



UNT System College of Pharmacy

Pressing Forward during Unpredictable Times

Wow, we have experienced a whirlwind of events over the last few months. In thinking back, one faculty member remarked, "Everything happened so quickly, Friday I was at school, talking to students and staff. That weekend, the school closed immediately and I haven't seen the students in-person since." This story is not uncommon. So much has occurred in these first five months of 2020 and as we consider our Work Life Journey, it's just that...a journey. These somewhat abrupt changes have forced us all to adjust rather quickly. Understanding that we all adjust in different ways is important, but even more important, is to acknowledge your process of adjustment. Here are some tips to consider in moving forward:

1. **Remember to Communicate and Manage your Concerns:** Don't hold them in and allow them to fester. Beware of catastrophizing. Catastrophizing is when we magnify negative consequences and assume they're certain to happen. Welcome the safe environment to express concerns, frustrations and fears in a respectful and compassionate manner. One colleague recently commented, "Thank you for letting me vent. I didn't even realize I needed to do that!" Shift your thinking from catastrophizing to a more helpful mindset by asking: What are the things within my control? Am I overestimating the likelihood of the worst-case scenario? What strategies have helped me cope with challenging situations in the past that will serve me well during this time? What is a small helpful or positive action that I can take now?
2. **Practice Gratitude:** Don't miss an opportunity to recognize a staff or faculty member — or a group of individuals — for going above and beyond to navigate the current crisis. Typically, this is the month when we celebrate the end of the academic year by gathering and enjoying food, activities and fun. We may not be able to gather physically quite yet, but we can still come together to celebrate each other and the successes of the past academic year.
3. **Allow for Self-care:** Sometimes we're guilty of not listening to our bodies. Perhaps you're tired, but you still wait a few extra hours before going to sleep because there's just one more email to answer, or it's too early, or you have to finish binge watching a favorite movie 😊. Although we can get away with this behavior from time to time, consider what the signals of fatigue, aches, pains, and restlessness really mean. Sure, being able to push through a challenge, financial or relationship stressors make you a resilient person, but taking a pause to rest, reset and refresh can make you even more resilient. Beware of getting trapped in the "more is better" mindset and consider prioritizing your tasks and your self-care. Self-care preferences vary by individual, but here are a few suggestions to get you started:
 - a. **Allow for appropriate sleep:** 7-8 hours per day [Sleep Foundation Tips](#)
 - b. **Complete a few days of scaled workouts:** [Stress Relief Workouts](#)
 - c. **Assess nutrition goals and focus on high-quality food:** [Stress Reducing Foods](#)

Take a day off work to refresh and renew yourself. Instead of trying to check off all the boxes to do all the best practices, consider simply asking yourself, "Right now, what do I truly feel like doing?"

4. **High-Five Yourself:** What have you learned about yourself during this time? Well, let me just say if you didn't know already, you are doing an AMAZING job! SCP faculty and staff have done an excellent job at shouldering new tasks and replicating the functions of the college without an actual college building...talk about the ability to improvise! 😊 The path forward isn't always easy, but it becomes easier when working together with determination, dedication and professionalism to make it happen.
5. **Notice the Shift to Wellness Around You:** Perhaps you were already there, but have you noticed the sharp increase in wellness focused resources over the past few months? Why are we seeing this shift and how do we determine what's right for each individual? Well, as the CDC notes, "The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger." Each person's experience during this time is different and if we're open to the idea that there are many ways to cope and that our preferences may change over time, we're on the right track. Listed below are links to a few of the well-being resources that have been shared recently among organizations. We will continue to update this list and if you come across additional resources, please share:

- a. **American Pharmacists Association - Cynthia Knapp Dlugosz, BSPHarm, NBC-HWC**

- i. These are stressful, uncertain, and scary times. Is it really possible to find some meaning and purpose in this pandemic? Christine Whelan -- clinical professor of consumer science in the School of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison -- has created a daily "pandemic purpose" exercise to do just that. In [this video](#), she explains how you can adopt a "purpose mindset" each day. Her completed example: Because I value relationships, perseverance, and creativity, I will use my gifts for translating research, making connections, and organizing to positively impact the lives of my children, my students, and the broader public. I accept my anxieties about not being perfect enough, not being helpful enough, and fear for the future and still today make conscious, purpose-based commitments to make a fun taco night tonight, take a bike ride with the kids, and check in with my students. A downloadable PDF of the purpose statement is available [here](#).

- b. **Free APhA's online wellness self-assessment tool**

- i. Burnout is real. APhA-APRS cares about your well-being. We invite you to take advantage of APhA's online screening tool, invented by the Mayo Clinic, to evaluate and assess your well-being. The Pharmacists Well-being Index (WBI) is 100% anonymous, free, and evaluates distress in just 9 questions. You do not need to be an APhA member to use the WBI Resources:
app.mywellbeingindex.org/signup Invitation Code: APhA

- c. **CDC Stress and Coping Tips**

- i. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

d. NAM COVID-19 Well-being Resources

- i. The National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience continues to be committed to supporting the health and well-being of clinicians during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. [View the COVID-19 resources compiled by NAM.](#)

e. Greater Good Science Center

- i. <https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/>

f. UNT Resources

- i. <https://recsports.unt.edu/programs/fitness/keepmoving>
- ii. <https://wellbeing.untsystem.edu/>

FOR MORE TIPS - Don't forget visit our very own **SCP Work Life Journey website!** 😊
<https://www.unthsc.edu/college-of-pharmacy/work-life-journey/>

Thank you to all who contribute to the wonderful UNTSCP wellness focused efforts!



Saying goodbye to Spring and welcoming Summer and Fall... Pressing Forward in Life