

## Program Approaches for Staff Wellness

Steve Shuman: And now we can begin. Let me introduce the first of today's speakers, Nancy Topping-Tailby. Nancy?

Nancy Topping-Tailby: Thank you so much, Steve. And welcome, everyone. We've been very much looking forward to spending this next hour with you today, talking about some of the work that our center has done around staff wellness, which is work that Neal Horen, my co-director, and I began several years ago and really have needed more than ever before.

As you know, my name is Nancy, and I have the honor of being the co-project director and the co-principal investigator of the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. And one of the folks who's been really involved early on and doing our staff wellness work. I'm going to turn it over to Neal and ask Neal to introduce himself next. Neal?

Neal Horen: Hi. I'm Neal Horen, and I'm also the co-project director and co-PI for the center, we're – as Nancy said – we're super excited. And we're also super excited because we have Karen Cairone, who's really been helping us to lead all these efforts. I'm going to turn it over to Karen.

Karen Cairone Hey, everyone. Nice to meet you all. I'm excited to be here with Nancy and Neal today and have been talking about staff wellness for about 20 years with this in prior work. I'm eager to dig in today with you all. Nancy, I'm going to turn it back to you for the learning objectives.

Nancy: Thank you. Now that you've met us, and you know who we are, let's talk about what we're going to do today. We have a full agenda, as you heard, starting with talking a little bit about helping you think about how to explore some possible staff wellness goals and strategies that include healthy movement, being active, getting enough rest, behavioral health, being able to be mindful, and then to feel more resilient during these very challenging times. And then thinking from a safety perspective about healthy relationships and trust.

We're going to share with you a tool that we've been using, a staff wellness action plan that we refer to as a SWAP, so that you'll have some sense of how you might use that if you wanted to adopt a staff wellness systemic approach in your program, and you wanted a plan to guide your activities. And finally, the part of today's presentation that I'm most excited about is that you're going to have an opportunity to hear from three of your colleagues, grantees who have been involved in work that we began in March of this year, seems like a very long time ago, when we had a two day institute followed by a six-month community of practice, where we've been sharing ideas with each other, sharing successes, and challenges.

And we have three wonderful programs who were kind enough to share their efforts with you about how they're promoting staff wellness in their own programs. And I hope that one of the takeaways from hearing them will be to encourage you and have you know there's not a one

size fits all approach, and that you can put your toe in the water almost anywhere with very good results. Having said that, I'm going to turn it over to Karen. Thanks, Karen.

Karen: Yeah. Thanks, Nancy. The fact that you are here today with us, we believe over 800 people understand the importance of wellness. We don't need to spend a ton of time on, "why wellness?" but I do think it's important to do the counterbalance to wellness, which is looking at the stress and risk that we all face. And we working in Head Start, we have some special stressors that we face on a regular basis. Those that come from our personal lives, and how we try to balance our workplace and our home lives, some economic hardships for folks, even thinking back to their history and adverse childhood experiences or things that they've had trauma throughout their own lives.

We look at our health, and how stressors can come from that with our mental health, physical health, and emotional health. And finally, how we function – how we function in our jobs, and how we function in our home life with the relationships that we develop, the quality and health of those relationships. And then also, just how we support children. I know many times we've heard the saying, we need to put on our own oxygen masks so that we can help others around us. But it's really important that we put on our own oxygen mask to help ourselves. Staff wellness just for the sake of staff wellness is extremely important. We want our staff to be healthy and well for them. And then we want them to, obviously, be able to take care of the little ones and the families around them.

I'd like to ask you to think about not only are these stressors here on a regular basis, years and years we've had these same sort of stressors, but now, we have an extra stressor layered on top of everything with all of the aspects and impacts of the pandemic. Folks that were feeling stress are now feeling a lot of stress, and we can see this reflected in our interactions almost on a daily basis. You can notice that people you used to maybe have easy interactions with are a little bit more difficult at times based on what folks are going through with this added stress. We felt it very important to dig into some of the aspects of staff wellness that we thought could have an immediate impact in your lives, and then also, as Nancy said earlier, to hear from some of your fellow Head Start colleagues, who are out there doing this work in their programs.

With that, I'd like to move on and just ask you to think about the stress that you're facing. I shared some on the slide prior, and if you feel comfortable typing some of your stressors in the chat, you can feel free to do that. Otherwise, why don't you just take out a piece of scrap paper and jot down a few things that you know are stressors for you on a regular basis. We all face different things. Some of the ones that I went through already and then some that are not even discussed yet.

