

## Program Approaches to Staff Wellness

Kim Stice: Hello, everyone. And thank you for coming. We're so glad that you're here. We're going to do quick introductions really quick. My name is Kim Stice. I work with the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. I work through the American Academy of Pediatrics. And I have a history of about 20 years working with Head Start training and technical assistance programs. I'm really excited to be with you today and talk about an area that's very near and dear to my heart and Ariella's heart, as well. So I'm really looking forward to talking to you and hearing from you. For everyone online, thank you for joining us and we're sending you a big wave. And I'll have Dr. Herman introduce herself, as well.

Ariella Herman: Thank you, Kim. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Ariella Herman, and I'm part also of the National Center for Early Childhood Health and Wellness. I come from UCLA, and I'm the Director of the Health Care Institute. I've worked with Head Start for 25 years, and Head Start is really my passion. I have a lot of respect for the work you do and I have a lot of respect for all the staff that works for Head Start. The children and families have been studied for the last 15 years, but not very much has been done for the staff wellness. Staff in Head Start often works with families in crisis and not always in easy conditions, and I really believe that the staff is the treasure that Head Start has, and really we need to think in a serious way about keeping the health and wellness of the staff going. Now, coming from a business school, we have learned over the years that nothing happens if it's not intentional, if it's not comprehensive, and if it is not strategic and planned. I know that many of you do a lot of activities for your staff, but what we want to share with you today is more a system thinking approach that will not happen overnight and might take a few years, but it is really time to take care of staff that take care of the most vulnerable families and children. So I'm really happy to be here. Kim?

Kim: Thank you. So, I'm going to get us started today. We're going to talk about stress and wellness. So I first want to get kind of a sense of the roles of the people in this room and online if you would enter what your role is in your program. Let's see a big stretch if you're a director of your program, give me a big stretch. Oh, well, those look like heavy arms. Oh! Okay. If you are an education manager in your program, give me a big stretch. Oh, a few of those. Those look like heavy arms, too. Health managers, give me a stretch. I've got several of those. Yay! Family services managers? Yeah. Front line staff who work directly with children and families, teachers, or family service workers? No, their arms are busy somewhere else right now, right?

[Laughter]

Executive directors, board members, anyone like that in the room? Oh, wonderful. So glad you're here. Training and technical assistance staff? Got a few of those. Great. And some federal staff. Come on. Give me a stretch. Not many today. Okay. Other roles I missed? Give me a shout.

Woman 1: HR and mental health.

Kim: HR and mental health, yay! Disabilities? Disabilities. T/TA staff, National Center staff, you count, too. Others? Who do we have online with us today?

Woman 2: We have several health core leaders, education managers, several site directors.

Kim: Great! I'm so glad that you're joining. I'm so glad that you think that this is a really important topic, too. What you want you to do now is to kind of get in the frame of thinking of what we're going to be talking about, and these PowerPoints are available online. Hopefully you've got some on your table, as well. First question I want you to think about is have you had any stress in your life in the last month?

[Laughter]

If you haven't, I'd like to talk to you after to see what your life is like. I want you to think, and you can talk at your table. If you're sitting by yourself or you're kind of an introspective person, you can take a note. Think about for a minute what have been the stressors you've had in your life just in the past month? So, I want you to take a minute to talk at your table about that or maybe make some notes.

[Inaudible]

For those of you online who are thinking about this, enter some of your thoughts and your responses online in the chat box. Okay. I'm glad to hear that there was actually a lot of laughter during that discussion. Not a lot of tears, not a lot of screaming. That's a good sign. We're able to laugh at the things that are stressing us. Does anyone have a couple of things that they would be willing to share with us? And we have a microphone so that the people that are online can hear you, too. Oh, this table is like, "We're ready. We want to tell you about our stress, Kim."

[Laughter]

She's going to run a mike over to you.

Woman 3: Even though there's one right next to you. I get extras. It's good. Is it good? Okay. Receiving the duration grant and doing a huge renovation and all of the things that go with that.

Kim: Oh, renovation. Oh, my gosh, yes. Bless your heart.

[Laughter]

Woman 3: Oh, no. Raised your hand. Now you're stressed. She just wants hands out.

[Laughter]

Kim: Anyone else have some stress that they would be willing to share with us? You know how it is, when you share it, it actually releases some of your burden and some of your stress, so share that stress with the rest of us.

Woman 4: Individuals who are very vocal about their challenges, but no solutions.

Kim: Yes.

Woman 4: Staff who you may have to help really think about other career opportunities.

[Laughter]

So just a few of those.

Kim: That was a nice way to put that, wasn't it? "We may need to think about other career opportunities for you."

[Laughter]

I love that. HR, take note, right? HR is like, "Yeah, that's how we talk about it." Anyone else have a stressor? How about online? Do we have stressors that people are sharing online?

Woman 2: Yes, we have everything from job-related stress, family stress, and even stress within the community -- violence and poverty in the community, unfortunately.

