



EMPLOYEE WELLBEING at CORNELL

Weekly Update – April 27, 2020

Information and services provided by Cornell Work/Life, Cornell Wellness, and the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program. Visit the [HR Resources webpage](#) for more information and check out the new [Working at Cornell YouTube Channel](#) to view recorded presentations, short clips, and messages from leaders. Email wellbeing@cornell.edu to ask questions and request assistance. We are here to help!

Navigating Work & Life

Most of us used to end our workday by hopping into a car or bus and heading home. Doing so was a mental signal that we were moving from our work world to our home world. In a remote work situation, “leaving work” can entail staying right where we’re at or moving to another room, if we’re fortunate enough to have a separate space to work. In this situation, it can be tempting to work excessively – especially in high demand roles or if we are living alone.

Many Cornell employees are telling our offices about how odd time feels right now – noting an inability to remember what they did the day prior, weeks that feel like months, and days that are over in a blink. Some say there is very little difference between the weekday and weekend – and that they’ve lost their sense of time entirely. Those of you that are caring for children 24/7 may really feel like this.

If you are struggling to adjust to a new routine – either because of the logistical differences or other worries and stressors you are facing, there may be simple things you can do to feel better.

- 1) Develop beginning of the day and end of the day routines to signify work/non-work time.
- 2) Shut down your computer at the end of the day. Put away the laptop, throw a sheet over your monitor, and/or close the door.
- 3) Plan your weekend in advance so that you have something to look forward to.
- 4) Start or continue a special project that brings you joy and/or a sense of meaning.
- 5) If you know you will need to do some work on the weekend, be deliberate about scheduling it in advance and stick to your time commitment.
- 6) If you live with other adults, discuss how you can support each other with navigating your work and your life - revisit your plan regularly.
- 7) Spend more time outdoors than perhaps you would have pre-pandemic.
- 8) Talk to your supervisor about possible ways to adjust your time to better align to your needs.



Lastly, while many Americans are enjoying the “work from home active wear” (e.g. holey sweatpants from the 90’s) and saving on shampoo, consider whether this is impacting your emotional wellbeing. While spending less time on self-care/personal hygiene can be tempting, it can also make you feel out of sorts and for lack of better word... *blah*. Shower and care for yourself close to the same way you did before. Make your Monday through Friday wear slightly different than your evening and weekend wear. At a minimum, save the footsie pajamas for the Friday happy hour with your team!

Taking Breaks

Active & Stillness Breaks to Recharge & Re-energize

Knowing yourself and your work and personal life responsibilities, what do you want or need in order to be well? There are always shoulds, coulds, and ought tos, but the wanting is powerful and will drive you to make a change.

Ask yourself, “What do I want when I take a break from work?” Do you want your mind and body to **energize** or to **rest**? This will shape what type of break you should take.

If you want to **energize**, take an **active break** by:

- doing some stretches at your desk
- listening to a song and dancing like no one is watching
- going outside and listening to the sounds of nature
- trying a live [group fitness class](#)
- planting something in a garden or pot
- cooking/baking a new recipe
- taking your pet for a walk



If you want to **rest**, take a **stillness break** by:

- closing your eyes for a few minutes and simply taking notice of your breathing
- trying a guided meditation through Cornell Health’s [Let’s Meditate](#) offerings



If one of the options above doesn’t resonate with you, go back to asking yourself what you want from your work break - it will guide you in the right direction.

Email Cornell Wellness at wellness@cornell.edu to request an individual consultation.

Mental Wellbeing

Why We’re All Grieving – and How to Deal with It - Ten Percent Happier [Podcast Episode #240](#)



Most, if not all, of us are experiencing a cocktail of challenging emotions these days. Some are grieving people we’ve lost, but many more are grieving a way of life or a sense of security. Guest [David Kessler](#), grief and loss expert, offers thoughts on how to manage it.

Community Postpartum Support Group

April 28, 12-1pm. The Child Development Council's Community Postpartum Support Group is now being held online. The group meets every second and fourth Tuesday at noon and is open to all moms and dads who might need support while adjusting to the postpartum period. Expectant parents who feel they may be at risk for postpartum issues are also welcome. Email amanda@childdevelopmentcouncil.org for the link to the Zoom meeting.

