Relational Coordination in the VA Program

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VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

DENVER SEATTLE CENTER OF INNOVATION
FOR VETERAN-CENTERED & VALUE-DRIVEN CARE

RC in VA Program

- Free access to Relational Coordination Survey
- Free access to Relational Coordination Collaborative (RCC)
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- Contact Brigid.Connelly@va.gov

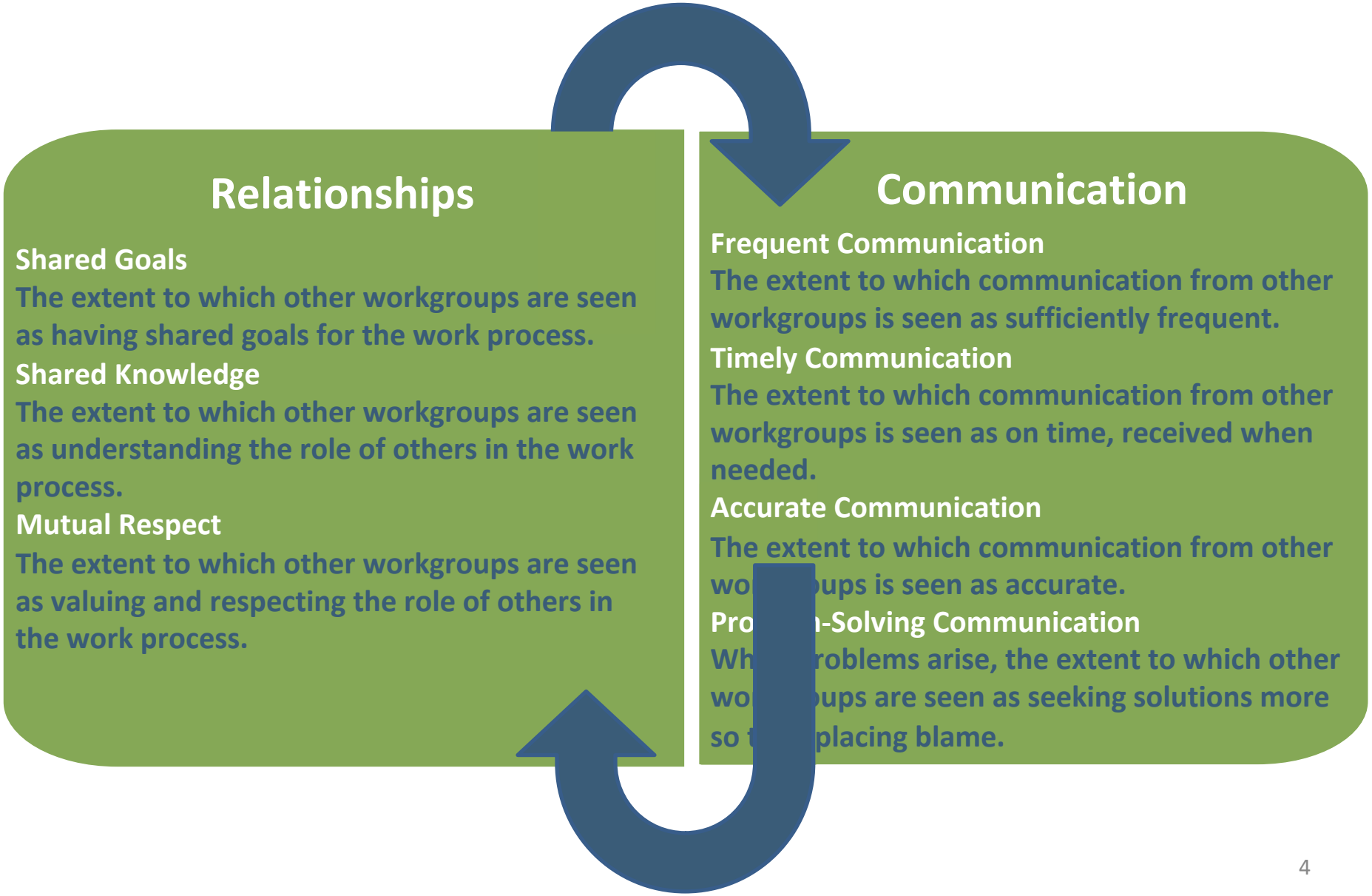
Relational Coordination in the VA Program

