



EMPLOYEE WELLBEING at CORNELL

Weekly Update - May 18th
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MOVING FORWARD

As regions in New York and other states begin to gradually reopen, it is natural that we as individuals are revisiting questions and concerns about personal safety and the safety of those in our households.

While this weekly email does not address Cornell's transition plans, we recognize that faculty and staff are revisiting these important questions and we know that can be challenging, even stressful and anxiety provoking. Please continue to invest in caring for yourself during this time.

We hope the topics, resources, and news provided in this newsletter have been useful to you thus far. If you need support or have questions, don't hesitate to contact us at wellbeing@cornell.edu.



FINANCIAL WELLBEING

If you are experiencing financial stress, the American Psychological Association (APA) recommends focusing on one financial decision at a time, tracking spending, identifying stressors/making a plan, and most importantly - exploring your relationship to money. [Check out APA's full guidance here.](#)

[Cornell Special Benefit Considerations During COVID-19](#)

Visit this webpage and click on the "Financial Assistance" tab to learn about:

- Retirement plan financial access as a result of the CARES Act - Withdrawal Access, Loan Access, and Loan Payment Deferment/Suspension
- Allowable changes to Flexible Spending Accounts
- Waivers of certain health care co-payments and fees
- Voluntary auto insurance premium credits due to COVID-19

[Legal resource library access through ARAG](#)

Cornell's voluntary legal benefits carrier, ARAG, expanded access to their resource library to all Endowed and Contract College employees. The legal resource center provides do-it-yourself legally valid documents, including wills and powers of attorney, medical authorization of treatment forms for minors, complaint letters for credit and consumer issues, etc. [Enroll in the 60-day free access here](#) and then click on 'sign up'.



[Federal Student Loans: Coronavirus and Forbearance Info for Students, Borrowers, and Parents](#) (U.S.)

The CARES Act provides broad relief for federal student loan borrowers. If you're concerned about your studies or loan repayment, explore what options are available to you.

[Webinar: Your Way to Smart Home Energy Savings](#)

May 21, 7:00pm - Want to feel cozy at home year-round, not just in the colder months? Come to an interactive chat about home energy efficiency. Find out about free programs, incentives, and rebates to help weatherize your home, and explore options to fit every household.

[TCAT Extends No-fare Policy to June 30](#)

Riders are required to wear a face covering or mask before boarding and while riding the bus. Those who have health issues preventing them from wearing face coverings and kids under the age of 2 are exempt.

Free Food Boxes at Greater Ithaca Activities Center

On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-4pm Cornell distributes 45 lb food boxes containing non-perishables and sometimes perishables like frozen chicken cutlets, milk, and cheese. No application process or forms to complete. GIAC is located at 301 W. Court Street, Ithaca.

Free Food at TC3 in Dryden

The Food Bank of the Southern Tier is hosting a drive-thru Community Food Distribution on May 21 from 10am-12pm. Registration is required and will be open from 8am-4pm on Tues 5/19 and Wed 5/20. Register [online](#) or call 1-833-432-3663.

RESILIENCY & SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Resiliency is a popular topic these days! Many folks are seeking information on how they can get through this challenging time or support others through it. What is resiliency, though?

Resiliency is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. It means "bouncing back" from life's inevitable disappointments, failures, and pains. Imagine resiliency as the shock absorbers in your brain that help you when you hit life ruts (Ithaca-based employees know the importance of shocks after winter!).

Unfortunately, our primal fight or flight instinct - which kept us safe long-ago - is still very instinctual. We can react fiercely to smaller and less dangerous threats as a result. In a time when we are seemingly bombarded by threats, our brains are constantly trying to determine what is safe and unsafe and don't always allow for a lot of in-between. This is where we can hone our thinking and reactions to cultivate greater resiliency.



Resilient people tend to:

- Recognize and manage feelings and understand the feelings of others
- Have a sense of independence and self-worth
- Know that tough times are a part of life and that suffering is a part of human existence
- Form and maintain positive, mutually respectful relationships with others
- Are able to adapt, solve problems, and make informed decisions

Questions to ask prior to, or during, a challenge:

1. How have I come through tough times before? What did I learn in that process?
2. What skills do I have that will help me get through this?
3. Who do I have around me that can help me?
4. How bad is this situation actually?
5. What is the worst thing that can happen as a result of this situation?
6. Am I contributing to my own misery in this moment?
7. Is my reaction amplified by a painful childhood experience?
8. How can I manage my mental/physical energy to address this issue and others?

General daily practices to cultivate resiliency:

1. **Hunt the good** - make an intentional ongoing effort to tune into what is good. At the end of each day, think about three things that occurred or that you witnessed that were good.
2. **Direct your attention mindfully** – create a habit of focusing on the things that you can change and accept the things you cannot. This is a vital learnable skill.

