

Creating a Coordinator Retention Revolution



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A partnership between



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Objectives

- Explore characteristics of coordinators from rural and community based programs who have been in their role more than 5 years.
- Understand the key attributes associated with the retention of coordinators who successfully maintain a longer tenure.
- Examine strategies to support retention of program coordinators.



Audience Question

Raise your hand:

In the past two years, has your program experienced turnover of a program coordinator?



Audience Question

Raise your hand:

Does your program have a coordinator who has been in their position for over 5 years?



Background

- A 2022 survey of 17 Program Directors in Family Medicine found 3 primary factors for long-term retention¹. These include:
 - **Developing the program** – Creating a supportive program culture, working to sustain the program, developing people
 - **Support systems** – Relationships both internal and external allow for continued growth and rewarding job experiences
 - **Rewards of the job** – The position provides them with a sense of purpose and satisfaction



Background, Continued

Is coordinator retention an issue?

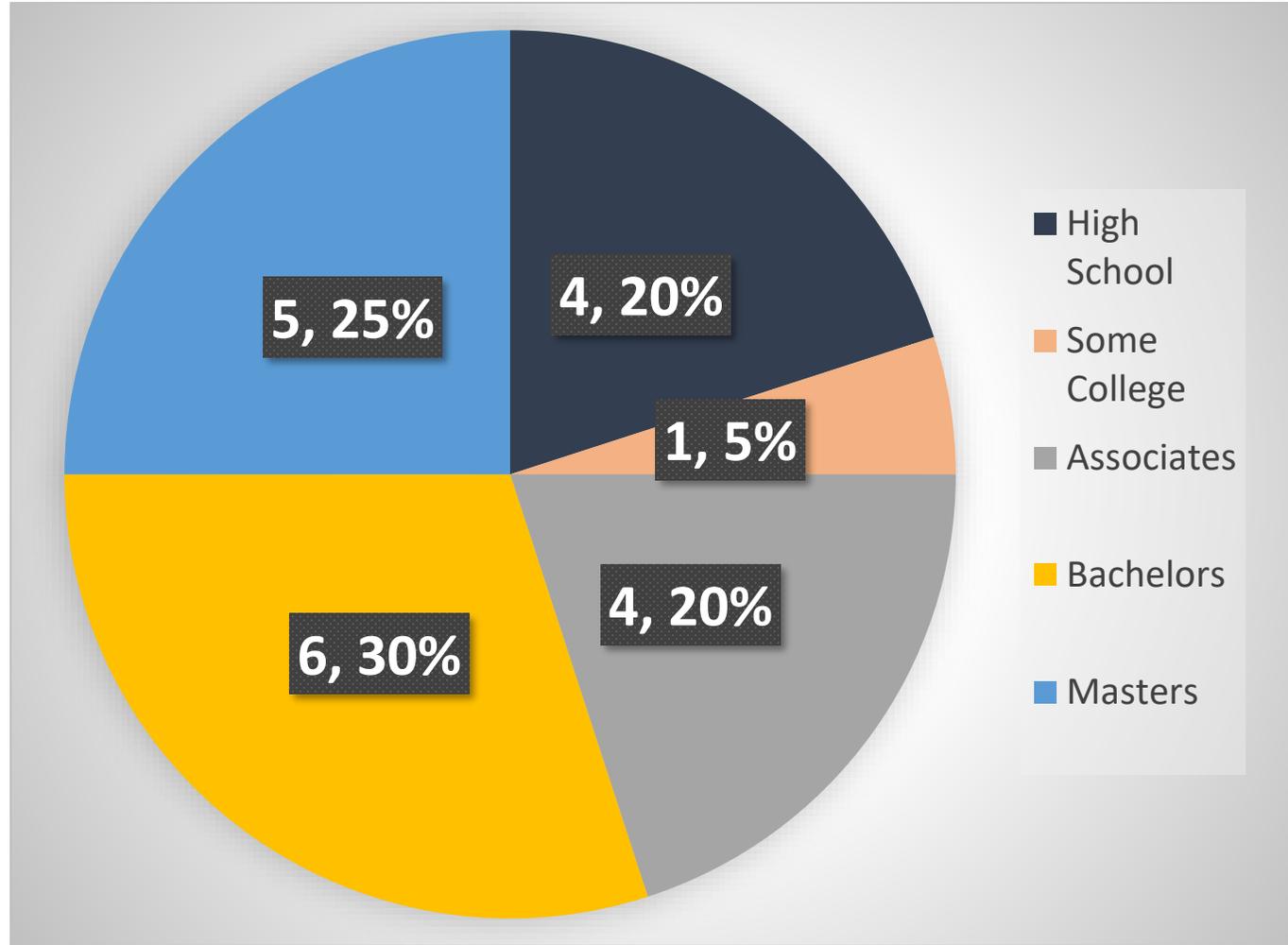
- Programs are experiencing the impact of **The Great Resignation**, due to challenges of compensation, engagement and overall wellbeing².
- On average it's estimated that over **30%** of programs will experience program turnover².
- In the past two years, Wisconsin saw **12 coordinators of 29 rural and community based programs**, leave their positions.
- A 2022 survey of 11,000 coordinators found that **27.9%** are likely or very likely to leave their position in the next year³.



