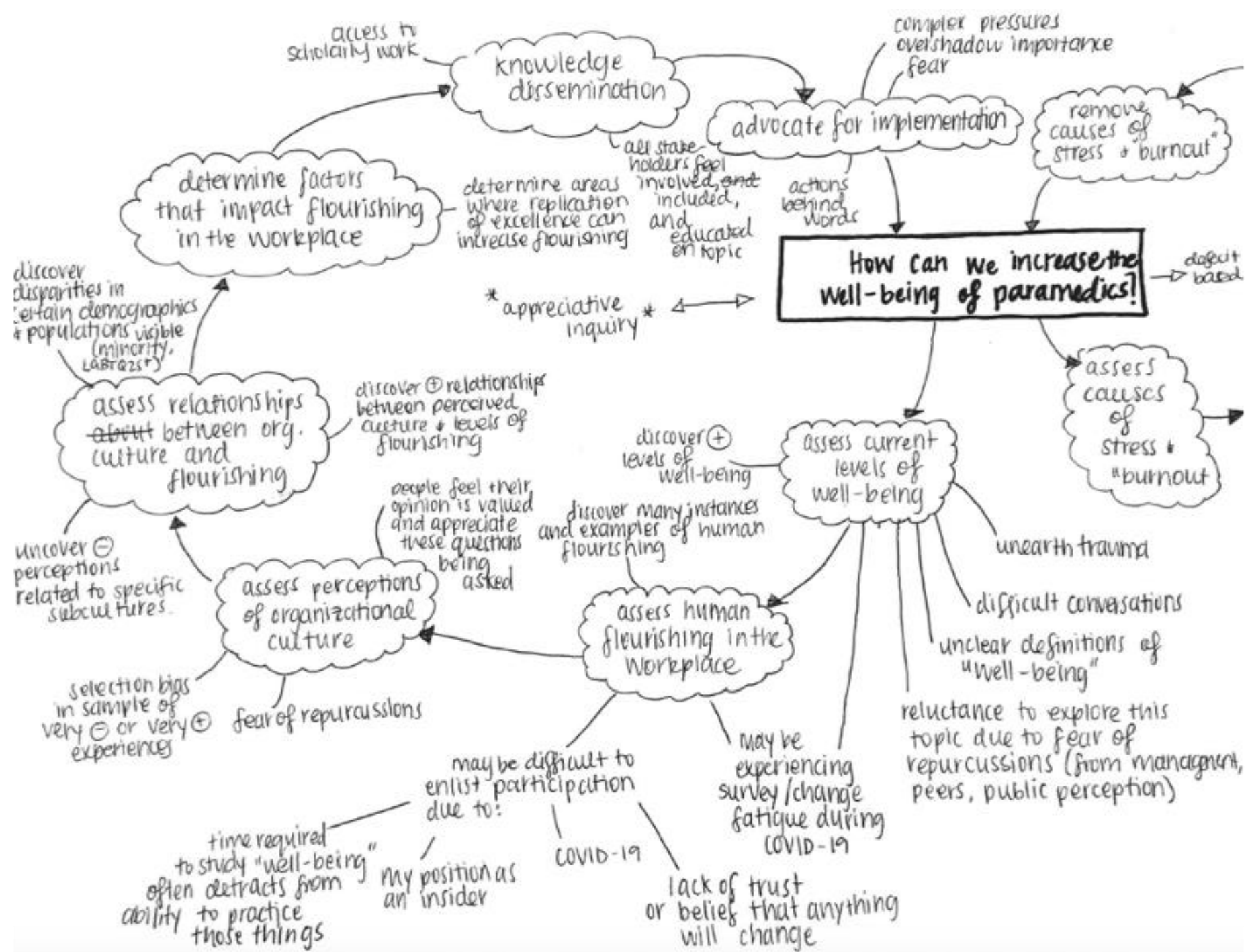


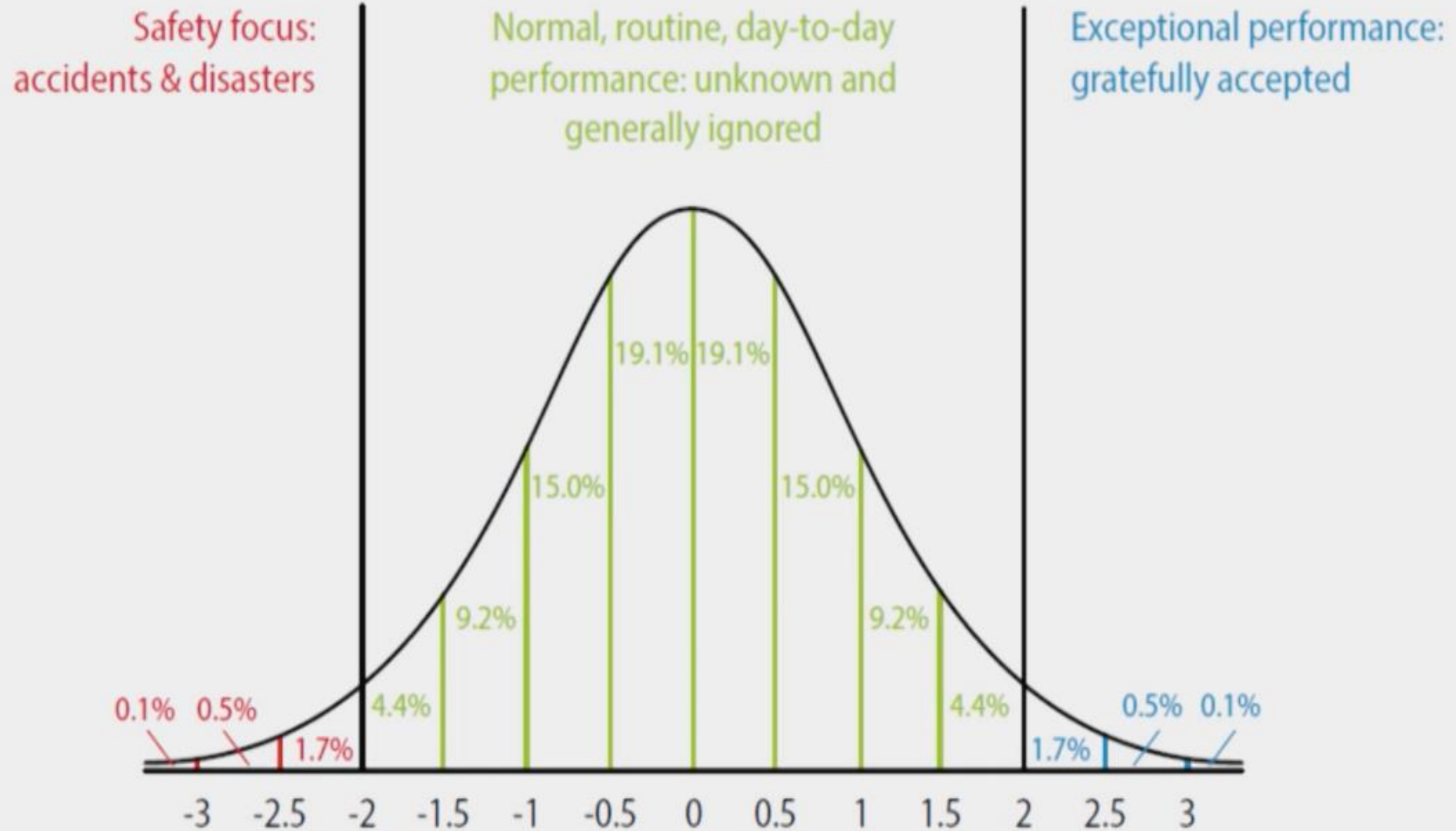
Paramedic Flourishing at Work: A Way Forward

Paige Mason

Royal Roads University – Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies







Source: Eurocontrol.
From Safety 1 to Safety 2. A white paper
www.eurocontrol.int

Figure 15: Event probability and safety focus

Introduction



Primary Aim

To explore how paramedics stories can demonstrate ways to improve flourishing within the Ottawa Paramedic Service.



Research Questions

1. What are the current levels of workplace flourishing within the Ottawa Paramedic Service?
2. What do the stories of paramedics tell us about workplace flourishing?

There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing

The neglected middle child of mental health can dull your motivation and focus — and it may be the dominant emotion of 2021.



Give this article



1.4K



Knowledge Claims

Mapping the gap



1.

Being a paramedic is hard



2.

COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder



3.

We know things about people who are struggling



4.

We don't know much about people who are thriving.



