

OHS Staff Wellness Series: Coming Full Circle

Nydia Ntouda: We have with us today from the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety, Amy Hunter. She'll be introducing the rest of the presenters. Amy.

Amy Hunter: Thanks so much, Nydia. We are happy. I love looking at the chat and seeing people from all over the country, all of our Head Start colleagues from most recently in the chat there. Puerto Rico, Oregon, Missouri, another Puerto Rico, California. It's just fun to see Head Start everywhere throughout the country.

For those of you who are just joining, again ... Oops, let's go back one slide real quick. Prioritizing Staff Wellness in Unprecedented Times: Coming Full Circle. Well, I can't think of a more important topic to be focusing on at this time, and recognizing that indeed it is unprecedented time that we're in. We can go to the next slide. I'll introduce you to who all will be here.

We're hoping that Dr. Futrell, the director of the Office of Head Start will be able to join us. We already have Dr. Parikshak who is a Senior Program Analyst and the lead for Early Childhood Behavioral Health at the Office of Head Start, one of our esteemed colleagues.

I, as Nydia said, I'm Amy Hunter. I'm an assistant professor to the Center for Child and Human Development at Georgetown University and part ... Well, co-lead I guess on the behavioral health, the National Center for Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. I'm super excited to also have my colleague, Karen Cairone, who is the associate project director. She's at EDC and she's associate project director on the National Center for Behavioral Health and Safety. We're going to talk later about people in your squad. These people are in my squad, and I'm excited about that. We can go to the next slide.

On this webinar today, we were hoping that you would have an opportunity to look at the Office of Head Start priorities. Certainly, we'll be thinking about all the many dimensions of wellness. We're going to be doing this really important dance between self-care and community care, and self-compassion and compassion for others, and going back and forth between those two important ideas.

Karen's going to share with us some information specifically related to staff wellness on health, behavioral health and safety. We're going to be summarizing some highlights from the other webinars in this series. This is the – I think – fifth in a series on staff wellness. The other National Centers have all contributed some important ideas. You can find those recordings either on the ECLKC now or they will be posted soon. We really encourage you to go take a look at all of those.

At the end, we're going to leave you with an important challenge to think about whether you're a Head Start program leader. We know whatever role you're in, Head Start, you are a leader,

but leaving you with an important challenge of thinking about, how do you engage staff wellness in your programs and within yourself? We can go to the next slide.

We couldn't talk about staff wellness without recognizing the times and the context that we're in. I have to say we started this series many, many months ago and this slide had many fewer bullets we've been needing unfortunately. I say this with a really heavy heart that we've had to add bullets along the way. Just to acknowledge, and this is not a comprehensive list. It's not inclusive of everything that you're all going through, but certainly to name that we've been coping with COVID-19 the last few years. We know that in your programs, you're facing staff shortages. We know there's a mental health crisis going on. Folks are feeling anxious. Folks are dealing with health issues. We know there's been challenges around policies and procedures and different opinions about those. There certainly has been an incredible, important recognizing of the racial inequities and structural inequities that exist.

We know the environment that we are working in is really strong opinions on all different topics. We'd be remiss not to talk about the fact that substance use is at this particular time having overdoses at rates that we've never seen. Often, that is not talked about. I mentioned the mental health crisis. We know that there's inflation and financial insecurity, financial hardships. The war going on in Ukraine, and most recently, I hate to say that we've had multiple mass shootings.

It is just to spend a moment here acknowledging these are tough, tough times for Head Start. It's an incredible opportunity that we have to be in Head Start where we can work in a program that makes a difference for the lives of children and families. In this webinar, we're talking about how we are with each other. Excuse me. With recognizing all of this, I'm going to turn it over to either Sangeeta, or Dr. Parikshak, or Dr. Futrell at the Office of Head Start to talk about our priorities and how we can do the work that we do.

Dr. Futrell: Hi Amy. Thank you so much. Hi, everybody. Dr. Futrell here, Director of the Office of Head Start. Amy, thank you so much for opening us up and setting the table and lifting up where we are in this moment that we are in. I will say this is very challenging and difficult times we're navigating. Things are happening externally, things are happening at our front doors. Things are happening to people who we love, people we care about.

I think worry and concern is top of mind for all of us in this very high reactive. It's putting us in a high reactive state. Today's conversation is one of many that the Office of Head Start has been doing to really talk about prioritizing and investing and supporting work programs around staff wellness. It's unfortunate, as Amy mentioned, that as we continue to do it, we also continue to add new challenges to the list of things that are still out of our control but directly impact our day-to-day work that we do.

As I get ready to walk through our Head Start part work priorities, I do want to pause and recognize and say thank you to each and every one of you. The work you do is impactful for lives, for generations, for future. You are important. You matter. Your health, your wellness is

not only essential for our kids to thrive, which I know you hear a lot but for you to thrive and for you to make the impact and do the things that you are here to do.