VA Challenges

- VA is a **complex system**
- Veterans have **complex needs**
- **VA MISSION ACT**
- Technical, structural, relational systems to support **care coordination**

Relational Coordination in the VA Program

Relational Coordination



Positive Impact on Organizational Performance

Performance Outcomes

Quality

- Increased patient satisfaction with care
- Reduced family complaints
- Reduced medication errors
- Reduced hospital acquired infections
- Improved on-time performance

Efficiency

- Reduced turnaround time
- Increased employee productivity
- Increased profits, sales and market share
- Reduced length of hospital stay
- Reduced total cost of hospital care
- Reduced costs of chronic care

Worker Engagement

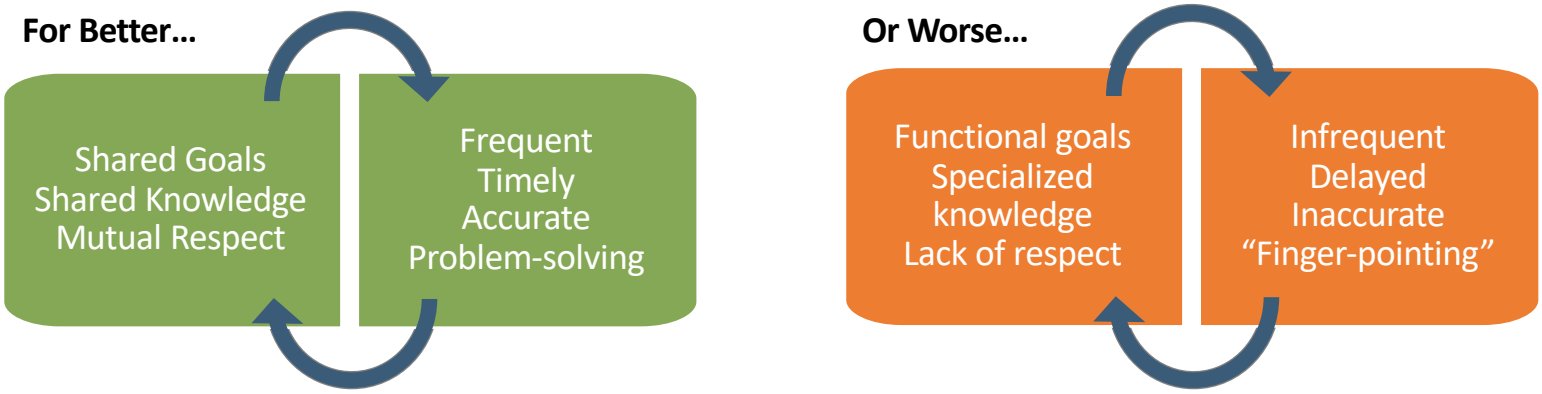
- Increased job satisfaction
- Reduced burnout/emotional exhaustion
- Increased work engagement

Client Engagement

- Increased family preparation for caregiving
- Increased family engagement in evaluation and retention
- Increased trust and confidence in care team