Articles & Resources

- [Productivity and Happiness Under Sustained Disaster Conditions](#) (Chronicle Vitae)
- [Workbook to Help with Anxiety](#) (The Wellness Society)

Safety

Help for Victims of Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence can now text 1-844-997-2121 to ask for help or go to the [new NYS website](#) to request help in a private chat. Text and online services are staffed 24/7 by the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. A [directory](#) of Cornell and community resources is also available to help employees.

Face Masks Can Prove Tricky for Those with Glasses

As Americans don face masks, many of those who wear glasses are finding that their lenses fog up. Check out [this article](#) from AARP for tips to keep your glasses clear and you safe.

In New York, no one should be at risk because they can't find a way to express their need for help.

Text (844) 997-2121

New Yorkers experiencing **domestic violence** who need help can confidentially chat with a professional, available 24/7. Remember: You are not alone and you do not have to stay in a dangerous situation. We will help you.

opdv.ny.gov

NEW YORK STATE

Encouragement & Gratitude

Sharing Experiences and Wisdom



Jeremy Kruser, Systems Administrator with CIT and Marine Corps veteran, offers tips, advice, and words of encouragement in this [Facebook Video](#) hosted by Working at Cornell.

Recognize Others

Simple gestures and words of thanks can go a long way in recognizing colleagues, especially during challenging times. Use the [Cornell Recognition Portal](#) to send a simple thank you and/or share the impact of someone's work.



Elder/Adult Care & Healthy Aging

Cornell Community Chat: Elder & Adult Care Amid COVID-19

April 29, 9-10am. Guest expert from Cornell Work/Life – Diane Bradac – will participate in a facilitated conversation about caregiving. [Pre-register](#)

Health Literacy & Caregiving Workshop

April 30, 12-1pm. A growing number of patients survive medical conditions that were previously fatal, resulting in an ageing population and an increase in multimorbidity (multiple chronic illnesses). Participate in this webinar to explore practical ways to communicate more effectively with healthcare plans and teams. Presented by Karen Brown MA, Gerontology Programs Manager, Ithaca College Gerontology Institute and Lisa Richards, BS, Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center Programs Manager. Sponsored by Work/Life in Human Resources. [Participate by Zoom](#).

Strength Training Classes with Keri Johnson, Cornell Wellness

[Recording 1](#) & [Recording 2](#) (both are ~50 minutes in length)

Request a Consultation

Diane Bradac serves as the Cornell Work/Life Consultant. She is available to help you with aging and elder/adult care concerns. Email worklife@cornell.edu to request a private consultation with Diane.

Resources

- [Tompkins County Office for the Aging – COVID-19 Resources](#)

Food & Nutrition

Community Chat: Fueling Yourself Healthfully

April 28, 1-2pm. Guest experts from Cornell Wellness – Jeremy Stewart and Kerry Howell – will participate in a facilitated conversation about fueling yourself healthfully. [Pre-register](#)

Plant Based Eating

The T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies has developed [nutrition information](#) to help people during these challenging times, much of which centers on plant-based eating. Keri Johnson from Cornell Wellness has completed the Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate and is available for 1:1 consultations with Cornell employees who are interested in this way of eating. Contact Keri at kaj84@cornell.edu.

Cornell Cooperative Extension – “CoVid Cookery” Zoom Parties

- [Stir Fry with Josh Dolan](#) – May 1, 5:30-6:30 pm
- [Pizza with Josh Dolan](#) – May 8, 5:30-6:30 pm

Food Cabinet Locations in Tompkins County

Coordinated by [Mutual Aid Tompkins](#)

1. Between Ithaca/Trumansburg: Cellar Door Park on Rt 96 - 1661 Trumansburg Rd. Lot 4, Ithaca.
2. Groton: On Main St in the pavilion
3. Dryden: Montgomery Park in Dryden, 203 Hook Place
4. Danby: 1774 Danby Road & 1859 Danby Road
5. Newfield: next to the mailbox at 2 Douglas Road, just off of Millard Hill Road

More Food Pantry Directories & Resources

- [Food Pantry Calendar: Foodbank of the Southern Tier](#)
- [Ithaca Free Food Resources](#)



- [Farms Serving Tompkins County](#)
- [Cornell Cooperative Extension – Directory of Food Programs](#)