Whatever that means for you, I hope that you take the time to invest in wellness, health, and care. I also hope that if you are in a webinar right now even in-person maybe with your colleagues, that you're checking on each other because sometimes, just the message even if we're so busy that we can only do a heart emoji on it, can be enough wind to push us and help us to move forward with carrying the load in the work that we have to do. The load and the work for Head Start is so significant and so important. I want to encourage you and thank you for what you do.

I went to a program actually on Tuesday. We were having a conversation with the staff and asking, "Wow are you feeling? How is it going?" Whatever the system director shared. It feels really good to be able to work in a program where it's expected to check in on each other, and it's expected to take that moment and take that time to find out how we're doing.

Now I know we cannot address all of the challenges by saying hello and making those connections. I don't want to minimize it at all. I do want to just say that's an important part. That's an important thing that is going to help us move forward and help us in this recovery phase.

There's been some heartbreaking things that have happened. As I look at our graphic and we've been talking about our Head Start priorities and talking about Head Start and heart work. The heart has been put together as puzzle pieces to really signify that moving forward, recovery isn't a one topic or one thing solution. It's going to take a collaborative approach. It's going to be an all hands on deck approach. It's going to take every part of us to move forward, which is why we say it's hard work because the work we do in Head Start, we put all of us in it anyway.

I am a Head Start kid, and I still have very bright memories of Mrs. Green working with me, pouring into me. I know there's so many children and families who can say the same about all of you on this line today. That's the work that we want to lift up, elevate, and highlight when we talk about our Head Start priorities. Our Head Start is hard work. Our four priorities of our heart really represents our commitment to our Head Start community and our Head Start workforce.

We have four prominent priorities, and they all commit to moving the work forward. Advancing equity, reaching children and families, investing in our workforce and our pandemic recovery, all of those really reflect to how we value people, our people, our Head Start people who all are our agents. The Head Start family, the forever family that we call it is not – it's like no other. The Head Start community, the passion, the commitment, the expertise, the talent is so strong. We recognize that awaits us. We want to continue to partner with programs so that we can highlight and put policies in place that allows that value to shine and be seen.

We also know that the evolving demands and stresses that are facing staff and families impacts our work, impacts your wellness. You are working hand-in-hand to solve issues and address

challenges that may also be impacting your family as well. We also know that being inclusive and having an equitable approach is the work of Head Start. It's from the reason Head Start was created and it's what we promote. In our recent item on staff wellness, we talk about creating a culture of inclusion and belonging not just for our children but for our staff as well.

We also know that as we pull together in what we're calling this year, the season of recovery, renewal ... I'm going to add hope to it because this program here is not going to be like the quote-unquote new normal program. We're still in the phase of recovery. Last year, we were clearly still moving forward. But that wasn't a normal program either. I want to make sure that as we walk into this year, we take note and recognize that right now is the time to rebuild, to renew, to restore, and to recover.

That includes investing in our workforce, investing in our Head Start practitioners, people who have been carrying, the weight and moving forward Head Start during these very challenging times and having results and an impact on children and families in many significant ways that we are very proud of that we're saying we want to pause and ensure that as we gather this momentum to move Head Start forward, that we do so together by prioritizing, the health and the wellness of our Head Start family, our forever family. That's all of you on this one.

Today's webinar is one of many conversations, one of many opportunities that we're going to pull together so that we can do this work. With that, I'm going to turn this presentation back over to Amy to walk through some of the great information that the team has pulled together.

Before I do that, sorry, I know we're going to share a lot. There may be things that you say, "Oh, I'm going to do that right now." That's great but it's also OK to make notes and identify something that you may come back to later because our hope in this whole process and this recovery year is to empower and support you all to ensure that you have what you need to lead effective programs during this season of recovery. Thank you so much. Thank you Amy.

Amy: Thank you so much Dr. Futrell. It's wonderful to hear your words. They're so meaningful to the Head Start audience, I know. Thank you. I love this slide and you've heard this tagline many times now: Head Start is Heart Work. But just to go through this side for a second, the heart says, "I'm going to bed. Wake me up when the world is fixed." The brain says, "Sorry heart, the world needs you. "

This is a perfect example of what we do in Head Start. Head Start is hard work, but we need your brains to think about how we tackle these really complex problems and how we do our incredible work that we do with children and families in the context of very, very complicated environments and problems. We need both the head and the heart.

We can go to the next slide. I'm going to turn it over now to my wonderful colleague Dr. Parikshak from the Office of Head Start. She's the lead of behavioral health there. Take it away.

Dr. Parikshak: Thanks Amy, and thanks Dr. Futrell for your words today. If you all are still wondering why stuff on this is important, why is the Office of Head Start focusing so much time

and energy into this, I just wanted to give some research around this and some additional thinking. But at a basic level, we know from the science that anyone who is caring for others' needs to be well themselves.

Caring for young children and their families is physically demanding, but it can also be emotionally demanding. For example, if you have a depressed mood going to work, this can impact the way that you see yourself and it can impact the way that you see and respond to others. When we're thinking about this, if we really want quality care in our Head Start programs, we have to start with making sure the adults and the child's life are cared for first and foremost. We have to give them – I know you've heard this metaphor before. I love it. You have to give them their oxygen mask first. You have to teach them how to put it on.