A Relational Theory of Performance

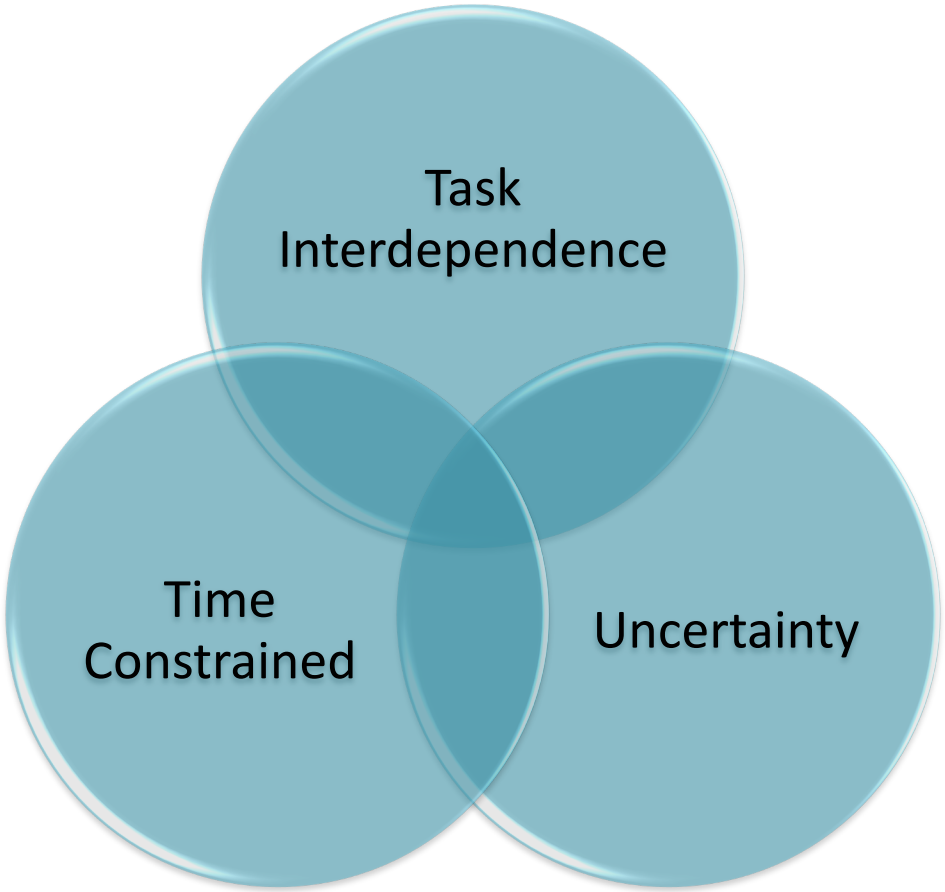
1. **Relationships <u>shape</u> the communication through which coordination occurs.**



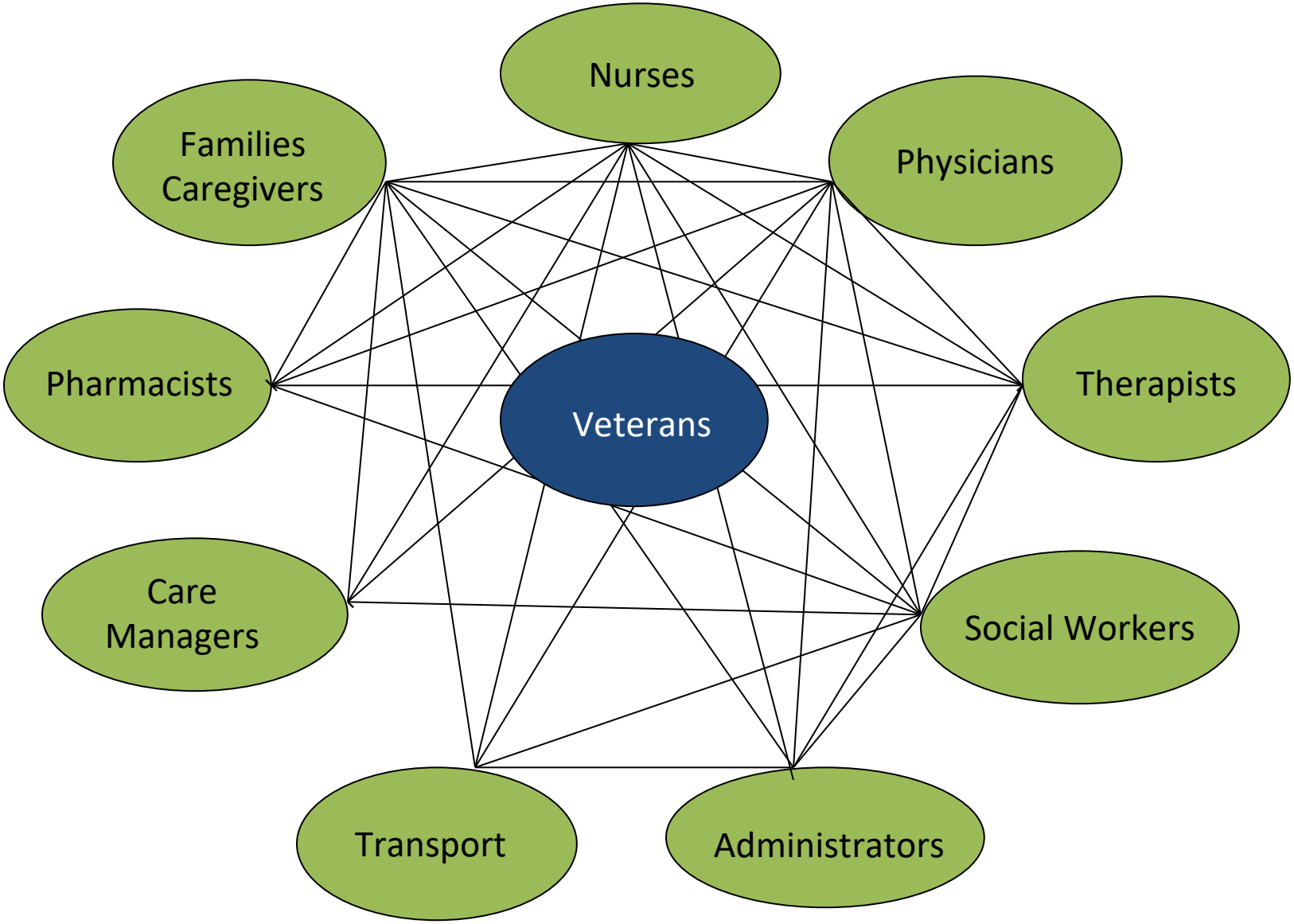
Communicating and relating for the purpose of task integration