5.

We know a bit about human flourishing.

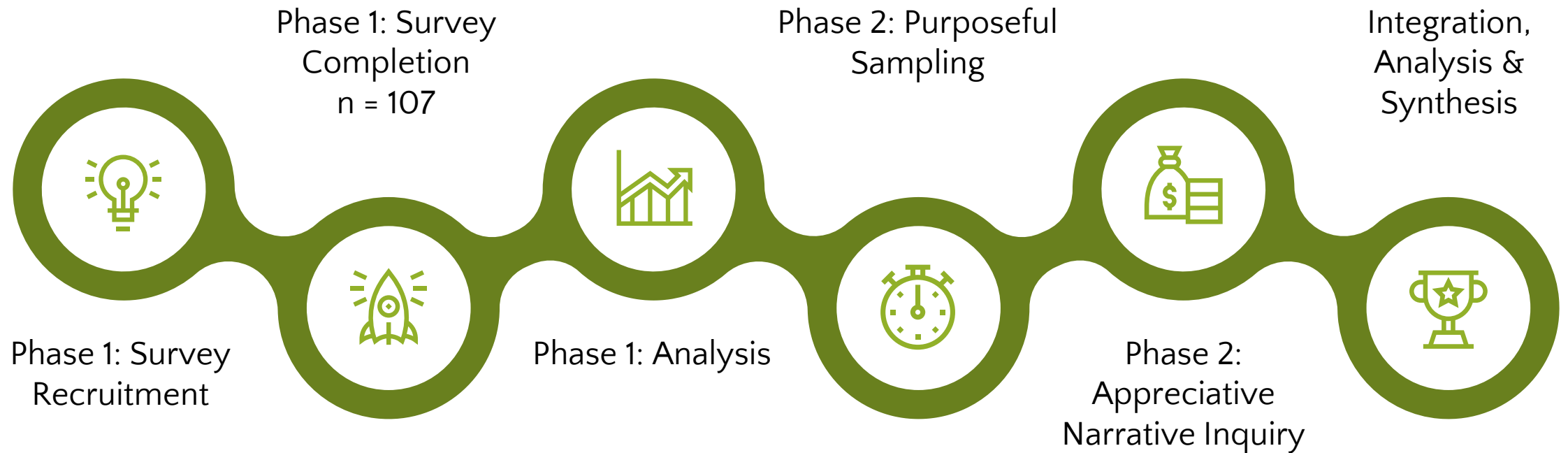


6.

We don't know much about workplace flourishing

Methods

Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods



Flourishing-at-Work Scale SF Result

Scale that evaluated evidence of feeling good and functioning well across:

- Emotional Well-Being
- Psychological Well-Being
- Social Well-Being



Languishing

n = 17 (16%)



Flourishing

n = 18 (17%)



Moderate

n = 70 (67%)

Correlation & Prediction

There were three variables with statistically significant association with Flourishing:



