

# WorkWell Guide

## Employee Well-being at USC

*Your guide to resources that help support all domains of well-being*

# WorkWell Guide

A collaboration between:  
USC WorkWell Center  
USC Environmental Health & Safety  
USC Office of Sustainability  
USC Occupational Therapy  
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# Introduction

Your guide to resources that help support all domains of well-being

The purpose of the USC WorkWell Guide is to support USC faculty and staff to adopt and maintain healthy work habits while working remotely or in the office and contribute to creating and promoting an environment that supports health and well-being at USC. Supporting faculty and staff around health and well-being will lead to a happier, more productive, healthy, engaged, and resilient workforce.

## Description

As part of enhanced benefits for USC employees, the USC WorkWell Center added a Health & Well-being Program that collaborates with and convenes key partners across campus to promote ways of working that encourage individual and collective health and well-being. This guide provides practical tools and resources. This guide also provides strategies that contribute to the inclusion and integration of health and well-being into workplace practices. Supporting USC's [Unifying Value of Well-being](#) through the integration of not only individual but also community well-being into policies and practices propels us towards a culture of well-being.

This guide provides information for employees at all levels and across schools and units. There is additional information for managers. We hope that you will adopt many of these strategies for yourself and your teams and share any successes or obstacles with us.

## The Case for Health and Wellness

The concept of a health-promoting workplace is becoming increasingly relevant as more private and public organizations recognize that future success can only be achieved with a healthy, productive, and engaged workforce. The workplace directly impacts the physical, mental, economic, and social well-being of workers and in turn the health of their families, communities, and society. It offers an ideal setting and infrastructure to support the promotion of health of a large population.

So, what's the business case for a health promoting workplace? Research has shown that success of an organization is linked to the health of its workforce evidenced by **improved health and productivity, reduced health care costs, disability and workers' comp costs, and absenteeism as well as presenteeism.**

The university setting is an ideal place for health promotion programs because:

- Faculty and staff alike spend most waking hours working.
- An established vehicle of communication already exists, wherein messages can be promoted, education can be provided, and skills (e.g., how to eat healthier foods or how to better manage stress) can be taught.
- Faculty and staff can receive social support (peers, professors, co-workers, managers).
- They can institute policies (e.g., “no smoking”) that can foster behavior change and a healthy work environment.
- Leveraging incentives can motivate program participation and increase the impact of healthy behaviors on the bottom line.

## Why do we need to build a healthy campus and why now?

USC is undergoing a watershed period of change as demonstrated by our new USC Unifying Values. The time is right for focusing on a culture of well-being through a comprehensive, collaborative, and long-term strategy that emphasizes the value and importance of employee and organizational health and well-being. From USC’s culture journey, we have a mandate to explore and expand our wellness offerings. Our infrastructure requires tending. We need to create high value and high impact programs based on evidence and need of our people. To move the needle on culture of health, we need to establish and maintain multi-component, evidence-based health promotion programs that improve organizational health alongside individual health. Our Trojan community needs to be connected with the rich benefits that exist in pockets across campus. USC has myriad resources related to health and wellness, however, there isn’t a hub through which employees can easily find these resources, until now.

## USC’s Culture Journey

The Culture Journey is USC’s university-wide initiative to explore our values, align the supportive behaviors that bring those values to life, and develop opportunities to improve our systems and processes.

Since October 2019, over 24,000 Trojans – faculty, staff, students, our governance bodies, deans, unit leaders – shared their voices and provided feedback on our desired USC values, behaviors, and actions to enhance our culture.

The 6 unifying values include:

- Integrity: We do the right thing
- Excellence: We bring our best selves
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: We all belong
- **Well-being: We honor the whole person**
- Open Communication: We share openly and honestly
- Accountability: We take responsibility



## Well-Being at USC: We honor the whole person

We create a caring culture that fosters our ability to thrive in mind, body, and spirit as essential to the sustainable pursuit of USC's mission.

- We treat each other with respect, empathy and understanding, without judgement.
- We embrace well-being at the individual, community, and institutional levels as a shared commitment.
- We prioritize well-being when creating policies and practices.

## USC WorkWell Center

The USC WorkWell Center empowers USC faculty and staff to thrive in mind, body, and spirit, so that our people are engaged, productive, and happy. WorkWell provides programs and resources for USC-benefitted employees that help them thrive in all areas of work-life wellness. We do this through cost-free and confidential counseling, coaching, consultations, critical incident/stress management, and health and wellness promotion and education programs.

## Creating a Culture of Health and Well-Being

A culture of health and well-being is achieved when the organization's structure, practices, policies, and systems are aligned to support and maintain health and well-being. Focusing on creating a healthy culture and environment supports an individuals' behavior change efforts and provides the infrastructure for campus well-being to make the healthy choice, the easy choice.

## Role of Managers and Supervisors on Employee Well-Being

Senior leaders, middle managers, and direct line supervisors all play a critical role in supporting employee well-being. While senior leadership support is critical, immediate managers and

Gallup found that managers can account for 70 percent of employee engagement levels. And more than 9 in 10 workers say they feel more motivated at their job if their leaders support well-being efforts.

supervisors have more impact on employee well-being than does the institutional environment, the organizational leaders, or the work itself (Beck and Harter, 2015). Managers and supervisors have the most day-to-day interaction with employees and therefore they are the primary gatekeepers of well-being. This guide includes practical tips for managers and supervisors to support their efforts to promote employee well-being.

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If you want to learn more about the role of managers and supervisors and employee engagement, please access the following article:

[Managers account for 70% of variance in employee engagement](#)

## Introduction to the Tip Sheets

The following tip sheets provide practical, feasible, and effective strategies to support USC faculty and staff to work well and live well. Support for employee health and well-being should be integrated into all relevant business functions (e.g., Human Resources, Benefits, Disability/Risk Management, Safety, Sustainability, Occupational Health, Facilities, Dining/Hospitality Services, Recreation, Professional and Leadership Development, and Organizational Development). The tools and skills provided support health and well-being while working within changing environments— on-site, remote, hybrid. We hope you will find the information useful and prioritize the health and well-being of your employees and contribute a healthy campus at USC.





# Work Well

## Healthy Habits at Work

Creating healthy habits that you incorporate into your day is an essential component to living a healthy life. Once you develop a habit, you don't have to think about making that healthy decision continuously or rely on willpower. It will become automatic. Your habits may be different than those of your colleagues; the key is to find a few that fit into your day and help you reach your individual goals.

- **Take time to get to know the people you work with.** People with a strong social network and support system are better able to manage stress.
- **Keep a pair of walking shoes at your desk** so you never have an excuse not to take a walk, or if your new shoes suddenly become uncomfortable!
- **Try creating a standing workstation space** or purchasing one so you can periodically stand throughout the day.
- Research shows that an organized office increases productivity and motivation. If your desk is cluttered and messy, take a few minutes each day or week to **organize your workspace.**
- **Keep some disinfecting wipes at your desk** to wipe down your area throughout the day.
- Spend all day working at a computer? Your eyes need a break too. When you get up to take a short walk around campus or around the block, make sure you **focus your eyes on something far away** and look side to side.
- **Avoid cradling the phone between your ear and neck.** Use a headset or speaker phone instead.
- When working remotely, **encourage regular video chats** and consider scheduling some remote social hours.
- **Open lines of communication between team members and their managers,** as well as within and between teams. Empower your employees to speak their minds with regular feedback forms or surveys, in addition to regular check ins.
- **Encourage your employees to take lunch and other breaks throughout the day** to maintain overall well-being and avoid burnout.





- **Reassess goals and priorities frequently** to ensure that the needs of the school/unit are being met and that employees' workloads are manageable.
- **Provide a sense of structure** through clear roles and responsibilities, precise objectives, and performance measures.
- To maintain motivation and engagement, **employees should be recognized** and rewarded for their successes, both individually and publicly.
- Effective time management will allow you to accomplish the most during your workday and have time for personal life afterwards.
  - **Make and utilize a to-do list** and prioritize the most important items first.
  - **Break large projects into smaller, manageable tasks.**
  - **Use online tools to organize, plan, and schedule tasks.**

## Scheduling Your Day

- What is your start time and end time? When is your lunch break? **Make time for breaks as needed.**
- **Schedule your meetings**, time to return calls, time to plan, time for follow-up and action items.
- **Discuss any non-traditional hours** (such as early mornings or evenings) with your supervisor if you need to take work time to focus on caring for elderly family members, children, or pet.
- **Discuss possible off-time commute schedules** to address the stress of a long, traffic-ridden commute.
- For those with kids, **schedule work time around their naps** or play time.

## Healthy Emails

Here are some things to consider to make your emails more manageable:

- Do not send emails before or after designated business hours. You can use the delayed receipt function or draft the email and send out later.
- Create "business hours" as a department when students, faculty and staff know you are reviewing and responding to email or providing other services. We all need time to work and can't be beholden to our email for the entire workday.
- Remove email from personal devices when on PTO.
- Provide clear expectations and direction for staff about responding to emails and for faculty when sending emails to staff.
- Provide your individual email response hours (i.e. 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. - 4 p.m. daily, no weekends or holidays). Inform recipient about the expected timeframe for response (i.e., 24 hours).
- Use out-of-office messages when appropriate.

Consider incorporating any of the following wellness-promoting and out-of-office responses that reflect your expectations.

## Signature Responses

- If you are receiving this email during off-hours, please feel free to respond during your regular workday.
- I value and respect flexible working patterns. Please know that I don't expect you to read or respond to this message outside of your normal working hours. I look forward to your response when you are next working.

- I value your work-life boundaries and rhythm. Please feel no pressure to respond outside of your normal workday or school day.
- My working hours may not be yours; I do not expect replies to my messages during your non-working hours.
- My working day may differ from your working day. Please don't feel obliged to reply to this email outside of your usual working hours.
- Sent during a convenient time for me, please read/respond during a convenient time for you.
- Please note: I strive to be email-free nights and weekends. Just know I do not expect a response during those times.