We understand the impact of stress, and we understand the importance of wellness. Some people are typing in things like home and work balance, lack of staff, staffing issues, mandatory vaccines for staff causing different kinds of discussions for folks in your program. And just, again, a lot of short staffing coming in, uncertainty, COVID, starting a new year, staffing enrollment, having not enough time to do things. These are the sort of things that you all are facing, and we do really appreciate all that you do and all the stressors you have.

We'd like to give you some strategies you can start with right away today. We've got two for health. I'm going to talk about movement and sleep, and then I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Neal Horen, and he's going to talk about mindfulness. I'm going to jump back in with resilience because I can't resist talking about it, and then Neil is going to take back over with some safety strategies around healthy relationships and trust. And then Nancy will talk with us about developing some staff wellness action planning.

We'd love you to end today with at least one place to start. And of the six strategies that my colleague Neal and I will go through, we would love you to choose at least one that you can commit to at the end of the webinar today, that you'll take and make an immediate change, something that you can start to try right away to impact your own health and safety. We've got two for health about movement and sleep. Those are the two I'll dig into. Neal will come next on some mindfulness, and we'll talk about resilience, and then he'll round out with some safety strategies around eliminating unhealthy and unsafe vices and also talking about the healthy relationships that you may have.

To dig in with health, we're going to start with two. And the first one as you can see from this big wild cat stretching and moving, that we can incorporate more movement almost into every moment of every day. Even with something simple like a little stretch right now or a little shoulder roll or moving your legs up and down or standing up and down if possible to hear this webinar instead of sitting, there are a lot of things that you can do to constantly improve your movement. We want you to think about all the benefits out there of movement and how just putting little conscientious, intentional strategies into your day can help with things like your digestion, your weight control, your mood, your sharpness, how able you are to have quick judgment and decision making. Movement is impacting us in so many things that we do.

We hope that this might be one thing that we can dig into a little deeper. And we wanted to look at the intersection of movement and nutrition. You'll see this little person here and all sorts of things leading to his or her body. And we've got things like having to eat more, frequent meals away from home, maybe having increased screen time in your house, having environmental constraints that are inhibiting your act of living, having a lot more access to large portion sizes, and junk food, and food advertising, and overall, just the decline in how physically healthy we're able to be. These are some ways that the intersection of movement and nutrition come together.

One of the strategies you might choose today would be to increase your movement in small ways throughout the day. We want you to remember that no matter how slow you're going, you're still lapping everybody on the couch. Try to continue to focus on this, and at the end, when we choose one, you may decide "Today, I'm going to make sure movement is something that I start to focus on a little bit more."

My second health strategy that I'm going to talk about today is sleep. I personally know some people who are not great sleepers, and they have found some strategies and ways to deal with not being great sleepers, but they are very cognizant, and they recognize that they still need to improve their sleep and keep working on the importance of it. Sleep improves our immune

system. Sleep helps us keep our body weight in the correct healthy areas. It reduces things like stroke and heart attack, and helps us with our mental health issues. It affects how our day goes. If we have a great night's sleep versus not a great night's sleep, sometimes it can impact the entire next day. Maybe this will be one of the six strategies that we share today that you'll decide, "I'm going to make some conscious efforts to focus on my sleep."

And here are a few strategies that you could consider. Things that you might put into your own lives like avoiding phones, TV, computers, or any kind of screen that would keep that light in front of your face right before bedtime; avoiding caffeine, like soda or energy drinks or things that either eating or drinking things that might keep you up; establishing a routine that doesn't have super high energy, things right before bedtime that might get our energy and our heart rate up and have us have a hard time settling down; setting up regular wake up times and bedtime for ourselves, even on the weekends, so that our body can get regulated and not be completely out of our usual sync; and then noticing what sensory stimuli are important.

The smells that we have around us, the sounds, breeze in our room. I know that Neal Horen will tell you that a cold room with a lavender smell are two thumbs up to get started on a healthy sleep strategy. Those are just a few to share with you, and maybe at the end, we will be able to come back and talk about which strategies you choose and maybe you'll choose to focus in on sleep. I'm going to turn it over to Neal, who's going to talk about two strategies around behavioral health.

Neal: Thanks, Karen. I already feel like a fraud because I've been sitting in this chair for seven hours after getting a [Inaudible] but will do my best to talk about behavioral health, and I will go sniff some lavender and take a nap. That was great. And hopefully, within a short time frame, we're going to do our best to give you concrete strategies. And we're really hoping that little piece of paper that you took out, you're writing down, "Oh, that's a good one, I'm going to stick with that one." Or "Neal swayed me, I think behavioral health ones are the ones I'm going to go with." Let's go to the next slide here please. I often feel like we've spent a lot of time talking about, "Hey, everyone be mindful." And they're like, "Yeah, yeah, mindful, I got it. I heard you. I heard you." And maybe over the last year and a half, you've had a lot of time to be mindful. Your many lives have been disrupted.