Coordinator Retention Research

- WCRGME staff interviewed 20 coordinators with experience ranging from 5 years to a max of 29 years.
- Participants represented 10 states and 3 specialties (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry).
- 40% of participants had a prior work history in Office Administration. A range of other backgrounds included Government, Education, and Small Business.

Coordinator Level of Education





Quantitative Research Questions

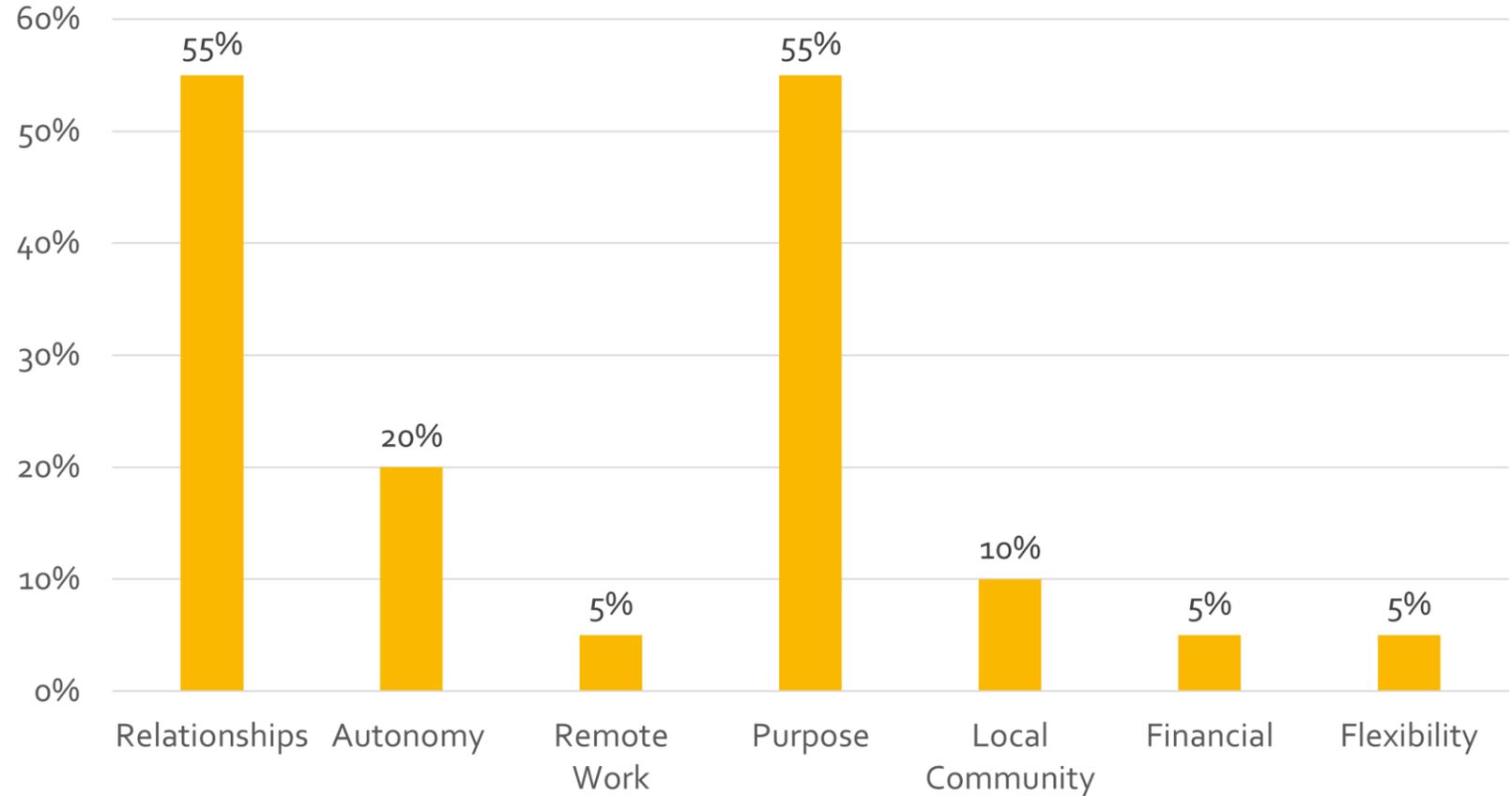
Participants were asked a series of structured quantitative research questions. They were asked to select a rating ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree).