## Out-of-Office Responses

Hello,

Time away from the office is essential and an important way to rest, recalibrate, and remain at our best. I will be out of the office without access to email from March 12 through March 22. Please consider resending your email after March 22nd. If your need is urgent, any of my amazing teammates will be able to assist.

Please reach out to them at the following emails:

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Hello,

I'm currently on vacation/stay-cation to rejuvenate my body and spirit until [date]. During this rest, I will not be checking emails. I will respond to your message after [date]

If your message requires an immediate response, please email [email].

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Hello,

I'm currently taking a well-being day to recharge. I will respond to messages upon my return on [date].

If your message requires an immediate response, please email [email].

## Guidelines for Conducting Healthy and Productive Meetings

USC supports a healthy work and learning environment both on and off campus and committed to the health, safety, and well-being of our faculty and staff. There are several strategies to conduct effective meetings while considering the well-being of your participants. Try a few of these strategies or come up with your own.

## Strategies for Healthy and Productive Meetings:

- Considerations for scheduling meetings
  - **Hold 50-minute meetings** (instead of 60 minutes) to allow 10 minutes to transition or take a mental break before the next meeting. Hold 25-minute meetings vs. 30-minute ones.
  - For longer meetings, consider **shortening the length** (1 hour and 45 minutes vs. 2 hours).
  - If possible, **avoid scheduling meetings on Fridays from 1 – 5 p.m.** to allow time to catch up on the week and prepare for the following week. Or consider “zoom-free Fridays” or monthly “no meeting days” to address Zoom fatigue.
  - If possible, **avoid meetings at 8 a.m. on Mondays** to allow time to warm up to work.
  - If possible, **avoid scheduling lunch meetings** unless they are programs or activities that do not require a lot of focus and concentration.
  
- Prior to the meeting, establish expectations
  - **Video camera is optional** to allow participants to take a visual break.
  - **Standing or walking during the meeting** is encouraged and acceptable.
    - Where feasible, consider conducting a walking meeting.
  - Encourage participants to **bring water and a healthy snack** for longer meetings or meetings that may run into lunch time.
  - Ensure that all participants have the meeting id and password along with agenda and documents in advance so they can **prepare accordingly**.
  - **Designate different roles** – facilitator, note taker, timekeeper – and rotate to share the workload and enhance participation.
  
- During the meeting
  - **Incorporate Ice breakers/brain teasers** at the beginning of meetings.
    - Share something with each other.
    - What are you thankful for?
    - Tell us something positive that you have experienced.
    - Provide a puzzle or riddle to solve.
    - Share an object or photo.
    - Share your favorite healthy snack or activity.
    - What was the last movie (song, TV show, food, trip) you did/saw?
  - **Incorporate a mindfulness minute** at the beginning.
    - The host of the meeting acknowledges that everyone is very busy and thanks them for being at this meeting. Take a minute to refocus. Adjust posture (sit up tall or scoot back in their chair, feet on the ground/on stool, shoulders relaxed, view of monitor is where they want it, etc.) and take a few 4 count in-breaths and out-breaths.
  - **Incorporate stretch breaks** during classes/meetings, especially for those over one hour.
    - March in place
    - Lift knees up and pump arms up and down
    - Step from side-to-side
    - Move arms, head, and torso in circles
    - Turn on music and dance or just move!
    - Put on a 5-minute exercise video
    - Stretch!

- **Create a safe and welcoming environment** where participants can contribute. On Zoom, use functions like chat, polls, raise hand, etc. to allow for multiple ways to participate.
- **Kindly ask participants to mute** when not speaking to avoid background noise and interruptions.
- **Check in with all participants** to make sure everyone has a chance to speak and share.
- **Have participants identify themselves** and make sure everyone recognizes each other.
- **Pose a question** that participants can think about and discuss at the next meeting.
- If possible, **record your meetings** or distribute notes to guarantee that participants understand the next steps and have the resources to complete their tasks.
- **Avoid static PowerPoints** when presenting to the group.
  - Use animations and impactful visuals.
- **Provide adapted programming** or alternative activities for those with disabilities.



# Eat Well

## Healthy Eating at Work

Roughly half of your weekly meals are consumed during the time you spend at work. Set yourself up for success and make eating healthy part of your daily work routine. Plan ahead and consider the following tips:

- **Eat a wholesome, balanced diet** focused on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, and dairy (for those that eat dairy).
- **Practice portion control** and keep healthy foods visible.
- **Eat balanced meals throughout the day** and make sure to hydrate.
- **Energize your body with a protein and fiber-rich breakfast** within 30-60 minutes of getting up.
- **Offer fruits, vegetables, and whole grains** for meetings and conferences.
- **Keep some perishable items in the office fridge** (e.g., yogurt, fruit, and vegetables).
- **Keep dried fruits, nuts, or jerky in your desk** for easy, healthy snacks that won't spoil quickly.
- **Bring your lunch to work.** When you plan ahead and pack a lunch before you are hungry, you are more likely to make healthy choices.
- **Healthy options are available on campus.** Look for these items or contact the [Hospitality Dietitian](#) if you have any questions about menu items.
- **Remember food safety.** Keep your lunch in the office refrigerator or in an insulated lunch bag.
- If you are working remotely, **stock your fridge with healthy snacks** and easy to make lunches. Don't forget to take your lunch break!
- **Host a healthy food potluck or picnic** for your team.
- **Take a break from your working area to eat your lunch.** The act of getting up and moving will keep you focused and energized.
- **Practice mindful eating and pay attention to what you put in your mouth.** Mindless eating while multi-tasking can lead to overeating without even realizing it. Consider limiting screen time during meals. Having a meal with someone is a great way to do this.
- **Make water the default beverage.**
- **Bring a reusable water bottle** to leave in your office.




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Check out the location of hydration stations at USC.  
[UPC hydration station map](#)  
[HSC hydration station map](#)

## Meal Planning and Prepping

- **Assess what you already have**, what you and your family enjoy, and create a meal plan for the week.
- **Create a grocery list** and shop the perimeter of the store.
- **Prep and cook multiple days' worth of food** at one time and portion out into single servings
- Buffet style – **make batches of staples** you can mix and match (veggies, steamed rice, chicken, potatoes).

## USC's Food Philosophy

USC is part of the [Menus of Change](#), a network that includes The Culinary Institute of America and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, working to create a long-term, practical vision for the integration of optimal nutrition and public health, environmental stewardship and restoration, and social responsibility concerns within the foodservice sector and beyond. It's core principles include:

- The relentless pursuit of deliciousness, chef-driven menus, and transparent products.
- Fresh and seasonal, both local and global.
- Think product first and focus more on plant-based cooking.
- Promote health and sustainability through inspiring and handmade menus.
- A focus on whole and intact grains.
- Red meat: smaller portions, less frequently.
- Reduced added sugar.
- Cut the salt.
- Right portion size and limiting food waste.
- Focus on whole, minimally processed foods.
- Drink healthy - a commitment to healthy options.
- Sustainable seafood.
- Designing operations for the future food.

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If you want to learn more about the Menus of Change, please visit: [Principles of Healthy, Sustainable Menus](#)



# WHAT IS A BALANCED PLATE?



## NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

Salad  
Raw Veggies  
Steamed, Roasted  
& Sauteed

## GRAINS & STARCHY VEGETABLES

Rice, Quinoa,  
Couscous, Pasta  
Oats, Potatoes,  
Sweet Potatoes, Peas, Corn,  
Butternut Squash

## PROTEIN

Poultry & Meat  
Seafood  
Beans, Lentils, Chickpeas  
Soy (Tofu, Tempeh, Soymilk)  
Dairy  
Nuts, Peanuts, Seeds

