

Strengthening Wellbeing: Families and Staff Growing Together

Alejandra Davis: Hello, everyone. We are very happy to have you with us today for this session of Conexiones, where we're going to be talking about strengthening wellbeing, for families as well as staff. We are very happy to bring you this topic, because we know that it's a very important one that can offer us unique and very valuable opportunities for strengthening our relationships and supporting families and staff in a special way, in order to reach this state of wellbeing.

So you are all very welcome, and thanks for joining us. You may be wondering what Conexiones is. Well, Conexiones is a series of online webinars, planned and designed in Spanish exclusively for our Hispanic communities for the purpose of supporting and engaging the families in Head Start and also Early Head Start. And as you know, this is a great opportunity for our center to give you strategies that help us involve families, including encouraging them to talk about their experiences. And we honor families' roles and their testimonies.

So this is an excellent opportunity to bring you this content and also to learn from the experiences you have had at your programs and from that great richness that the families bring to this content and at work, both the content and the work that we do in the field. So as we think about Conexiones we're going to see the purpose of Conexiones and our focus for today.

Well, we are going to focus on promoting children's growth and development, and families' support and engagement in Head Start and Early Head Start, and we are also going to work on topics related to the families' engagement as leaders and decision-makers in Head Start programs.

The topics we are covering in seminars offered by our National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement, will have to do with the relationship between family wellbeing and eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, assistance, and we will also cover the topic of families as leaders.

We are pleased to be with you today for this session. My name is Alejandra Davis. I'm a specialist in training and technical assistance for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. I have two great friends and coworkers with me on this journey, Alicia Franco and Laura Galindo. I'd like to give you a chance to introduce yourselves now, Alicia and Laura.

Alicia Franco: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Alicia Franco. I'm a specialist in Family Engagement and I work for Region 12, where we provide training for the Migrant Programs in the entire country. It's a pleasure and a thrill to be here with you and I want to welcome you all. Laura?

Laura Galindo: Hello, good afternoon, everyone. I'm Laura Galindo and I am the Family Engagement Specialist here in Region Nine. And we serve California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, Guam and the Pacific Islands. It's an honor to be here as a presenter along with my friends, and to offer this very important information to all of you.

Alejandra: Thank you very much, Laura and Alicia for being here with us. So next I would like to introduce you to the console, which you can see on your platform. And this is very important so your experience will be very positive. So you can see that in the center is the presentation, but also on the left you will find the Multimedia Center, and there is also a place, the Chat Bar, where you can ask questions. You can also send us comments on your reflections and experiences. Remember that this is a conversation. There is also a place where you can get to know us more and have access to our biographies.

On the left you will see these features, but on the right, you will also find an option for activating interpretation. And this part is very important. If you would like interpretation into English, you can go here to gain access. We're going to go over it in more detail, so you know what to do. At the bottom you will also see some icons that will be very useful, and among those is a very important one, for getting access to your certificate that you can obtain at the end of the presentation, so please use that one, and you will also have access to a survey, because we are very interested in your opinion.

In the same vein I'd like to comment that in your list of resources, you have access to an area for reflection, because it's very important that you be able to take notes and reflect along with us about this topic. Also you will find other resources that you can download and that will be very useful for you personally, as well as in a family setting, as you support the families you work with.

All right, let's turn to the interpretation feature. Here are the directions. The first thing we have to do is click on that interpretation icon, the integrated widget. We're going to select our preferred language and then click on Connect. Mute the audio from the media player and from that point on, you will have real time interpretation. So we invite you, if you prefer, to access interpretation services in real time. Well, since we have covered the platform and who we are, how about if we delve into the material?

First of all, we would like to present this topic, with a very personal reflection on our daily experiences, and we'd like you to please consider this topic as something that can help you on a personal as well as a professional level. But first of all, let's think of how we start our days, how do you start out your day, every day before you get out of bed. What happens at that time? Well...

Alicia: Ale, while—excuse me, excuse me—while we are waiting for people to answer in the chat, I want to share with you how I start my day. You see, I think that the last two and a half years have been very difficult for a lot of us, and I think in a way it has helped me to start my day being thankful for what I have. And I think that one of the ways I am grateful is...being grateful for my health. And I wanted to share that as we are looking to see what our friends are answering, and Laura, what about you? How do you start your day?