Kim: Right. We're all dealing with a lot of different stressors, right? What is stressful for you may not be so stressful for me. And what I find to be very stressful may not be a big deal to you, so now that we've had a chance to get that off of our chest, now let's think about wellness. I want you to think for just a minute about what does wellness mean to you. Because that's a word that can really mean different things to different people. So, again, kind of think about that for a minute. What is wellness for you? And, again, share that at your table. Make some notes maybe. If you're online, type in some of your thoughts. We'll share those, too.

[Indistinct conversations]

Okay, does anyone have a couple of ideas that they would share with the rest of us? Raise your hand. Come on. Surely you've got something that you're thinking of. What is wellness? Was that really a much harder question? It's easier for us to talk about what's stressful. I'm not really sure I can tell you what it means to be well. Oh, good. I have one over here.

Woman 5: Having good support systems.

Kim: Having good support systems.

Woman 6: I think to me it's just about not feeling overwhelmed, that everything is manageable, I can do it.

Kim: Yeah, yeah. Not feeling overwhelmed. Anyone else? What is wellness? What are some of the different pieces? Oh, I see another hand.

Woman 7: I would say pain free, mentally and physically.

Kim: That's great -- pain free mentally and physically. I love that, yes. Any other thoughts to add? Do we have any online?

Woman 2: We have lots of responses online. Kim: Oh, good. Tell us.

Woman 2: Physical wellness, peace of mind, enjoying family, and good, hearty laughter.

Kim: Yes. Thank you. Yes. Laughter is a part of wellness. It's my big stress relief. I don't know if you can tell. So, thank you. Now that we've started thinking about what stress means to us, and you've heard

some of the people at your table, you've seen online how different people have described what their stressors are and what wellness means to them, be thinking about that as we go forward and we start talking about what does this mean from the programmatic level rather than from the individual level. Today we are going to be talking about why are we talking about this? Why are we talking about health and wellness in the workplace? I mean, in the workplace, I've got HR and I've got budgets and I've got facilities and I've got child outcomes and family engagement. Now you're going to tell me about staff wellness, too? I am, but it's a really important part of what you do. We're also going to talk about what we know already about Head Start staff health and wellness, and then we want you to be thinking about what we can do as a program to address staff health and wellness. We're going to give you some ideas, hopefully get you thinking about some things that you can go home and do. How many of you are familiar with corporate wellness programs? You might hear that phrase now and then, right, and you hear some things. Some of the companies that we hear about, first of all, I have to ask you, does anybody's staff meeting look like this?

[Laughter]

Right? Some of the corporate things that we hear about, Microsoft, they have a lot of the things like flex time, they have a lot of on-site services. There's some big dollars in these companies, right? They have an on-site health and wellness clinic. Wow! Wouldn't that be neat? Zappos, have you heard of some of the things that they do? They have a lot of fun and engaging things for their staff to reduce stress. They have things like recess Tuesdays where they bring in basketball, volleyball, things like that to get people out and moving. We need to move as adults, too, not just sit at a desk all day, right? Johnson & Johnson is really doing a lot of things.

They have an entire division that addresses staff health and wellness and they have managed to accomplish a lot in the past 13 or 14 years. The staff who participate in the wellness programs that they have, almost half who were smokers have stopped smoking. More than half who participated who wanted to lose weight have lost weight, and more than half have said, you know, "I can tell my stress is significantly lower after having participated in these activities." They do a lot of research around what's causing your stress and what can help relieve your stress. They've actually been talking to us a lot about some of the things they've learned over the years, so we're looking forward to sharing some of that information with you, as well. And Google is another one, right? We hear a lot about the different kinds of things that they do, and we'll be talking a little bit more about that later today. So what does it mean when we say "a culture of wellness"? What are we trying to do when we have a culture of wellness? What we mean by that is that employee health and safety is embraced and you can tell that there are things that we want to do here through our policies, through our activities, through the different programs we do, through our benefits, so we're really looking for an entire culture that you can walk in and you can say, "I can tell this is important here. I can tell what this agency values." And, so, why are we talking about wellness at work? Well, because, for a lot of us, work is where a lot of our stress comes from and a lot of our unhealthy habits. So when we're talking about workplace wellness, we're saying things that we're intentionally doing and actively doing to combat those things that might happen otherwise. So instead of sitting all day, getting people moving a little bit. Instead of tending toward junk food and junk snacks, you know, the doughnuts at the staff meeting, we maybe try to promote more healthier options.