## FRUIT

*(fresh, frozen, canned or dried)*  
Whole  
Cut up  
Pureed  
Cooked

## DON'T FORGET TO ADD:

### WATER

- Hydrate with water instead of sugary beverages

### HEALTHY FATS

- Plant based oils (e.g. olive oil)
- Avocado
- Nuts / Peanuts/ seeds

### CALCIUM RICH

- Dairy
- Almonds
- Broccoli & Dark Leafy Greens
- Oranges
- Tofu
- White Beans

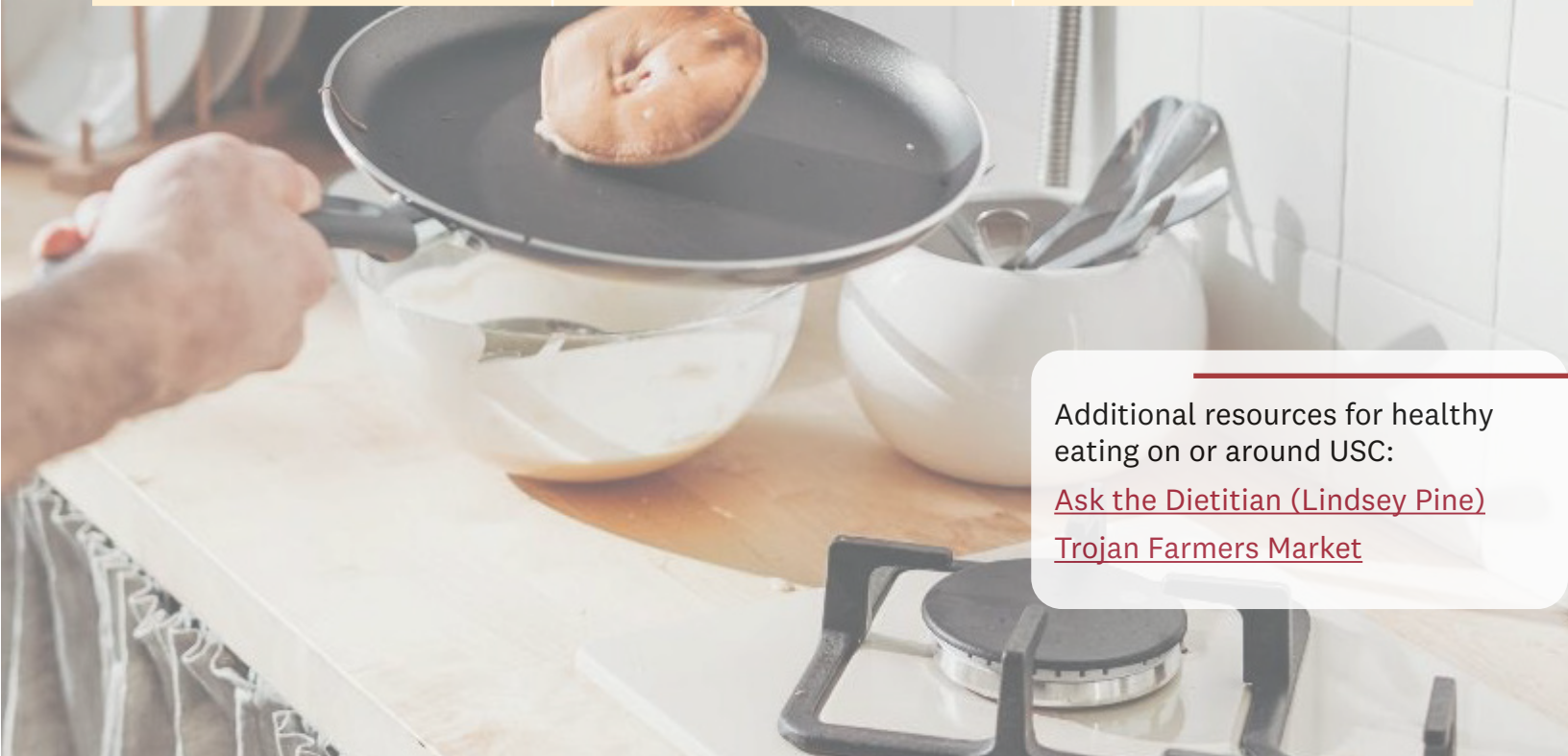
### GUT HEALTHY

- Probiotics: Sauerkraut, Yogurt, Tempeh, Miso, Kefir, Kombucha, Kimchi
- Prebiotics: Onions, Garlic, Apples, Bananas, Asparagus, Beans, Wheat, Barley, Flax

### COMPLEMENTS TO A HEALTHY PLATE

Fun Fitness    Reduce Stress  
Stay Social    7-8 Hours of Sleep/Night

Breakfast	Lunch	Snacks
Fresh fruit	Vegetable soup	Fruit
Whole grain bagel	Romaine or spinach salad	Vegetables with low-fat dip
Toast with peanut butter	Turkey, tuna, chicken, or hummus sandwich on whole grain bread/wrap	Low fat cheese and crackers Nuts Trail mix (without M&M's)
Low-fat yogurt with fruits and nuts	Pasta salad with vegetables and beans	Popcorn
Oatmeal with fruits and nuts	Chicken and vegetables	Low-fat yogurt with granola
Egg sandwich on whole grain bread	Tofu scramble	Dark chocolate Turkey jerky



Additional resources for healthy eating on or around USC:  
[Ask the Dietitian \(Lindsey Pine\)](#)  
[Trojan Farmers Market](#)





# Move Well

## Move More at Work

A study, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, found that adults who sat for more than 11 hours a day had a 40 percent increased risk of dying within three years from any cause - compared with those who sat for less than four hours a day (van der Ploeg, 2012). Unfortunately, even a daily trip to the gym can't undo the effects of an entire day spent sitting. To keep your body functioning properly, you need to move your body in a variety of ways. Consider the following examples:

- Throughout the day, **take short stretch breaks**. Move for 3-4 minutes every hour.
- **Plan movement** and activity to achieve at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.
- **Break up long periods of sitting** (hour or more) by going for a walk or stretching.
- **Integrate exercise equipment**, if possible, within your workspace (e.g., exercise balls in place of some chairs, raised tables for standing).
- **Implement walking meetings** whenever possible. Ideal for 1:1's.
- **Stand up to do tasks** while on Zoom meetings, or reading emails.
- **Practice active Zooming**. Stand and walk or move during Zoom/audio only calls.
- **Invest in a standing desk or tabletop riser** (or a tall kitchen counter!).
- Use your cell phone and a set of headphones to **walk around campus** or your neighborhood during a conference call.





- **Use the stairs**, if you are able, instead of the elevator.
- **Set a reminder** on your phone or computer to take breaks.
- **Walk to meetings** across campus instead of driving.
- **Break up your workouts** into mini sessions throughout the day.
- **Stretch your shoulders**, neck, and back throughout the day to overcome tightness from typing on a computer all day.
- **Plan your physical activity**. Schedule a morning walk, lunch break, or evening session.
- **Enjoy fitness with your friends and family** for more accountability and fun. Find a fitness buddy!
- **Destress with a mindful movement**. Try a yoga class or Pilates to breathe through controlled movement that calms and strengthens the body.
- **Get outside** for some sun and fresh air and move!
- **Take advantage of online resources** to supplement in person-workouts.
- **Use alternative transportation** to and from work. Be mindful of safety precautions and guidelines.
- **Enjoy the great outdoors** and hike nearby right in LA! [Lake Hollywood Reservoir Loop](#), [Runyon Canyon](#), and [Elysian Park Loop](#) are great hikes to try.
- **Join the [USC Recreation Center](#)** and take advantage of all the classes, personal training, and opportunities to be active. Enjoy lap swimming at the Lyon Center pool. You can also use your [Employee Fitness Incentive](#) to join one of the USC gyms on campus (Lyon Center, USC Village, and/or HSC).

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To access the full article, please visit:

Van der Ploeg, H. P., Chey, T., Korda, R. J., Banks, E., & Bauman, A. (2012). Sitting time and all-cause mortality risk in 222 497 Australian adults. *Archives of internal medicine*, 172(6), 494–500. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archinternmed.2011.2174>

# Stretch with USC

## 1. Start in your seat

As you are seated, stretch your legs and back with a seated figure-four stretch (1), calf stretch (2), and back extension (3).

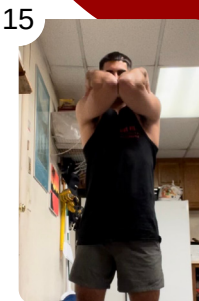
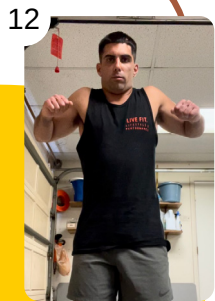


## 2. Stand up and stretch your upper body

Stretch your chest and shoulders with a bicep stretch (4) (5), standing chest stretch (6), and chest/shoulder stretch (7).

## 3. Arms and neck

Extend your arms above your head with an overhead stretch (8), then stretch to the side (9). Pull on your elbows for a tricep stretch (10). Release your arms and end with a side neck stretch (11).



## 4. Stretch your back

Bend arms at a 90 degree angle and pull them back for a trapezius stretch (12) (13), then touch your shoulders (14) and push your elbows together (15) for an upper back stretch.

## 5. Move on to your wrists

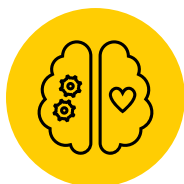
Stretch your hands and wrists with a wrist extension (16) and wrist flexion (17).

## 6. End with your legs

Stretch your legs with a standing hamstring stretch (18) and a standing quad stretch (19).



Special thanks to our models: Julie C, Karrin M., and Thomas M.



# Be Well

## Stress Management at Work— Communication, Courtesy, Community

Stress is part of daily life. It often is the moment of “change.” It may be sudden or progressive. It can be a full spectrum from danger to accomplishing an important goal. Being aware of it and how we individually respond is what matters. Knowing ourselves and how it impacts physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually gives the empowerment to handle and manage in the moment.

While there is no way to remove ALL of the stress from work, you can take some daily steps to help lower and manage the stress from your job.

- **Connect with others** at work in your office, remotely and around campus.
  - Developing friendships with co-workers can help you better manage the negative effects of stress.
  - Creating kind communication; positive greetings, a tone of caring, express encouragement, respect, support, acknowledgement, and praise.
- **Think positively** about your work and avoid negative office gossip.
  - Presume the best intention and manage everyone up to all.
    - If you see the downside of every situation and interaction, you’ll find yourself drained of energy and motivation.
    - Realistic optimism is productive and helps motivation.
    - Ask directly about the information you hear. “When in doubt; find out.”
  - **Be organized.**
    - A clean desk help increase your clarity and motivation, as well it can also relieve stress.
    - Prioritize each day to do what you most need to accomplish.
  - **Know your responses to stress-** your signs that it is affecting you. Take breaks throughout the day.
    - Movement and breaking away can help you manage a tough situation and replenish.
    - Breathing, stretching, walking cleanses and energize and boosts our mood.
    - A two-minute break from what is bothering you and focus instead on your breathing. Sit up straight, close your eyes, and take cleansing breathes rejuvenates.
  - Create thinking time and write three solutions to a concern.



- **Have personal goals.**
  - Goals serve as guides and action plans for accomplishing tasks.
  - They are evidence of a plan and active efforts towards a desired outcome.
  - Having clear goals instills positivity and a sense of progress.
- **Create high points in each day and week.**
  - Creating small “high points” within each day can have a similar effect, boosting motivation.
  - Breaks are crucial for rejuvenation.
  - Selecting meaningful and refreshing breaks can enhance productivity and overall well-being.
- **Share with trusted colleagues** or friends and support services (such as [WorkWell](#)) about the issues you’re facing.
  - Supportive sources creates community connection that offers perspectives and insights for problem solving, providing insights and offer suggestions for coping in healthy ways.
  - Simply sharing about a stressor can be a relief.
  - Remember a stress response is a normal preparation for your mind and body to be ready to meet the challenge.
- **Find ways to laugh and have fun.**
  - Laughing lowers your body’s stress hormones and increased chemicals that boost your mood.
  - Create positive social connection with stories that are uplifting and engaging to share with coworkers.
- **Reframe how we see things.**
  - Consider that that even though there may be challenges, there is always a solution.
  - Remember the big picture goal you are achieving.
  - Seek the silver lining – see the benefit of a challenge.
  - Create a positive thought or message to tell yourself when pressured.
- **Practice mindfulness.**
  - Being present keeps the focus on what we can do.
  - Make time for mediation, reflection, and quiet time.
- **Practice patience and forgiveness** for day-to-day issues and stressors. It can conserve energy for what is most important.
  - Channel energy into positive action.
  - Have an attitude of gratitude.
  - Think of who you want to be treated.
- **Attend to you.**
  - Do what you love and notice when your health is messaging you to care for yourself.
  - Keep self-care a priority as a normal routine of living.