And I want to spend a little time talking about this, because I think people hear this word and they can conjure up lots of different things about what that really means. And I think it's important to think about what that means to you. And many of you as I'm looking in the chat, and I'm with Steve about how exciting everything is. I do think that it's important to think about what this means for you. I do think it would take 10, 15 seconds. Can you write down what you think it means to be mindful. If you wouldn't mind. What does it mean for you?

You could put it in the chat if you want. I always like to sort of see what folks are putting in there. Tuned in with self, being present, being present, thoughtful, being in the moment without judgment, thanks Jody, trusting, being reflective. Great. I'm trying to be in the moment as some sort of robotic vacuum apparently is heading towards my way. If you see me get

sucked into a vacuum, Karen will take over and show me how to be resilient, but I'll do my best to be in the moment.

Let's talk about this on the next slide here a little bit. Great insights from all of you. And I just want to remind you that being mindful in some ways – if I present it in a very different way, you'll be like, "Oh, yeah. I get that." I oftentimes like to talk about mindful and the one thing that I know the most about, which is eating. I think about those cooking shows where Guy Fieri's at some restaurant, and he takes that sandwich, and he bites, he's like, "Oh, you can taste the creamy Mayo and the garlic from the bread." And I'm like, "What's this guy talking about?" I'm like shoveling chips in. He's being mindful. He's doing mindful eating.

I want to remind you if you're being mindful. You're doing this in this non-judgmental way. You're being present, as many of you said, in the moment. Do it right now. Look around the room that you're sitting in and see if you can notice something that you've never really paid attention to before. I'm in some rental house for a bit here. I just noticed the design on this lamp that I stare at all day every day. When you are in – for some of you when you're taking children on that walk, you're being mindful. You're pointing out every single little thing that you do. It's really important that we start to pay attention and be present because we're all busy. We're all stressed at various times. One thing to do is to take a little bit of time to be mindful of where you're at and what's going on.

And what we know about that – one second – what we know, on the next slide, is that this has been an effective intervention for all kinds of actual medical interventions. It's about addressing stress and anxiety. It's been used to treat depression, weight loss. All the kinds of things that we actually would refer to in some of our physical and health work, we can actually use mindfulness to address. I really encourage folks to start to think about, "How can I be mindful, be in-tune, be present in a non-judgmental way?" because we know what the research says about how this can be helpful.

Next slide, please. I said we'd give you concrete strategies. I'm going to give you one. And it is when everyone sees me, they just immediately think "soft" in lots of different ways. We're going to give you a soft piece here to try on your own, and I'll work on it with you to start.

S is for soften your face. And often, I do meditation every morning. And the first thing that happens is the person says, "OK relax your face." And I'm, like, "Oh, yeah. My face is really intense." Soften your face. Open your chest. Open up and take that deep breath and float down your shoulders. Let your shoulders go. You're releasing tension in your face. You're opening up your chest, and you're floating down your shoulders, and take a deep breath in through the nose and out through the mouth. Takes you 30 seconds.

SOFT – Soften your face, open your chest, float down your shoulders, and take a deep breath. That's one piece. And this may be the piece that you want to work on, is this mindfulness piece. I'd love to talk about resilience, but I have an expert in resilience in Karen. I'm going to turn over to you Karen.

Karen: Thank you, Neal. So far we've talked about three strategies – movement, sleep, and mindfulness. And our fourth strategy that we want to touch on is resilience. We like to think about resilience as an umbrella. You never know when that storm is going to come, but you want to have that umbrella just in case. It's really important that your umbrella is very broad, has no holes in it, is taken good care of, hasn't been moth-eaten, and as it sits in the back of your car. You need to foster and build your resilience on a regular basis.

And in order to do this, resilience is something that you don't just get and keep for your life. Resilience goes up and down. Like I feel a little more resilient than I did a year before or yesterday. We need to constantly be checking in and working on our resilience. And I would love if you would go into the chat and think about the word resilience, and bounce back, and coping, and adapting. And type in the name of one person that you can think of who's resilient. Could be someone we all know, someone famous, or could be somebody just in your own life that you know that's a resilient person, could be yourself. But take just a minute and type in the name of a resilient person. I see a lot of "my mother" coming through. "Oprah," "my husband," "my son," "Ginger," "my sister," "Christina," "my 83-year-old father," "my friends," "my parents," "my mother," "my child," "my sister," "my girlfriend," "my son," "co-worker Charlie." Great things coming in here.

And we'll tell you we always see "me," we always see "my mom," and we always see "Oprah" when we ask this question in the chat. And those three did come through this time. Thank you for sharing and please keep that person in your mind. What is it about them that helps them be resilient? I think we all know adults who could work on their resilience. We all know some adults that could work to build their bounce. They're often are more irritable. They're inconsistent. One moment their one way and the next you don't know what to expect. Their energy level may be low. They may be less engaged with their work.