We have to remember to teach ourselves how to put on our own oxygen mask. It takes a lot of practice – often, a lot of reminders for ourselves. We have to recognize and support each and every one of the staff and Head Start programs as they are the ones doing the hard and important work. You all are doing that work and just really want to reiterate those points because it's so important. Next slide, please.

I also wanted to revisit some of the areas of wellness that we have been focusing on through this webinar series. As Amy mentioned, this is the fifth in our series of wellness. This graphic is taken from the IM, the information memorandum that Head Start released in September of 2021. This is really just to remind us that integrating staff wellness into our everyday work life, it's more than expecting individuals to care for themselves on their own time.

We can give ourselves all the reminders throughout the day. That's really important, but if we're really going to integrate wellness into our programs, it is about creating that culture of wellness by making sure that everyone is provided with opportunities throughout the day to take care of themselves without judgment – really feeling like I am allowed to do this. This is part of my workplace culture, and I can do this. It is about creating a culture that values and recognizes the hard work that staff are doing every day.

I would say that it's also about destigmatizing mental health. Really lifting up the importance of it for both adults as well as the children and families that we serve. I just – I wanted to remind us of these pieces really think about this. I know that Amy and Karen are going to really walk us through more specific details around these and other areas. I want to turn it over to Cairone Karen. Thanks so much.

Karen Cairone: Thank you so much Dr. Parikshak and Dr. Futrell for setting the stage. We're going to talk a little bit in the chat about what a healthy workplace really means to you. I chose this picture specifically because I thought it was a little comical but also it's way more than sitting on a bouncy ball and feeling like you're getting your health needs met at your workplace.

If you'll take just a few moments and right into the chat a couple of things that come to mind when you think about a healthy workplace. Then we'll take just a moment to dig a little bit deeper. Our first comment, which I'm excited is positivity. Now I see respect. A growth mindset.

Lindsay, that's a great comment. Joy in work. Having boundaries and teamwork, having time to breathe, being motivated, having peace, being supportive, having a safe space where I can be heard, having lots and lots of laughter. I love that. Having an accepting environment, work life balance, healthy culture, fun, being comfortable, being accepting of everyone, valuing staff, again more balance feeling supportive, listened to, respected, acknowledged, a family. Again, a lot more about fun, diversity, acceptance, and respect.

We agree with all of these comments, and we feel as if we could spend a whole day just talking about healthy workplace, but on the next slide, we can look at how the World Health Organization defines. Healthy workplace, we're looking at a place where workers and managers can collaborate to use continual improvement processes to protect and promote health, safety, and well-being of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace.

For those of you who already were so ahead of the game and printed out your handouts and you have paper in front of you to write on or even just to take notes, I would say the words to circle on this slide are continual improvement. A healthy workplace today doesn't automatically assume a healthy workplace next week, or next month, or next year. It's something that organizations have to continue to work at to make sure that they have systems in place, and policies, and procedures that help their staff with their health, safety, and well-being

We can move on to the next slide. Those of you on this call who also have teenagers will totally feel what I'm saying right now when I say my kids will look at this slide – I have three teenage girls – and they would say, “TLDR.” That means too long, didn't read. Sometimes I get that little reply from these long mom texts that I send to them all. This looks like a lot of information. I just want to try to break it a little bit into smaller pieces for us to digest.

If you are a morning person, I'd like you to look at the orange section and tell us if any of these things or if you can think of additional pieces that are personal health resources that your organization puts forth. Put those in the chat. Tell us what you're doing in your organization if you're a morning person. If you are a night owl, like some of my colleagues are who I can see on email at 2:00 in the morning, look at the physical work environment section and tell us what your program is doing, or maybe some things that you can think of that you could add to this list.

If you truly can't decide if you're a morning person or a night owl, I want you to pick the green, which is the organizational culture and dig into that section for us. Tell us what your program is doing to create a healthy workplace, or maybe some things that are not on the list that you can add. I'm just going to pop into the chat. I see someone's writing morning. Go ahead and write in some of those thoughts. What are some of our morning folks thinking? Those personal health resources. Go ahead and put a few of your ideas.

Laurie's saying, “I'm none of the above.” I know that Laurie. I know that feeling. Having contracting with mental health consultants and excellent personal health resource. Weekly staff wellness newsletters. That's another great resource that Kathy has shared. Having our EAP accessible. Monthly meetings where we celebrate all sorts of things for our staff. Having an

employee 5K. Offering Zumba, yoga. Having morning holistic trainings, providing lunch, massage, yoga.

Jessie is saying trauma-informed talks. I love that. Healthy staff meals. Recently, our agency gave each staff member one month gym membership for free. Team building, monthly mental health day, Tai Chi. These are also awesome. Write these notes down and make sure that you're taking good next steps for your program to take back. Having a wellness room. It depends on which day what we're doing. Support groups. Great.