Maintaining our stamina and endurance through work/life changes and transitions relies on how we think. Keeping a positive dialogue within is key to building strength. Coping through positive thinking can help us rise to manage the moment to the best outcome.

Here are some things to remember:

- Remember that we often experience the normal response to multiple life changes and keep the context of the events in mind.
- Remember the personal meaning of change to identify the feelings associated with them.
- Remember ways you have adjusted to change in the past that has been useful to apply to new circumstances.
- Remember there are many resources to learn relaxation techniques like [Mindful USC](#).
- Remember to plan time for making decisions.
- Remember to be compassionate and patient with yourself. Credit yourself for managing all that you do.
- Remember to appreciate your success.

## Sleep

Did you know the National Sleep Foundation reported the average American feels tired at least three out of seven days each week? Sleep is one of the most important parts of the day. Sleep is the body's time to restore itself allowing for growth and development, and is necessary for the body's immune system, and other important functions. A lack of sleep can affect our moods, performance, motivation, and memory.

- Stick to a schedule and try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time, even on the weekends. A regular sleep schedule will help regulate your body's clock and help you sleep through the night.
- Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep per night.
- Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual away from bright lights. This will separate your sleep time from activities that cause excitement, stress or anxiety which makes it more difficult to fall asleep.
- Evaluate your room and design it to fit your ideal sleep environment. Your bedroom should be between 60 and 67 degrees. Make sure your bedroom is free from light and sounds that can interrupt sleep.
- Check your mattress and pillows to make sure they are supportive and comfortable. Life expectancy for a quality mattress is nine to ten years. Pillows should be comfortable and inviting but stay free from allergens that may affect your sleep.
- Wind down and shift your body into sleep mode. Participating in a calming activity such as reading and avoiding electronics will help you sleep through the night. Also, try and avoid large meals, alcohol, or caffeine to close to bedtime as it interrupts quality sleep.

For more information, contact the [USC WorkWell Center](#).

If you want to learn more about the importance of sleep, please access the following resources:

[Sleep in America Poll 2020](#)

[National Sleep Foundation](#)





# Work Well

## Ergonomic Healthy Work Habits Checklist

Maintaining good posture and adopting healthy work habits help keep you comfortable at work and reduce your risk of injury. To evaluate your postural and behavioral practices, please check all the following that apply to you.

I take short hourly breaks.
I leave my desk at lunchtime.
I rest my eyes regularly when working on the computer.
I stretch throughout the day.
I avoid forward head posture and keep my ears over my shoulders.
I sit upright and do not slouch or lean forward.
I sit back in my chair rather than perch on the edge of my seat.
I rest my feet on the ground or a footrest, not on the base of my chair.
I keep my mouse and keyboard close to avoid reaching.
I relax my hands when I am not actively typing or using the mouse.

How did you do? Most people could find ways to improve their work habits to be healthier. Review your answers and identify strategies on how to improve your scores.

### Scoring Categories:

10 points: You're a healthy working posture and habits rockstar!

8-9 points: You're health conscious and regularly integrate healthy habits while working!

5-7 points: You're aware of things you can do to feel well while working!

1-4 points: You've started finding some healthy habit strategies. Keep exploring strategies to try!

## Standing Work

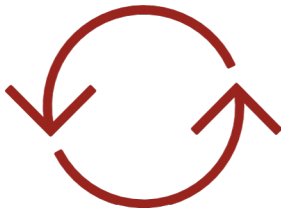
Periodic movement and standing for work offer opportunities to decrease the strain of prolonged sitting postures. Benefits of standing include decreased pressure on the buttocks and legs, increased activation of muscles when moving between positions, and the opportunity for increased movement while standing.



### Move Regularly

Changing positions periodically is one of the most important things that you can do to improve your circulation. Static positions can also result in increased muscle tension. Take periodic breaks to respond to your body's cues for stretching and movement.

*As a general goal, aim to take a pause from being seated every 30 minutes.*



### Switch Between

If you have the opportunity to stand while working, change between seated and standing positions at regular intervals. For some computer-based or cognitively demanding work, it may be preferable to be seated.

*Try dividing each 30 minutes into standing, moving, and seated time.*



### Posture Matters

Check in with your position when in standing to ensure that your elbows are bent at 90-120 degrees, with your table and elbow at roughly the same level. Adjust your monitors so that your eyes are within the top part of your screen. Wrists, hands, and forearms should be straight. Try to avoid "locking" the knees and leaning in any direction.

**Ease into it.** Start off gently and pay attention to what your body is telling you about standing. Leaning, foot fatigue, and increased discomfort are all signs to take standing slower. Wearing comfortable and supportive shoes and using an antifatigue mat are recommended. Remember, moving is the most important part, which you can do even without equipment.

### Sources:

Callaghan, J. P., De Carvalho, D., Gallagher, K., Karakolis, T., & Nelson-Wong, E. (2015). Is standing the solution to sedentary office work?. *Ergonomics in Design*, 23(3), 20-24.

Kang, S. H., Lee, J., & Jin, S. (2021). Effect of standing desk use on cognitive performance and physical workload while engaged with high cognitive demand tasks. *Applied Ergonomics*, 92, 103306.

USC Occupational Therapy  
Faculty Practice  
323-442-3340  
[www.usc.edu/otfp](http://www.usc.edu/otfp)  
[otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)



## Basic Steps to Better Ergonomics

### What NOT to do



These can lead to:

- Neck pain
- Eye strain
- Low back pain
- Tense shoulders
- Poor circulation in legs

### What to do

#### Head

Ears, shoulders, and hips should be aligned; don't tilt head forward or back.

#### Neck

Keep neck straight, not bent forward or leaning back. If reading, use a book stand.

#### Elbows

Bent 90-100°, keep elbows near your sides.

#### Chair

Mid to tall back, lumbar support for low back, try using pillows or folded blankets.

#### Sitting

Sit all the way back in the seat – don't slide forward. Break from sitting every 30 minutes.



#### Eyes

Top of computer screen should be eye-level. If using laptop, center of laptop screen should be 30° down from eye level; try a few books to position the height.

#### Keyboard

Just below elbows. Do not bend wrists side to side or up/down to rest wrists or forearms. Use light keystrokes.

#### Mouse

Use whole arm to move mouse or on trackpad, not just wrist or fingers.

#### Chair Height

Hips at 90° or slightly more, feet flat on floor or use footrest or use a stack of books.

Have questions? Contact us to find out more about how you can get an ergonomic consult.

Photo courtesy of:

<http://www.completelerehabolutions.com/blog/ergonomics-the-science-of-sitting/>

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# Breathe Well

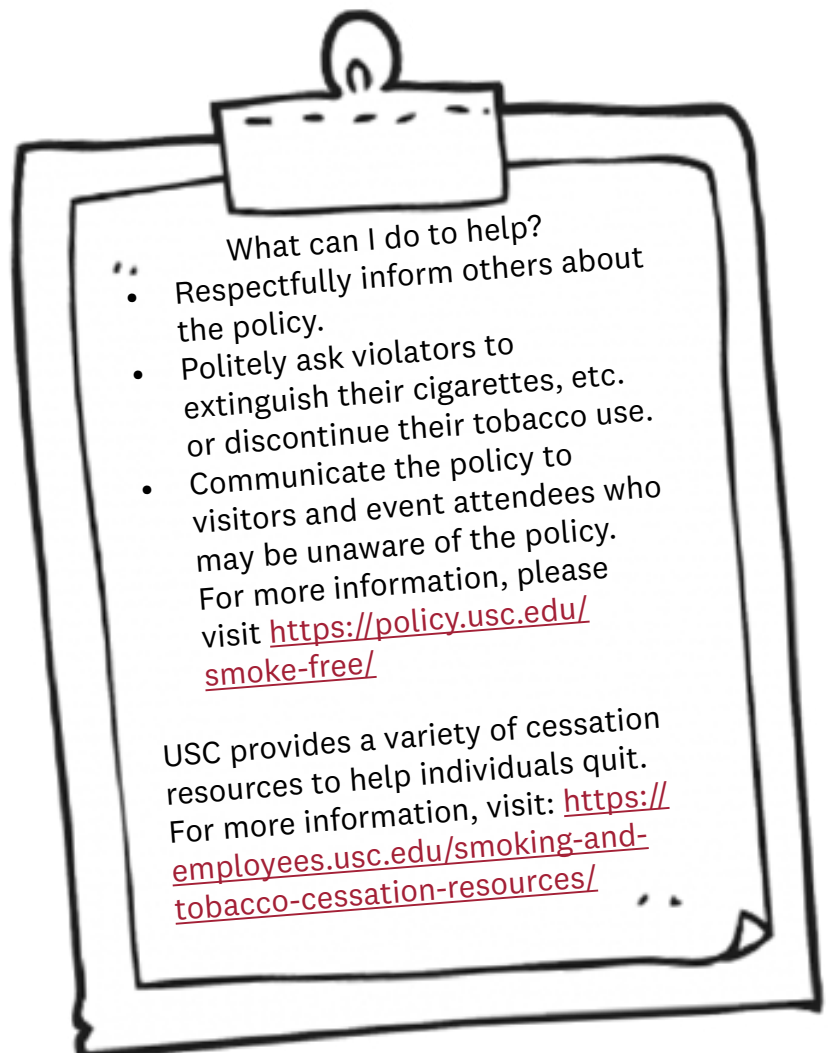
## Smoke and Tobacco Free Policy

USC is committed to promoting a healthy, safe, and comfortable environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Smoking is prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities on university owned and leased property with no exception, including within vehicles parked on those properties. This includes all university owned and leased housing, dining, hotel, retail, athletic and performance facilities and all teaching, research, clinical and office space. In addition to university owned and operated student housing facilities, this policy also applies to any property occupied by any fraternity or sorority officially recognized by the university.