Social & Emotional Wellbeing Programs & Resources

[Workshop: Grief Relief, Recovery and Resilience - The Missing Piece: Mourning](#)

May 19, 1-2pm - Do you wake up in the morning filled with dread? Do you anticipate hearing bad news? These days, loss is our constant pandemic companion. Grief is a natural/normal response, but many of us are unable to find comfort because we never learned how to properly experience it. Join us to learn about mourning and how to create ways to bring peace and support into your life and at work.

[Community Chat: Morning Mingle - Living Alone During COVID-19](#)

May 22, 9-10am – Join staff of Work/Life, the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program, and Organizational Development & Effectiveness for a morning get-together designed for those who have been living alone through this time.

[Meditation in Spanish](#)

May 20, 12-12:30 pm – Offered as part of Cornell’s Let’s Meditate Program (a free, guided, mindfulness meditation series sponsored by Cornell Health, in collaboration with numerous campus partners).

[Managing Your Wellbeing: Empowering Yourself to Make Healthy Choices During Stressful Moments](#)

(eCornell Recording, 1 hour) Watch panelists Michelle Artibee, director of workforce wellbeing in human resources and Ruth Merle-Doyle, associate director of Cornell Wellness discuss with facilitator Chris Wofford the nuances of wellness, wellbeing, work/life balance, and strategies for self-care.

Articles

- [Worrying About Work-Life Balance Can Be a Trap. Here’s What to Try Instead](#) (TIME)
- [How to Increase Your Resilience as a Leader](#) (Center for Creative Leadership)
- [Strategies for stimulating your social needs while social distancing](#) (Optimist Daily)

PHYSICAL WELLBENG

[Virtual Wellness Resources List](#) compiled by Cornell Wellness

Explore the many ways to improve and/or maintain your physical wellbeing in the comfort and safety of your home for low to no cost. Check out this new list from Cornell Wellness of national and local resources for virtual sessions, videos, and Apps.

[Spring brings a diversity of songbirds to Cornell Botanic Gardens’ natural areas](#)

Todd Bittner, director of natural areas, shares his [top-three places](#) for enjoying the beauty of Cornell Botanic Gardens’ outdoor spaces and the songbirds passing through them. Or tip toe through [Dunlop Meadow](#), [Purvis Road Wetlands](#), and [Mitchell Street Hawthorne Thicket](#) virtually, clicking on each bird species mentioned to hear its song, courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s [MacCaulay Library](#).

[Slacklining 101](#)

Watch Andrew McLaughlin, Cornell Climbing Programs Coordinator, demonstrate how to set-up, and safely use, a slackline activity at home.

[Next Week with Cornell Wellness](#)

Check out the full agenda for details.

- Take A Break Tuesday: Upper Body Stretching for Tension Release
- Workout Wednesday: Family Fitness
- Thoughtful Thursday: Meditation for Relaxation
- Fuel It Friday: Eating More Vegetables



Articles & Resources

- [Contact tracing is a tried-and-true tool from the public health toolkit](#) (Gen Meredith, Associate Director of the MPH, Population Medicine, and Cornell)
- [Bored of your work from home lunches? Step it up with these tips](#) (Optimist Daily)
- [Losing your motivation to exercise as the pandemic drags on?](#) (Washington Post)

HELPING OTHERS / POSITIVE NEWS

[Women Swimmin' for Hospicare goes Virtual](#)

Whether you've been a past swimmer, paddler, Kayak Safety Team member, volunteer, or spectator - or if this is your first year ever participating - you are invited to join us for what promises to be a unique, fun community endeavor. Join us for our virtual community event now through August 8.

[Cornell biologists grow, donate plant kits to local families](#) (Cornell Chronicle)

"When we were asked to stay home in March, I was inspired by all of the community-organized projects that were taking off in the Ithaca area," Margaret Frank [assistant professor of plant biology] said. "I figured that the best way for my lab to contribute to these efforts was to offer at-home, hands-on STEM activities with plants."

LEARNING & FUN



[Unusual Fruits for Home Gardens](#)

May 20, 6-8pm - From Pawpaws to Hardy Kiwi, your yard can be the home to many of these exotic sounding crops. Let Roger Ort of CCE-Schuyler County teach you about these and other unusual crops he grows at home and for the Cornell Cooperative Extension Teaching Garden. Fee: \$0-\$30 per person (pay what you can afford)

[Live in the City of Ithaca? Explore HistoryForge](#)

HistoryForge is a digital database that uses the census records of Ithaca, New York from 1890-1940 to create an interactive search engine tied to multiple city maps from this time period that allow current residents, and historians to track the buildings and inhabitants of Ithaca in the early 20th century. Visit to search for people, buildings, and addresses within the City of Ithaca.