Laura: Alicia, we start it the same way. I also get up and I am thankful to have another day to have opportunities to help the community, to have my family here with me, and like you said, with these two years, it's been something...I am grateful for my health. So we are on the same page, Alicia. [Laughter]

Alicia: And also our participants, Ale, they are saying that they are...thankful is key, being grateful for another day of life, above all we are in the same... "I also start the day by getting up and dressing to go to the gym, an opportunity for health," of course, Anita.

Alejandra: That's right, Alicia and Laura and our participants. We all start the day like a blank page, and we start to plan a series of activities that we carry out or we think that we will do. So each one of these activities will contribute to our daily life. But as the hours of the day go by, we keep adding in more and more activities, right? And new events happen. So it's important when we think of wellbeing, to think of what happens in the course of a day. Is our day usually just as we planned? Or can we handle changes? What can we say about that?

Alicia: While we are waiting in the chat to see what they are writing to us, we have a lot of people who are saying, Ale, that they also go to the gym, they go to the gym, give thanks to God for everything that is around them. Perfect.

Alejandra: This is an appropriate place to answer, Laura, because they are asking if they can answer in this space, in the chat, definitely, it's a space where you can reply and reflect. So, what were you saying, Laura?

Laura: I was going to say that...well, I forgot, but I think I was going to say that we have to start out positive and accept that there are going to be changes during the day. If you are like me, and change challenges us, then to have that positive attitude, knowing that we can't control the day, but we can control our emotions.

Alejandra: So we are coming to the conclusion that we're saying that our day can start out one way, according to what our friends are saying in the chat, but we are also saying that those plans or what we feel or think can change. Right, so that is where that connection starts, the one that exists between the start of our day and the duration of the day, and how that can affect our wellbeing. Because as it happens, wellbeing means being well. And so, as we go about facing the tasks that the day brings, the obstacles, the challenges, the opportunities, we are going to realize that that horizon, or the day, can change.

And that is where we have a great opportunity to think and reflect on this space, about how all together, in a way that is personal, individual as well as family-related, how can we promote a wellbeing that helps us to have a better quality of life. So let's see if we have another comment to share from the chat.

Here is a reply: "Thankful for health on a daily basis," definitely. It says, "I can see changes and I am tired of resting, if my muscles are sore," right. Rest helps us to recover physically, and like you all say, there are quite a few notes about being grateful.

So then, thinking about how wellbeing means being well, now we can think a little about the meaning of personal and professional wellbeing. And to think about this we have brought you some reflections and testimonies from Head Start parents and staff, that we would like to share, but please, while we are sharing these testimonies, we would like to invite you to continue sharing with us in the chat about the meaning of personal or professional wellbeing. Let's see, Laura and Alicia, what our friends have to say, the parents and staff, about the meaning of personal or professional wellbeing.

Alicia: Of course, Ale, I would love to share the testimony of Xitlali Sosa, a Head Start mother who currently is a teacher from New York. She shares with us her belief that it all starts with her, with the way she begins her day:

“I like to start the day grateful for my good health, that my daughters are well, that I have a job and we have a safe place to live. If we have personal wellbeing, that’s going to help with our wellbeing as a family and at work. What happens at home is reflected in other areas of our lives. We all have gray days; however, I always try to look for the positive side, especially on those days when we face difficult circumstances. I think that the way I feel emotionally will be reflected in my health, in my relationship with my partner, with my children, in my work relationships, especially when we work with children and their families. It is a privilege to be alive and have a job and have a family.” Let’s see, Laurita, what does another mother share with us?

Laura: Wow, thank you, Alicia. Here we have Henrietta Gutierrez, who is a mother from Sacramento, California, and she tells us that, “to enjoy our wellbeing, first of all, I think I need to be well, and that lets me take care of my family, satisfy their needs and focus on finding ways to manage daily situations, including the needs of my children, who are eight and nine years old. It is very important for me to rest and eat well so that I can help them, since my children and my household will be well as long as I feel fine, and I am able to face the challenges that each day brings.