A Relational Theory of Performance

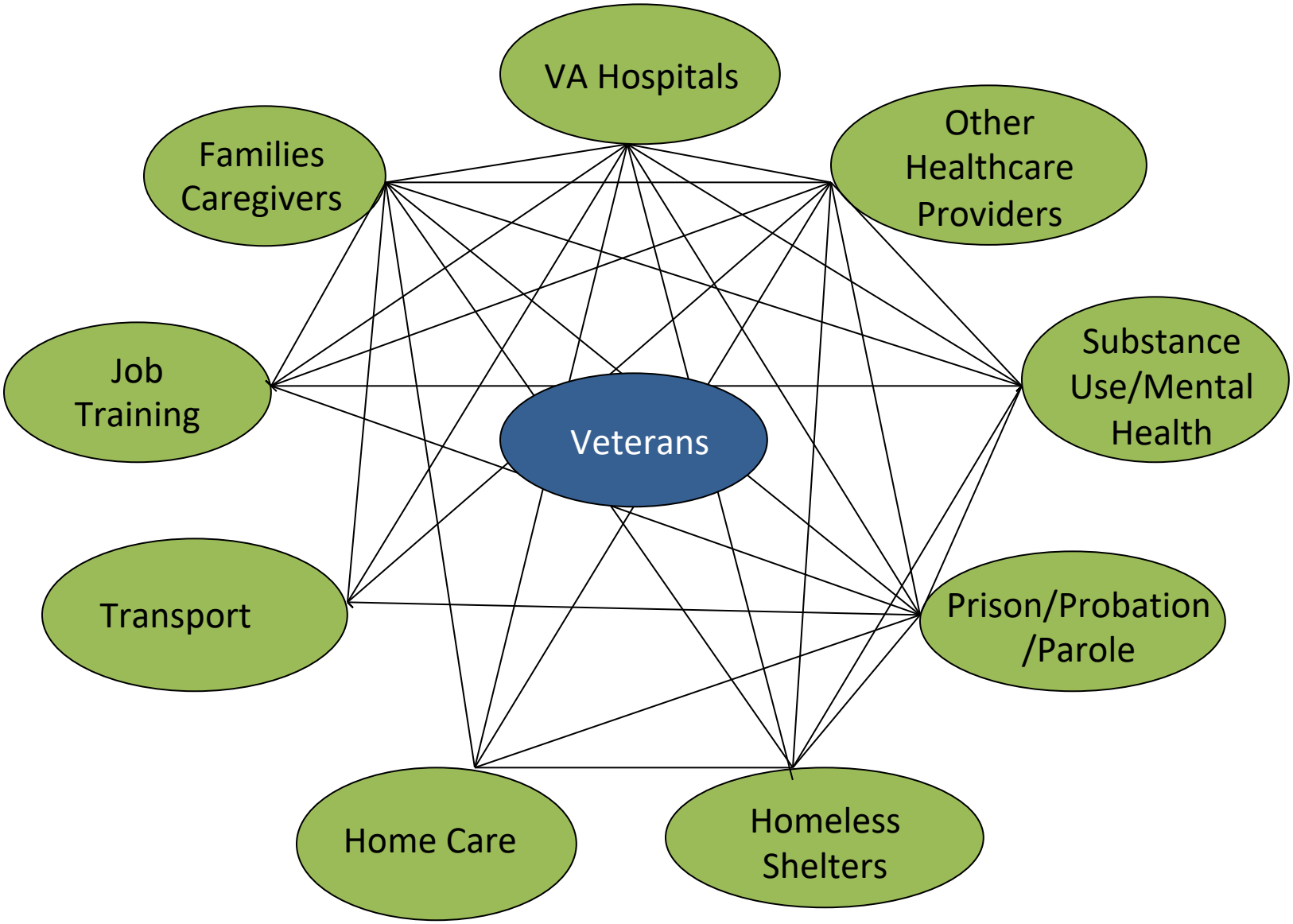
RC matters most for work that is complex, uncertain and time constrained.