When you have stress at work, maybe we do a happy hour afterward, but maybe instead of going to have alcohol, maybe we look for something that helps us relieve stress in another way. So when we're talking about workplace wellness programs, there are things that you intentionally do to try to combat

the stress and unhealthy practices that might otherwise be happening there. So some of the statistics that we know about adult health and staff health, this is from the CDC. How many of you have staff of at least 100? A lot of you. Oops. Can we go back, please? Can we go back one slide? I hit the button too many times. Maybe I just want you to guess at how many for every 100 people. For every 100 employees in a company, statistically this is what you'll find. Now, I'm impressed, I have to tell you, that only 15 are bothered by excess stress, because I would have thought that number would be a lot higher, but some of these numbers may surprise you. They may not surprise you, but this is what the average American workplace looks like. And so some of the things that we know the way that people are compensating for their stress and their tight schedules leads to unhealthy habits, right, and what we know is with those unhealthy habits lead to health problems.

What we know is that there's a lot of science behind this that says that up to 90% of cancer cases have some root in environmental causes or things that you have some control over. We know that heart disease and cancer both are very much influenced by ongoing practices, health practices. So if we can encourage healthy practices at work, then maybe our staff will be healthier, they'll be more engaged, we'll have less turnover, we'll all live longer. That would be nice, have lower healthcare costs. So this is some of the reasons that we're talking about this, about what is the state of our health in this country. Another thing I'm going to mention to you really quickly is America's health rankings. I don't know if you're familiar with this, but this is a report that's been done every year for the last 30 years based on information from the CDC, the AMA, several other different sources, Census, Department of Ed, all of these, and what they're finding is actually most recently, although some conditions had been decreasing, in the last year, they're actually increasing -- Cardiovascular deaths and rates of obesity. We know we're getting unhealthy, so, in the workplace, where we spend a lot of our time, we want to see if we can help to try to help reverse some of that. So I'm going to let Ariella talk to us about what we know about staff in Head Start and their health.

Ariella: Okay. So, Kim has given you the general background of staff wellness that starts happening in big companies, small companies. I think now is really the time to start focus on early childhood education, and in particular, on Head Start and Early Head Start. Why is it really so important to take a proactive approach about staff wellness? Children need consistent and sensitive caring and stable relationships with adults. Adults who are well physically and mentally are more likely to engage in positive relationships. And when we support staff wellbeing and we strengthen early care and education, so that's extremely important.

Now, if we continue, about Head Start in particular, children are most precious resource. We know from research that the greatest impact that we can have is on children between the age of 0 to 5. Head Start families are often in crisis. Working in Head Start and Early Head Start is often challenging and stressful. Staff have health problems such as obesity and depression at rates above the national average. Salaries are often low, creating personal financial stress. We all know that staff works in Head Start because they want to make a difference and because they care, but these are really the facts. Staff turnover rates are high. So staff wellness and stability will effect really the quality of services delivered to families. So if we look in general first at stress in early childhood education, first of all, early childhood education staff carry heavy demand. They have high expectation for measurable outcomes. They have to meet many sets of standards and requirements and reviews.

They often feel undervalued. They're often underpaid to other sectors, even in the public sector, and they most of the time work with at-risk children and families. And children who live in difficult circumstances at home exhibit more challenging behavior and have greater needs, which in turn have an

impact on the demand on the Head Start staff. So what happens if you really don't take action to disrupt an unhealthy workplace? When there is an unhealthy workplace, it creates work-related stress, which can encourage unhealthy lifestyle practices. These two combined together can have a lot of outcome, increasing turnover, litigation, increasing absentees, increasing short and long term disability, increasing depression, and increasing accidents. On the other side, we can see a decrease in satisfaction and in commitment.

These are the impacts of an unhealthy workplace. Now, all of these impacts will have an increased cost and decreasing productivity, which taken together really will affect the quality of services that are given to children and families. Not many studies have been done, but this was a study that was done by Professor Whitaker who is a public health and pediatric professor at Temple University and who did a study on the physical and mental health status of Head Start staff in the state of Pennsylvania, and he also used these results to compare the sample to a sample of equivalent demographics that are obtained through research done by CDC and the Health Survey indicator just to compare the status. This survey was anonymous, voluntary, web-based. About 66 Head Start and Early Head Start participated in the study, which represents about 80% of the total number of Head Start, Early Head Start in Pennsylvania. There were about 200 questions. It was quite long. And it was -- it had the same structure as the CDC survey to be able to compare the results. And here the goals and the outcomes of this study. Now, from the short-term perspective...

Can I go back a slide, please? From the short-term perspective... Oh. Forward. Why am I going backward? Can you go backward, please, one more? Yeah. That's good. So in terms of impact of stress that is found, right, for Head Start staff from that study, we found that the stress that comes both from workplace stress, economic hardship, and adverse childhood experiences that the staff expressed has an impact both on health and on functioning, and when we speak about health, it's mental health and physical health and functioning relative to the relation quality to children, to learning, and to families. So we're going to talk about these type of stressors, which for me were surprising that were found in the Head Start environment. So the first is the workplace stress. I believe you all are aware of this given the high demand, the low control, and often the feeling of low support. But to this workplace stress, they found two others that really impacted the staff, which were the economic hardships and the ACEs that staff reported having had in their lives. So, in terms of economic hardship, when you take a look at the kind of economic hardship, not enough money for utilities, not enough money for healthcare, not enough money for housing, on food stamps. All these were part of the one mentioned. And in the data analysis, if you take a look, close to 40% of the staff had more than one economic hardship. 8% cited more than three economic hardships.