I try not to concentrate on daily events like the news or negativity, because that robs me of the possibility of creating the happiness and stability that my family needs. I like to look my children in the eyes in the evening when I put them to bed and see happiness and peace reflected in their faces. I have decided to invest my time and everything that helps me in being in a good place with myself and in the wellbeing of my family.” Now Alicia, what do our friends have to report on a personal level? Oh, you are on mute. [Laughter]

Alicia: Oh, of course, sorry. I had the pleasure of receiving some testimonies from a program in UMOS, located in Texas. And it was a pleasure, for me it’s a joy to present them, so I have a few employees who told me that wellbeing to them is peace, tranquility, and learning to live with the situations that are going on. Wellbeing also means being physically and mentally well. It’s focusing on the positive and not thinking about the negative.

I also have more staff who say that “The first thing that comes to mind is mental health and overall health, when I hear the word wellbeing.” Another staff member says what comes to mind, “My health and that of everyone else. If I am well, I’m able to have a productive day and enjoy our wellbeing. To me, wellbeing is being fine with myself, with people around me and being well enough to help everyone so that we all are well.” Ale, what can you share from the chat?

Alejandra: Well, Alicia and Laura, let me tell you that these testimonies are very powerful and in the chat, we have some of our friends who tell us that for them, waking up in a positive way, grateful to have a job, and that’s something that they love and enjoy a lot. We have another message that says that “I think it is my personal testimony that because of my professional and personal wellbeing, I have been able to have an impact on others.” Imagine that, to influence

the lives of others. “And I have seen how this has been one of the tools that has caused me to help families I work with effectively, as well as my own family.”

We have other messages that say that “Consider that in order to be well, it is also important to recognize when we are not well. And allow ourselves to identify those emotions, accept them, feel them and embrace them.” All of these comments are definitely very wise, because they help us to define that our wellbeing is going to be based not only on situations, but also on emotions, on feelings. And that is going to affect us in the personal as well as professional realm.

We invite you to continue sharing, because as you share and we continue with our presentation, the participants can see your comments and we are sure that they are going to be very useful. So please, let’s continue with this conversation and keep sharing in the chat center. Now Laura, what do you think if we talk about those key words that we use as, to put it this way, a reference point to reach that wellbeing?

Laura: Yes, Ale, and we are really looking at the words that the participants are sending in. These key words are for finding wellbeing, and these are words that the staff gave us, and if you notice on the screen, the words that stand out most are the balance between work and life. Also staying positive. Another phrase that stands out is “free of stress”.

Now if you all can share with us which words you relate to wellbeing, that connect with your personal experience of wellbeing. Put them in the chat so we can see which words you associate with wellbeing. As I explained, these are words that the staff from Region 9 sent and these are words that stand out for them about wellbeing. Ale, do we see something in the chat?

Alejandra: Well, look, I think we are still waiting for the chat comments, but they are starting to arrive, and they say, good mental health. And there is a comment here from Jasmin Martínez that says, “It’s living our life day to day being grateful for all that we are and all that we have, being a support for everyone we have the privilege of serving.” Here is a key phrase, “the privilege of serving.” And we also have other people, Laura, who tell us, “Mental health, abundance, connections with others.” Definitely. “Balance.” So we do have a lot of words here that help us define and see how wellbeing definitely is linked to our personal lives and if we are definitely well, we can help others, and have a positive impact on them.

Well, the messages are still arriving, and I invite you to keep putting words and phrases in the chat so we can all appreciate them. Next, we would like to talk about where we find these concepts in our professional work at Head Start, in the roots and the mission and vision of Head Start. And there are two places we would like to mention. First of all, in the performance standards when we talk about family partnership services and we say that we want to support families in achieving their goals in areas such as family safety, health, financial stability, support for learning and child development.

But Laura and Alicia, notice that we also find this in our framework for our centers, where it says that one of those goals is that we want to support families with so they can reach their goal, and we can find the definition in this reference which says that families are safe, healthy, they have opportunities for educational advancement and economic mobility. In addition, they

should have access to mental and physical health services, housing and food assistance and other family support services.

So keeping in mind that wellbeing is an integral part of the work we do at Head Start, what do you think if we move ahead with our presentation and consider how our actions, these actions that we carry out day to day can help families receive support, but also help them overcome challenges and take advantage of daily opportunities?