For purposes of this policy, smoking is defined as inhaling, exhaling, burning, carrying, or possessing any lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, electronic cigarette, hookah, or other lit product and including the use of any substance, including but not limited to tobacco, cloves, or marijuana. For more information on the policy, please visit <https://policy.usc.edu/smoke-free/>.

The success of this policy relies on the respectfulness, consideration, and cooperation of both tobacco users and non-tobacco users. All members of the university community share the responsibility of adhering to and enforcing the policy and have the responsibility for bringing it to the attention of visitors and guests.





# Social and Community Well-being

## Creating connection, inclusion, and belonging

A Deloitte report found that 93% of respondents believe that a sense of belonging (feeling respected and being treated fairly) drives organizational performance. It's important for employees to have meaningful work, and it's also important that they feel a sense of connection to the people they work with.

Social well-being refers to the quality of employees' interpersonal relationships both in the office and outside of work. Having a sense of belonging and connection to other coworkers is important for employee engagement and productivity levels. Positive work relationships can help build strong, cohesive workplace environments that are based on collaboration and teamwork. Research has shown that although many workers rank socializing as one of their highest personal priorities, social concerns were also viewed as more stressful than health issues and debt worries. Consider the following tips to improve your sense of social well-being and create a workplace culture that prioritizes inclusiveness:

### Improving your Communication Skills

- Practice active listening skills when communicating with colleagues. Remain nonjudgmental and patient even if you don't agree with what's being said.
- Give verbal and nonverbal feedback (e.g., eye contact, nodding, smiling etc.) to show that you're listening.
- Practice proper email etiquette and express your thoughts clearly. You should be avoiding shorthand and slang, replying in a timely fashion, having a clear subject line, including a professional greeting and signature, double-checking attachments, proofreading, and spell checking.
- Promote constructive peer-to-peer recognition by remembering to offer positive feedback and praise in your criticism of a colleague's work.

Reach out and ask questions for clarification when you do not completely understand what is being expected of you.



### Networking Tips

- To start up a conversation with a colleague, try using good **conversation starters** (i.e., asking for information, giving a compliment, offering help, commenting on a shared experience, making an observation etc.).
- **Make a strong introduction** by greeting someone with eye contact, a smile and a firm handshake.
- **Display genuine interest** and build rapport by asking thoughtful, specific questions.
- **Communicate effectively** by providing clear, succinct points without beating around the bush.
- Demonstrate that you're listening closely by **paraphrasing or summarizing** what has been said already.

### Ideas for Inclusion

- **Acknowledge and embrace** colleagues' religious, racial, cultural differences.
- **Include your pronouns** in informal and formal introductions (i.e., in your email signature, Zoom name, conversational introductions, etc.).
- **Eliminate use of gendered language** in formal writing and in conversation.
- **Be aware of your own unconscious biases** and take steps to minimize them.
- **Celebrate and learn about holidays** and events for underrepresented groups like Black History Month, Pride etc.
- Research has shown that not only do men dominate the conversations in professional meetings, but women are also more likely to be interrupted than men are. **Be aware of these interruptions** and help break the habit.

### Facilitating Social Connection

Managers have the unique opportunity to promote inclusion within their departments by hosting team-building activities and social events. These events can help employees connect with one another through various get-to-know-you activities and in turn, establish positive work relationships that keep workers motivated to perform their best. As the university gradually transitions into “normal” campus life, remote social events are good ways for on-campus colleagues to connect with remote colleagues. Some creative team-building ideas include: escape rooms, happy hour, coffee chats, trivia night, casual Slack group discussions and sharing etc. It's important to note that most of the in-person options can be easily modified to a virtual format.

## Healthy Workplace Relationships: Connecting and Collaborating in a Virtual or Hybrid Workplace

Embracing the shift to online workspaces can present opportunities for enhancing traditional work habits as well as foster a more efficient and fulfilling work experience. Our new settings can therefore introduce innovative strategies and helpful guidelines in order to better connect and work with our team members. Here are some tips on how to better prepare for some of the key ways we interact online:

### Virtual Workplace

#### Virtual Meeting Tips

- Meetings are efficient for brainstorming, setting vision, aligning roles, agreeing on goals, and other creative and strategic discussions.
- Consider shifting the focus of regular team meetings to a more strategic perspective once a month.
- Set an agenda in advance and assign a facilitator to keep the meeting on track and drive decision making.
- Assign someone to take notes and share them with stakeholders to avoid the need for future meetings on the same topic.

#### Share Documents

- Share the material for feedback asynchronously using document-sharing services like Google Docs, SharePoint, Teams, Slack, or approved file-sharing platforms.
- Set a deadline for the review and enable track changes for easy collaboration.
- Clearly communicate your expectations to reviewers regarding what you need from them in the document.

#### Work “Side By Side”

- Remote workers can adopt the practice of “virtual side-by-side” working.
- Engage in a video call with a colleague and work on a shared project simultaneously.
- The collaborative approach enhances productivity and motivation in completing activities.

### Hybrid Workplace

Within the new thriving hybrid workplace, effective collaboration becomes a powerful catalyst for success. Whether your employees are in the office or at home, it is important to prioritize strategies that keep them organized, motivated, and in sync as they work towards team goals. By implementing effective approaches and techniques, you can foster a collaborative environment that supports productivity and success in the hybrid work setting. Here are a few tips to help improve collaboration in the hybrid workplace.

#### Communicate Clearly

- Maintain team cohesion by ensuring remote and in-office employees are on the same page.
- Conduct weekly team meetings to gather updates from each employee.
- Encourage employees to share their priorities, tasks, and any obstacles they are facing.
- Clearly communicate goals, responsibilities, and deadlines to foster understanding and alignment.

#### Share Project Updates

- Create a project plan to outline tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines.
- Schedule standup meetings to share progress updates on individual assignments.
- Foster effective collaboration by keeping everyone informed about the status of their respective tasks.

#### Use Collaboration Software

- From communication to collaboration, hybrid workplaces require technology to operate effectively.
- A list of USC collaboration software and tools are available on the USC ITS website: <https://itservices.usc.edu/collaboration/>.

## Healthy Workplace Relationships: How to Develop Friendships and Build Great Relationships at Work

According to research at Purdue University, relationships which have friendship at their core tend to be more satisfying and long-lasting. Great friendships are made up of emotional support, liking each other, caring for others, feeling trusting and secure and spending time together. Brilliant research by Lewandowski at Monmouth University finds there are key elements to great relationships—and these can translate to creating strong and rewarding bonds through work.

These are the four aspects that matter most when building great relationships with colleagues.

### Accept Others

- Acceptance and reducing judgment play a vital role in fostering satisfying relationships, as found in a study published in the *Family Relations* journal.
- Individuals who exhibit higher levels of acceptance tend to experience greater relationship satisfaction.
- Strive for acceptance and understanding when interacting with coworkers to promote positive relationships.

### Be Trusting and Trustworthy

- Share challenges, concerns, and thoughts related to projects or improvements in products.
- Support others personally and fulfill commitments and tasks.
- Building trust involves prioritizing the best interests of the other person and the relationship through consistent choices and behaviors over time.

### Emphasize Commonalities

- Emphasize common goals and interests between you and your co-workers.
- Highlight shared values, such as a focus on innovation or the future of work, to strengthen relationships.
- Language usage plays a role in perception and relationship satisfaction. Using inclusive terms like "we" or "us" fosters a sense of closeness and commitment.
- When presenting work or projects, acknowledge and give visibility to teammates who have contributed to the effort.

### Grow Together

- Supporting each other's growth and development goals is a key aspect of great relationships.
- In strong relationships, individuals feel they can pursue their goals and expand their skills while maintaining relationship satisfaction. Encourage your co-workers in their pursuit of learning new skills.
- Provide constructive feedback to help them in their development journey.

## Volunteering Opportunities

Giving back to the local community can be a fun, productive way to spend your free time.

Volunteering not only instills a sense of purpose and meaning into your work but turning it into a group effort with your fellow colleagues allows for opportunities in team-bonding and collaboration. Whether you only have time for a one-day event or can commit to an ongoing effort, below are a few suggestions on how to get started with volunteering:

- **Plan an item drive** (i.e., food, books, toys, clothes). This is an easy way to give back especially during the holiday season.
- **Decide on a charity together** as a team and plan creative fundraising ideas to raise money.
- **Participate in “volunteering days”** as a team and serve at a specific location, like an animal shelter, soup kitchen or beach clean-up, together for one day.
- **Engage with charity runs** or walks together either by volunteering with race day set-up or competing yourselves.
- **Sign up to volunteer** for one of various online hotlines (i.e., [Crisis Text Line](#), [7 Cups](#)) as a safe, remote option for volunteering.
- **Visit the following websites** to find more specific volunteering opportunities near you: [VolunteerMatch](#), [JustServe](#), [All for Good](#).

The Healthy Campus Social Connection and Belonging subcommittee has also curated a [list of volunteer opportunities](#) in partnership with the USC Volunteer Center. Get a group of colleagues, friends and family together to support these great causes.