So economic hardship added to the stress will have definitely a stronger impact on the wellness of the staff. Related to the adverse childhood experiences that the staff who answered the survey looked at were emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, parental separation, household substance abuse, incarcerated household members, and the list was quite long, but the surprising results, if you look at the analysis, you see that close to one in four Head Start staff from that sample cited that they have three or more ACEs, meaning that it's not something that is an accident, but it really touches Head Start staff. So relative to physical health, there were some questions, and the most pertinent that came out were severe headache or migraine, lower back pain, obesity, but if you look on the right, 21.8% of the staff said they had three or more physical conditions, which is nearly one in four. That's quite troubling. Now, when compared to a national sample with equivalent social demographic, you see that in all the results, the levels cited by the Head Start staff is higher. Severe migraine and headache is 10.6% higher than the national sample.

It's 13% higher than lower back, and close to 10% higher in the obesity rate, and in the last category that is on the right, close to 10% higher in having three or more physical health conditions. So as a starting point, even before the stress of the work, these are really important elements that are needed to be considered and that's for sure part of the landscape of the Head Start physical health. Now, in terms of mental health, take a look. 23.5% of Head Start staff reported that they were diagnosed as having depression by a health professional. Much higher than the national sample where the answer rate is 17.6%. So added to the physical, you also have the mental and the depression. Now, it is obvious that as you see an increase in the number of conditions, you will see an impact on the quality of work. So when the Head Start staff in Pennsylvania was asked, "In the last months, how many days would you say that you were physically healthy, and how many days did you feel that you were not healthy or you had an injury?"

And looked at nearly 20% said 14 or more physical unhealthy days. When asked, "In the last months, how many days did you feel stressed or depressed?" This percentage really rose to 26%. In general, for people who have at least three physical conditions, they reported that they are absent from work at least 10 days a year due to illness and as we know, children need continuity, and not being able to be at work for different reasons can have an impact. So now that I gave everybody a little headache with my statistics, which I am a data person, I'm going to let Kim do... I gave her the good part. ...a break, a wellness break.

Kim: So, that was some rough news, right? How many of you heard things that sound either like things you're dealing with or your staff? Does it sound like kind of familiar things? Yeah. I know. It's kind of a lot of downer, right? So let's take a minute now and release some of our stress. And for those of you who are listening online, I know many of you are probably multi-tasking, maybe doing e-mails or doing a few other things, I want you to give yourself a couple of minutes now and join us as we take just a little bit of a break. This is for everyone. It's a quick tip called SOFT. We talk about this a lot in our staff wellness trainings. This is something that's easy to do, it's easy to remember, and you can do it any time you start feeling yourself getting stressed. The first thing I want you to do is you can close your eyes as you listen. If you don't feel like closing your eyes, that's okay. You can just kind of let your gaze go into the distance. You don't have to focus on anything right now. Just sit kind of comfortably. We're going to talk about the letters in the word SOFT. The "S" in SOFT stands for "soften your face." So with this first step, think about how your face feels and just help it to relax and go SOFT. Sometimes we keep our stress around our forehead or our eyes. So just let that area of your face go SOFT. Sometimes our stress is in our jaw.

Maybe we find that our jaw is clenched a little tightly, so take this time to let your jaw relax. Think about what it means for the muscles in your face to just soften. The "O" in SOFT stands for "open your chest." So, now think about how your chest feels, maybe pull your arms back a little bit, maybe sit back in your chair a little bit. Feel your chest and your lungs kind of open up. Sometimes we keep our stress in our chest and we find ourselves hunching forward, so take this minute to do the "O" and open your chest. You can feel it just open up. The "F" in SOFT is float down your shoulders. Often we keep our stress in our shoulders. Sometimes we find when we're in a stressful situation and we don't even realize it, our shoulders are creeping up toward our ears, so right now we're going to float them back down. Just let your shoulders relax. Your face is soft. Your chest is open. Your shoulders have floated down. The "T" in SOFT is "take a deep breath." Take a deep breath now that your body is relaxing. Go in through the nose deep and out through the mouth.

[Exhales slowly]

And as you're relaxing, take another breath. Sometimes it can help to think about how you blow bubbles. When we blow bubbles, you can't do short, quick breaths. You have to do long, deep breaths to get a great reaction from the bubbles. So pretend right now that you're blowing bubbles.

[Breathes deeply] That's nice. I can tell the mood in the room is calm. I hope this has helped release some of the tension for you. It's a very easy thing to try, even if you're driving, you're stuck in traffic and you're starting to tense up, you can remember SOFT. Keep your focus on the traffic.