Laura: Yes, Ale. We want to invite our participants to meditate or reflect for a moment on the everyday actions that we do on a daily basis to adapt ourselves to situations and overcome challenges we meet in our daily lives. Now feel free to share with us in the chat the actions or practices that you use in order to feel good, reduce stress, and manage difficult situations. In my case it's taking time for myself, time to breathe, because I know that when I'm stressed, I challenge myself and I am running from one highway to the next and it's best if I don't drive. [Laughter] So I take that time to breathe. Do you see anything in the chat, friends?

Alejandra: Well look, Laura, there are several comments here in the chat that I think can contribute with some practices. For example, they tell us, "Hold onto possibilities and be friendly," that is to say, be positive. Afterward comes learning. "Making mistakes has taught me to become strong and feel satisfied." These are very powerful messages. "To keep forging ahead," that is to say, keep going "even if everything is very hard." "Do the best I can." And still more messages are arriving.

Laura: Yes, very good answers, Ale.

Alejandra: Some people are telling us, "I love to read, exercise, count from one to ten." That one is very interesting to me. An excellent technique for handling stress. Also, "Do some exercise." "Meditation helps me spend time with my children. Music, taking walks." So here we see some of the practices that our participants are sharing with us, and they say these help them to manage stress and face hard situations and all of this is very related to wellbeing from different points of view or settings.

First of all, we can talk about how these comments are related to emotional wellbeing, mental wellbeing, social, physical, and financial wellbeing. And all of these definitely come together and play a very important role, and we can see it in real life in practical examples where feeling stress is part of our human experience and it's universal and we all will experience it in a different way according to our culture, our beliefs, our customs.

However, we can say that when we are worried, faced with challenging situations that cause stress, for example, having a debt or facing the daily expenses of our households, it's possible that at some time that causes anxiety.

And that is going to have an emotional impact. But in addition we could add on that the stress could have a physical impact and also if the person is unable to work, due to a physical situation, they will suffer a financial impact, which in turn will bring more impacts of a social nature, because we are going to feel isolated, we won't have those relationships that we have when we go to work and people help us one way or another to be able to face what life brings.

So as we can see, this example illustrates how wellbeing is a cycle, and that all these aspects definitely, as you all have said in the chat, all of these activities, strategies or practices are going to help us keep our balance and be able to keep all the kinds of wellbeing in equilibrium. So next up is Alicia. What if we talk about the kind of wellbeing that we are going to focus on today?

Alicia: Of course, Ale. And we are going to concentrate on two areas today; we will focus on emotional wellbeing and social wellbeing. Let's start with emotional wellbeing. And in a simple and basic way we could say that emotional wellbeing means feeling well, right? With yourself. Emotional wellbeing is aligned with our ability to produce emotions, our mood, our thoughts, and having positive feelings, right? Through strengthening emotional wellbeing as well as personal wellbeing, like that of our families and children.

You will have more opportunities and strengths to focus on the aspects and positive thoughts that allow you to manage your negative emotions and feelings that are connected to difficult and challenging situations. And as we can see here on the slide, we can see that there are several areas that can help us. First of all, having a good, positive attitude, take care of our self-esteem and strengthen it, develop skills for facing adversity, which is defined as having resilience. Having the capacity to face stress and other emotions, seek out positive relationships that you can maintain long term. Now, looking ahead, Ale, our next area is social wellbeing, right?

And when we look at social wellbeing, we see several points there, by social wellbeing we refer to all of the factors that come together and take part in determining the quality of life of a person, that permit them to enjoy and maintain a peaceful existence, or without too many insufficiencies and with a constant state of satisfaction. Here we can see some points listed on the slide: enjoying healthy ties with friends, family and community. Being interested and concerned about the needs of others. Having access to health care. Definitely. We have seen a lot of deficiencies during this pandemic. Feeling safe, feeling free. Having a sense of equity and social justice and having access to education. Right, Ale?

Alejandra: Of course, Alicia. You explained it well and definitely every one of these social and recreational activities will offer us opportunities to interact with others and at the same time that will strengthen our relationships in that social and personal setting. So for example, I would like to use as a basic illustration the idea of swimming. It is true that swimming has physical benefits, and it helps the body and biological functions, but we can also say that it has the social benefit of having contact with other people and also it has an emotional benefit, since it helps us to reduce and release stress.