If you want to learn more about social connection, communication, and networking, please access the following articles:

[What Does the Future of Work look like after Covid-19?](#)

[Workplace Wellbeing](#)

[9 Tips for Navigating your First Networking Event](#)

[50+ Ideas for Cultivating Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[Seven Studies that Prove Mansplaining Exists](#)

[50 Volunteering Ideas and Tips](#)





# Spend Well

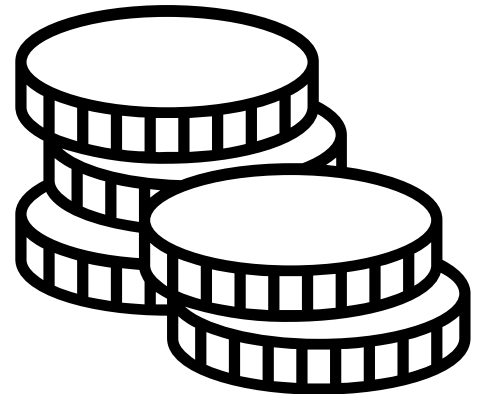
## Financial Fitness and Well-being

Financial Fitness and Well-being includes increasing awareness of your current financial state, how to successfully manage financial expenses, and making well-informed decisions. It also entails strengthening of your knowledge of financial literacy and the ability to manage finances effectively. This portion of the guide serves to educate and inform you on the domain of financial well-being as well as resources available to help you achieve your financial goals.

### Financial 101

Understanding fundamental money terms and concepts that affect your financial well-being is the first step toward financial literacy. Here are 5 tips to help get you started towards financial success:

- Stick to a budget.
- Have a savings plan.
- Pay off credit card debt.
- Keep good records.
- Contribute to a retirement plan.



### Budgeting 101

The **50/15/5** rule of thumb is a way to distribute your budget according to 3 separate categories: essentials, retirement, and unexpected expenses. It's not a rule set in stone but a general guideline to help you build your financial well-being. So why 50/15/5? Hundreds of scenarios were analyzed to create saving and spending guideline that can help people save enough to retire. Research by Fidelity found that by sticking to this guideline, there is a good chance of maintaining financial stability to prepare for retirement.

- Allocate no more than 50% of your take-home pay for essential expenses which includes matters like housing, utilities, groceries, health care, and childcare needs.
- Try to save 15% of pretax income (including employer contributions) for retirement plans.
- Save 5% for the unexpected and unplanned expenses that may arise.

You can see where you stand on the 50/15/5 rule by using this Savings and Spending Check-Up Tool available [here](#).

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If you want to learn more about financial wellness, please access the following articles:

[The Best Personal Finance and Budgeting Spreadsheets](#)

[The 7 Best Budget Apps for 2021](#)

[50/15/5: A Saving and Spending Rule of Thumb](#)



## Ways to Save Money at Work

Here are some simple ways you can save money at the (home) office or on your daily commute.

1. **Save \$1000/year.** How? Simply by brewing your own coffee. Buying coffee every day can quickly add up. \$5 a day can quickly turn into over \$1000 a year! Make it easy by keeping a cup, kettle, along with coffee or tea in your workspace.
2. **Walk to work.** If within walking distance, consider leaving your car at home and walk to work. Not only will you benefit from the health benefits of daily exercise, but you will also save money by not buying a campus parking permit and reduced gas usage.
3. **Prefer the gym?** USC staff and faculty are eligible to purchase membership/ membership packages at a discounted staff/ faculty rate. Purchase this, and all other memberships, through your [MyRecSports](#) account. You can also get up to \$220 reimbursement for eligible wellness activities (USC Rec Sports membership fees included) through the USC fitness incentive program. More information available [here](#).
4. **Pack Your lunch.** Prepare and bring your lunch to work to save up to \$100 a month by not dining out.

## Retirement Information

USC has a comprehensive **Retirement Savings Program** available for all benefits-eligible employees. USC is committed to supporting your retirement savings by making a matching employer contribution of up to 5%. For a complete breakdown and full detailed chart, please visit page [here](#).

## Budgeting Resources

The following are a list of budgeting resources to help you get started:

- [Google Sheets](#): Google docs offers a template gallery where you will be able to find a Monthly Budget spreadsheet or Yearly Budget spreadsheet.
- [Monthly Budget PDF](#): Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) developed a simple monthly budget PDF worksheet to see how much you make and spend each month.
- [PocketGuard](#): Free budget app that connects your checking, credit and savings accounts and detects recurring bills and income. PocketGuard automatically categorizes your expenses, and you can also create custom categories.

## More Ways to Save Money

Small savings can collect and add up to large sums. The following are a few tips to save small to save big in the long run:

1. **Get all your savings in one place;** ask whether a store matches the prices of its local competitors. If so, print out the other stores' flyers and coupons for convenience.
2. **Fill your car up at superstore fuel centers.** Check the lowest gas prices near you at [gasbuddy.com](#) the next time before you fill your tank up!
3. Did you know **USC employees get discounts** on select theme parks and zoos? Click [here](#) to see the full list of places.
4. **Sign up with "fare watcher" services** for travel search engines (E.g., [expedia.com](#) and [travelocity.com](#)). You will be made aware of price drops for your desired tickets.
5. Check out nearby parking-garage options beforehand to **save on hotel parking.**

**USC offers many great discounts and perks** that employees can enjoy. See the full page of details available [here](#).



# Safety

USC is dedicated to the protection of its employees from on-the-job injuries and illnesses. When injuries, illnesses, or incidents occur, we are prepared to immediately respond to the needs of the injured or ill.

## Infection Prevention During Covid-19

Please visit the [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) for comprehensive information on the COVID-19 response. Updates to COVID-19 protocols can be found as recommended by LACDPH and the CDC.

## Monitor Your Health

There are every day preventive actions you can take that can help keep you and others from getting and spreading respiratory illnesses.

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Use hand sanitizer** when you are not able to wash your hands.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a face covering.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** by coughing or sneezing into your elbow or disposable tissue.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched surfaces daily.
- **Avoid close contact** with those who are sick.
- **Monitor your health daily** by watching for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or other signs of Covid-19.
- **Stay home** if you are not feeling well.



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More resources to explore:

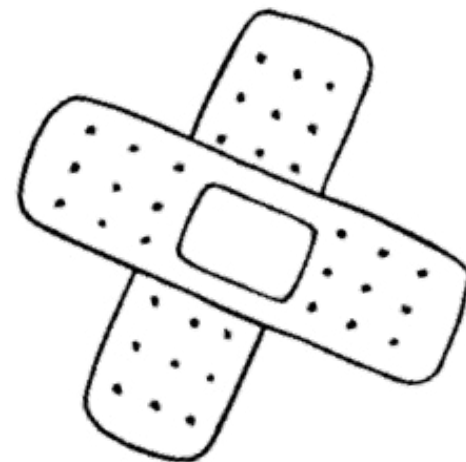
For updates from LA County Department of Public Health: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/>

For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

## Emergency Preparedness

Having an emergency preparedness plan can keep yourself and others safe in the event of an emergency. Make sure you are aware of your department's emergency plan and procedures and establish one at home for you and your family or household.

- Establish an evacuation plan and meeting place and review annually.
- Post or carry a list of emergency phone numbers (fire, police, hospital, family members, etc.).
- Sign up for emergency alerts in your city and through USC.
- Ensure you have the following: emergency kit, first aid kit, portable fire extinguisher.
  - Contents should be replaced per guidelines.



## Injury Prevention

*General safety tips from EH&S (on campus and at home)*

Injuries can happen anywhere, at work or at home. Take steps to prevent accidents and injuries by eliminating obstacles and hazards.

- Maintain and clean, clear, and clutter-free workspace.
- Set up your workstation to minimize extra cords that can be trip hazards.
- Use power cord ties to keep cords organized or bundled.
- Ensure doorways, stairwells, and walkways are well-let and unobstructed.
- Secure mats, rugs, and carpets.
- Avoid placing food and liquids near equipment in the event of a spill.
- Do not overload outlets.
- Check all cords for any frayed or exposed wiring.
- Ensure you have a working fire alarm and carbon monoxide detector and check to make sure it is working regularly.
- Know how to shut down electric and gas during an emergency.
- If you are injured at work, please notify your supervisor and EH&S immediately.

## Crisis Support and Intervention

[USC Trojans Care for Trojans \(TC4T\)](#) is an initiative within the Office of Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention that empowers USC students, faculty, and staff to take action when they are concerned about a fellow Trojan challenged with personal difficulties. This private and anonymous request form provides an opportunity for Trojans to help a member of our Trojan Family.

## DPS

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) provides [safety tips](#) and services to the USC campus. The department's primary mission is to provide a safe and secure environment on campus and in the local USC community that allows students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors to realize their academic and social pursuits. Download the mobile LiveSafe [Safety App!](#)

For more information, please visit:

<https://ehs.usc.edu/occhealth/injury-prevention/incident-reporting/>



# Sustainability

The movement to go green and live a more sustainable lifestyle has gained momentum throughout the years. Most of the attention, however, tends to go towards reducing one's plastic footprint. Living sustainably and adapting a lifestyle that promotes environmental health is so much more than just limiting one's use of plastic. In fact, sustainability can be adapted in the workplace and has been shown to improve productivity, reduce the number of average sick days among employees, and increase job satisfaction. At home, sustainability can help you live a more efficient, healthier, and happier life. Here are some of the things that you can do to create a sustainable workplace and to live a more sustainable lifestyle!

## Nutrition

- **Eat more whole foods.** Whole foods like fruits, vegetables, and nuts, have the lowest impact on the environment. Eating whole foods allows for a shift from industrial scale foods to local foods.
- **Eat foods that are in season.** Foods that are in season use less energy to produce, rather than foods that are not in season, and reduce the distance food must travel, but utilizing local growers.
- **Eat organic.** Organic farming practices typically use less energy, reduce pollution, conserve water, and is healthy for you!
- **Eat local.** Eating locally reduces the time that it takes for your food to travel to get on your plate. Cutting down on these food miles means reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Eat more plant-based foods.** Plant-based foods use less water and produce less carbon emissions and waste byproducts. When eating meat, try to choose less environmentally impactful foods such as poultry rather than beef, which has been shown to generate ten times more GHG emissions from its production.



## Activity

- **Go outdoors.** Outdoor activities are good for your physical and mental health and promote sustainability by cutting back on energy from gym equipment.
- **Change your commute.** If possible, try walking or biking to work and other destinations! Doing so helps cut back on pollution and promotes your physical health as well.
- **Explore public transportation options** through the [USC faculty/staff transit subsidy](#) to increase walking and reduce community air pollution.