Learning

Cornell Undocu-Ally Training

April 29, 9-11am. Learn about how to be inclusive and supportive of immigrants in our campus community, including undocumented individuals, those with tenuous immigration status, and those from mixed-status families. Assistant Clinical Professor Jaclyn Kelley-Widmer (law) and Residence Hall Director Amadou Fofana (Court-Kay-Bauer) will present on what it means to be undocumented and explain legal, social, personal, and economic challenges faced by this community. [Pre-register](#)

Free, Temporary Access to Adobe Creative Cloud Suite

In support of distance learning during the coronavirus pandemic, Adobe has expanded access to the full Creative Cloud suite to any user affiliated with Cornell University's Adobe Enterprise Term License Agreement (ETLA). Temporary access will be valid through May 31, 2020, after which each user's access rights revert to normal. For more information, visit IT@Cornell.

LinkedIn Learning

Current Cornell faculty, students, and staff have [free, unlimited access](#) to LinkedIn Learning's online library of high-quality training videos featuring the latest software, creative, and business skills. Access over 11,000 online courses designed for all experience levels.

The New York Times

The Times is providing [free access](#) to Coronavirus coverage as well as many other feature sections.

Parenting

Fun Family Fitness

Join Keri Johnson and her 10-year-old son Zyphyr every other Wednesday for a family-friendly workout. Recorded ones include [Yoga With Kidz](#) and [Family Fitness](#). Look for the Zoom links for these Workout Wednesdays, plus all of Cornell Wellness' daily themed offerings, at [Wellness' webpage](#).

Child Care Grants for Essential Employees

New York State is using a portion of CARES Act funding to provide free child care for income eligible essential workers. Essential workers using a regulated child care provider will receive a scholarship for the cost of care as long as the funds to support it are available. If you are a parent who meets the definition of an essential employee and have child care needs, [register here](#). You will be contacted by the Child Development Council within one business day. They will contact you to gather information about your household and help you identify a participating child care provider or work with your current provider. Questions? Email CARES@childdevelopmentcouncil.org or call (607) 273-0259.



Missing Swim Lessons?

The YMCA of Ithaca and Tompkins County offers [these activities](#) you can do at home with your child to help them retain their skills and master new ones. These activities will help your child improve their form and build stamina, making it easier to perform the skills in the water when the pool reopens!

This feature was written by Margie Whiteleather, a Cornell staff member and parent. Margie is the senior strategic projects manager for Campus Life Marketing & Communications at Cornell. The views represented are her own.

As a parent of a high school senior and a college sophomore I've been watching for advice and resources to help them navigate through their next milestones while so much is uncertain. From Twitter and webinars here are the key insights I've gathered. I hope they're helpful for you!

High School Seniors – Deciding on a College for Fall, Possibly Online

I'm impressed by how often I'm hearing people at a variety of organizations say that just picking up the phone to talk is helpful. Even if the answer you hear is "we don't know yet," that will give you some comfort. Reach out to resources who can give you good input: high school counselors, and staff at the colleges your student is considering.

The general advice is to continue on a plan toward a particular college. If a student is thinking about deferring, or taking classes part-time instead of full-time, wait until July or August to make those changes. Employment and gap year opportunities are limited, but there are a variety of remote learning opportunities, and this is an excellent time to try something entrepreneurial if your student has had a project in mind. Skills that are most in-demand in remote work involve coding, and design--anything already digital--but there are also employers who need customer service representatives who could work from home by phone or email.



For all the feels about missing senior year traditions and for many helpful tips, see the Grown and Flown website, Facebook group, or book: <https://grownandflown.com/>

High School Juniors

The main thing your high school student can do now is to keep working on their academic courses as best they can under these unusual situations. Colleges are offering more virtual tours and information sessions than ever, so while you may not be able to do in-person tours on campus, you can get a lot of information from the colleges' videos, social media and websites. In June or July, you can ask the colleges you're most interested in about their SAT or ACT requirements. Many colleges are making the tests optional, but the tests may be needed for merit scholarships, athletic eligibility or special programs.

Resources:

- Rick Clark's [blog and podcast](#), even if your student isn't interested in Georgia Tech. He's on Twitter as @Clark2College.
- Search in Twitter on the words "webinar juniors" to find lots of free webinars hosted by school counselors and organizations that work with colleges and students.

- The leader of admissions at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) just [wrote an open letter](#) to all high school juniors. Follow him at [@InsideAdmission](#).