Role within the service

Regular operations, PCP, ACP, PRU, Community Paramedicine, Superintendent



Involvement with specialty teams

Public order unit, tactical unit, bike unit, marine unit, PRU

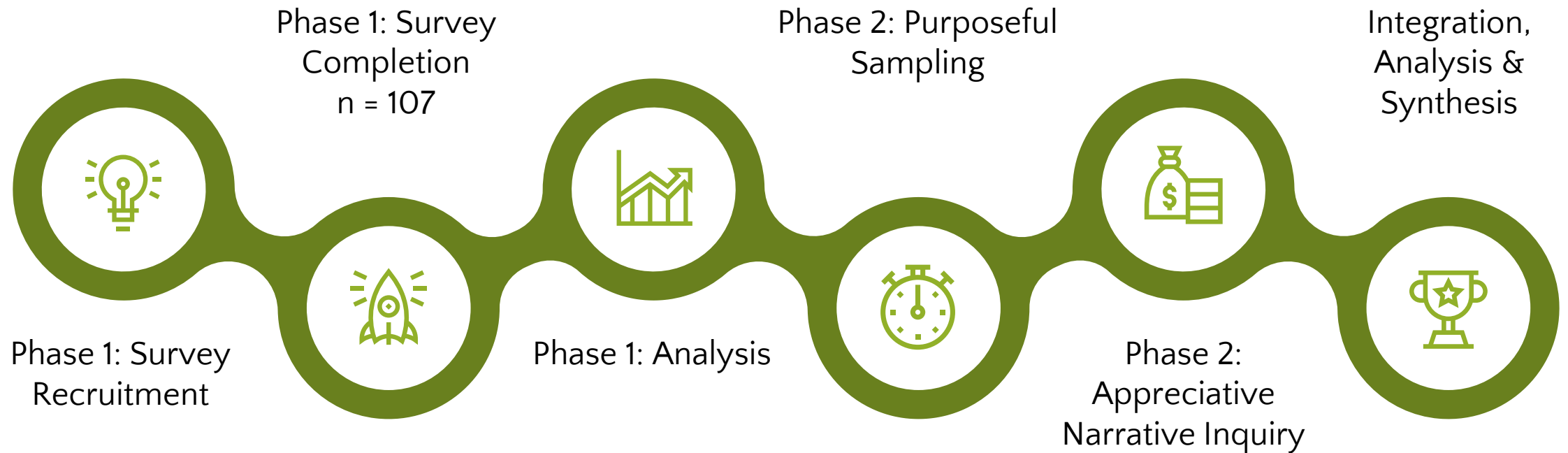


Involvement with groups/committees

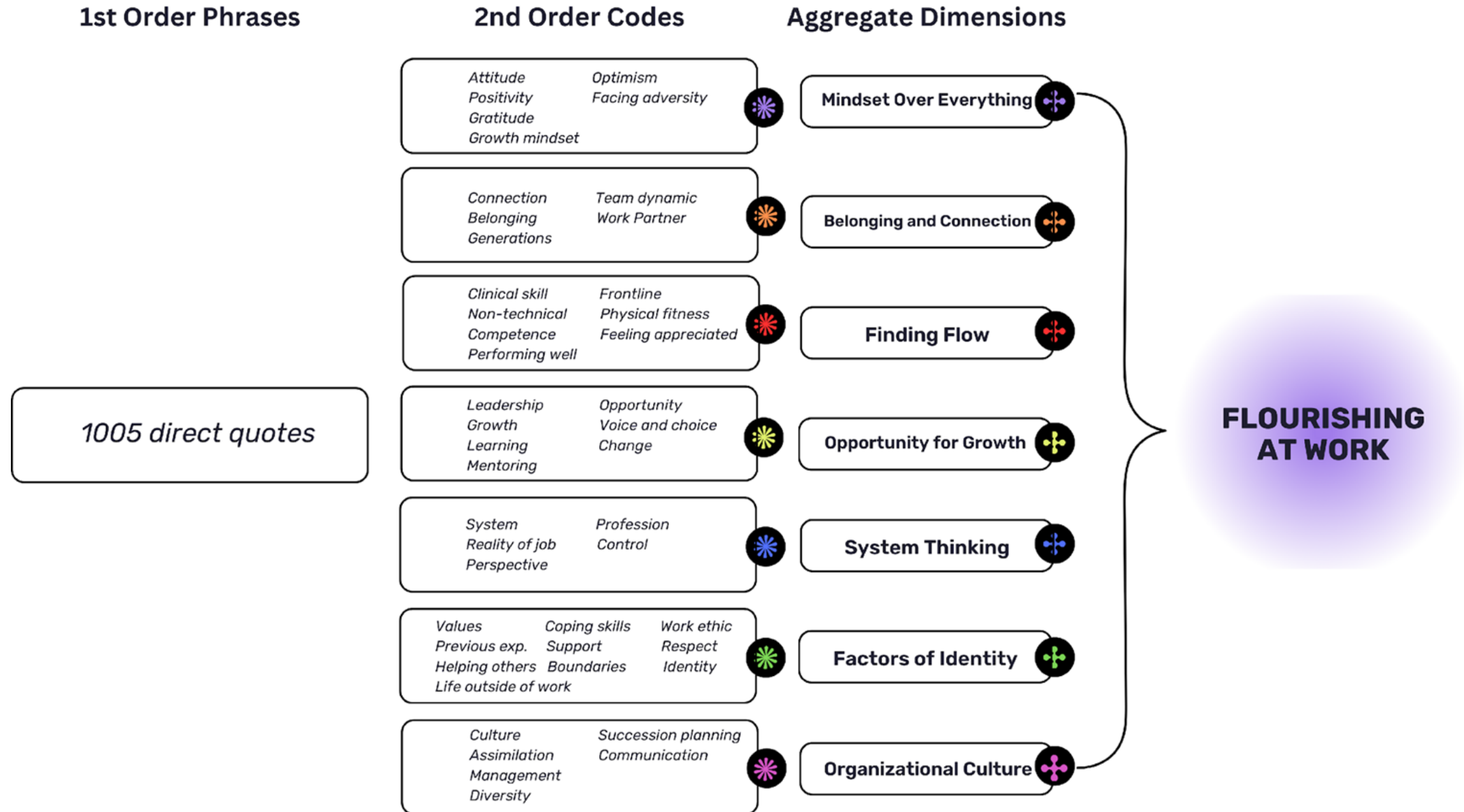
Peer support team, diversity champion program, health and safety committee, scheduling working group