## Work

- **Go paperless.** Reduce waste by limiting your paper usage. Going paperless reduces the amount of emissions released into the atmosphere from the process of turning trees into paper and eliminates waste before it is created.
- **Have a desk plant.** Indoor plants can help reduce the levels of carbon dioxide in air-conditioned offices!
- **Turn off electronics and lighting.** Turn off electronic devices and lighting when not in use, or when leaving the office. This allows you to lower your energy consumption, which in turn lowers the amount of fossil fuels that are burned when power plants produce electricity.
- **Utilize natural light.** Using natural light in your office will help you lower your carbon footprint.
- **Properly dispose of e-waste** and take advantage of collection programs such as for ink cartridges. For more information see the [EH&S Battery Recycling Fact Sheet](#).
- **Schedule a pick up or drop off surplus office supplies** and furniture at local donation centers such as the Salvation Army or Goodwill.

## Home

- **Use a reusable water bottle.** Reusable water bottles reduce your carbon footprint and reduce plastic waste in the environment!
- **Use reusable straws.** Reusable straws do not need to be produced as often, are made of recyclable materials, and do not contribute to environmental pollution and waste.
- **Use reusable grocery bags.** Plastic bags require a lot of fossil fuels to produce and they are non-biodegradable, meaning they cannot be broken down.
- **Go thrift shopping.** Thrift shopping reduces pollution that results from the process of creating new clothes.
- **Recycle.** Recycling reduces the amount of solid waste that goes into our landfills.
- **Upcycle products.** Find new uses for products in your home. Mason jars can be upcycled and turned into flower vases and portable food containers!
- **Start a home composting** and home garden to reap the many benefits of gardening and growing your own food.

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If you want to learn more about sustainable practices, please access the following articles:

[Benefits of Creating a Sustainable Workplace](#)

[Going Green: 10 Ways to Make Your Office more Eco-friendly and Efficient](#)

[Why Recycle My Clothes?](#)



# Role of Managers and Supervisors on Employee Well-Being

Managers amplify well-being by creating an environment that empowers employees to manage their own well-being. There are many ways that managers and supervisors can invest in their organization's greatest asset. Below are practical strategies, tools and resources supervisors can use to support USC's Unifying Value of Well-being through the integration of both individual and community well-being into policies, practices, and environmental enhancements. Strategies apply to both virtual and on-site work.

## Policies and Practices to Promote Health & Well-being

- Within parameters of the business function, support and offer **flexible work arrangements** and schedules to enhance work/life experience while meeting business needs.
  - Designate certain days for in-office meetings and collaboration, and remote days for work involving individual focus. Physical presence might be required for orientations, team building and project kick-offs, but not necessarily for other work.
- **Adopt meeting guidelines** that promote employee health & well-being:
  - 50-minute meetings to allow 10 minutes to transition or take a break (25-minute meetings vs. 30-minute ones).
  - Schedule breaks during long meetings (1 hour+).
  - No meetings early Monday or Friday afternoons to allow time to warm up and catch up. Or consider shifting morning meetings to later times.
  - Be mindful of when meetings are scheduled (avoid after hours and lunch).
  - Consider blocking off time for “no zoom hours” or “no zoom days” to allow staff to focus on work. Non-essential meetings are discouraged during this time.
  - Consider making some meetings camera free (audio only) to lessen camera fatigue.
- **Create a culture that is respectful of personal time** by avoiding sending emails during nontraditional work hours with an expected response.
- Encourage your employees to **take lunch and other breaks** throughout the day to maintain overall well-being and avoid burnout.
- Take advantage of the [time off benefits](#) that USC offers to support well-being.
  - Utilize **sick leave and vacation** for mental health/wellness days.
  - Encourage employees to take their vacations away from the office and to stay disconnected during their time off.

- Highlight [family and dependent care resources](#) for childcare, eldercare, and other dependent care needs.
- **Create a policy or practice that allows for flexibility** during the workday for participation in wellness activities (e.g., attend wellness programs, work out, take stress breaks, go outside for lunch).
- **Lead equitably.** Recognize and respond to each person's unique circumstances and needs.

## Create an Environment to Support Health & Well-Being

- **Support a healthy eating environment** by ensuring healthy choices are available at work meetings, celebrations, business events, and potlucks. Look for healthy items available through [USC Dining/Hospitality](#) at the various residential and retail locations.
  - Ensuring adequate space and time is provided for lunch breaks and snacks
  - Provide awareness and access to hydration facilities. Visit the maps for [UPC](#) and [HSC](#) for more details.
- **Support an active environment** by providing the time, space, and resources for employees to be physically active.
  - Encourage and coordinate walking, movement or standing meetings, stretch breaks, mobile office furniture.
  - Encourage fitness challenges in your department.
  - Take advantage of the fitness classes offered through [Recreational Sports](#).
- **Set up office space with ergonomics/workspace considerations.**
  - Provide remote and on campus offices with flexible furniture, standing desks/height adjustable risers and workspaces that have good air quality, light, and clutter-free.
  - Contact USC's Environmental Health and Safety and the USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice are providing free, virtual group in-services and individual [ergonomic evaluations](#) for USC employees.
- Remind employees that USC is a smoke and tobacco-free campus by sharing and promoting the [policy](#).
- **Go paperless.** Reduce waste by limiting your paper usage. Going paperless reduces the amount of emissions released into the atmosphere from the process of turning trees into paper and eliminates waste before it is created. For more sustainability practices visit the [Office of Sustainability](#).

## Support Individual Level Mental Health Well-being and Work-Life Balance

- **Prioritize mental health wellness** by sharing the many resources which are available on campus to support faculty, staff, and students, including:
  - [USC WorkWell Center](#) offers workplace consults, coaching and counseling support around the following issues: dealing with burnout, anxiety, depression, alcohol/substance use issues, coping with uncertainty and change, workplace conflict, managing effective teams, and work/life balance.
  - [USC Trojans Care for Trojans](#) empowers students, faculty, and staff to take action when concerned about a fellow Trojan challenged with personal difficulties.
  - [Campus Support and Intervention](#) assists faculty, staff, and students in resolving complex personal, academic, and financial issues, providing useful information.
  - [Student Counseling Mental Health](#) offers counseling, workshops, and other planned events for students.
  - [Office of the Ombuds](#) offers support for any campus related concerns, conflict, or challenging situation.

- **Create connection, inclusion and belonging.** It's important for employees to have meaningful work, and it's also important that they feel a sense of connection to the people they work with
  - Address on-going isolation and loneliness that team members may feel through:
    - Co-worker support
    - Technology
    - Affinity groups/support groups
    - Virtual social hours

### **More ways in which managers and supervisors can support their employees' well-being:**

- Advocate for and empower employees to enhance their well-being.
- Connect employees with well-being opportunities and activities.
- Provide a welcoming, approving, safe environment that encourages active participation in well-being practices. This requires ongoing support from leaders who need to consistently communicate their commitment to well-being and proactively foster a culture of well-being. Simply offering well-being information is not enough.
- Model well-being to encourage employee participation and buy-in. Managers should authentically display and share their personal well-being practices, providing verbal and non-verbal examples of well-being in action.
- Proactively communicate that they are invested in each employee and genuinely care about each individual's well-being.

Managers have the opportunity and resources to serve as healthy role models for employees. By giving employees permission to keep their health and well-being a top priority, employees will be much more likely to adopt healthy behaviors at the workplace, such as staying active, making better nutritional choices, and engaging in stress-relief activities. In addition to senior leadership support, engaging middle managers that hold the key to changing workplace culture.

### **Managers as Role Models and Leaders**

As a manager/supervisor, your leadership is the most important predictor of the well-being of faculty, staff, and other managers. You have great influence on the extent to which any member of your team either engages or does not engage with wellness opportunities on campus. So, what can you do?

#### **Be a Role Model**

- Being a role-model by enhancing your own well-being
- Use your lunch and break times to re-charge
- Take frequent stretch breaks
- Utilize walking meetings
- Use the stairs instead of elevators if you are able to
- Practice good nutrition and hydration
- Participate in campus and community events related to health and wellness

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If you want to learn more about the role of managers and supervisors and employee well-being, please access the following resources:

[The Role Managers Play in Shaping Employee Well-being](#)

[Employee Well-being: A Guide for Managers and Supervisors](#)



### Get Others Involved

- Know where to find well-being policies and programs.
- Give enthusiasts leadership roles.
- Encourage others to set well-being goals.
- Set group well-being goals.

### Promote Civility and Respect

- Create a supportive work environment.
- Embrace individuality and diversity; match workers with tasks they like.
- Be friendly towards new hires.
- Facilitate team building exercises and promote collaboration.

### Communicate about Wellness

- Share your or USC's wellness vision.
- Explain how people can participate in health & well-being activities, wellness programming, policies, events, services, and resources.
- Let people know that well-being is a priority.
- Forward email communications about wellness, and about applicable faculty and staff development opportunities.
- Check in with members of your team regularly.
- Share websites and resources that promote health and well-being.
- Ensure new hires are introduced to the healthy culture.
- Listen to and act on feedback from your team.
- Coordinate constructive change with good communication.

### Be Flexible

- Support scheduling flexibility (time).
- Support workplace flexibility (location).
- Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in campus and community events related to health and wellness.

### Make Work Meaningful

- Use wellness programming as a mechanism for increasing the sense of community, shared vision, and positive outlook.
- Give feedback regularly.
- Understand the relationship between health, individual and University success.

### Recognize Others

- Recognize and value faculty and staff efforts and contributions.
- Reward faculty and staff efforts with healthy celebrations, healthy rewards, and words of appreciation.
- Share the achievement of personal and group wellness goals.

### Invest in Others

- Foster continuous personal and professional development to build skills.
- Contribute to a supportive environment to encourage individual growth.
- Ensure that faculty and staff have the right tools they need to succeed.
- Encourage the development of friendships and work relationships during healthy activities (e.g., stretch breaks).