So let's remember that definitely the state of wellbeing that the person is experiencing will influence all of these aspects, as regards social life, this will be linked to the access that the person has to medical care, as Alicia said, to their education level, sense of safety and freedom as a citizen, equality and experiencing a setting that leads to having a better quality of life. So, considering these two focal points, we would like to have a moment of reflection and ask you, what do you think are examples of social interactions that can affect families and staff, and have a personal impact, and what is the impact of these interactions? And how can we create in

our workspaces or also in our families, more opportunities to be connected with our families, with the families and the children?

So we are going to pause a moment for the chat room to see if our participants have some comments related to social interactions and what is their impact on families and staff.

Alicia: Look, Ale, I am looking at some of the comments and I love what Guadalupe says. She says that she hugs trees in her garden to absorb energy. Jaqueline shares that she closes her eyes and breathes, and it helps her a lot with stress. Also Ana shares with us the idea of listening to music and playing instruments. Gladys also mentions listening to music. We have a lot of participants who love music, they love to listen to music, and doing exercise helps them a lot with controlling stress. I also love what Guadalupe said, that she also works in her garden, which helps her a lot.

Alejandra: All those activities are definitely going to help us. Thalia tells us here, "When they arrive to drop off their kids at the classroom, it's your opportunity to interact with the parents. It's important to greet them and make them feel welcome." Correct, Guadalupe. That friendly atmosphere that is promoted by relationships and connections. Well, I think we will leave the chat open to allow you to keep sending in your support through the chat, telling us what kind of interactions you think can help strengthen that social impact that our programs have on the lives of the staff and the families. Beatriz also lets us know, "Cleaning helps me handle stress."

Yes, that's true. Physical exercise or keeping busy helps us a lot. And this comment says, "I think that in order to have an impact and help with social interactions it's important to know the families so we can provide what they need." Right. Jazmin tells us, "In the morning I have a chance to interact with the families, greeting them with a smile and wishing them a good workday. For a lot of people that could seem like a daily routine, but to me it's an opportunity to establish connections with the families."

Right, Beatriz, that's why we start with everyday routines, because it's there in our daily actions, in what we do day to day, the way we start the day and how our day goes by we can strengthen and help families and ourselves to build that wellbeing. So next we would like to concentrate now on the topic of wellbeing from a personal point of view. Laurita, what can you tell us about that?

Laura: Yes, it's a very important area, because when you feel mentally, emotionally and physically well, you are more capable of involving the families in positive, directed and objective relationships. Remember that maintaining balance in our personal lives is fundamental for having a satisfying life, so you can establish good relationships with other people around you at home, at work and in the community. To find balance we should make space in our busy lives and our full schedules to do those things that make us happy, that bring us that peace.

Among these activities we can include work, having fun, being with family and friends, participating in social, safe and community activities. Being physically active, as we have seen in the chat, many of our friends are doing exactly that. Remember that every one of us is different and unique, and together we make a huge difference. I think that is the most important thing, because sometimes we think that everyone thinks the same way. But as we talk about personal

wellbeing, we have to consider that people and activities are positive things that we like and that make us feel good, these ways of spending our time.

I mean, we get together with people who make us happy. We can give you some examples that could be useful to enable the wellbeing of the staff and in our own daily lives. For example, spending time with our friends, our acquaintances, relatives, doing activities, talking, going for a walk, cooking. My friends like to cook, and I tell them that I am awful at it. But as a recipe that is passed from family to family, it is important to have social wellbeing, and to be comfortable in our surroundings and our community.

Alejandra: Thanks a lot, Laura, for giving us that broad description of points of view about personal wellbeing, because that is going to help us now to talk about wellbeing from the point of view of the family. And family wellbeing definitely happens when every member of the family is safe, when we all feel we are in a place in which we can interact, where we can grow, there are opportunities for growth, in the area of education as well as financially.

So when families have their needs met and they have access to those resources and community services such as housing, nutrition and health programs, they can take care of their needs. They can have access to programs that are compatible and that offer them cognitive as well as socioemotional opportunities, and we can say that it is more feasible for them to face obstacles and challenges.

