

CMCL Lili Ruane Grant Application

Building a Culture of Wellbeing: Changing Minds to Change Lives

UVMMC has taken the lead in supporting innovative approaches to promoting staff wellbeing, retention and inclusion. The Lili Ruane Angel Fund has been instrumental in championing our caregiving staff by providing the resources, opportunities, and relationships to bolster our resilience, increase our wellbeing, strengthen our belonging and sustain our commitment to caregiving. Though nurses and nursing team members serve with expertise and compassion, prolonged stress — amplified since the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing systemic challenges in healthcare — can lead to burnout and diminished morale. Effective strategies for sustainable workforce resilience facilitate change at the individual level by strengthening the ecology of workplace environment. Ongoing strategic investment in staff wellness, mutual respect and professional fulfillment is fundamental to maintaining a nourishing environment for staff thriving and career satisfaction in frontline healthcare providers and all employees working in a healthcare setting. Broad-based positive workforce stabilization requires ongoing commitment to institutionalize and expand access to programs with demonstrated efficacy at scale. Building on the success of the initial implementation of the Changing Minds, Changing Lives program at UVMMC, this proposal seeks additional funding for wider dissemination through UVMMC's own certified leaders and trained facilitators to provide sustainable access to this evidenced based strategic resource for employee wellbeing, inclusion, and retention.

Changing Minds, Changing Lives (CMCL) is a nurse-led wellbeing program designed to restore resilience, support team cohesion, and improve job satisfaction. CMCL uses a strengths-focused, employee experience-based, interactive learning model that aligns with the ethos of Vermont: emphasizing strength rather than failure and building community connections while extending a warm welcome to all.

The Culture of Wellbeing project (CWP) aims to expand the successful Changing Minds, Changing Lives (CMCL) program at the UVMMC. The outcomes indicate resilience is restored, stress is buffered, and caregiving is revitalized, promoting effective teamwork. To date, we have hosted ten successful groups, including facilitator training to build internal capacity for sustainability with over 100 CMCL alumni and over 25 trained CMCL facilitators in the organization. This initiative supports nursing team wellbeing through promotion of the ABCs of resilience:

- Active coping
- Building on strengths

- Cultivating connections to access needed resources

Through this program, participants are welcomed in a supportive and non-judgmental group environment that meets for 75 minutes for 10 weeks. The first 9 classes are held virtually, with the final class held in-person as a celebration to reflect on key learnings and connect with peers. This program is an IRB-approved research study surveying pre and post key aspects of wellness: emotional self-awareness, coping, resilience, and sense of belonging. Over the past two years data indicate an improved sense of resilience and wellbeing with statistically significant results ($p < 0.05$) in all surveyed areas plus the use of identified strengths, ability to meet challenges and reframe negative thinking, participating as a member of a team, and integrating wellness practices into every day and future life. We have an engaged and active facilitator group that meets regularly and has collaborated to develop three conference poster presentations and four podium presentations – all shared at local, regional, and national levels – and an upcoming manuscript sharing the outcomes from this program implementation.

The Aim of this proposal is to widely disseminate and embed CMCL to increase staff wellbeing, inclusion and retention at scale. The strategy is to focus on the workplace environment so that the caregiving ecology is nourishing for staff thriving and resilience (measured by the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (BPNSFS) which will facilitate measurable changes in wellbeing, belonging, and retention.

Currently, our program includes nurses, LNAs, MHTs, CCAs, MAs, CPSAs, and anyone who identifies as a nursing team member. We have offered groups specifically for new graduate nurses, nurse leaders and supervisors, the ambulatory setting, and combined groups across the inpatient and outpatient settings. We are equipped and ready to expand this program even further to ALL EMPLOYEES. The curriculum has a proven track record of efficacy with clinicians and leaders at all stages of their careers and in different practice roles. At the request of CMCL alumni, we have continued our connection beyond the 10 designated weeks of the program, by offering peer-led monthly drop-in booster sessions for CMCL graduates at no cost. These booster sessions provide opportunities to refuel resilience, boost connection, and expand community. This continuation of CMCL promotes sustainable growth at the individual level and catalyzes a positive shift in wellbeing culture at the organizational level.