VA Inpatient Care



VA Community Care



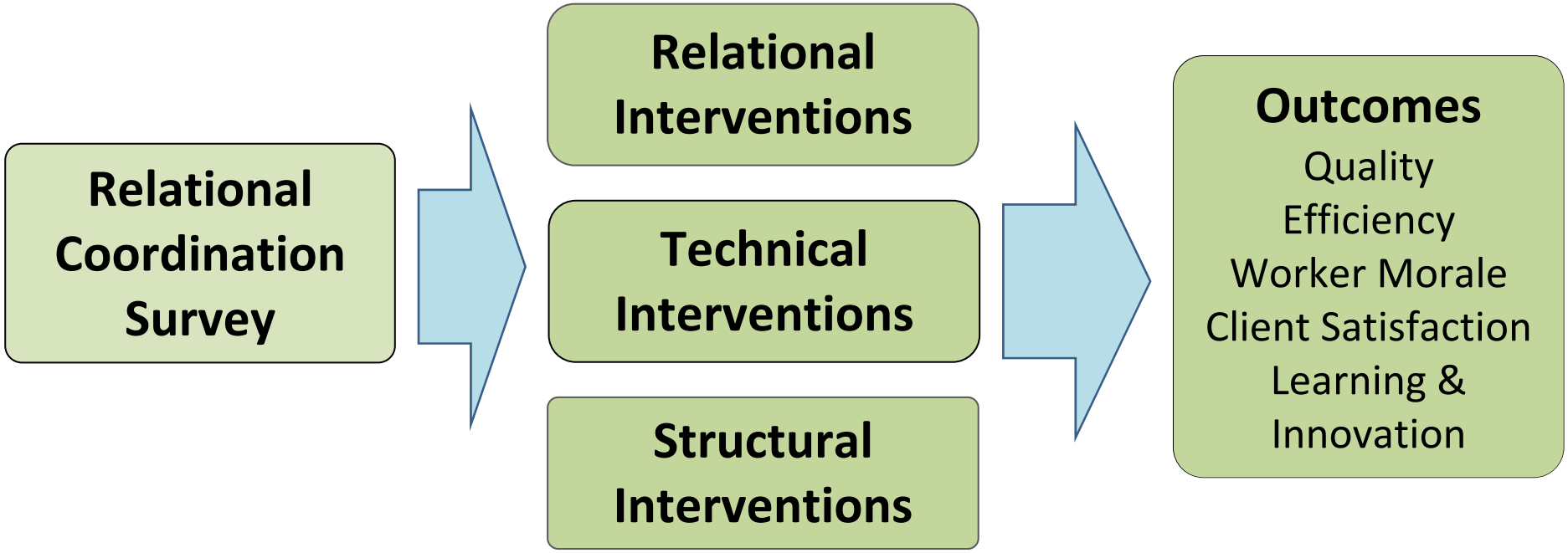
Relational Coordination for High Performance