Methods

Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods



Phase 2 Findings: Qualitative



Mindset Over Everything

Mindset refers to the perception of one's circumstances – including their day, job, skills, and abilities – and can impact engagement and achievement.

*“it’s all in the way you look at it. And the kind of attitude that you can go in with is; this is a waste of time, it’s not our job. Or you can say; yeah, **this is gonna be a great challenge, let’s do it.** And if we can help a bit, it helps the overall picture”*

Belonging and Connection

Flourishing participants often surrounded themselves with like-minded people, who had shared interests, shared values, shared language about work, and shared positive outlooks regarding work:

*“...having that group of friends has meant so much to me...and [they are] in my opinion, largely a group who are interested in a lot of stuff that I am...we are excited about what we’re doing. And so **that has helped me [] stay excited to be at work**”*

Finding Flow

Mattering

Mindfulness

Mastery – clinical role identity:

*“if you can take away someone’s pain...if you can make someone breathe better...I think that’s pretty cool. Especially those [patients] with the fear of death in their eyes...and by the end [of the call] they’re looking calm and relaxed...**it’s pretty cool to see the transformation in your patients**”*

Opportunity for Growth



Where traditional engagement practices within organizations may focus on social activities such as pizza parties, holiday events, townhalls, and email expressions of appreciation, Jamie believed ***“people need something more tangible than that – they need a goal”***

Giving staff an opportunity to diversify their experience within the service helps people ***“feel like there’s someone that cares about their professional development...and they’re contributing to the service as a whole”***

Systems Thinking



*“at the acting superintendent level...we can change some little things [but] we have to accept, okay, we cannot change this right now, **we don’t have control over the budget...we don’t have control over level zero. But we do have control over how we react to things**”*