And it can start very early. We all know the importance of focusing on resilience in young children and the importance of turning that thinking even around from negative thinking and negative vibes to more positive vibes. One strategy that we would like to leave you with today is to think about turning around what we call "stinkin' thinkin'." We all have – I think, we're good to our friends, right? Our friend comes to us and say, "I can't do this. I'm a failure. This is horrible." And what do we say to our friend? "No, you've got this. You can do this. You can try. I'm here to help you. I'm here to support you." We're very good to our friends, but we're not always so good to ourselves.

We'd like you to start to focus on when those negative thoughts come into your head, like, "This isn't going to work. I can't do this. There's no way this is going to happen." And start to think about turning around your thinking to be more positive, to be more optimistic. "I'm happy for another opportunity to try. I'm going to learn through this experience. I've noticed some changes. I've made some baby steps. I might not be all the way there yet but ..." This could be one thing as you think about building your own resilience on a regular basis. That even taking those negative thoughts and treating yourself like your own friends would be a really good way

to start. We want to leave you with that strategy, and then I'm going to turn it back to my colleague Neal to talk about two safety-based strategies.

Neal: Thanks, Karen. I got rid of my stinkin' thinkin' just now. All right. I think that, apparently, I'll be moving more quickly. I think that we want to talk here a little bit about safety-based strategies. I'm old. As you see, I'm scared of robot vacuums, but I also have fond memories of Family Feud. We're going to play a little Family Feud here because what you're going to look at on this slide is what are the factors related to longevity. The impactful things that help in terms of leading a long life. And I have given you the bottom four answers. Not that these aren't important, but these there are answers that are wildly more popular from Richard Dawson and Steve Harvey's perspective.

What I'd like you to think about are what are the – wow, you already had me Hortesia, that's pretty – all right, Kelly, I got you. You're all ahead of me. All right. What do you think they are? And let's just take 30 seconds, and you all type in what you think is going to be above exercise, lean versus overweight, hypertension, and having clean air.

I see good mental health. I see happiness, relationships being positive, sleep, laughter, faith, diet. I think I saw skydiving. I also can't see very well. There's a lot of factors going on here. Karen, I'm not very resilient. Mental health, relationships, sleep, gratitude. Great. This is really helpful to start to think about because when you see the top answers on the board, you'll see that many of you got a whole bunch of them. But there are a couple that might be surprising to some of you. Let's go on to the next slide.

I'm sure my friend Steve Shuman will love seeing flu vaccine because I know if there wasn't a pandemic we'd be talking about flu vaccines. And we'll be back to talking about flu vaccines very soon. We actually will be planning a webinar, I think, Nancy, very soon on flu vaccine. Flu vaccine, cardiac rehab, but it is about boozing and smoking, right? It is about substance use. We know that those are critical things. It's those vices, as Karen alluded to earlier on, that are really important to start to think about. While we have lots of research about the impact of nicotine and alcohol, and yes, I'm sure somebody is going to make an argument about the Mediterranean diet and a glass of wine, when, we're talking about this, we're talking about heavy use.

But what you see up at the top, to many to your credit, is social integration and close relationships. Often, we think about – and this is why our center takes this approach – we often think about health, behavioral health, and safety, and yet, they are completely intertwined. That if you want to have good health, here's what you see. That yes, it does include things that we would more directly relate to health, like getting your flu vaccine, like exercise, and things. But it also includes social wellness. And I think you'll hear from our grantees – I don't like calling you grantees – you're going to hear from Madison, and Jerry, and Pat, how they've gone about addressing this in a more cohesive, comprehensive way. But this is a good example of the research that indicates these are all completely intertwined. Let's go to the next slide, please.

Another way – and we said we give you strategies. Here's another strategy. It's sort of a less/more. On a piece of paper, one of the things that you can do, and I'd like you to take a minute here and do this for yourself. And as I've presented this more and more, I do this more and more. I'm making those lists every day of this. I want you to start to think about what's going to make you safer and healthier in terms of daily choices. What do you need to do less of? Make a column of things that you need to do less of. Where's my pen? And what are the things that you need to do more of. On one side, the things you need do less of, one side the things you need to do more.

