

OITE Wellness Events

All OITE events are currently being offered virtually; information and Zoom links are sent to trainee list serves daily. Information also available on OITE website (<https://www.training.nih.gov/>).

Regularly Scheduled Events

- **Resilience Discussion Groups** – 10 to 12 hourly sessions per week (1 on Mondays; 2 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; 3 on Fridays; 2 additional sessions on the 3rd Thursday of the month)
Drop-in discussion groups focused on various issues related to wellness and mental health; facilitated by trained mental health counselors.
- **Wellness Wednesday** – Every Wednesday, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Drop-in, group discussion groups focused on various topics related to holistic health, including strategies for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing; facilitated by OITE staff member.
- **Mindfulness Meditation** - 3 times a week: Mondays 5:00-5:30 p.m.; Tuesdays 12:00-12:30 p.m.; Thursdays 5:00-5:30 p.m.
Drop-in, 30-minute meditation session grounded in mindfulness and yoga nidra approaches to meditation; focused on supporting overall wellness and facilitated by OITE trained meditation teachers.
- **Journaling for Career Development and Personal Growth** - Every other Tuesday, 4:00-5:00 p.m.
Drop-in, journaling session with monthly themes focused on use of journaling as a wellness tool; facilitated by OITE staff member.
- **Affinity Groups** – Coordinated by OITE staff members
 - *Fellows of All Abilities (FAAb)* – Weekly on Mondays, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
 - *Mom-Dad-Docs* – 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
 - *Network of African-American Fellows at the NIH (NAAF)* – Bi-Monthly Networking Lunches, Fridays, 12:15-1:15 p.m.; Monthly Chapter Meetings – 2nd Wednesday of the month; 12:00-1:00 p.m.
 - *NIH Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender – Fellows and Friends (LGBT-FF)* – Weekly on Tuesdays at 12:00-1:00 p.m.
 - *NIH Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)* – Weekly on Thursdays, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
 - *Veteran and Active-duty Members of the U.S. Military* – Every other Thursday, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

4 New Wellness Skill Building Groups – 2 launching in November, 2020; 2 launching in January, 2021

- *Stress Management Group and Mindfulness Group* - Starting on Nov. 9th, 2020
- *Emotional Regulation Group and Assertiveness Group* - Starting on Jan. 4th, 2021
Small groups providing opportunities to reflect on areas of growth, explore tools to support wellness, and practice skill development. Each group session will provide trainees with tangible strategies relative to the overall theme. Offered as a 4-6 week series depending upon the topic. For more information, visit: https://www.training.nih.gov/wellness_skill-building_groups

Wellness and Mental Health Seminar Series* – 2020-2021

- *Becoming a Resilient Scientist* – (Sept. 15, 2020-Feb. 9, 2021)
Series of webinars and small group discussions focused on helping undergraduate students, postbacs, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the sciences develop the resilience needed to thrive in high-knowledge environments. Open to NIH trainees of all levels. For more information, visit: https://www.training.nih.gov/nih_becoming_a_resilient_scientist_series
- *Mental Health and Wellbeing of Biomedical Researchers* (Nov. 2, 2020-July 12, 2021)
Series of webinars and small group discussions focused on providing participants with tools to cope with stress, as well as discuss ways institutions can develop programs that support wellness and resilience within scientific careers. Open to trainees at all educational levels and administrative staff, faculty, and other research supervisors at universities, the NIH, and other research institutions. For more information, visit: https://www.training.nih.gov/new_seminar_series_mental_health_and_well-being

*These and other previous wellness presentations posted on the OITE YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/channel/UCQQHo_QnuBxdfcsRv4INGGw

Additional NIH Wellness Resources

- **R & W “Virtual Fitness for You” Classes** – Variety of fitness programs (e.g., yoga, cardio, weight training) held most weekdays. Schedule found here:
<https://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/wellness/PublishingImages/FFY%20Virtual%20-%20November%202020%20Schedule.jpg>
- **NIH “Wellness Toolkits”** – Online resources related to physical, emotional, interpersonal, and environmental wellness and disease prevention.
<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthiest-self-wellness-toolkits>
- **Employee Assistance Program** – Variety of resources for dealing with stress, grief and loss, behavioral health issues, interpersonal relationships, and other life concerns; available for both employees and trainees. Most EAP services are being provided virtually due to COVID-19; call (301) 496-3184 for more information or to schedule an appointment.
<https://www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/HealthAndWellness/EAP/Pages/index.aspx>

Ideas for Supporting Wellness & Mental Health Within Research Groups

Beyond encouraging trainees and other lab members to be involved with various OITE, NIH and other institutional wellness activities, Principle Investigators and other group leaders can be pivotal in developing a culture that is supportive of wellness and holistic health. Here are some suggestions:

- Consistently communicate the message that “to do well, we must be well.”
- Be a role model for wellness by engaging in healthy self-care activities yourself.
- Check in with lab members at the beginning of lab/individual meetings for a few minutes about how they are doing prior to turning to discussion of progress of work assignments.
- Include and value discussion on research articles on wellness in journaling clubs.
- Encourage research group (as individuals or as a team) to participate in campus-wide wellness activities (walk/run races, wellness challenges, healthy eating presentations, stress-reduction strategies, other wellness-related initiatives).
- Institute monthly wellness challenges within research group; consider rotating selection of wellness challenge among lab members.
- Provide mechanism for sharing helpful wellness resources and websites among research group members, including both online and community-based resources.
- Recognize impact of difficult current events (e.g., natural disasters, reports of violence, changes in policy affecting international trainees/lab members) by providing space for discussion and/or bringing in skilled facilitator to lead such discussions.
- Be mindful of and flexible about meeting needs arising from specific challenges that research group members are experiencing during this time of COVID-19, such as:
 - Concerns about not being able to meet research/career goals as efficiently as expected; fears/guilt about not being “productive enough.”
 - Extra strain on trainees/employees who are parents trying to meet work/career demands while arranging/facilitating education and/or childcare for their children.
 - Worry and guilt about family members and close friends who may be more severely impacted by pandemic, including health, employment, and financial issues.
 - Feelings of disappointment, isolation and loss for those who cannot go home for the holidays or usual visits, especially international trainees/employees.
 - Frustration and pain about not being able to see family members or close friends due to enhanced vulnerability to the virus (e.g., older people, people with underlying health conditions).
 - Reduced opportunities for social, but physically-distant, connections and exercise/ recreation due to reduced daylight hours and colder weather.

Helpful Online Websites and Publications

Websites

- The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley. Evidence-based articles and videos on a wide range of wellness topics. <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>
- Stanford Well for Life at Stanford Prevention Research Center, Stanford University. Resources for wellness strategies and interventions, including opportunity to participate in global study. <http://med.stanford.edu/wellforlife.html>
- Purdue University Global Resource Center. Listing of links to 25 top 2020 health and wellness blogs. <https://www.purdueglobal.edu/blog/student-life/valuable-health-wellness-blogs/>
- Dr. Kristen Neff's website on self-compassion. Research articles, videos, practices, and other resources on mindful self-compassion. <https://self-compassion.org/>
- Global Wellness Institute. Provides research, information about roundtables and initiatives, and evidence regarding a wide range of wellness strategies. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/>

Publications

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- Wald, HS. Optimizing resilience and wellbeing for healthcare professions trainees and healthcare professionals during public health crises: Practical tips for an 'integrative resilience' approach. *Journal of Med Teach*. 2020 Jul; 42(7):744-755. doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1768230. Epub 2020 May 25. PMID:32449867. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32449867/>
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