How about the next one? Let's move on you night owls. Let's head into the safe and healthy work, physical workplace. What are some things that you're already doing or maybe you could add to this list that you think would be important components to the healthy workplace? I'm looking in the chat for physical work environment, either improvements or things that you're working on. Making sure that we have healthy food available, exercise classes on-site, having a standing desk. I love that idea. Healthy air in the facility. That's so important. Walking groups, healthy buildings, safe environments. A lot of good ideas coming in for physical work. Someone else is agreeing – standing desks are great. Having a break room, considering windows when planning, making sure that sunlight is available. Having space for people to be alone. Thanks for saying that. Stephi, that's a great comment. Having some time to regroup and reset.

Then let's move on to our final one, which is organizational culture. This is for you folks that couldn't pick between a morning person and a night owl and you're a little bit of both, depending on the day. What are some things that you would add to the organizational culture, or maybe some things your organizations are already doing? We've got here already listed respect and appreciation, engagement. Sherry's saying that the staff input committee. Having a committee so that staff is able to weigh in. That's a great idea.

Be well, be fair. I just heard about this program yesterday, the Be Well Care Well staff wellness program. We just heard from someone yesterday in South Carolina on a webinar who was talking about the Be Well Care Well program. Being willing to try new strategies and ideas. Having a wellness committee. Having a wellness fun day or even more than one fun day. Having incentive programs. Monthly team meetings with recognition, committees for health and wellness, and a fun bunch.

Great ideas and I just really appreciate you breaking into this too long didn't read and having a chance to dig into this in a little bit more detail. Hopefully, you wrote down a couple of new ideas that maybe you could take back and explore with your program.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Amy who I think is going to add a little bit of maybe what's missing from this slide. Sometimes, we do hear folks tell us that equity, inclusion are so important, and they're a little bit maybe woven in but not explicitly stated on this slide. I'm going to turn it to Amy, and she's going to share a little bit more about that.

Amy: Thank you so much Karen. Before I do that, I have to just resonate with a couple of things. One is I've got two teenage boys. I haven't seen that text, but now I know to expect it. Two, I

want to capture all these amazing ideas in the chat. I think we have a new resource that we should put together with all your phenomenal ideas. Thank you all for sharing those things.

As Karen mentioned, we really have an intentionality around infusing equity in all that we do. When you think about the last slide that Karen went over, really I'm encouraging, or we're encouraging you to think about how does your plan and how do your wellness activities represent everyone in the organization? Have you included all voices and getting input? Sometimes we respond to the loudest voices, sometimes we respond to the squeakiest wheel.

If there are folks who haven't been as vocal and sharing their interests, or their needs, or what would be helpful to them as they think about their staff wellness, are you leaning into that silence? Are you really reaching out so that you can make sure that you're – to the maximum extent possible – building an inclusive, an equitable wellness plan that really addresses the needs of all people in the program.

Once you do that, once you tried as much as you can to get input from all staff, including staff that you might not usually hear from, what kind of feedback loop do you have? Or how do you know if the equity initiatives that you're building in to your staff wellness plan, and how do you know if your staff want this plan in general is meeting the needs of the staff in your program? What kind of strategies are you using to check back, to follow up, to ask people, is this working for you? Does this activity match? Is there a different activity that might be more useful? Really leaning in to make sure that you're hearing from to the best extent possible everyone in the program.

We can go to the next slide. I don't know how many of you have heard this phrase. I have a hard time saying it and I practice. Ubuntu. I know I'm probably butchering it, but it's the thought behind this concept.

What this means is that "I am because we are." I'm going to explain a little bit more about that through a story. The story goes something like this, if I understand it correctly. You know how stories get passed down and they change as they go. But to my understanding, there was an anthropologist working in an African village. As he was doing his work, he was often surrounded by children.

One day, he got a basket together from another village of candy and decorated the basket and made it really exciting, and said to the children in his surrounding area, "I'm going to put this basket down here. When I say now, I'm going to ask you to run to the basket. The first person who gets to the basket gets all the candy."

Well, when he said now, all the children held each other's hand and ran together to get to the basket. That was quite unexpected for him. When he asked the children, "Well, why did you do that?" They explained, "If we all do it together, then we all get candy." They couldn't imagine if only one of the children got there and had candy. This concept of really we're in this together, and it's about the we.

There was a quote thinking about this story actually from Desmond Tutu, who said, "We can't be human all by ourselves. We often think of ourselves too frequently just as individuals separated from one another when really we are social beings. We are connected to one another." That story really spoke to me, and maybe it speaks to you too about how we are in this together.

You can go to the next slide. One of the many things that story illustrates is the idea of empathy of those children really thinking about the other children and what it would feel like if they didn't have candy, or what it would be like to be the one child who did have all the candy, but the idea of really empathizing with others.

If you haven't heard of this website, the Greater Good Science Center – it's out of UC Berkeley. It's an amazing website if you want to check it out. They pull research about science for a meaningful life, is their tagline and they found this tidbit that I thought was really interesting about this idea of empathy. That we have about nine opportunities a day to empathize with other people. We have about six opportunities a day to receive empathy from other people.