Take 30 seconds and just start up a little list, and then I might – there you go. Or you can start throwing it in here. Thanks Lisa, “eat less candy, less soda.” Our friend Ariella Herman would break out a 7-billion-gallon bottle of soda sometimes to show how much sugar people can get from drinking soda. Less social media, sleep more, less – very specific, La Tanya, really going right after the Dr Pepper. Not even going to say “soda,” she's going to tell you exactly which soda, Doctor Pepper. Less sweets. Good. I see lots of less. There you go. I see some more. More water. Right. If you're doing less of things, hopefully there's more self-care, less screen time, more vegetables, more walking, more hugs, less negative, or as I like to call it, stinkin' thinkin'. Karen, I don't know if you're familiar with that term, stinkin' thinkin'. Yeah. Great.

What we really want you to start to do is visit your list. Come to your list every day and say, “Oh my God, my list is exactly the same. I didn't do anything less or any more.” Are you actually doing it? These sort of visual reminders, you would have no problem if we said have a visual reminder for children in the classroom, and yet you don't use your visual reminder. Here's your visual reminder. “What do I need to do less of, and what do I need to do more of?”

OK. You all saw on that other slide, and you put in the chat about social relationships and things like that. Let's look on the next slide, I want to talk a little bit more about this. This really is about what we know are the factors that are related to healthy relationships. If you really think about those relationships that you have that are the strongest relationships, start to think about what kind of boundaries you've set. That you've actually had these conversations, that you support one another's interests and goals and desires.

I'm a dummy who got a puppy in the pandemic. You should see the mutual support and support of each other's interests, goals, and desires conversations that my wife and I have when she's stepping in dog hair. It's not pretty. But it does help us to express our feelings openly, honestly, and considerably, right? But these are the kinds of factors, communication, safety and trust, respect, and equality. All of these are the foundation. Just take a sec to look at how you're doing here. Because these healthy relationships are not just in your personal life, but as we are returning to in-person services, it's also start to think about who you work with, and how you're going to continue those relationships and make sure that their healthy relationships.

Number one and number two factor in terms of longevity are those social pieces. These are really important for you all to consider how these sort of play out for all of you. Take a look and think about how am I doing here? What do I need to do differently? What's going to change as we are shifting from – maybe we've been having a lot of these relationships in very different

ways over the last year and a half. I actually used to see Nancy all the time, now I just see Nancy in a box, which is a new cereal coming out from Kellogg's – shameful plug here since you went against Dr Pepper, La Tanya, I'm going to go to Kellogg's but in a healthy way. But this is going to change. Our relationship is going to change as people do get back out and travel and all those kinds of things. Think about those relationships.

And then what we want you to do is also to think about – we'll show you on the next slide – is to start to think about this communication piece in relationships. What do you all see is being communicated in these postures? Closed off, not wanting to be bothered, shy, not approachable, right? Every time I have an idea I go to Steve Shuman, I'm like, “Hey,” and then all of a sudden [Inaudible]. But what we know from this is that it communicates something. Very simple. You don't know who these people are, you don't know the context, you don't know what's going on, but you already understand something about how this is going to go.

As opposed to on the next slide, please. What is this communicating? Better, open, happy. This really, very quickly, makes you feel a different way about where this person is, and their approachability, and how you're going to interact with them. That relationship piece is critical and here we are with a very simple shift from this to this. Openly communicating something very, very different. I want you to start to think about that if these are some of the strategies that you're interested in. Remember, Karen laid out six. On the next slide here, just keep this in mind. Really important that it's always a two-way street here.

I want you to start to think about how you're going to build those bridges from your side. I'm fascinated by bridges just in general when I see them getting built. I'm always interested like how are they going to actually make this all happen. It takes both sides to build a bridge. Who were are your trench partners. When I think about staff wellness, and you're going to hear from Jerry Madison and Pat here in a bit, I think about, they're not doing this by themselves. They're not just the only people who are paying attention. These are ways in which everyone's sort of building this bridge together as we address staff wellness.

I hope that you all, as you're thinking about those six different choices, and they're not the only things that you can work on but they're amongst them, that you start to think about where you're going in terms of that. With that, I'm going to turn over to Nancy and hope everybody's deciding which one of those strategies want to work on.

[Interposing voices]

Karen: Oh, I'm just going to jump in real quick, Nancy, for our poll and then I'll turn it over to you. We've given you six, I think you're going to learn some more as you listen to Nancy speak and also our grantee presentations. But if Kate could bring up the poll, she has I think given you the choice of choosing up to three. The reason that we're asking you not to choose all six is because we really want you to take something and start it right away today. You can pick one if one of the strategies that we shared really speaks to you, and you want to immediately focus on it, but you can choose up to three of these strategies. And we'd like you to take just a minute, fill in the poll.

And we can see as people are starting to answer, we can see the numbers going up and down. And then we'll come back and let you know overall how the results looked. And Nancy will take you in the next section to be able to use some action as far as taking this to the next level. Not just saying, "I'm about to start building resilience" and leaving it at that. But Nancy will take you and show you a little bit about how to move this into action. It looks like we have about 500 people participating so far in the poll. I'll leave it open for just another minute, and then I'll ask Kate to close it up, and we can look at our results together. About 550 folks.