And you were right when you said before that during these times we have lived through a huge number of situations that one way or another have affected our wellbeing. But through relationships and partnerships based on these strengths that you all described in the chat, to which we can add more comments about all those interactions and those relationships that help strengthen and support the families so they can achieve results, we can say that the programs focus on strong relationships between parents and children and at the same time we support interactions in order to share new ideas and new opportunities that they can take home with them as well, so there is a tremendous opportunity for the families and the staff during these interactions to learn different ways to contribute to personal as well as family wellbeing.

So next we would like to turn once again to the topic of how we interpret the concept of wellbeing from our PFCE perspective, according to our Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. And Laurita, in this sense, we would like to say that in order to achieve the result of family wellbeing, we were talking about two types of results, right? One is found in the blue column and the other in the purple column. We are talking about family results and children's results. And definitely the programs need to have a solid base, solid foundations and service areas that are strong so that they can offer this support and backing that the families need.

And definitely, the relationships between the staff and the families will help develop that trust and respect, and make the relationships based on equity. They are relationships in which we will take into account all those cultural differences and similarities, values, native languages, beliefs, traditions and above all the goals and dreams of our families. So keeping this in mind, I

would like to go on to our next slide where we can talk briefly about the connection between wellbeing and relationships in Head Start.

Laura: Yes, right away in the strength-based relationships and partnerships with the families, the programs can help improve results for families and their children. The programs can focus on solid relationships between parents and children, to support those positive interactions that will come about, and by sharing new ideas for activities at home. Program leadership can work with the staff to create an environment in which strengths, hopes and passions are valued and reinforced. It's important to see that in the programs so that the families feel that we support them. Now, Ale, what are some ideas about what we can do in our programs for the wellbeing of the families and to support our families in achieving their goals?

Alejandra: Well, what if we talk a little about how we can start supporting the wellbeing of the staff who work with the families? Because in order to be able to support the families, first we have to support the staff, right? And it's as if we were on an airplane, in case of emergency we should be the first ones to put on the mask. So what can we say about this? Well, some of the things we can do are, first of all, look for a balance in our everyday work, in our personal goals, family goals, but at the same time recognize that our coworkers' jobs in the program can sometimes be very stressful.

And stress will be part of that. So we need to find a balance between our work responsibilities and our lives, because we've already seen that wellbeing begins every morning from the time we get up, that is to say, it's part of the baggage we carry with us. So bearing this in mind, first of all, it's important to recognize in my opinion, Laura, that stress is a factor that we can consider to be normal or common, and that we need to work with it during the times we are facing adversity and trauma. It's important to strengthen and keep in mind our self-care and receive support from the program, because we are not alone.

We can all help each other. So what if we go to our next slide and talk briefly about what some of these practices could be. And we see here a post card, a card that tells us, "Be patient with yourself, immerse yourself in nature, bloom all year round." That is, in other words, things will not always be easy or turn out well. But first of all, let's consider, and what we are going to see next are techniques for handling stress, options for healthy behavior and strengthening self-esteem.

So in real life we will each have slightly different methods, you know, of dealing with stress and facing challenges. But during this time we want to share with you a few considerations and some practices that you could find useful. What do you think, Alicia, if we talk about some of these practices?

Alicia: Of course, Ale. It can be a little complicated to establish new, healthy habits or change life routines that we have...because we are used to living a certain way, so it is worth creating, it is worth it to create new habits in your life! That contribute to reaching your goal of wellbeing.

In the first place, we should give ourselves a chance to prioritize healthy habits that help us to have positive feelings that contribute to our emotional health, give us satisfaction in our relationships with others, and increase our energy, take care of our health and increase our motivation to get better every day. It is often a little difficult, but each one of these factors is

linked to emotional, physical, social and mental wellbeing that fortifies our self-esteem and our desire to improve day by day, right? What are some of those areas in which we can take action to be able to improve, Ale?

Alejandra: Well, Alicia, let me tell you, I think that as you were talking about things we can do to achieve that balance, I was thinking about work. Have connections with our colleagues and spend time together, share our physical space and our virtual space, enjoy and celebrate. That helps us a lot. I also think that it's very important to connect with groups outside of work, with friends. And in the testimonies from the families they tell us that their friends have been immensely important, they have been fundamental and have helped us in many ways to keep going.