[Chuckles]

Don't close your eyes. If you're in a meeting, if you're in a really long presentation that's stressing you out when you hear about how stressed out your staff is, think about SOFT. This is a technique that's very easy to use, doesn't take very long. We want you to try it. Does that help you feel a little bit better? Yeah. So, let's talk about now what are we going to do.

Ariella: Is everybody awake?

[Laughter]

You see, I'm not left with the easy part. Thank you, Kim. So I think we all realize that there are many reasons right, to start a wellness program for your staff. Definitely to increase satisfaction, to reduce turnover, to reduce absentees, to improve outcomes, to promote teamwork, but there's one more reason, and the reason is that it is part of your performance standards, and this is why I have my glasses, just in case you forgot, this is what it says -- "A program must make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may effect their job performance and must provide regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about mental health wellness and health education." But I would encourage you to go beyond the compliance. We also heard it this morning, but I think it is time to really not only follow the performance standard, but really create a culture of health for your staff, and this does not happen overnight.

So the truth is that to build a workplace health program and improve staff wellness, it really takes a coordinated and systematic comprehensive approach. And we're going to follow these steps that you all are aware of them because they're simple management principals where you start to assess, then you're going to plan, implement, and evaluate for continuous improvement. Now, in my opinion, the assessment one is the most important. This is where you need to listen to your staff needs and wishes. This is a very important starting point, and although you're not going to be able to do everything and it might take you multiple years, really important and create the buy-in, and if the staff feels that they're listened, their concerns are put up front, it's going to be a very important starting point, and the evaluation will create the continuous improvement that we need and could you imagine it as a five-year plan as you think about a five-year plan and every year going one step at a time, making some changes because of different levels of changes, but as being able to measure the impact that you're going to have.

So we have decided for a starting point to use this model that was developed by the CDC, and it's called workplace health model, and then to adapt it to the needs in Head Start where you start with assessment, and assessment can be individual, organizational, or community. Then planning and management -- for that, you need the leadership support, you need a team that will champion, and you

need to create the buy-in, then implementation, and, last but not least, evaluation -- How well did we do, and what can we do better next time? So if we think about the components of a healthy workplace, you really have the organizational culture, the personal health resources, and the physical work environment, which all contribute to the health in the workplace. So in the organizational culture is really attitude, values, and belief, right, that are demonstrated in the workplace -- respect, appreciation, commitment to balance workload, decision, latitude, employee involvement. When we talk about the personnel health is opportunity that the organization provides to support efforts to maintain and improve health.

Time to exercise, immunization clinics, smoking cessation program, stress management training, healthy food choice in the cafeteria and in the vending machines. The physical work environment really relate creating the right lighting, not too much noise -- create a safe and healthy physical work environment. So in the first step, which is the assessment, which, as I said, I believe is the most important, is when you are going to capture the big picture, the same way you do a community needs assessment to know about your families and the children in your community, it is really important to identify current health issues, as well as employees' interests and what is already offered because all of you already offered some type. So that's always a good place to start. And definitely if you involve the employees from the beginning, the buy-in will be much stronger. So one tool to be able to do this is a tool that was developed by the CDC, and it's called the CDC Worksite Health Score that you can access that allows you to do this kind of assessment, and that ScoreCard will help you answer questions like, "Does your worksite have an active health promotion, staff wellness, or health education committee?" Very important. "Has your agency conducted needs or interests survey planning of wellness activities?" Crucial. "Does your agency have a dedicated space that is quiet where employees can engage in relaxation activities such as deep breathing?" Now, each one of you has your own environment, and as we did the activity with Kim here, we don't always need a special room, but we need to find a place where these kind of things can happen.

And each one of you have different resources. You're in different communities and you have different needs, so it's important to assess what you have and what your staff would like to have and needs. Other questions as part of the ScoreCard, "Do you have posters and flyers to identify symptoms of different kinds of diseases? Do you have an emergency response plan to address acute emergency health situations? Does your program have written illness prevention rules?" This is really a starting point. Once you have done this, you start the planning phase, and the most important -- and I've learned this in my work with Head Start -- is to get the buy-in of the leadership. Without that buy-in, nothing will happen. You need also a coordinator that will manage the wellness team. And to be able to really be successful, you need a strategic implementation plan. I call the strategic implementation plan SHIP -- Staff Health Improvement Plan.

Now if you can imagine how a ship goes and stops in different ports and each time, there are new adventures, new lessons learned, to continue to enrich, imagine your Staff Health Improvement Plan over time and we are going to talk about this in a few minutes with more detail. So the third step is the implementation. And you have the choice to implement many kind of programs. Health-related program, health-related policies, programs that improve benefits, and environmental support. This needs to be a discussion and a collaboration with the staff. So we always think if we want to have an impact that we need to start to make a change and then to maintain that change. It's not enough to make the one time -- unfortunately, this is a continuous cycle of each time trying to do better and maintaining the goals that we have reached already.