Of those opportunities, we either empathize or receive empathy about 88% of the time. Actually we're pretty good about it. But the most important thing about this research is people who saw more opportunities for empathy and who empathized more with others reported greater well-being and greater happiness. I encourage you – maybe this is one of those take – home moments, or things you jot down. But I encourage you to think about, are you noticing those opportunities to give empathy, to imagine what it's like to be somebody else? Are you noticing those opportunities to accept empathy, to rather than say, "Oh, no, no, it's fine," to say, "Oh, yeah, thank you, thank you for noticing?" We can go to the next slide.

As I mentioned, we're going to be doing this interesting and important dance between thinking about self-care and thinking about caring for others. For many years, when we were talking about staff wellness, we focused quite heavily on the component of self-care.

Self-care is super important. It's critical, but it's not enough. Often, our stress and trauma, or distress comes from interaction with the environment, comes from inequities, comes from interactions with other people. The solutions also need to come from being with other people beyond individual solutions, beyond what we can do for ourselves. Caring another piece of research that came out of the greater good is that caring for each other is good for us.

Actually caring for other people helps us. It helps us live longer, it helps us feel a greater sense of purpose, it helps us feel happier in life, it helps create a sense of belonging. There's great benefits for caring with others. The last bullet says caring too much can come at a cost. I actually want to modify that to say, caring for others without caring for ourselves can come at a cost. We're going to talk a little bit more about that on the next slide.

Some of you may have heard this term, compassion fatigue. It often gets thrown around quite a bit with the same, the term burnout, or secondary trauma, or things like that. What it really means is that caring for others can come at a cost. And again, I want to modify it to say it's

really less about caring too much. It's not that you're caring too much, but it's that you're caring a lot and maybe not balancing it as much with caring for yourself.

Really thinking about how do you care for others? How do we care together? How do you receive care from other people, and how do you care for yourself? So this side offers a number of symptoms that you might want to just think about if you're feeling exhausted, if you are feeling like you have headaches, or you've been eating more than you usually do, or less than you usually do, if you're having trouble sleeping, you're not feeling well generally, if you're ... For me, the one that I need to pay attention to is if I'm not feeling like I want to do work, this lack of motivation, I'm feeling like, oh, it's just hard to get into it, or it's hard to focus, or maybe sometimes we find ourselves making not the best choices.

Really this one in bold about feeling detached and numb is really a consequence of feeling like you're just exhausted from all the caring. Just pay attention to how you feel and then reflect. Is it because maybe I need to spend a little more time paying attention to caring for myself in addition to the care that I give for other people? You can go to the next slide.

Compassion fatigue really is the cost of caring, but it's not a sign of weakness. It might be a sign that you would want to balance your care for others with care for yourself. Then it's important to think about how trauma plays into this. That we may be working with people who have experienced trauma. We may be taking on some of those symptoms that they may be experiencing. We may be feeling it as if it's happened to ourselves, or we may have had some of our own trauma.

When we are faced with other people's trauma, or when we're faced with challenges, our body might be going into fight, flight, or freeze mode. We may be reacting instead of responding. It's helpful to be thinking as we think about self-wellness, how do you give yourself some grace? How do you give grace to others? Just pause and reflect and think about all that is going on. We can go to the next slide.

We said, we're going to go back and forth between thinking about self-care, things that we do for ourselves, things that we do to reduce our stress. What do you do? You might want to name some things in the chat. Do you blast the music? Do you listen to classical music? Do you garden as this picture?

How do you cope with the challenges in your work? Do you have a friend like I do who you can text and say, oh, my gosh, I can't believe this is happening? Do you have a supervisor who you can go to who has an open-door policy that you can just vent with? Do you have people at home that you can talk to? I see folks are saying they go for a walk. They talk to a friend. Great. This third bullet subjective sense of well-being.

How do you know how you're feeling? How would if you're feeling better? How would if you're feeling worse? Really thinking about the ability, which is a skill and a practice skill to reflect, to reflect on what your body is feeling, to reflect on where you're feeling stress in your body, to reflect on your mood. Not everyone is practiced at that skill.

But think about where do you get your energy. Do you get your energy from spending some time on your own? Do you get your energy from being with other people? Do you get your energy from being active? Really where do you find and how do you maintain that joy? Oh, the last one I saw in the chat is chocolate and chihuahuas, that's some joy they're. Nourishing of the soul. I love it. I see watercolors. Yeah, well, that's a good station. Watercolor jazz on Sirius radio. Wonderful. These are excellent lists of thinking about how do you maintain care for yourself while balancing the care that we do in Head Start for other people.

We can go to the next slide. As I mentioned at the very beginning, that many presenters on this call are in my squad. Thinking about who is in your squad. Our squad might be interpersonal, it might be small and intimate, it might be affectionate with those people in your squad. Your squad could be big. It could be bonded by geographic or an historic identity really. You use your workplace and your squad to refuel yourself, to think about, what is rewarding and activity? Why do we do the work that we do?

Then you could have a squad related to community care or organizational. Thinking about how you get involved in your community. Do you do volunteer work? How are you engaged in activism? What do you do when these problems or these contexts that we're in feels so big? What is your small piece of maybe being part of solutions? We can go to the next slide. now I'm going to turn it over to someone, as I said who's in my squad. Karen, take it away about wellness.