Factors of Identity



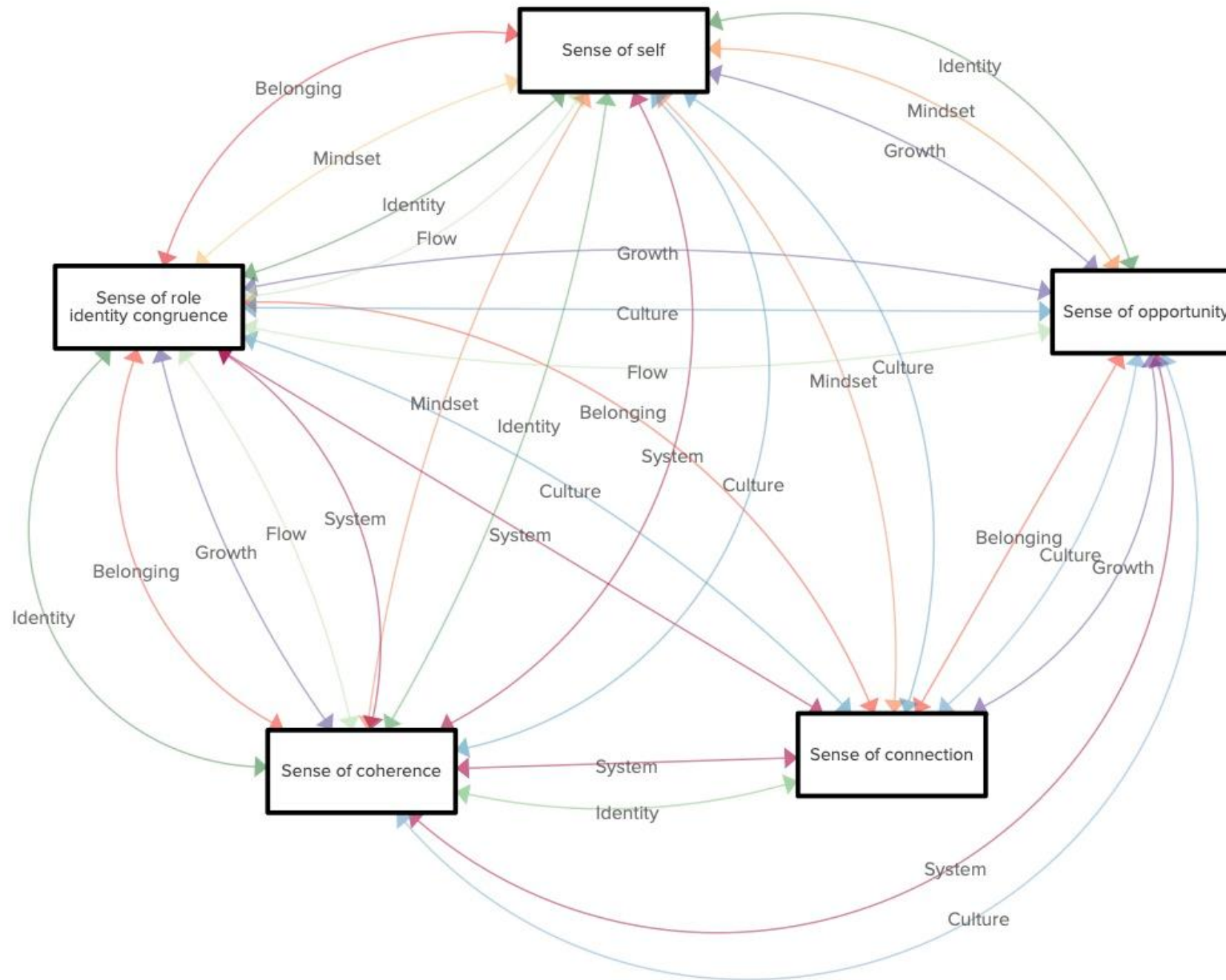
Importance of being differentiated from the experiences in the workplace: “*I feel there’s a lot of kind of external pressure put on us. So **if we’re not necessarily sure of who our own identity is**, and we’re taking on the load of everyone else, it would be really overwhelming*”

Organizational Culture



Several participants mentioned covert social pressures to conform to group behaviours.

“it just feels like as soon as someone starts working here, it just engulf them. I don’t know whether people feel like that’s how you fit in, is to have the same mentality as majority of people, or whether that’s how, when you’re somewhat new and you don’t have a name for yourself...”





Sense of Role Identity Congruence

Participants demonstrated a sense of congruence with their perception of their role as a paramedic and the daily work that they do.

For participants – the antidote to the feeling of misalignment was to make a choice or a change.

Sense of Coherence

Used system thinking to position themselves within the broader context.

Demonstrated an ability to reconcile the ups and downs of working as a paramedic with a sense of coherence – this is all part of the bigger picture, the good and the bad.





Sense of Opportunity

Those that were flourishing spoke at length about the importance of opportunities for growth personally and professionally within the organization.

Opportunities that were frequently mentioned involved specialty teams, community paramedicine, and various groups and committees within the service

Sense of Self

Participants demonstrated an ability to differentiate themselves from the normative contracts present within the organization and create their own social subcultures.

Participants also demonstrated a strong sense of self in the understanding of their own personal values, and told narratives of how living into those values, and finding roles that empowered those values, helped them to flourish at work





Sense of Connection

Flourishing paramedics found a sense of connection in the specialty teams and working groups they were a part of, in their partnerships in double-crewed ambulance model, in their relationships outside of work, and with like-minded individuals within the organization

Implications & Recommendations – Opportunity

Good

Access to groups and committees

Access to high quality training (no exclusions for scope or section)

Better

Clear succession planning with formal pathways, mentoring, and coaching

Groups/committees spearheaded/led by frontline staff

Best

Succession planning mapped to PAC career framework w/ specific opportunities in each category

Invest in training programs for specialty groups

Scholarship program – courses or conferences

PAC Career Framework for Paramedics



Cameron, C., & Batt, A. M. (2024, May 2). PAC Career Framework for Paramedics.
<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/WDH9M>

