



HHSA NEWS

Finding Balance Between our Professional and Personal Lives

By: Sam Fusselman

Hello HHSA Team,

I am excited to have the opportunity to contribute to our monthly newsletter! Since returning to Yolo County after a 3-year hiatus, I personally have been able to witness and feel the positive changes our agency is making to promote employee wellness. As such, I wanted to take this opportunity to share how I am finding a better work-life balance in my new role as the Director of the Adult and Aging Branch, with the hope that each of you will pause and reflect on your own personal and professional needs for striking a similar balance – especially during this time of year.



This last week brought a whirlwind of emotions for me – from grief and anxiety to an abundance of joy after spending time with my youngest son who came home for the long weekend. As both a clinician and a leader, I know that striking a balance between the personal and professional is essential to a lifetime career in health and human services. I also realize I'm not always the best at applying that principle to myself! This past week reminded me just how important it is for me to find that balance.

Google defines work-life balance as “the balance between the demands of work and personal life. It involves managing time and energy to meet both commitments, while prioritizing self-care and well-being.” This definition resonated with me as I recommit to a goal of ensuring that I am not overstressed and/or overextending myself in any one realm in my life. For me, it also means nourishing myself personally and feeling satisfied with myself in my work and home roles.

Returning to HHSA was a big decision for me and one I took with tremendous care. Sitting in my role now for these past few months, I can share that I am so grateful for the support our leadership and staff have demonstrated in modeling life/work balance. I encourage everyone to review their own work/life balance to ensure your well-being is preserved. Some examples of how to do this include:

1. **Set boundaries:** Review your time spent at work and create specific work hours for yourself. Try and separate out work-related tasks from your personal life.
2. **Time Management:** Review how much time you need to complete your responsibilities. This includes both professional and personal pursuits. Be realistic as you set goals for yourself.
3. **Stress Management:** Implement strategies to relieve your stress. Recently, I have been using mindfulness and taking breaks as a part of my routine. I have also returned to some of my favorite audiobooks from Brené Brown on courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy.
4. **Flexibility:** Work to adapt when things shift. In my day, I must adapt to the unforeseen but still maintain focus on my personal needs without jeopardizing my work commitments. This example has been the greatest reminder for me in my new role.

Striking a better balance between professional and personal priorities is not only important for overall life satisfaction, but it is also so important for our physical health. Personally, I can easily fall back into patterns of working long hours, and I must continually remind myself that changing this pattern is critical for reducing my own risk of burnout, fatigue, and developing stress-related conditions. I was also reminded this past week of the benefit of physical exercise as both a tool and a bridge for striking this balance... something I'd lost sight of in this past year and am working to incorporate back into my life.

As our HHSA team has grown over the years, we are working together to uplift big projects, to innovate, and to serve the most vulnerable in our community. While I've shared some of my own strategies, we each have a unique balance of what works for us. I encourage each of you to consider your own work/life balance, build strategies into your routine and consider what might need to change or be added to reach the best work/life balance for you. Each one of you is needed to do this incredible work that we do together, and I want to thank you for choosing to do this important work here at Yolo County HHSA!

Warmly, Samantha

Focus on self-care for your overall health and wellness.

Here are some ways to take care of yourself one small way each day:

Coping Tips

- Take care of your body**
 - Get enough sleep
 - Spend time outside
 - Play sports
 - Get exercise
- Take care of your mind**
 - Write or draw your feelings
 - Take a few deep breaths
 - Take a break from news or social media
 - Explore your interests and hobbies
 - If you can, follow a regular schedule each day and build in time to take breaks
 - Celebrate large and small successes
- Connect with people for support**
 - When you feel ready, think about asking for help
 - Join a support group or online community
 - Talk to people who care about you and won't judge you—and be open to their advice
 - If you're in a safe relationship, be open with your partner about what you're going through
 - Get involved with a sports team, school activity, or a religious or spiritual organization
 - Volunteer for a cause you care about

SAMHSA [samhsa.gov/find-support/how-to-cope](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-support/how-to-cope)

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FOCUS ARTICLE

In November 2022, HHSA launched the first annual Healthy Work Survey through the Center of Social Epidemiology and the Healthy Work Campaign. At the time, the focus was on a general overarching initiative to address staff burnout. The Healthy Work Survey provides annual data on our agency that can be compared to nationwide numbers in similar organizations. It also allows us to compare results on targeted initiatives and interventions while supporting data-driven and evidence-based focused for the agency strategic plan.

Focus

You will notice this year that some branches have more links than last year. This is aimed at allowing more refined interventions that are thoughtfully and intentionally rolled out. As we gain more data and learn more about the dynamics of healthy work within specific teams, the interventions will continue to aim to disrupt conditions that create unhealthy work environments, and to reinforce, maintain and solidify the conditions that currently exist within our agency that support healthy work. Last year we had a total participation of 61% of HHSA staff responding. Our goal for 2023 is to maintain or improve on the 61% response rate! The more responses we have, the better the data, and strategic planning can be as informed as possible to best support our staff while at work.

Upcoming Dates:

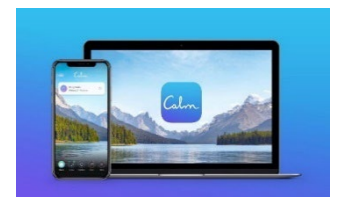
- 11/29/2023
 - Healthy Work Survey 2023 launched at HHSA All Staff. Dr. Marnie Dobson from the Center of Social Epidemiology will attend the All Staff.
- 12/15/2023
 - Healthy Work Survey 2023 Closes
- Late January/Early February
 - Branch Directors will start to get their reports, and can begin sharing with their Branch Leadership Teams/staff.
- March 2024
 - HHSA All Staff: Dr. Marnie Dobson from the Center for Social Epidemiology will review agency level results.