- **Culture** that supports process improvement
- Visualization of **connections**
- **Relationships** = positive emotions

Relational Coordination in the VA Program

Relational Coordination

Assessment to Interventions to Outcomes



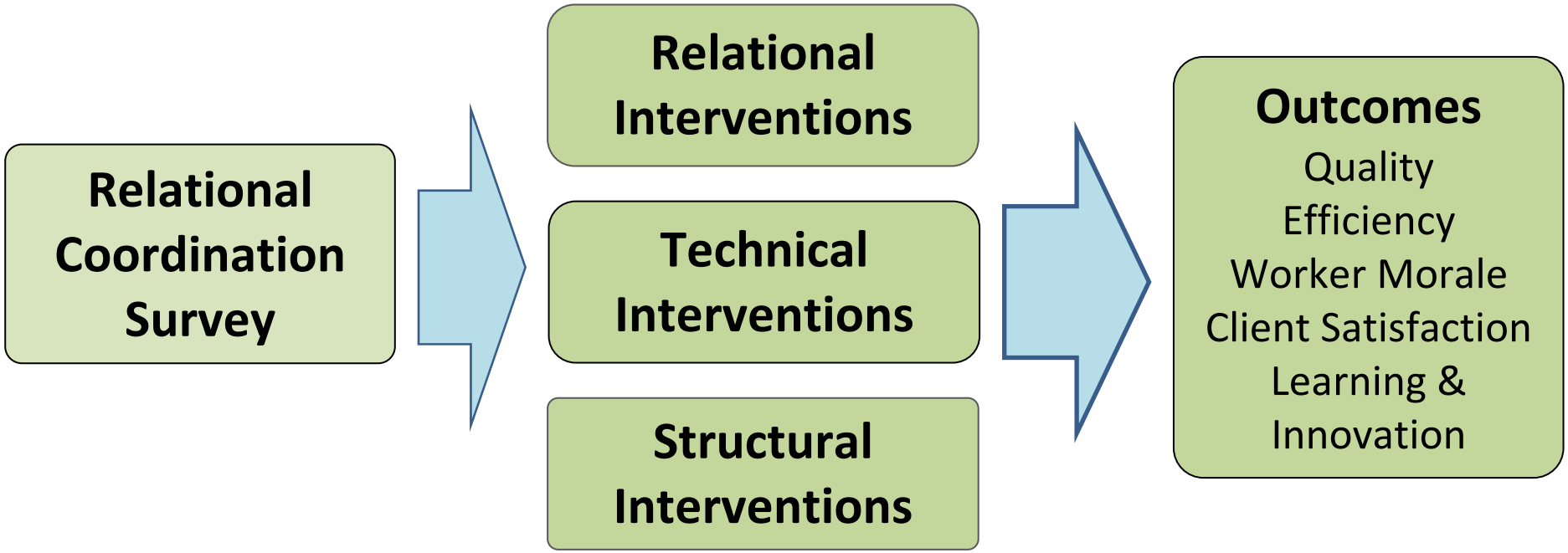
Relational Coordination in the VA Program

Relational Coordination Survey

COMMUNICATION	**Frequent Communication**	How ***frequently*** do people in each of these groups communicate with you about [**work process**]?
	Timely Communication	Do they communicate with you in a ***timely*** way about **[work process]?**
	Accurate Communication	Do they communicate with you **accurately** about **[work process]?**
	Problem Solving Communication	When there is a problem in **[work process],** do people in each of these groups blame others or work with you to ***solve*** the problem?
RELATIONSHIPS	**Shared Goals**	Do people in each of these groups ***share your goals*** for **[work process]?**
	Shared Knowledge	Do people in each of these groups ***know*** about the work you do with **[work process]?**
	Mutual Respect	Do people in each of these groups ***respect*** the work you do with **[work process]?**