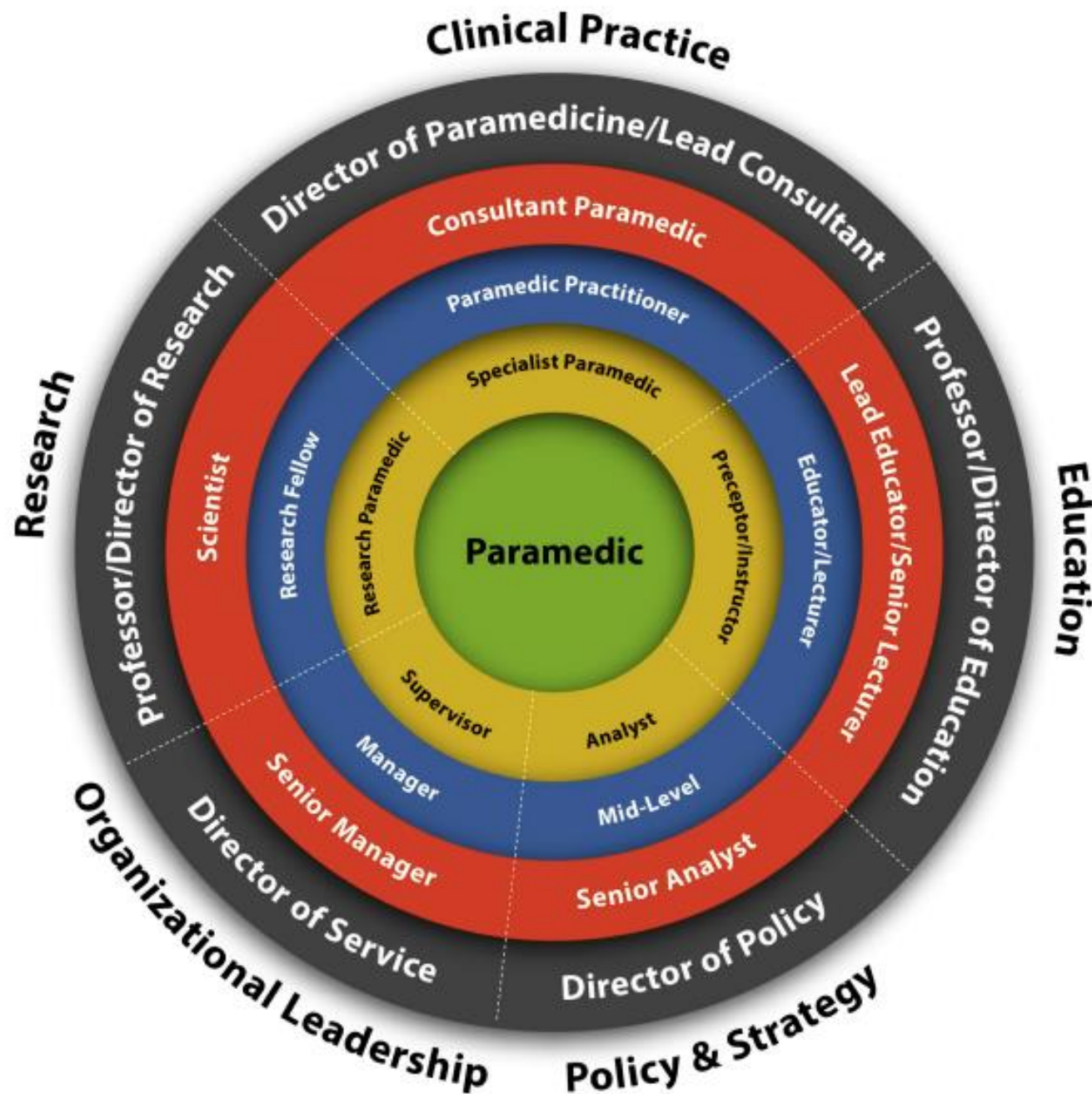


Figure 3. The Career Framework for Paramedics.

Implications & Recommendations – Connection

Good

Prioritize choice in partnership

Create teams within: platoons/start times/bases

Supervisor has set team (no more than 1:10)

Better

Create positions within the teams (TL/TTL, etc.)