Now, there are different levels that you can implement staff wellness. The first one is creating awareness. So through newsletters and posters and one 90-minute education session, you can create awareness, but you're not going to create change of knowledge or behavior change. Now, if you have a supportive environment, that can be the ultimate long-term goal which would be adopting a wellness policy, adopting a tobacco free environment, offering the fitness room, okay, stocking vending machines with healthy food. So that's a different level. And the lifestyle change will require more ongoing activity, ongoing fitness, regular meetings for weight loss groups, extended stress management education. Nothing can happen with the one time. Things really change and can be measured if it is done over time in a repetitive way and in a measured environment where you can see if you reached it by how much and so on. So this will lead us to the evaluation. When you think about evaluation, there are different kinds of measures.

You can measure your process, you can measure your outcomes, or you can measure the impact of that you have done. And each one of these are different ways and different categories. So let's talk about each one of these. In the process evaluation measure would be, for example, number of type of health education sessions that were held, number of employees participating in the event, or number of calls requesting more. Okay. This is what would measure process. Next level, if you want to measure the impact, you can measure looking at the number of participants, but also using survey that measure pre and post change. Did the knowledge change? Did any behavior change? Did any policy change? Okay, but this will happen if you do something in a continuous way. And the third type of evaluation outcome measures would be really the dreams, right, the long term. Number of employees showing a reduction in the medical risk conditions, reduce absentees, improve morale, and reduce turnover. I think the pressured staff really on the long run deserve these kind of outcomes to continue functioning with all the challenges that they face.

So you should have on your table one sheet that really summarizes this model that we call the Staff Health Improvement Project. And if you look at the different steps, it is similar to any improvement process, but this one specifically applies to staff. You start with understanding the needs and wants of the staff. Then you have to define goals and objectives. Remember, if you do not define goals and objectives, then your objectives are not measurable, you're not going to have outcomes and be able to see if you have reached what your SMART objective was. Then get the engagement of your staff and community, because no staff wellness will happen without developing partnership with the community. What are the resources that you need, and then what is the action plan? What are the steps? And you do not need to think of an action plan for the next five years. Think of an action plan for the next year.

And small steps really can lead to big achievement over time as long as it is organized and it starts with a need and it ends with the evaluation to be able to move to the next step. Now, all this would not work without what we call the LOVE, and the last concept was created by a Head Start director who really understood that no matter what we do, what performance standard we have to satisfy, what procedures we want to improve, nothing can happen without the LOVE. And the "L" stands for "listening," the "O" for "observing," the "V" for "valuing," and the "E" for "encouraging." This love needs to trickle down from the top leadership to the management, to the staff at all levels, and it will then trickle down to the families. But if we talk about the love for the staff, I just want to highlight some elements. For the letter "L," listen to staff needs and wishes.

Listen to their feelings about their own health. Listen to their ideas on how they can improve worksite wellness. For the letter "O," observe and understand staff challenges. Observe staff cultures and beliefs concerning health and wellness. And observe their aspirations. For the letter "V," value the staffs'

unique strengths and experience, value their expertise in health and wellbeing, and value them as partners in a health program. And for the letter "E," encourage every staff effort to support the implementation of the wellness program, encourage every staff's ability to be a positive health role model and encourage staff to attend training. They have to be a role model for the families and for the children, but they need to start by being a role model to themselves. So we really need to treat the staff with love. Kim?

Kim: So, we've given you a lot of things to think about. We're asking you to take on a lot here. So I'm hoping that you're thinking about staff wellness in a new way, not just what's the one or two activities that we can do once or twice a year, and isn't that good enough, and don't we all feel less stressed now? Hmm, no, not necessarily. So, in our center, we do a lot of work around staff health and wellness. We do a lot of research about what others are doing. And as we were doing our research and looking around, I came across an article where a person who had started a business, he said, "We always hear that everybody wants to work at Google, and there's always a lot of people applying for jobs at Google, and everything's so great at Google." So he said, "I want to have people that love my business, too. It's not going to be a huge business, but I want to see what it is that's so great about working at Google." How many of you have heard some of the perks that they talk about that employees have at Google? Right? I mean, we all hear about it.

It sounds pretty great, right? They even put it in a movie, right, the internship, they talk about how great it is and all the perks they have and everything. So this man, he went and he asked if he could spend the day observing around. So went and he looked. He visited the offices of Google, and he saw some things like a really nice, state-of-the-art exercise room. He was like, "Wow, this is really nice." He saw the little scooters that people could use to scoot from meeting to meeting down the hall. He was like, "Oh, wow, okay, scooters." Have you heard that they also have the fireman poles, so you can slide from the third floor to the second floor to get to that meeting just that faster. He's like, "Okay." Some of the other things he saw, there were actually some snack stations. That was nice, and they had both health snacks and, you know, chocolate, chips, things like that, But one of the things that he noticed is that the healthy snacks were in open bowls in clear containers and the M&M'S and the chips and things like that were in closed containers. They were there, but they were in containers you couldn't see through. They knew that sometimes you just need a little chocolate, right, sometimes you need a little salt, right, but what they knew is that some of the research says that you're more likely to grab the one that you can easily see than the one that you have to go looking for. So, he saw all of this, but at the same time, he saw that that exercise room, there wasn't anybody in it, and those scooters, there wasn't anybody scooting from meeting to meeting.