Great. Kate, if you wouldn't mind stopping the poll now, and we can see the results. Hopefully, you can all see what I'm seeing as far as the results on the screen, but it looks like across the board, movement has come in at 61%, that folks are really going to focus more on movement. And then our next two are at a tie for better sleep and mindfulness. And then we've got strengthening healthy relationships coming in around 34%, and finally, building resilience and eliminating our unsafe habits for 17%. Please do think about this for the rest of the presentation as Nancy now takes you into moving forward with some action.

Nancy: Thanks, Karen. Now we're going to think about the second piece of our learning objectives for today, which is learning about the parts of a staff wellness action plan. One thing that I hope will be very obvious to folks and not a new idea is that if you want to be successful, you have to break a bigger goal, if you will, down into smaller chunks so you can plan how you're going to actually do something. Sometimes when I have not been successful in my life, it's because I've taken on too much, and I haven't tried to break it out into smaller pieces, or I don't have the resources or the supports that I need. Next slide, Karen.

Here you can see an opportunity to think about a single action step, who's the person who's going to take the action or actions, what supports and resources are needed, and what's the timeline. One of the things that we've also learned is that it really helps to have a timeline. And I will share my own experience, which is that it's better to start really small with something that is achievable and then move on, rather than start with something that might be really out of reach for me.

If you think about each of these categories, you're the lead person because this is your goal, right? For the three that you chose or up to three, you didn't have to choose all three. But then, who could help you? Because we don't really want to do this alone, we need relationships and supports. And what resources do you need to carry out the step? Because if you think about making sure that, just like when you're planting seeds, you have fertilizer, and you have water, and you have all of the things that you need to be successful.

Then finally, how long will it take you? What are the deadlines and milestones. Do you have some little milestones along the way? That you feel like you're making progress or are you going to try take a straight shot to the end and choose a very big far-off time. I would encourage you to think about setting smaller goals, building some momentum, and feeling like you could have the opportunity to be successful, and then building from there. Next slide, Karen.

Here is the way we think about our staff wellness action plan. We think about setting goals. And you know from your program goals and objectives, we think about big broad aspirational goals, and then really smarty objectives. Thinking about equity and inclusion. What are the things that you're going to do along the way as smaller objectives to achieve your big aspirational goal. Who do you need to include in the planning? Who's your team? We always do better when we have a team. What evidence are you going to use to know whether or not you made progress? Figuring out what data you're going to collect, and how you're going to measure, so you know if you are making the kind of progress that you want.

And then finally, what is the timeline? And what will you do first, and then what will you do next, and then from that point forward. OK. Next slide. Now that we walked you through what a staff wellness action plan looks like, or what we affectionately call our SWAP, we're actually going to give you a treat, which is that you'll get to hear from three grantees – I saw somebody put in the chat, “recipients” – about their efforts with promoting staff wellness in their own program. Hopefully, you are going to leave and feel inspired by your colleagues today. Next slide, please.

This is our grantee sharing time. And our very first presenter is Madison from Berks County Intermediate Unit Head Start. It's my pleasure to turn it over to Madison. Madison?

Madison VanPelt: Hello. My name is Madison VanPelt. I am a disabilities and transition specialist at the Berks County Intermediate Unit Head Start Program. We are located in Reading, PA. Along with being one of our disabilities and transition specialists, I also act as the co-lead for our Head Start Staff Wellness Program. Our Head Start staff wellness team is a multidisciplinary team that reflects all staff members throughout our program. This team includes our admin staff, our specialists, our education supervisors, teachers, and paraprofessionals. We felt this was important as this way, we can reach the needs of all staff in our program. Next slide, please.

Our approach to staff wellness: Our staff wellness team meets monthly throughout the academic year to discuss our initiatives. Throughout the summer, our staff wellness team meets biweekly to create, plan, and implement initiatives that are run by our group. Subcommittees were established to dedicate more time and apply more meaning to all of our initiatives. And our staff wellness co-leads along with our survey feedback subcommittee work to gather, aggregate, and share data with the whole team, so we can make data informed decisions. Next slide, please.

Our staff wellness team has created and implemented multiple initiatives to increase staff wellness on all pillars of wellness. We thought this was important that we targeted all pillars – not just one pillar – and this year we put an increased focus on mental and emotional wellness to really support our staff through this challenging time. Our first initiative is our Head Start Ambassador Program. This program is designed to highlight one staff member a month who embodies the Head Start vision and mission and goes above and beyond to help families and children in our program.