Karen: All right. Thanks Amy. A lot of you may be familiar with the different pedals on this flower because this comes from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. There are steps to wellness. They have eight wellness dimensions. They call it a wellness wheel. We call it a wellness flower and we like to think about it as part of growing your wellness garden. Dr. Parikshak at the very end of this presentation today is going to pose an opportunity or a challenge for everyone on this call around these different dimensions of wellness.

I won't spend a lot of time on it, but just want to give a quick touch base as we start at spiritual. We're thinking about soul filling work, intellectual as our professional development and ongoing growth and learning. Physical, our bodies. How we're taking care of our bodies. Environmental is the light, air, sound, water, all of those good things around us that we need to make sure our healthy and help our wellness.

Financial wellness, obviously our physical wellness and how well we plan and how well we do and making sure that we can even deal with unexpected financial burdens that come our way. Social is not just building relationships but it's also maintaining ongoing healthy relationships with others. Occupational wellness is where we look at our job satisfaction and what's going on in the wellness of our organization.

Our emotional wellness is having a whole variety of different types of emotions and having healthy expressions of those emotions. Dr. Parikshak will come back and talk a little bit more

about this. But what I want to do is on the next slide, connect some of these pedals of the wheel with some suggestions and strategies.

I learned a little trick. Some of you may already know this trick, but I've seen a few people in the chat. Oh my, gosh, I wish I had this list in the chat of all these great suggestions and ideas about chihuahuas and walking and going to the beach. Someone wrote my vibe tribe. Happy for them. There's so many good things in this chat, but I learned a little trick that you can go to the top of the chat and you can do like one of those. Hold your finger down, select all. And it might take you like 30 seconds because the chat is pretty long, but you can take that, copy it and put it in a little document for yourself and you can look through a lot of those suggestions later.

We have a list on the slide for you. I won't go into a ton of detail. But these are the sort of things that you want to make sure that you're taking care of the different pedals in your wellness flower. Just to choose one or two to highlight from this list, I would take this list and maybe go through and do a little check mark for all the things I feel like I'm already doing well to take care of myself, but just some important ones. If you think about an emotional and behavioral, if you look at the fourth one on the list, praise yourself. Kind of taking good care of yourself.

Think about the last time a friend has come to you and said, "I made a mistake. I did something. I had a bad moment." What would you say to your friend despite the situation, like what sort of build up do you give your friend? What kind of things do you say back to them? Like, it's OK, you'll get it the next time. You're a great person, so don't worry about that. You're going to move on. You're going to think of a solution. You build up other people and you take good care of them. Yet sometimes when we have those bumps and we make those mistakes, we do the exact opposite to ourselves.

We bring ourselves down, we use what I call stinking thinking, like negativity toward ourselves, and we really are not a good friend to ourselves. take a look at this list and just go through and say, do I do these things to help take care of myself? Can I say no when I need to? Do I find time for my hobbies? if I don't have hobbies, are there some things I might want to explore and look into? Do I know how to take a break?

Someone wrote in the chat that they have sort of a tap out program where if they can tell a staff member is getting stressed out that they have an opportunity to use a word to switch roles in the classroom for a moment, or if possible to have coverage to have coverage come in. But even if you can't leave the room because of having proper coverage, you can use a special kind of a collaborative way with your teammate that you're to be able to help each other in stressful situations.

Take a look at this dig more into these and then on the next slide, I want to talk about some of the things that when it's not just as simple as saying, I'm going to do more yoga, or I'm going to keep my checkbook balanced. There are times where we know we absolutely know folks out there are struggling. We hear it from – every training that we do, we hear people talking about

the stress and the burden and the burnout from some of the staff that they're working with. we recognize it's a real thing.

Just to keep in mind, I like to think about your body, mind, and spirit. What you ingest is often what you digest, and what you digest is what fuels you. Making sure that you're taking care to keep your body, mind, and spirit as healthy as they possibly can.

As I mentioned before, as the mom of a bunch of girls, we got tons of physical health appointments. I can't tell you if you're like our family how hard it was to try to maintain and keep all those physical health appointments and just kind of keep on the track and on the schedule to make sure everything needed to get done, but they are so important that you continue with your well checks and making those appointments.

If there's something today that you've been holding off doing or you just haven't got to make that appointment yet, make that appointment today before you put your head on your pillow tonight. Talk to your health care provider about any symptoms and solutions that they might have. Amy talked a couple of slides ago about some of the stress symptoms. Take a good look at those symptoms. If some of those are applying to your life, talk to your health care provider. If you have a mental health care provider, talk to your mental health care provider. If you don't, talk to your health care provider about how to connect with the mental health care provider. Also look at your Employee Assistance Program. I'd love for people to put a yes in the chat right now if they are aware of the resources in their Employee Assistance Program. Hopefully, we see lots of yeses. I'm seeing them right now. This is great.