- Key findings from our analysis include:
 - **100%** strongly agree: I feel a sense of **purpose** in the work that I am doing to support training of physicians
 - **85%** strongly agree: I feel **supported** by the program director
 - **95%** strongly agree/agree: In my role I can **innovate** and make the program stronger
 - **100%** strongly agree/agree: I have made strong **connections** with others in similar roles
 - **90%** strongly agree/agree: I see myself in this role a year from now



Open Ended Question:

What are some of the reasons you've stayed in your role?



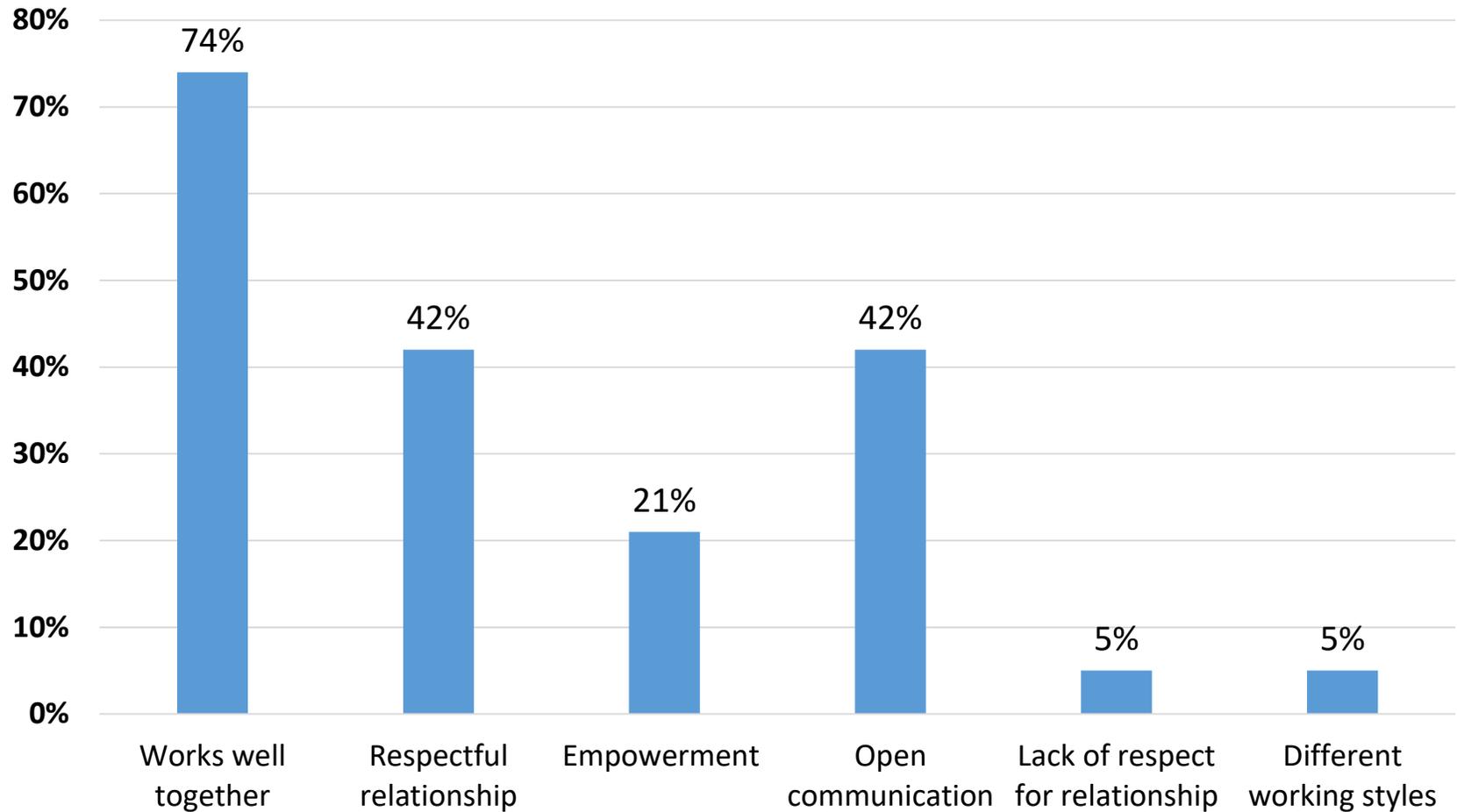
“The challenge of it. I enjoy the job because I get to do something different everyday. I also enjoy the opportunities for growth in my department.”

