



## STAR Guidelines

### How to Use the NHPCO Survey of Team Attitudes and Relationships (STAR)

#### A Guide for Hospice Administrators

##### I. Introduction

Employees play a fundamental role in the success of any organization and astute administrators recognize the value of a stable and committed work force. Regular assessment of staff job satisfaction provides information that can be used for proactive and corrective modification of organizational behavior and work environment to promote workforce excellence. Research has shown that employees who have higher job satisfaction care about the quality of their work, have higher retention rates, are more productive, and are more committed to the organization. Evidence also exists that job satisfaction correlates to the quality of patient care.

Other sectors of the healthcare industry use job satisfaction surveys tailored to their specific health care environments. However, until now, no tested comparable survey existed for hospice employees. The Survey of Team Attitudes and Relationships (STAR) is the first systematically developed job satisfaction measure that reflects the unique needs and work environment of hospice care delivery. STAR is designed to be administered to all hospice staff members whether they hold administrative, clinical, or non-clinical positions.

The STAR was developed by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with NHPCO. STAR questions were generated from interviews with hospice staff and were refined with additional input from an expert panel. The tool then underwent multiple revisions, pilot testing, and psychometric analysis. The final survey consists of 45 core questions across 6 domains: individual work rewards, teamwork, management support, organizational support, workload issues, and global assessment of job satisfaction. An article delineating the development of STAR was published in the October 2007 issue of the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* and can be downloaded from the STAR page of the NHPCO Web site: [www.nhpco.org/STAR](http://www.nhpco.org/STAR).

##### Benefits of Using STAR

The STAR is the only job satisfaction survey designed specifically for the hospice field. Hospice team members face distinct challenges working with a population of patients and family caregivers who have unique care needs. Consequently, a specialized job satisfaction survey such as the STAR is essential to the effective evaluation of job satisfaction of hospice staff.

Administrators will find STAR to be a valuable tool for promoting workforce excellence and delivery of quality hospice care. Participation in the NHPCO STAR administration and reporting



process will provide the information needed to make adjustments to improve staff satisfaction and retention. In addition, the NHPCO national level STAR report will allow hospice administrators to compare their results to others for benchmarking and comprehensive evaluation critical to organizational quality.

## II. STAR Online Survey Administration and Reporting System

NHPCO provides online survey administration and reporting of a hospice's survey results for STAR. Staff members complete the survey online in the STAR online system that is accessed through a link on the STAR page of the NHPCO Web site ([www.nhpco.org/STAR](http://www.nhpco.org/STAR)). Results for an individual hospice are compiled and presented in a downloadable report from the same online system.

The STAR online system includes a section labeled Survey Management, which enables your hospice's Primary Contact to direct and monitor administration of STAR. Links in the Survey Management section of the system allow setting the start and end dates for survey administration, checking survey participation progress, and on-demand creation of reports presenting the results for your hospice.

The Survey Management section of the STAR online system is accessible only by a hospice's Primary Contact.

**NOTE:** Each NHPCO member hospice is asked to designate a "Primary Contact" when completing the membership form. If an organization has multiple locations, each location should have a Primary Contact. If there is uncertainty regarding who is the designated Primary Contact for your hospice, contact the NHPCO Member Services Center at 800/646-6460.

## III. Implementation

Follow the steps outlined below to use the NHPCO STAR online survey administration and reporting system.

### Step 1

#### *Review the survey*

A copy of the survey can be downloaded from the NHPCO STAR Web page at [www.nhpco.org/star](http://www.nhpco.org/star).

**NOTE:** The survey posted on the NHPCO page **should not** be administered as paper/pencil. The only way to create an individual report for your hospice is to follow the instructions for online administration as outlined in this document. The downloadable survey on the STAR page of the NHPCO Web site is slightly different from the one administered online. The core questions remain the same; however, the demographics section of the online survey has been augmented to maximize detailed reporting of national level results.



## **Step 2**

### *Update Your Hospice's Roster in the NHPCO Member Database*

Each hospice staff member's employment status is verified by the online survey administration system prior to allowing access to the STAR online survey. In order to gain access to the online survey, an employee must be listed in NHPCO's membership data base. Therefore, it is imperative that the staff roster for your hospice be up-to-date prior to administration of STAR.

The person designated as Primary Contact for your hospice has access to the roster of your hospice's staff in the NHPCO member database. The Primary Contact should log onto the NHPCO Web site and review the names of those individuals listed on the roster and make any corrections, deletions, and/or additions. **\*\* (More detail on this process is provided at the end of this Guidelines document.)**

**NOTE:** Any staff member not listed on your hospice's roster in the NHPCO member database will be denied access to the survey.

## **Step 3**

### *Decide on the timing of survey administration and enter start and end dates in the online system*

STAR can be administered at any time. You determine the timeframe for your staff to complete the STAR.