There wasn't anybody sliding down the poles. They were taking advantage of some of the things there, but some of these, they weren't. And he was like, "You know, what's the deal?" So he went around and talked to the employees, and he said, "What's the deal? You got your scooters and your fireman poles and everything that you guys aren't using them, but you still love working here. What's the deal?" And people told him it's not the scooters and the fireman poles. It's the fact that they're trying to make our lives a little better. They're doing what they can to bring in a little fun, to make life a little easier, to give us some healthy options for snacks, to give us a place to go work out during the day. We don't always do it, but the fact that they're trying, they're always trying something new to try to help make our lives a little bit better. And, so, that really got us to thinking, "Hmm, maybe it's not so much, well, I can't afford to put a fireman pole in, and I don't think we can get a state-of-the-art gym." So as part of our training on staff wellness, we took a little gamble.

I want you to take this gamble, too. Okay? Trust me. So, we decided we would start when we did our training on staff wellness, one of the things we were going to do is we were going to talk to people about if you could Google your environment, the center where you work, if you could do some things like this, what would you do? And we had people in our trainings at tables just like you're sitting right now, and we had them talk about what you would do. And, to be honest, I was little worried they were all going to say, "Well, first, I would get a company car, and then I would only work two days a week," that they're responses were going to be a little out there. But you know what we found, that was not the case at all. When staff started talking about what would make them feel a little bit better about their environment, they loved the activity, first of all, but the answers that they gave us were so surprising. They were so achievable.

They were things like, "I think I'd bring in more plants so that it's a little greener around here." "I think I would put a couch in our staff room so that when you take your 15-minute break, you've got somewhere comfortable to sit." They were little things that were so achievable, and then people got excited and they said these are things that we can do when we go back home. So I encourage you to think about doing that with your staff, all of you who are directors or managers, where you can have some kind of influence over what you're doing in your program to support staff wellness. I encourage you to go back to your staff and say, "If we could Google our offices, what would it look like?" And maybe you'll get some things like, "Well, first you buy us all a company car," but maybe you'll get some of those things like, "I think it would be nice to have some plants around here."

So, I want you to take just a minute, think about that, and with the people at your table, talk for a minute about what you might do to Google your environment. Let's take just a minute to do that. And people who are listening online, if you would take a minute, think about it, enter some of your answers online, as well. Thanks. I love to watch the energy start to grow as you get more comfortable with these ideas and maybe you're all talking about getting company cars or maybe you're all talking about where you're going for dinner tonight. But have any of you come up with some ideas of things that you might do in your program that would "Google" your environment, and help promote some wellness in your environment. Any of you have anything you would share? Can you raise your hand so that we can get some examples? Come on. I heard some great laughter going on. Oh, I see a hand over here. All right. Thank you.

Woman 8: I'm from California. One of the things we did was we converted a Tuff shed. Normally we order them for storage for outdoor equipment. We converted it into a break room for staff. So we went back to Tuff shed, and told them, okay, this is going to be a break room. We need windows. We need a nicer door. They did it, and we were able to put Sheetrock inside, insulate it, Sheetrock, add electrical, and it's right outside the center. We have space outside, but we don't have space inside for break rooms. Nice. Well, that might be a nice change to be able to actually physically go outside of your environment for your break. Wow. Are your staff using it? Yeah, what a great idea. Thank you. Does anyone else have ideas of things they would do or maybe you're already doing? Or maybe you had lots of great ideas of where you're going to go to dinner tonight, because there was lively conversation.

[Laughter]

Woman 9: Nancy's one was great.

Kim: Oh, hang on. Let's get the mike up here. All I heard was, "We have a great one." No pressure.

Woman 5: So, we have a wonderful coffee machine that makes really good coffee that's lovely.

[Laughter]

Kim: Sometimes it's the little things, right? You just want something that makes good coffee. Anyone else? Oh, I see a hand over here.

Woman 10: I'm actually going to have Beth Fosler, our Head Start director talk, but I just want to say a plug for intentionality. We can go out of here and have all these great ideas, but if we don't do it, it didn't go anywhere. I'm going to let Beth tell you about what she did.

Beth Fosler: First of all, I really love the Tuff shed idea. That was awesome. I already wrote it down. We did convert one of our conference rooms instead of traditional tables and chairs into couches, coffee table, bean bag chairs, so that when we have long, long meetings, we're actually comfortable during those meetings. I think the staff really do appreciate the effort that we tried to make.