“The program director - he's amazing and supportive of me in my role. He respects me and cares about me as an individual.”



Open Ended Question:

Describe the program director/program coordinator relationship



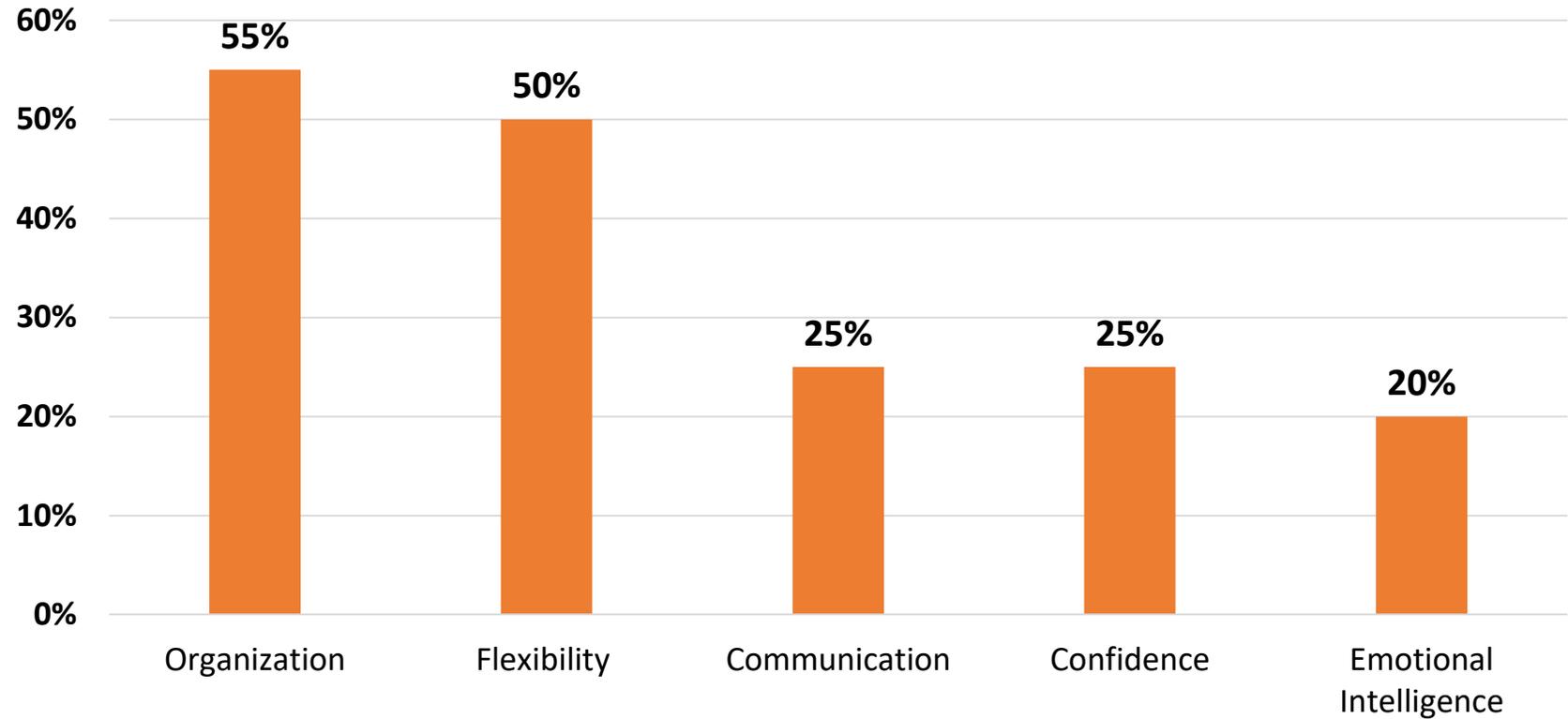
“My program director and I have a great open relationship in terms of communication and honesty. There is a shared sense of ownership within the program.”