Next is our staff wellness newsletter. This is designed to provide monthly updates about the initiatives that we're rolling out to staff and to increase awareness and participation. This newsletter also includes motivational quotes and pictures to help uplift staff, as well as charts and data gathered by our survey feedback team. Our staff shoutouts and appreciation team is a new initiative that is being implemented based off of staff data that we collected. The staff shoutout and appreciation program will allow for our staff to give praise to their colleagues in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

Next we have our survey feedback team. And this team is crucial to gathering data about our staff. This year, this team focused on the anxieties and stress in relation to COVID and the pandemic. The data that we collected was used to implement staff trainings as well as drove the resources that we push out to staff to best meet their needs. This team also oversaw the collecting of data in relation to our staff wellness program and the initiatives that we run, so that the team can make data informed decisions on how to not only strengthen our staff on wellness program, but also make our initiatives more successful.

Finally, we have our staff wellness health month. This is a whole month we dedicated to staff wellness. Each week had a theme and a video that was made to highlight activities that staff could do to increase staff wellness. All of our videos were recorded by our own staff to add a personal touch. And each week was accompanied by a staff wellness activity to increase participation. Next year, this initiative will be carried out throughout the year by including additional staff wellness activities in our monthly staff wellness newsletter. Thank you, and I hope you all enjoyed hearing about the Berks County Intermediate Unit's Head Start's Staff Wellness Program.

Nancy: Thank you so much, Madison. It's really lots of great ideas for people to chew on and take back because you've done so many different things. Thank you. Next we're going to hear from Geri Mendoza at City of Lakewood Head Start and Early Head Start. Geri?

Geri Mendoza: Thank you. I am the early childhood mentor coach at the city of Lakewood. Next slide. We've adopted an Ubuntu approach to our wellness work. "I am because we are." At the city of Lakewood, we're a group of authentic individuals, a collection of values and practices contributing to the larger Head Start community. Because we're part of a city government system, we've had access to wellness incentives and programs that support our mental well-being, related to rest, eating healthy, exercising, breathing, but it wasn't enough.

This past spring, our staff were telling us that they were stressed and burnt out. One day a teacher texted me a picture of a ship that was stuck in the Panama Canal and this little tugboat or digger was attempting to turn it. She told me this is how I feel in our workplace. I'm the small tugboat trying to do my work, but I need other supports to stay the course. We ended the program year by taking the temperature through the use of confidential organizational culture survey. All of our staff met with the mental health consultant and share their honest impressions of what this past year was like for them.

We the leadership team did some analysis of the data that was collected, and we noticed three trends for which we've created action items to address. The first one was the social environment. Staff were telling us that we needed to create some safe spaces to be brave spaces for the community at large. We needed opportunities to build connection and social time, and promote celebrations, and have time to play, and come together to connect, that wasn't in a meeting. Our first Fridays in our programs we will not have children in session. No meetings will be scheduled so that teams can support one another, and there will be time for paperwork and visiting classrooms and just connecting.

Our second trend was the practices and processes we use in our program. We needed to understand and revisit and refresh the why behind our work and how decisions are made regarding programming. Staff input into these decisions had an effect on their time. They redesigned the calendar over this past summer. They offered types of PD that they could do in smaller groups. And they wanted to spend more time, staff center time with our mental health consultants so that they could address their own self-care as part of the "We" Care in our community.

Our third trend was probably the hardest, in that, we as a leadership team had to take a hard look at ourselves. How are we modeling and demonstrating what is needed to thrive during this time? As a group, we read Brené Brown's "Dare to Lead" and did a book study on how our own personal reflections and vulnerability and self-discovery was needed to craft and create this community of care. We wanted to create a more shared leadership model of childhood curriculum, parent-driven training, staff focused PD, where all of that could happen. While our SWAP action plan includes a more abstract approach, our outcomes are clear. Next slide.

We will develop programming that will support a trauma-attuned care model that moves us from an ego system self-care to an ecosystem of we-care. We will develop a more collaborative process, where we all build a community of care for our staff, our children, and families – our Ubuntu approach. Thank you for your time today.

Nancy: Thank you so much, Geri. More food for thought for everyone. And now, it's my pleasure to introduce Pat Broker from the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Head Start. Pat?

Pat Broker: [Speaking Ojibwe] Hello, everyone.

I am Pat Broker, and I am the senior program manager for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Next slide, please.

Ganawenindidaa – this is the name of our staff wellness committee, and it translates to, "Let's take care of each other." Next slide, please. In a more holistic manner, we are focusing on cultural reclamation as a means of personal healing. We're bringing more cultural opportunities to our staff, things like drum making, moccasin making, ribbon skirt making, and these are all the lead up to our new moccasin Monday ritual that we will start at the center this fall. We will be hiring soon an Ojibwe Language and Culture Revitalization Program developer. And this person will work to deepen and expand our approach and learning so that we grow in this area.