College Students - Seeking Summer Internships or Employment

The recommendations are to focus on what you can control. Students should fully populate their Handshake and LinkedIn profiles to make it easier for employers to learn about them. Encourage them to stay in contact with companies (patiently), to keep applying and searching, and to look in their secondary interests as well. This may end up being a summer of building skills on their own or taking classes, and demonstrating their skills by doing volunteer projects or freelancing. The main goal is to patch together a set of meaningful experiences from which to learn and extend their professional networks.

Resources:

- In their blog Handshake has compiled a great set of resources titled “[Get Hired Remotely](#)”
- They also [recently posted](#) a list of 500 companies that use the Handshake platform and are currently hiring students
- There may be job opportunities assisting with the response to the pandemic which can be done remotely, such as in contact tracing, customer service, or data analytics.

Stay Aware, Plan, and then Change Plans

Read as much or as little on these topics as you like. The main thing is to focus on your family’s immediate needs. You can outline some possible plans but be prepared to change them. Try to enjoy the process itself. It’s interesting to brainstorm the places and ways our students will learn and then contribute to the world.

This spring, summer and fall may be different than they expected, but colleges very much want to continue to teach and help students develop their skills and interests, and employers want their talent entering their workforces soon. Employers may not be able to hire for several months, but they are looking creatively at ways to adapt the roles they offer. Students will have pathways to become independent and to shape the communities and organizations they care about. What students most need to hear from us now are that we believe in them, and that we are certain they will continue to learn and achieve.

Hobbies & Interests

Art & Music

- Cornell Johnson Museum of Art – [Learn at Home](#)
- Museum of Modern Art - [Virtual Tours](#)
- Corning Museum of Glass – [Virtual Tours](#)
- Boston Symphony Orchestra – [At Home](#)
- [Quarantine Livestreams and virtual concerts](#) (Vox)
- [Press Pause and Hit Play: The Best New Songs You’ve Missed During Quarantine](#) (NPR)

Outdoors

- American Sailing Association – [Knots Made Easy Video Tutorials](#)
- Growing Cut Flowers: CCE Tompkins – [April 29, 6-8 pm](#)

For Managers

“Being virtual doesn’t erase power or status. Those who speak loudest and longest tend to drive the agenda – even if they don’t have the best ideas. We reach better decisions and more creative solutions when we hear the voices who are normally crowded out.”

– Adam Grant, Organizational Psychologist, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

Tips for Being Inclusive During Remote Work

- 1) Ask what the employee is facing/juggling – don’t assume.
- 2) Provide accessible meeting materials in advance to give employees ample time to review and prepare questions and gather their thoughts.
- 3) Encourage those unable to attend to share their thoughts and questions via email.
- 4) Use a variety of tools – like hand raising features, chat, etc. – during virtual meetings to give individuals many ways to contribute.
- 5) Use of video can aid communication, but do not require that employees use it.
- 6) Virtual backgrounds can help employees who feel uncomfortable showing their environment.
- 7) Consider the [experience of new employees](#) – help them cultivate work relationships.

Tips for Supporting Employees with Children

- 1) While some working parents may want to dial back, do not assume that every parent wants to.
- 2) Establish clear priorities.
- 3) Discuss what your employee expects their hours will be, while acknowledging that they may not be able to fully predict those hours – some dual career couples are essentially trading shifts.
- 4) Evaluate employees based on outcomes.
- 5) Employees may be anxious about “proving” they are working through their presenteeism, causing added stress and not necessarily resulting in desired outcomes.
- 6) Ask your employee how you can best support them regularly as needs will evolve.

Articles & Resources

- [Building More Inclusive Cultures At Work While We’re At Home](#) (National Center for Women & Information Technology)

Helping Others

Cornell Farmworker Program

The Cornell Farmworker Program is dedicated to improving the living and working conditions of farmworkers and their families. The program has been working to get food and hand sewn masks to farm workers in need. The program relies on fundraising for all their work. [Make a gift online.](#)

Storage Shed Construction

Volunteers are needed to help put together storage sheds for those who are being displaced from where they live. The work will take place in an Ithaca area commonly referred to as 'The Jungle'. Funds are also being accepted to purchase one more storage shed - the cost is \$300. Contact: Richard Rivera, richard.rivera.oar@gmail.com or 607-351-7462.

[Other volunteer opportunities](#) from the Cornell Public Service Center