“My program director sees me as a valued team member and we connect several times a week.”



Open Ended
Question:

Top attributes that are helpful for a GME Professional



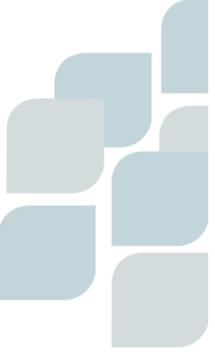
“Flexibility and the ability to juggle. You need to be able to think on your feet and troubleshoot issues as they arise. Be happy and flexible – see it as a challenge and maintain positivity.”

“Significant organizational skills and ability to pivot or change. Focus on the positive in the position. You can make enhancements and improvements if you’re open to feedback.”



Opportunities for Programs & Institutions

- Develop a strong culture that empowers all team members (especially your coordinator!)
 - *“Though I don't really see myself as a leader, my Program Director empowers me to take on new responsibilities.”*
- Identify training and networking opportunities that will help your coordinator grow and feel supported. Examples include RTTC, RRPD, THCPD Annual Meeting, Educational Events, etc.
 - *“Attending specialty specific conferences.”*
- Look for ways to provide flexibility and autonomy to foster a sense of purpose in supporting the program
 - *“I've stayed in my role because I have the freedom to make changes, do things.”*
- Acknowledge the coordinator leadership role
 - *Use language that reflects the responsibilities of a PC as a leader of the program²*
- Foster a strong relationship between the Program Director and Program Coordinator
 - *“The PC and PD (in particular) must successfully work together, communicate often, and trust one another to effectively manage the program(s)².”*



Opportunities for Coordinators

- Seek out growth opportunities (i.e. mentor, coordinator groups, leadership institute, educational webinars)
 - *“Join new things – like GME Coordinator Leadership Institute. Sign up for things to do that allow you to learn and improve.”*
 - *“Networking is super important. Meet others from different programs and learn from their experiences.”*
- Finding a community is important (i.e. Rural GME Coordinators Network, RRPD, THCPD, WWAMI, WCRGME, RTTC)
 - *“Look at state organizations that can lead you to local connections of coordinators.”*
- Know your “why”
 - *“The mission is not complete.”*



Questions?

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- 1) Douglas H. Fernald, Christina M. Hester, Steven R. Brown; “We've Really Built Something”: Why Family Medicine Program Directors Stay in Their Positions—A Qualitative Study. *J Grad Med Educ* 1 August 2022; 14 (4): 451–457.
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