I think that physical exercise, as our participants have commented, helps a lot in keeping active and moving our bodies. That helps us to enjoy better health and also helps us to manage our emotions. Healthy eating, we talked about cooking those recipes from grandma and mom and seeking out whatever can help us improve our nutrition. Physical rest is very important, we said, so we get up in the morning energized, more ready to take on our lives like a blank sheet of paper on which we will write the story of that day.

So I think, Alicia, that it's a matter of finding a balance between personal time and the time we invest in cultivating relationships and interacting with others. It's like a combination of many elements and it would be good to mention that we have a resource available for you to download, that will talk in more detail about these practices and how to implement them and what are the options you have. So we invite you to download tips for professionals, and they are very useful, you can use them to strengthen your personal wellbeing.

Well, now that we have taken on the topic of personal wellbeing for professionals and how we can support the staff first, how about if we talk now about how to support the families? Next, we're going to show you some strategies you can consider using to strengthen the wellbeing of families and also your own.

Alicia: Of course, Ale, and I think it is so important when we have those alliances with the families, to always have enough time, time to establish that relationship. When you invest time in the relationship, it all turns out well, right? Also keep in mind that each family, each family member...is part of the family, especially for setting goals or any topic that is sensitive for the family, so, involve the whole family when we are talking about topics, goals. Find out about the family history and culture.

It's so great to know the people we are helping and supporting, to be able to know about their culture, their language, to be able to have that connection with each other, right? Encourage continual conversations with the family and participate in them. It's not a question of saying, "We're going to set a goal and then we'll see you at the end of the year." No. Follow up on that conversation, follow up with the families and then look for and learn the differences between our own values and the families' beliefs.

Many of us, as we said, we are individuals, we are different, we have different cultures, they have brought us...We were brought up in different ways, to learn and value all we have in Head

Start, Early Head Start and the Migrant program, which I represent, those cultures, that love, those traditions that our families bring to us, to be able to have a relationship with them.

Alejandra: That's so important, Alicia, what you just stressed. To respect those values, those customs and that culture. Now, Laura, what if we talk a little about safety for the family and the staff when we are working with families?

Laura: Yes, and that's really important, Ale. So it's important to value and check with the families if you have any concerns or doubts about the safety of the family's house or residence. During the family safety assessment, talk with the family about measures they can consider implementing to help them help themselves. So each member of the family will feel safe and protected.

With safety in mind, get to know the neighborhoods, the communities where families live, so you can evaluate the location for your own safety too, especially when you are in unfamiliar surroundings. The objective is to create an environment in which everyone in Head Start knows that it's a place you value and that promotes healthy relationships and there are resources available, especially if someone is experiencing violence or has questions. A strength-based focus for talking to families about domestic violence requires trust and mutual respect between program staff and the families.

The program staff who are familiar with best practices for receiving domestic violence assessments and provide appropriate and empathetic answers in this situation to help families maintain the trust and respect that you have built with the families.

Alejandra: Thanks very much, Laura, for sharing those very important aspects of family safety, and next we would like to talk about strategies that help with the goals of family wellbeing regarding the families we work with. Support and help the families to identify and evaluate the goals that can contribute to their personal as well as family wellbeing. It is very important to support them in thinking of setting short and long-term goals, as well as offering them support for the implementation of these goals. So when you begin this process, you can consider asking the families about their hopes, desires and goals that they have for the future, and how they see themselves.

Help the family identify those steps that they want to take over the next few days. We said that wellbeing is built day by day, being well. Offer them resources and support to help the family reduce and overcome the challenges they face on a daily basis. All of this will be very useful for the families. Next, we would like to talk about how to contact families with additional support.

Alicia: Of course, Ale. It is also very important to have that community, to have that relationship with the community to strengthen the wellbeing of the families. It's advisable to have these broad connections, to identify additional support. Some ways we can identify these methods would be by sharing information and making warm, friendly referrals, having partnerships with agencies and community providers to deal with obstacles that keep families from accessing needed supports. For example, transportation, childcare, language, schedules for appointments that are not flexible, and required documents.