Supervisor meetings with individuals to set goals and create action plans (IAP/ILP)

Best

Dedicated time for training and learning/sharing in teams

Supervisor meetings to follow up on progression of action plans (IAP/ILP)

Courses that support employees' goals

Implications & Recommendations – Role Identity

Good

Internal communication systems – share the work being done

Education systems focused on the reality of the work that we do

Better

Rewards and recognition in timely manner (save certificates)

Groups/committees aligned with the reality of the work that we do

Best

External communication systems – PR

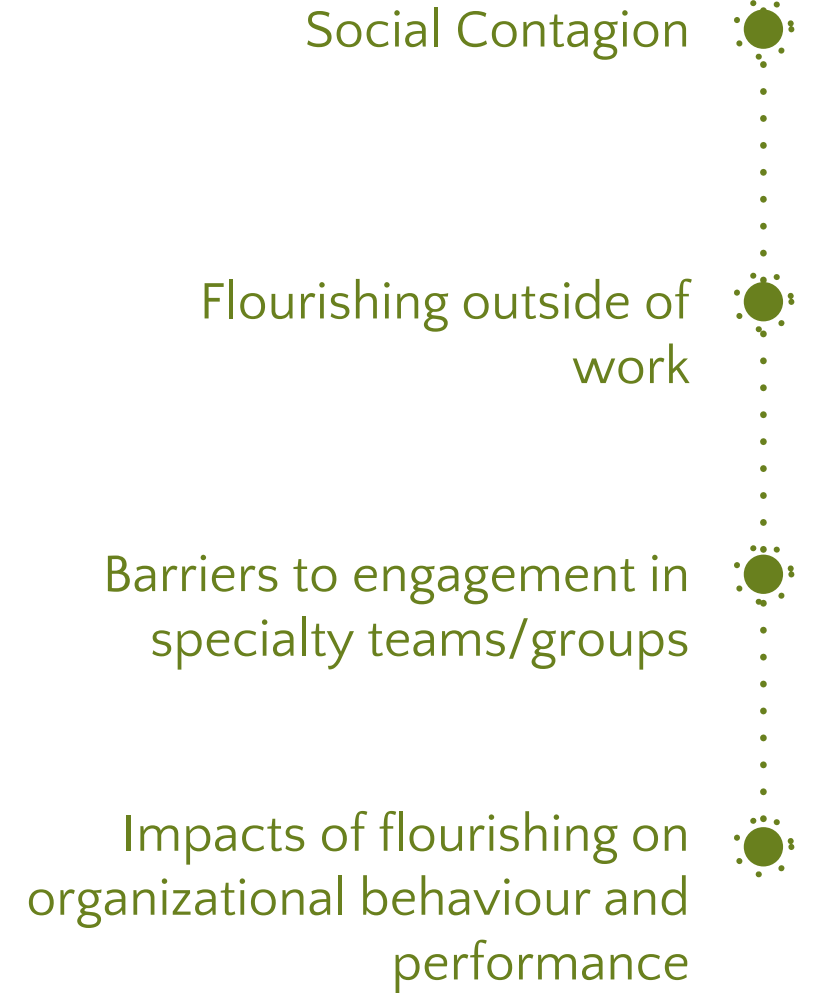
Feedback systems (QA and QI, appreciative inquiry, patient outcome)

Yearly skills inventories

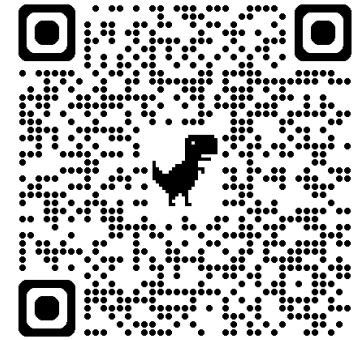
Nature vs. Nurture



Future Directions



5 D's of Appreciative Inquiry



Define

Discovery

Appreciating that which
gives life

Times of organizational
excellence

People come to know
their organization's history
as a positive possibility –
rather than static or
problematic

Dream

Envisioning impact

Challenging the status quo
to envision a preferred
future

Possibility statements that
make clear the shared
vision and desired future

Design

Deliver

A close-up, dark photograph of dense green foliage, likely a plant with thick, waxy leaves. The leaves are various shades of dark green, with some showing lighter green veins. The background is very dark, making the leaves stand out. The overall mood is mysterious and natural.

Questions?



Thank you!



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Thesis





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