If you didn't receive the 2023 Healthy Work Survey Link, please connect with your Branch Points of Contacts:

- Adult and Aging Branch: Christina Grandison
- Children Youth & Family: Brandi Mancheria
- Service Centers: Your Program Manager
- Public Health: Katie Kelsch
- Admin: Katie Kelsch

CALM APP CORNER

Gratitude takes practice. Our brains default to negativity so it takes conscious, regular effort to give ourselves the opportunity to reflect on the good in our lives. Don't dismiss a daily gratitude practice as many studies show a consistent practice can positively impact your health in the long-run. Here are some recommendations from Calm, our mental wellness partner, to get you started on your daily gratitude practice:



- [Gratitude Check-In](#): Do your daily gratitude check-in on the Calm mobile app where you can share three things you're grateful for on that day.
- [Gratitude Body Scan for Sleep](#): Do a full body scan exercise to drift off with a sense of gratitude and appreciation for your body after a long day.
- [7 Days of Gratitude](#): Learn about the many benefits of gratitude and the tools you can use to bring more of it into your life.

Join one of the [Calm App Webinars](#) to learn how to get the most out of your Calm experience and bolster your overall well-being.

UPCOMING PAINT LANGUAGE EVENT

The HHSA Hears Employee Engagement Team is excited to invite you to celebrate the beautiful diversity that is HHSA through free Paint Language events! Join us as we explore our rich cultural heritage through paint expression. Paint Language events are provided at no charge to HHSA employees and are instructed by KonaKeeli Designs.

Upcoming paint events will be held the following Wednesdays in Woodland:

- December 20 (Gonzales Community Room)
- January 17, 2024
- February 14, 2024



Huge thank you to those who have joined Paint Language events in 2023! To register, please email Suzanne Ramalia at Suzanne.Ramalia@yolocounty.org. Photos featured is from the November 15 class.

PERFORMANCE & PROCESS MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHT

Researchers have [found](#) that employees now spend an increasing amount of time each week in meetings. Meetings can be critical for achieving business goals and building team cohesion and relationships. Given the importance and prevalence of meetings, consider using effective facilitation strategies to make the most of meeting time and maximize meeting outcomes.

What Is Meeting Facilitation and Why Is It Important?

Meeting facilitation is the act of guiding the meeting process to ensure that meetings stay on course, are participatory, and meet their intended goals. A well facilitated meeting can ensure that groups work efficiently together and complete tasks such as sharing information, making decisions, or resolving conflicts. Additionally, effective meeting facilitation ensures that all participants feel valued and have space to participate in discussions and decisionmaking. To achieve these meeting outcomes, meeting facilitators should take a proactive role in both planning and running meetings.



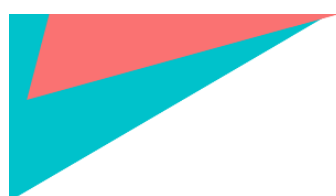
Strategies for Effective Meeting Facilitation

- **Define Meeting Objectives in Advance:** Before the meeting, think intentionally about your agenda (discussed in the [October 2023](#) performance highlight) and determine what outcomes you'd like to achieve from the meeting. Some meeting purposes may be simply to share information; others may be to brainstorm, make a decision, or plan strategically.
- **Assign a Note Taker:** It can be difficult to simultaneously keep meetings on course and capture meeting notes. Assign and rotate note takers so you can focus your attention on facilitation and reading the room.
- **Make Meetings Engaging and Participatory:** Effective meetings allow all participants to contribute to the conversation. Pay attention to who isn't speaking and moderate the conversation if one person is dominating it. Consider using collaborative activities such as [brainwriting](#) or [sticky dot voting](#) to give quieter participants the opportunity to contribute their ideas.
- **Stay Neutral As Facilitator:** Facilitators should remain impartial when possible, especially during discussions or activities such as brainstorming. When stepping out of the neutral facilitator role to give your opinion, be sure to indicate to participants you are doing so.
- **Determine Follow-Up Items:** End your meetings by generating a list of tasks or follow-up items and assign individuals to those tasks. Send participants the action item list along with meeting notes after the meeting.

Additional Reading

- <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/mastering-the-team-meeting>
- <https://hr.mit.edu/learning-topics/meetings/articles/basics>

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT WORD OF THE MONTH



Quality Improvement Word of the Month

Histogram



DEFINITION

A Histogram is a graphical display of data using bars of different heights to show groups of numbers in a range.

It's used to summarize data from a process that has been collected over a period of time, and graphically present its frequency distribution in bar form.



IN A SENTENCE

"We collected a large amount of data on the number of phone calls received in June. From the Histogram, we can see that we receive the greatest volume of calls around 9-10 am and 12 pm. We might want to schedule extra phone operators for those times."



WOTM IN ACTION

How to Use It:

1. Gather data over a period of time.
2. Prepare a frequency table from the data.
3. Draw a histogram from the frequency table.

Links to an online resource:

- [Understanding frequency tables](#)

Advantages:

- Displays large amounts of data that are difficult to interpret in a table format.
- Shows the relative frequency of occurrence.
- Illustrates quickly the underlying distribution of the data.



Use this tool as a team to identify problem areas or plan process improvement!