Relational Coordination

Assessment to Interventions to Outcomes



RC Improvement Resources

Sample Interventions - Relationships

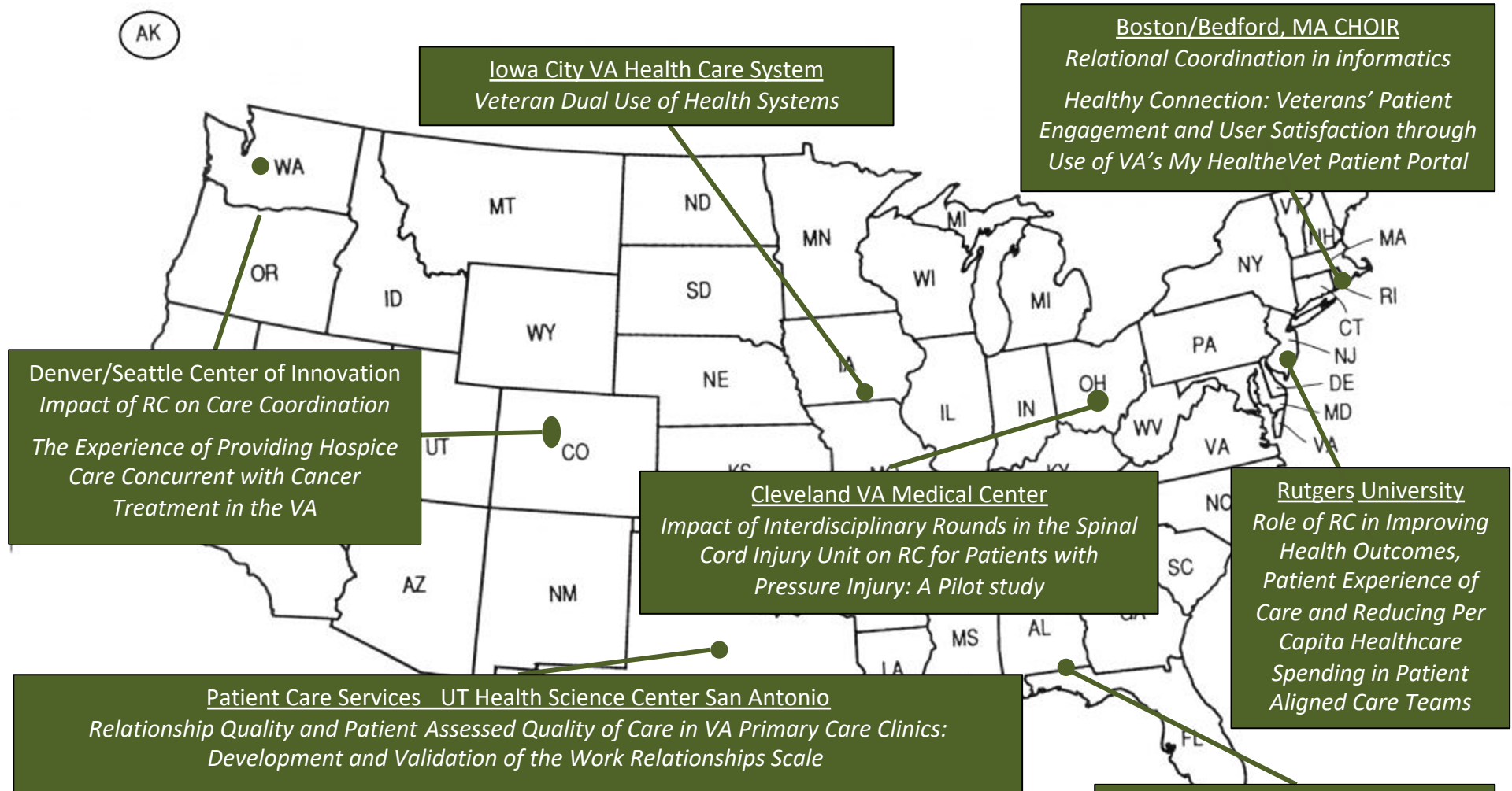
- Development of client-facing brochures to demystify the care process, educate, or address frequently asked or commonly misunderstood topics
- Interprofessional summits and/or workshops for training and professional development to foster awareness and build relational and team competencies (retreat, workshops, simulations, etc.)
- Job shadowing to understand roles, responsibilities, and interdependence
- Mentoring
- Social events – staff bbq, volunteer opportunities, quarterly summits
- Narrative storytelling and role playing to differentiate current and ideal future state and associate relevant behaviors with each
- Create a safe space – e.g. safe words to freeze/unfreeze discussion, physical object to signify violation of agreed upon norms for respectful interaction, etc.
- Interdisciplinary application of Lean and Six Sigma – value stream mapping, process mapping, Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycles with emphasis on cross-functional visibility
- Use of templates to track and monitoring metrics, progress and action items for cascaded goals
- Co-designed care pathways and/or standard operating procedures (SOPS)
- "Shout-outs" – publicly celebrating colleagues and reinforcing positive behavior, core values, and common decency
- Visual displays posted in common areas to track and monitor goals
- Protected time to meet and monitor progress