We are practicing speaking the Ojibwe language on a more regular basis throughout the day and in our classrooms. Next please.

This part of our staff wellness is what we call our general. It's something that you expect to find, I think, beginning with the survey of our staff. We do have data from two years ago, and we're using that data, but we're also updating a survey so that we can learn about the impact of the pandemic in people's personal and in their professional lives. We have hired a full-time mental health consultant who works on site, and we're very excited to see what she will be able to bring to us this year. In the past, we've offered life coach sessions, dance classes, hobby activities, a train ride in a nearby city, and staff appreciation activities. Next.

Finally, with our nature-based experiences, we intend to focus more activities around the great outdoors and seasonal activities. We know that our children spend too much time in front of screens, and we have concerns about the obesity levels of children. And we know culturally, we have a strong connection to the land. We have behind our center some space, some outdoor space, it's called the Megwayaak trail, where we do gardening. We have raised beds and a greenhouse. Loose parts area for children to explore and create. In September, we will be hosting a community event of cultural demonstrations out on the trail. And in October, we have a nature enthusiast and an outdoor learning expert coming to work with our teachers to train them on the ways that they may use the outdoor space in developmentally appropriate ways. We will do this for both our Early Head Start and Head Start staff.

We are working to rate our efforts and our dollars together to support our classrooms with the cultural teachings and practices. And of course, we know that partnerships and community engagement are very important, so we want to do this in partnership with other programs and bring this to our families and our community. [Speaking Ojibwe] Thank you.

Nancy: Thank you so much, Pat. And thank you to all three of our presenters today who shared some of the things that they are doing in their programs, and I hope that you all saw how many comments there are in the chat from people saying these are wonderful ideas and thanking you all for sharing. This is an example of some of the work that folks have been doing and will continue to do. And I hope that it will inspire those of you who are newer to this journey and give even those of you who are further along some fresh ideas to think about things that you could try in your program. Super cool stuff. Absolutely. I agree. At this point, I think we're almost out of time, and I'm going to turn it over to Steve Shuman to wrap up and do our closing.

Steve: Wow, great ideas. And if you liked what Pat, and Geri, and Madison shared, I am sure you will like being part of the staff wellness community on MyPeers, because that's where you can hear from each other, swap ideas, even share forms and other materials, so that you can really learn from each other, which seems to really resonate. Nancy, Neal, and Karen shared terrific information. But I think, from the chat, there was just so much enthusiasm for hearing what your colleagues and peers are doing on the ground. Thank you. And for Pat, literally on the ground there with the gardening and nature.

If you haven't been to my – join MyPeers, there's a link on the bottom of every single page on the ECLKC. And if you have joined MyPeers but not entered the staff wellness community, there's a link there. You can also go to the communities' link on the left hand side of MyPeers page and look for staff wellness and jump right in. All are welcome. You can even dabble and just look around to see if that's something you want to be part of. Next slide, please.

It's very important that we hear from you – your evaluations, your comments, are just critical to our being able to deliver to you in the future. Use this link. It's also been put into the chat more than once. It's also on your handout. And if you complete the evaluation, once you hit Submit, you'll find the link to the certificate that so many of you would like to use to document your time with us today. Use the evaluation link, go into the chat, or you can just copy it right from the slides when you download the slides or from your handout. Next slide, please.

I can't thank you all enough. Nearly 900 of you joined us today, and it was just so exciting to see your responses to the questions that Neal, Nancy, and Karen asked in the chat, your responses in the poll. People are going to definitely be moving more and sleeping better, I think, after today. And those go together nicely, actually. If you want to hear more from the National Center, there's a link on your handout and on this slide for subscribing to our mailing list. And next slide, please.

And if you have more questions, questions that you don't want to put on MyPeers or just for follow up questions today, you can reach us at this toll-free number, at this email address. I promise, you'll get a response, and all of our materials are there on the ECLKC. Thank you, Neal, Karen, Nancy, Geri, Pat, Madison. Incredible information.

I also want to thank backstage, Livia and Karen – excuse me, Livia and Kate. Karen was backstage too. But Kate was flying this plane, and Livia was responding to so many of your questions and comments. Thank you everybody. Go back to your programs, embrace staff wellness, have others embrace staff wellness, and know that today is really the beginning because staff wellness doesn't really have an ending. We really want it to be something that's integrated into everything that we do.

Thank you all. And we'll leave the ... Karen, can you go back to the evaluation link in case people want to copy it. Thank you very much. And we'll leave that up for another few seconds. And I see people are starting to leave. Goodbye, and we look forward to hearing you from you again.

Nancy: Thank you all.