If you are not putting a yes in the chat right now, dig into your Employee Assistance Program. They have a lot of benefits and resources in there for you that are specifically designed to help you feel healthy and safe at work. Then finally, some of your programs do have mental health consultations that work directly with them or others that are kind of available to your program as needed. Use them as a resource. See what they might be able to offer your staff.

Then finally, anyone on this call, or just friends of yours, family of yours that are having more need for instant support, please know that SAMHSA has a resource that you can find help in an instant as needed. There's a link here to provide that as well.

You can move on to the next slide now. What we're going to do for the remainder of this presentation is talk about where we've been on this journey. As we mentioned, this is the fifth in a series of five different presentations from the National Center. You can go to the next slide, please.

The first one that kicked off our series way back in December of 2021, this is available on the ECLKC. This was a webinar that our center provided. We invited Dr. Parikshak and Amy Hunter were our moderators and they talked a lot about the new information memorandum that had just dropped in September of 2021.

They also invited to Head Start directors. The Head Start directors shared back and forth so many strategies that they have been using for wellness in their Head Start programs. They also shared retention strategies, ideas for just well-being in general. I would encourage you, if you have not had an opportunity to view this, take the hour of time and dig through that webinar, and you'll find all sorts of great suggestions and ideas. You can move on to the next one.

The next one in the series of five was from our friends at the Parent Family and Community Engagement National Center. They talked about really honoring the impact and legacy of the work of their family service workers. This is also available on the ECLKC. You can head to the next slide, and I'll just share with you a couple of the things that they did.

They invited Junlei Li and Dana Winters who both have worked with the Fred Rogers Institute to talk about the helpers and how important it is to help. They continued to share that there are really seven huge benefits of helping others, including having lower blood pressure and living longer, and just feeling better in general. They also say that happiness is contagious. We live in a world right now where the word contagious has not been a popular word over the past two years, but when we can have contagion that's a positive contagion, it's really exciting and helping others does give us that. They shared from a lot of different folks. You can go on to the next slide.

I think they give you a couple of these testimonials. There are a whole bunch of other testimonials. I encourage you to watch this webinar. But some of the folks that they highlighted ... I'll just read the top one. That, "Working getting to know, and supporting families has been a dream come true for me. I love meeting new and unique people looking for their strengths instead of weaknesses. These are hard days, but overall, I feel like this is where I belong. I've never regretted my decision to be involved in Head Start." That's from Jessica.

This webinar goes through and shares a lot of those helper testimonies, and just gives you that sort of reigniting your purpose, feeling like Head Start is the work that drives you and the philosophy is what you love to do. This is, I think, a very motivational webinar and I would encourage you to go back and check it out if you have it. You can go to the next slide.

Again, this is from PFCE. And they have given us a contact here. This will be in your slides as well. If you have more information or you like to ask them some questions, you can contact them. The next one in the series came from our friends at the Program Management and Fiscal Operations National Center, PMFO. This was in March. This one is not yet on the ECLKC, but the recording should be coming soon. You can head to the next slide, Nydia.

They talk about in their presentation eight distinct cultural styles of leaders. And they offer many, many resources. This particular takes you through a chance to assess where am I on these different leadership styles. Good leaders would probably have little pieces of all of these different eight distinct leadership styles. You get an opportunity to reflect on your own organizational leadership, and then to think about some areas that you might want to work on in advance. This was very specifically designed for the organizational wellness. You can go on to the next slide.

There are three things that they say folks want are to be heard, respected, and valued. This is a double bonus. If you are feeling heard, respected, and valued, you feel like you have purpose, you have more job satisfaction, and in general, you're just feeling more engaged in the work you do.

The other thing that's so beneficial for employees feeling heard, respected, and valued is that they're offering ideas, solutions, strategies that some of our leaders may not have thought of yet, or may want to consider when they're trying to come up with wellness programs, or think about how to make their organization a better place to work. Having these three things is so important. Our friends at PMFO will give a lot of background and detail about how you can do these things in your organization to build that culture.

Then finally, the last slide from PMFO. This is one of my favorite slides, just thinking about how our purpose provides activation energy. When I see a flame anymore and I think about our work and Head Start, three things come to my mind. I think about burnout. That match is totally down to its little Black head and there's nothing coming out of it. No more heat, no more fuel. I think about embers, like in a fireplace that are there and simmering, just keeping that fire going. Then I think about what's happening on this where a match is actually lighting the flame and others.

I think about all of the folks working in Head Start right now are probably somewhere on that continuum of feeling burnout to just hang in those embers, to being reignited and feeling like your purpose is able to light others and to lift others up. One of the themes that Amy will talk to you about that we've seen throughout these presentations really is thinking about reactivating our purpose and our energy and our fire. I'll turn it over to Amy to talk about DTL session and then we'll turn it over to Dr. Parikshak for our big challenge at the end.

Amy: Thank you Karen. We can go to the next slide. Our colleagues at DTL National Center for Development Teaching and Learning had their webinar on April 2006. On the next slide, we'll talk a little bit about some of the highlights that they have. You'll see some lovely alignment with some of these aspects of wellness that Karen talked about. When I think of spiritual, I'm really talking about, what is the meaning of life for you? What is your purpose in life? You'll hear that theme quite a bit from the pieces that we're talking about and pulling together here.