RC Improvement Resources

Sample Interventions - Communication

- Visual and/or electronically scheduled informational updates - newsletter, blogs, bulletin boards, social media, etc.
- Invite leadership to monthly departmental meetings to increase knowledge and visibility across organizational levels.
- On-call rotation schedule to give staff “off-line”/ time to disconnect
- Protected time for improvement teams to meet and plan
- Establish permanent and ad-hoc members of rounding teams to promote consistent participation and dissemination of information
- Expand huddles to include non-clinical and/or service roles such as Unit Specialists and CNAs
- Create and pilot co-designed, shared protocols to resolve common sources of delay or bottlenecks in hand-offs or transitions
- Role play to surface finger-pointing or counter-productive behavior and to socialize problem-solving strategies
- Use of liberating structures and principles of human-centered design to tackle and develop solutions for “wicked” problems
- Shared access to IT and/or reporting systems for care team members
- Embedded IT notifications for critical tasks
- Use of secure messaging or chat apps to resolve time-sensitive communication needs
- Establish team norms for acceptable communication patterns, inclusive of mutually agreed upon consequences for non-adherence
- Redesign of communication mechanisms (e.g. meeting agendas, check-in/huddles, email practices)

Relational Coordination in VA HSR&D



Iowa City VA Health Care System
Veteran Dual Use of Health Systems

Boston/Bedford, MA CHOIR
Relational Coordination in informatics

Healthy Connection: Veterans' Patient Engagement and User Satisfaction through Use of VA's My HealtheVet Patient Portal

Denver/Seattle Center of Innovation
Impact of RC on Care Coordination

The Experience of Providing Hospice Care Concurrent with Cancer Treatment in the VA

Cleveland VA Medical Center
Impact of Interdisciplinary Rounds in the Spinal Cord Injury Unit on RC for Patients with Pressure Injury: A Pilot study

Rutgers University
Role of RC in Improving Health Outcomes, Patient Experience of Care and Reducing Per Capita Healthcare Spending in Patient Aligned Care Teams

Patient Care Services UT Health Science Center San Antonio
Relationship Quality and Patient Assessed Quality of Care in VA Primary Care Clinics: Development and Validation of the Work Relationships Scale

Alignment of Patient and Primary Care Practice Member Perspectives of Chronic Illness Care: A Cross Sectional Analysis

Implementation of the Epilepsy Center of Excellence to Improve Access to and Quality Of Care

Relationships Within Inpatient Physician House Staff Teams and their Association with Hospitalized Patient Outcomes

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center
Characterizing Staff Interactions in a Sample of High Performing Nursing Homes

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Now Accepting Applications to Use Survey Through End of 2022!

Is your workplace like this?

PATIENT: Why hasn't anyone told me when I'll be discharged?

PROVIDER: Why hasn't this patient been discharged yet?

Or is it like this?

PROVIDER: I'm really happy to be a part of this team!

CAREGIVER: My mom's care team has been so coordinated!

Performance Outcomes of Relational Coordination

Quality

Worker Engagement

Financial

Patient Engagement

Safety

Learning and Innovation

RELATIONAL COORDINATION RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

To Learn More Visit:
https://www.seattledenvercoin.research.va.gov/education/rc/

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