Talk with your supervisor about other people to be sure you are familiar with the community services so that everyone knows what services are available. A lot of times we at Head Start and Early Head Start want to do it all, but it's important to have that community connection so you can refer our families to additional services, right? And while we're doing this, Ale, let's also look at the importance of privacy and confidentiality when we are working with our families, respecting the privacy of each family and making sure we don't reveal anything about them.

Many of us live in very small towns and we have to make sure that we keep our families' information very private. Also it's important to be familiar with and follow policies and procedures that are in place at our programs to make sure our families feel safe. That makes me think, Ale and Laura, that over these last few years, we've had a lot of parents who have had a lot of fears about giving out information, so make sure that they know that yes, their information really will be kept confidential, that it will only be used for setting goals and determining eligibility. But it's important to maintain confidentiality with them and respect the privacy of their information.

Alejandra: Of course, Alicia, that's a fundamental part of our job, building trust and respectful relationships. Here is a comment that says, "Show the families that they can count on us, that we support them, we have to earn their trust." That's right, Margie. What you are saying in the chat reinforces what Alicia just told us as well as Laura, when she shared those strategies about how to support families in building wellbeing. Another comment says, "We help the families, giving them resources that can help them with food, finances, and this gives the families peace."

Of course, when you know there are ways to help them and give them peace of mind. "Put local resources within reach of the families." Thanks, Gisela. This comment is very... it makes us think of connecting the families with available resources and strengthening our relationships with other community members, other partners so we can support the families. So through these points that you can find in the resource, we want to tell you that wellbeing is not to be put off till tomorrow. We can do it today. Let's not put off till tomorrow what we can do today.

And that's why we started this conversation today, which has been very enriching in the chat, and we thank you for all that feedback, for your valuable contributions, because it starts today, it starts every day with your morning, when you open your eyes, we look for ways to do it. We are not going to all do it the same way. But we look for ways, we search for resources, and we encourage our own wellbeing so that we can help others and also build that communal wellbeing, community wellbeing that we want to have in our Head Start programs and so we can help families with strong and long-lasting relationships.

And on the Resources page you can see a list of resources here that you have access to. On the screen is a page with the topic of family support and wellbeing that offers you suggestions about how to support each other and what type of techniques or practices you could consider and also family engagement results from the series Research to Practice: Family Wellbeing, which explains in more detail these strategies we reviewed with you today.

So please download the resources. They are yours and feel free to share them with coworkers, with the families in your programs and in your communities. We want to remind you that we'll

have a few events in the future. In April, on April 5th, we'll have Strengthening Family and Community Engagement Practices for ERSEA; we'll be talking about ERSEA. In June we'll have Father Engagement, with details to be provided shortly. And we will also offer during the month of August our last session of Parent and Family Advocacy: Discovering our Leadership Super Powers.

So that will be the topic for the month of August. We remind you to sign up for the MyPeers page. It's a virtual network that allows you to stay in touch, exchange resources, find out others' opinions and be online with other colleagues who, like you, share this desire to strengthen wellbeing and other topics related to economic mobility that we mentioned today and resources to help families reach their goals. We want to remind you of our ERSEA Institute, April 5-7, so please save those dates. We want to spend time with you, exchange reflections, ideas, and experiences, so we hope to see you at this conference.

And in conclusion, we want to say thank you very much. For Alicia, Laura and myself it has been a pleasure to be with you all. We wish the time didn't go by so fast, but it goes by full speed. And we have ended on time, and we want to remind you to please download your certificates. You can download them, and they are very useful. Also, we want to remind you about the survey. Laura and Alicia, if you have anything else to add before we conclude the session, please go ahead.

Alicia: Of course. Just real quick I want to tell you all that I am grateful that you were here with us today. Take care of yourselves. You do a job that is so important. You are the glue of this program, and we need you to be well so that we can help our parents and children. So have a good evening. Laurita?

Laura: A big hug to everyone and thanks so much for your participation in this very important topic. It was so easy for us to spend time with you, and time went by really fast, but thank you and have a great day.

Alejandra: Thanks to both of you for being with us and thanks to everyone, and as you said in the chat, it also seemed to go by fast and time flew by, but it was very enjoyable being with each and every one of you. So have a happy evening and we send hugs to you all.

Alicia: Take care of yourselves.