Kim: What a nice change. We're going to have a long meeting not in the stiff chairs. What a nice change! Oh, and I see a hand over here. Oh, another?

Woman 11: Hi. So, this idea actually came from a TA staff, and we were having a meeting and we were actually talking about parent meetings, but I thought this was a great idea. The mental health professional before every meeting would give everybody a warm, lavender-scented towel.

Kim: Wow!

Woman 11: And I'm going to take that to our next TA meeting, and I think that's how we're going to start it. But I just thought, "What a nice idea." Right? Wouldn't that be nice?

Kim: Right.

Woman 11: And it was easy. That's not hard to do and not expensive. Right? Just make sure of allergies.

Kim: A little initial investment could probably go a long way on something like that, right? We want you to take care of yourselves, and we're going to talk about something stressful, but first, have a nice hot towel with a little lavender scent.

[Laughter]

Woman 3: It makes air travel better

Kim: There you go. Any other idea? Do we have any ideas shared online

Woman 2: Yes, there's so many great comments online from the virtual audience, but here are a few -- Walking meetings or a walkway, upgrading staff lounges to include healthy snacks, here's a good one -- a compliment corner, one program transformed a whiteboard into a space instead for staff to write compliments to one another.

Kim: Great. Great ideas. Any others? No? Okay. Well, I did hear a lot going on, so whether you were just sharing plans or sharing ideas, that's okay. Whatever works, right? The important thing is that the approach that we've been talking about today, it's not the individual one-time activities because those may not hit the mark for your staff. You want to take the time to do some assessment of what are the needs and the interests of your staff and what resources do we have. Do we have money to buy a Tuff shed, or do we maybe have enough money to buy towels? Look and see what do our staff need. Are they interested in a Zumba class after work? Maybe not.

So really look and see what are they needing, where are they stressors, and what can we do, put together a group that's going to help you with a plan, implement those activities. That's the easy part. But don't forget to get back and evaluate and say, "Did this make a difference? Did people like it? Did many people participate?" Evaluate to see if it had any success, and that way, if you're doing this in a more systemic way, you're going to be more successful. We'd like to continue the conversation. Hopefully you're all logged on to MyPeers so you can get the resources, you can exchange information about what's going on. As part of MyPeers, we have a community that's specific to staff wellness and we encourage you to come in, to join, share your ideas. We share ideas and resources there on a regular basis. It's a great place for people to say, "Hey, here's something we tried," or to post a question and say, "Hey, what would you do?" I encourage you to sign on, check in every once in a while, and see if you can get some ideas there. Before we go, I want to take one more wellness break because we've been sitting a long time. Lunch has kind of settled. Getting a little bit tired.

This is another stretch that you can do pretty easily. It's something you can do in your meetings or if you've been sitting too long at work. It's an adaptation of a yoga pose. First I want you to sit up in your chair, put your hands on your knees. People who are at home watching, again, if you would take a break from the multi tasking, the e-mails, other things you're doing, give yourself a minute to do this. So first we're going to take a deep breath, and it's going to be a breath that's so deep that your head goes back and your chest puffs out. So, as you inhale, chest puffs out and head goes back. And when you get ready to exhale, your head is going to come back down, your chest is going to roll in, your shoulders are going to come forward and you're going to stretch your back. Okay, and when you're ready to inhale, pull yourself back up again and pull your head up.

Take such a deep breath your head has to go back, your chest has to puff out, and when you're ready to exhale, come back down again with your head down, scrunch down your shoulders, and stretch out your back. Good. Good stretch. Okay. One more. I'm going to have you get out of your chair and stand up. Oh, my legs. I've been sitting a long time. Okay. This is going to be an easy one. We're going to put hands behind your back, your palms toward each other, and just press your hands toward each other. Just kind of float just a little bit like a butterfly might do just very gently just to stretch your arms and your back. Feel that stretch through your arms, maybe stretch out your legs while your doing it. Mm! It feels good to get up and stretch a little bit, right? It's a very easy one, not difficult. I see a lot of people are like, "Now I need to stretch my wings up high." If you need to stretch, go right ahead and stretch. Thank you all so much for attending today.

Before we go, before we go, I want to ask if anyone either here in the room or online has any questions for us before we go. Yes, thank you. Oh, we have a question back here. Thank you for waving your hand.

[Inaudible]

They're already online. They are in MyPeers in the Leadership Institute community. Sure. If there's anybody who wants CEU credits, come and sign this sheet with me.

Woman 3: I will be right here. I'm not going to run around. You're going to have to run to me this time.

Kim: Any other questions? Any questions online? Okay, well, we are going to give you a gift of 15 extra minutes. Thank you so much for spending time with us today and we encourage you to visit us on MyPeers and address staff wellness in a systemic way.

[Applause]