Emotional, we've already talked quite a bit about thinking about, how are you feeling? How are you expressing your emotions? Are you expressing your emotions in healthy ways? Are you feeling that range of emotions? Intellectual, are you curious? What are you doing to try something new, to extend yourself, to keep your brain energized? And physical, Karen talked about exercise and getting a good night's sleep, taking care of yourself, physically going to the doctor, all of those important things.

Financial, now we know you're not working in Head Start because you're being paid the most money you've ever could imagine. Do you feel financially secure? How do you feel about your finances? Are you taking advantage of opportunities that might be out there?

Social, who's in your squad? Are you connecting with others? Do you feel like you have other people that you can count on and that they can count on you? We can go to the next slide.

I love this from DTL. They took a plan that might be familiar with some of the education folks out there around planning for children. They thought about how could you use this action plan to plan wellness activities, whether you're a formal leader in the program, or whether you're using a plan like this for yourself. We all know the value of writing something down. In Head Start, sometimes we say if you didn't write it down, it didn't happen.

But really using a written plan to hold yourself accountable and to remind yourself, OK, here's what I'm going to try. Here's what we're going to try in our program, here's what I'm going to try for myself. We can go to the next slide. For more information on DTLs, you can go to the ECLKC. If it's not there, it'll be there soon. We can go to the next slide.

Just to lift up some of the key takeaways and coming again, full circle for our fifth webinar, PFCE had those incredibly moving success stories. We all need to remind ourselves of our purpose in Head Start and how we really are making a difference.

We don't always hear that we're making a difference, but please know that you are. Those stories reminded us of that. And from PMFO, they really emphasized this organizational culture of wellness. They also talked about really igniting and finding your purpose and thinking about that large environmental, organizational level. And we just looked at DTLs, some of their practical strategies. Making it real, writing it down, making a plan.

Then from us at the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety, we looked at the eight components of the wellness wheel, that beautiful flower, and thinking about what's one thing that you can do to balance your wellness wheel. Pick one section and think about one thing to focus on your own self-care while you're also thinking about caring for others and compassionate care for each other. We can go to the next slide.

I love this slide. Thinking about this firefly makes me think about light. And in this time, that can sometimes feel very dark. Speaking for myself, I loved ... For some reason, I'm finding myself quote twice, Desmond Tutu, twice – but this quote really spoke to me, which is, "Hope is being able to see that there's light despite all the darkness." Then I found another quote that also really spoke to me and it said, it was from Edith Wharton. She said, "Two ways of spreading light be the candle or be the mirror that reflects the candle."

That makes me think of all of our work in Head Start and being a mirror for each other, for other staff, our colleagues, the staff in the programs, the children and the families, and reflecting back all the light that is in each of us. A we can go to the next slide.

I don't think we have time for questions. We're already at the 3 o'clock point. If anything is burning, Dr. Parikshak, you can let us know. Otherwise I'm going to turn it over to you to close us out and give us all a bit of a challenge to take forward.

Dr. Parikshak: Sure. Thank you so much everyone for hanging on a little bit longer for this important conversation. Really thank you for putting into the chat everything that you all are doing so that we can learn from each other. Just wanted to bring us back to this final, the flower here, the wellness flower growing wellness and all the different aspects. As you heard from Karen and Amy today, wellness is a set of interconnected pieces.

If you have a moment before you jump off, our challenge is, how will you grow your individual and collective wellness and reignite your purpose? I'm thinking about all of these different sections. We really want to create balance in our life. Do you feel balanced? Are there places that you really want to focus on that you feel like are unbalanced for you? What is the one place that you are going to really take with you and work on after this webinar today?

If you have a second to put it in the chat, and if not, that's OK. Just think of it as move on to the next meeting or whatever you are doing today. Don't forget to take care of yourself. If you take care of yourself, we can take care of our Head Start community. Thanks again for being with us today. I see a few things coming in, encouraging my staff. Wonderful. Work on eating better. Be happy with a little bit. I love that.

Someone is going to – Brenda is going to focus on the physical activities. Great. Give my compassion to myself, move more, encourage my team to get their steps and drink more water. You're encouraging me to drink a lot of water after this webinar. Thank you. Wonderful.

Thanks so much, everyone, for joining us today and for reconnecting with your colleagues in such a positive manner. We really appreciate everything that you do every single day for the children and families that we serve. Have a great rest of your day, everybody.

Nydia: I want to say thank you so much once again to our speakers, Dr. Futrell, Amy Hunter, Dr. Parikshak, and Karen Cairone for such timely information today. Please do not be dismayed if your questions that you submitted did not get answered. All of the questions rather in the Q&A will be responded to. And if you have more questions go to My Peers or write to help@ecetta.info.

Remember that the evaluation URL it will appear when this webinar ends. Do not close the Zoom platform or you won't see the evaluation pop up. Remember that after you submit the evaluation, you will see a new URL. This link will allow you to access, download, save, and print your certificate.

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