The Survey Management section of the STAR online system has a screen for entry of the start date and the end date for survey administration for your hospice. This screen can be accessed only by your hospice's Primary Contact. These dates may be changed at any time, allowing for an extension of the deadline for survey completion and/or a change to the start date, if needed. STAR is available to staff at all times between the start and end dates chosen. A staff member who is unable to finish the survey in one sitting may return to the STAR online system to complete it any time prior to the end date set for the survey.

**NOTE:** Start and end dates must be entered in the STAR online system in order for staff to access the survey. Be sure that the start and end dates you have chosen have been entered prior to instructing staff to complete STAR.

## **Step 4**

### *Administer the STAR survey*

Introduce STAR to your staff by explaining the purpose of completing the survey; that all responses will be confidential; and provide them with starting and ending dates for completing the survey.



Guidelines with instructions for staff participation in the STAR process are available on the STAR page of the NHPCO Web site ([www.nhpco.org/STAR](http://www.nhpco.org/STAR)). NHPCO recommends that you provide staff members with a copy of these guidelines or direct staff to access the guidelines on the STAR Web page. Information on the STAR process is also presented on the STAR online system. Staff will find it helpful to review this information as well, particularly the detailed explanation of the confidentiality of survey responses.

After staff have been instructed in the survey process, they are ready to complete the online survey. Survey participants should start by clicking on the “Participate in STAR” link on the STAR page of the NHPCO Web site ([www.nhpco.org/STAR](http://www.nhpco.org/STAR)). This link will take them directly to the STAR online system where they will need to enter their NHPCO individual member ID and password to access the survey.

Survey participants will be asked to verify the name of their current employer. After a successful login, a screen appears displaying the name of the current place of employment listed in the NHPCO member database. The survey participant clicks “yes” if the listing is correct. If incorrect, the participant is instructed to contact NHPCO Member Services. This step ensures that each participant’s survey responses are accurately linked to their employer.

**NOTE:** Remind your staff that they will need their NHPCO individual member ID and password in order to log into the STAR survey administration Web site. (Staff do not need to first log into the NHPCO Web site. If they do, they will need to log in again on the STAR administration site.)

Each staff member listed on the roster for your hospice has an individual ID and password. Staff members who are uncertain of their ID and/or password should contact the NHPCO Member Services Center for assistance at 800/646-6460.

## **Step 5**

### *Create Your Hospice’s STAR Report*

Reports containing your hospice’s survey results can be created on-demand by the STAR online system. To create a report, the Primary Contact for a hospice must first access the Survey Management section of the STAR system. Next, click on the “Reports” link, then on the “Report Launcher” link and enter the start and end dates for your desired reporting period. After the report launcher starts, it will take approximately 2 minutes to populate a report.

**NOTE:** The reporting period is customized to the dates entered in the report launcher screen. This means that reports reflect only the survey responses entered in the timeframe you select. Be sure that the survey start and end dates are entered correctly to ensure accurate reporting of your hospice’s results.



#### IV. National STAR Report

Beginning in 2008, NHPCO created an annual National STAR Report summary of STAR results at the national level. Based on STAR survey responses entered throughout the year, the National STAR report includes overall national averages for STAR domains and questions, as well as results broken out by selected demographics such as clinical/non-clinical, discipline, and hours worked categorized by hospice size and location. The report also includes information on salaries.

The National STAR Report, is available for purchase through the NHPCO Marketplace, and is an invaluable tool for comparisons across hospices and evaluation of the hospice workforce as a whole.

To ensure inclusion in the annual National STAR Report, administration of the survey must be completed by **October 31<sup>st</sup>** each year.

**NOTE TO HOSPICE DIRECTORS:** Even if you do not complete Part I (Job Satisfaction) of STAR, you are urged to complete Part II of the survey. This section provides NHPCO with biographical information which is essential to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the national level report.

#### V. Help

NHPCO maintains a dedicated email address ([star@nhpco.org](mailto:star@nhpco.org)) for questions related to all aspects of the STAR survey process. The STAR email is the most efficient means of receiving assistance. Even if you would prefer to discuss your question via telephone, please send an email to STAR and request a call. Be sure to provide your name, phone number, and times you are available.

#### **\*\* Updating Your Hospice's Staff Roster**

To update your hospice's staff roster in the NHPCO member database, the Primary Contact first logs onto [www.nhpco.org](http://www.nhpco.org) using his/her individual ID and password. Once logged in, a "Manage Company" link will appear on the left-hand navigation bar (below the "View Profile" link). The "Manage Company" link directs Primary Contacts to the "Manage Organization Information" page where your organization's roster can be edited. **NOTE:** Some Internet virus protection programs block the "Manage Organization Information" screen. If you find this to be an issue, please click the option in your browser to "Allow Pop-ups."

When staff members are added to your organization's roster, they should be automatically enrolled as an NCHPP member and will be assigned an individual ID and password. If you need assistance with the updating process, please contact the NHPCO Member Services Center at 800/646-6400.