Culture influences behavior through shared values, norms, formal/informal policies, procedures, peer support, and social climate. Health and well-being programs must use culture change strategies whereby healthy behavior becomes, “the way we do things around here.”



### Leadership Support Indicator

The following questions assess the quality of your support for creating a healthy workplace.

Rate yourself on each of the following statements using the following scale:  
 5 Always, 4 Often, 3 Sometimes, 2 Rarely, 1 Never

As a manager or supervisor, I....	1	2	3	4	5
Explain why well-being is important to the organization.					
Explain how my team can benefit from well-being activities.					
Explain how employees can participate in the well-being programs.					
Demonstrate support for wellness through my own lifestyle choices.					
Participate in wellness activities.					
Adopt policies and procedures that make it easy for my team to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyle practices such as physical activity, healthy eating, and stress management.					
Help reduce barriers to achieving healthy lifestyle goals.					
Recognize people’s well-being achievements.					
Set well-being goals for myself and my team.					
Set shared well-being goals for my team.					
Celebrate the success of my team in achieving shared well- being goals.					

How did you do? Would members of your team agree with your self-assessment? Most people could find ways to improve their well-being leadership efforts. Review your answers and think of strategies on how to improve your scores.

## Increasing Leaders' Comfort and Confidence in Assessing Employee Well-being

In this section, leaders will learn to feel empowered to assess their teams' well-being to identify the sign and symptoms that suggest an employee is struggling. Learn effective communication techniques to have meaningful conversations with employees and learn self-care coping strategies for yourself. Employers need to manage carefully to protect against burnout, anxiety, and isolation. As a manager, your employees' mental health and well-being should be something you consider regularly.

### Signs and Symptoms of a Distressed Employee

Watch for behaviors and performance changes

- Increased absenteeism/ tardiness
- Late to meetings
- Lengthy lunches or frequent breaks

Changes in productivity/or work quality

- Failure to meet deadlines
- Work performance issues

Changes in outward demeanor and Work Relationships

- Wide swings in mood or morale
- Withdrawn, sad or cries frequently
- Disheveled/untidy
- Workplace conflict

Health and safety issues

- Mental health problems
- Suspicion or substance abuse
- Accidents on the job
- Frequent illnesses

Burnout

- Emotional exhaustion - feeling of compassion fatigue and generally feeling drained
- Depersonalization - the feeling of watching yourself do what you are doing and not being fully present
- Low personal accomplishments - feelings of not doing enough or you have not gotten far enough



### How Leaders Can Be Supportive

- Consult with the [USC WorkWell Center](#). Experienced, licensed professionals provide confidential consultation to support leaders. This resource is to help leaders assess and effectively address employee's well-being, resolve challenges around employee work performance, and conflict among staff/workgroups.
- Tap into your emotional intelligence.
- Be self-aware. Recognize one's emotions, be aware of what hooks you.
- Self-regulate. Calm yourself first (i.e., mindfulness). Manage one's internal state, impulses, and have boundaries.
- Show empathy and compassion.
- Be present and actively listen. 93% of communication is nonverbal which consists of body language and tone. Seven percent is verbal/ content.

### Create Connection

- Reach out to employees with more frequency (by Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or in-person).
- Help team members connect with teammates.
- Connect the employee to resources or support that will help them build a plan for themselves.

### Your Role as a Manager

- It is not your role to solve your employees' problems.
- You do have the opportunity to refer the employee towards finding assistance.
- You can also influence the employee to follow through.

### Communication

- Think about your delivery in advance and practice your script.
- Remain calm, caring, and authentic.
- Be as clear as possible.
- Use short and simple language.
- Tone is Important. While words matter, the tone has a bigger influence on the way information is received.
- Initiate a conversation in a safe and private environment.
  - Ask open-ended questions.
    - Suboptimal: You doing okay?
    - Ideal: I care about you...What are some of your concerns?
- What barriers are you encountering?
  - If possible, explain the situation and the underlying reason for the conversation:
    - I noticed a change in your work performance and/or your outward demeanor. How can I help?
  - Pause: Wait for the employee to respond.
- What do you need from me as your supervisor?
  - Validate and reassure them about their value to the company. Employees need to feel empowered and safe in addressing their emotional well-being with their manager.
  - Provide empathy, be flexible, adjust expectations, provide certainty and hope.
  - Help the employees focus on their strengths.
  - Flood your conversations with terms such as, "we, us, together, future, success."
  - Refer the employee to the USC WorkWell Center. The WorkWell Center is an available resource for employees that are experiencing personal problems that may be affecting their work. Emphasize that WorkWell's services are confidential.

## Manager's Don'ts

- Don't diagnose.
- Don't start solving the situation for the employee.
- Don't show irritation when an employee struggles.

## Corrective Interview

If you have already talked with the employee and their work performance continues to be impacted:

- Consult with the University HR, Equity and Compliance Department.
- Schedule an individual meeting with the employee in a private setting.
- Be prepared!
- Focus on declining work performance and facts.
- Be clear about your expectations about their work performance.
- Remind the employee that the WorkWell Center is confidential and is an available resource.
- Set up a follow-up meeting.
- Monitor the employee's work performance.

## What to avoid

- Diagnosing the employee's problems or getting involved in their problems.
- Making generalizations or moral judgments.
- Threatening corrective action unless you are prepared to follow-through.
- Discussing the employee situation with anyone except WorkWell, HR, leadership, and who may have a business need to know.

## Managing in a Remote Work Environment

### *Assessing and Supporting Employee Well-being*

An essential tool for managers is called "Physical Intelligence." It is easy to notice nonverbal expressions in person. However, virtually, it is hard to see as you are focused on the speaker and may miss these signs.

- Be present and actively listen.
- Don't assume what they need.
- Scan employee emails for emotional content ("Sorry I didn't get to that, I am overwhelmed").

## Reading Concerning Facial Expressions

- **Stress:** a clenched jaw, tightened neck, furrowed brow
- **Disagreement:** tightly pursed
- **Struggling:** A flat affect, emotionless
- **Anger:** Frowning, eyelids narrowed, lips tight, lips in a straight line, nostrils flaring
- **Fear:** Eyes wide, mouth open, cheek muscles tense, eyebrows up, a wrinkled forehead.
- **Uncomfortable:** Glancing sideways, eye darting, looking around
- **Low self-esteem or nervous:** An employee who is slouching, with shoulders down, or covering parts of the body (like the neck)
- **Leaning backwards** can be a sign that an employee is not feeling particularly positive about the subject matter
- If someone is **looking away** or their brow is furrowed, you may have lost engagement with your employees
- If a person is **moving a lot** in their chair, it could also mean they are restless or bored

## Being a Role Model for Self-Care and Help-Seeking

- Be honest about the challenges you are experiencing personally. Share how you're managing your psychological well-being to normalize self-care and the benefit of setting boundaries.
- Practice and commit to healthy working norms to model healthy behavior. No sending emails at 2 a.m.!

## Modeling Body Language/Professionalism

- Proper posture shows leadership and optimism
- Good eye contact
- Use the power of a pause
- Have a good "virtual presence" i.e., professional attire

## Managers Role when an Employee is Grieving

Leaders play an important role in how to set the tone for employees and how supported they feel during the grieving process. Everyone responds differently when grieving. When someone close to an employee dies, many different emotions and reactions will come up. Grieving comes in waves and can surprise employees.

- Provide care, empathy, and support.
- Allow the employee sufficient time to prepare for, attend services, and even some extra time off to care for themselves. Assist with arranging whatever compensation is available to the employee. These actions will go a long way to support a grieving employee.
- Consult with Human Resources.
- Call the employee before their return to work and discuss needs.
- If helpful, provide a flexible work schedule and be sensitive to assigning new tasks or responsibilities.
- Give the employee permission to let you know about their "readiness" to return to work.
- The employee should meet with the department supervisor(s) before returning to work.
- Discuss how to best help them through the initial adjustment period.
- Listen without criticizing feelings, judging them, or telling them what they "should" do. Some grievors will want to share their thoughts while others will be less open.
- Refer the employee to WorkWell as a supportive, confidential resource.

## Signs and Symptoms when an Employee is Grieving

- Trouble focusing on normal tasks
- Health issues
- Lack of motivation
- Feelings of anger and irritability
- Sadness and change in work relationships
- Isolation
- Fatigue and low energy



## Summary – The 8 Most Important Things You Can Do As a Manager/Supervisor

Here are the eight most important things you can do to support a culture of wellness among faculty and staff, and across campus:

- 1. Be a role model.** Visibly demonstrate and value good health and well-being (i.e., exercise on lunchbreaks, participate in wellness events, practice good nutrition, establish boundaries between work and home life, and keep your own stress levels manageable).
- 2. Communicate about wellness.** Introduce and endorse health and well-being initiatives and programs to the USC community.
- 3. Recognize others.** Highlight wellness achievements and efforts of faculty and staff. Also acknowledge and appreciate non-wellness related efforts and achievements.
- 4. Be flexible.** Support scheduling and workplace flexibility to encourage and empower employee work life and well-being.
- 5. Make work meaningful.** Faculty and staff need to know what they need to do, and how their work contributes to the USC mission. Faculty and staff should be included in decision making discussions.
- 6. Invest in others.** Provide faculty and staff with personal and professional development opportunities, encourage, and support the development of their interpersonal, emotional and job skills.
- 7. Promote civility, diversity, inclusion, and respect.** Require faculty and staff to be respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another. Clearly define for all what steps to take if unprofessional behavior is taking place. Create a culture of care and belonging.
- 8. Get others involved.** Announce your support for participating in health and well-being programming and encourage faculty and staff to participate. Include a conversation about wellness during a new faculty or staff member's first day. Designate faculty and staff to serve as Wellness Ambassadors at USC.

As a manager/ supervisor, you are in a unique position to either foster well-being on campus or impede it. Help ensure that health, safety, and well-being become integrated into the fabric of USC.



# Contact

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