[Hangar Theatre Virtual Mainstage Shows](#) - Tickets: \$20 each, Students: \$10 with promo code: LEARN

The Skin of Our Teeth - May 23, 7:30 p.m.

Uncommon Excerpts and Others: The Wendy Chronicles - June 20, 7:30 p.m.

[Remember the Ithaca Festival? Virtual Comedy Fest](#) – May 30, 7-9pm – FREE

FOR PARENTS

[Story Time with Cornell Leaders](#) - Cornell Kids@Home

Enjoy stories read by Mary Opperman, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, and Ray Jayawardhana, Harold Tanner Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, plus a hilarious interview of Lorin Warnick, Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, by his grandchildren.

[Recording: Cornell Work & Family Life Panel Discussion – Parenting and Child Care Amid COVID-19](#)

Watch the 1hr recording of this recent panel discussion, exploring the availability of child care and summer camp, how to support the



emotional and educational development of children, and strategies for parents to consider.

[Explore Native Wildflowers at Home](#)

Each spring, area third graders discover ephemeral spring wildflowers through Cornell Botanic Gardens' Wildflower Explorations. This hands-on experience—including in-classroom activities and visit the Mundy Wildflower Garden—is now adapted for at-home learning and fun!

[Maternal Depression](#) (NYS Office of Mental Health)

Between 15-20% of all women experience some form of pregnancy-related depression or anxiety. It could include prenatal depression, the "baby blues," postpartum depression, or postpartum psychosis. The pandemic has challenged new and expecting mothers and families in a way most have not experienced before. If you are feeling overwhelmed about Coronavirus, help is available.

- Postpartum Resource Center of NY Mom Line - 1-855-631-0001 7 days a week | 9 am to 5 pm
- Parental Stress Hotline – Help for Parents: 1-800-632-8188
- Child Development Council Warm Line/Postpartum Support – 607-273-0259

Articles

- [Preschools and child care might reopen soon. Should you send your kid?](#) (CNN)
- [Teaming up with another family may be the key to getting through this](#) (Today's Parent)

FOR OLDER ADULTS & CAREGIVERS

The theme for [Older Americans Month 2020](#) is "Make Your Mark" in recognition of the contributions that older adults make to our communities.

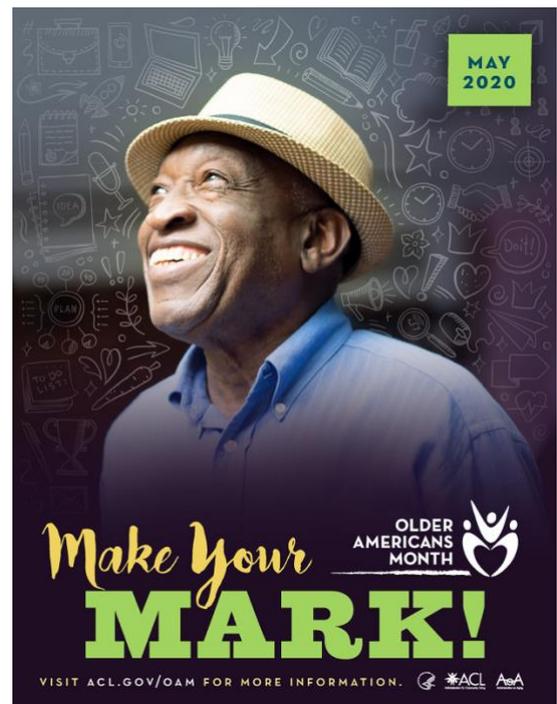
Navigating COVID-19 has been particularly challenging for older adults and caregivers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, older adults are of higher risk. This inevitably causes increased stress and fear. Many older adults living independently or in long-term care facilities have restrictions with visitors and isolation is of great concern. Listed below are resources and ways to remain connected throughout this time.

[Office for the Aging](#)

Tompkins County Office for the Aging has a new comprehensive listing of services and resources available during COVID-19 for residents of Tompkins County. All counties have a comparable "Office for the Aging." To find your local resource, search your county name + "aging services."

[Connect2Affect](#) – AARP Foundation

This network offers resources to meet the needs of anyone who is isolated or lonely and helps build the social connections older adults need to thrive.



[Finger Lakes Independence Center](#)

FLIC has a compiled list of private pay aides who have been screened. References are provided and verified to make sure the aide has the necessary skills and compassion that are important for someone to have when taking care of people in their homes. The Registry also contains a list of skilled nurses varying from pediatrics to palliative care.

[Cornell Caregiver Support & Education Network](#)

May 28 and June 18, 12-1pm. Registration is required. Email worklife@cornell.edu and a Zoom link will be sent prior to the meeting.

[Cornell Cancer Support Group](#) – facilitated by the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes Meets virtually the second Wednesday of each month, 11:45-12:45pm. Open to faculty, staff, students, and retirees who have been diagnosed with any type of cancer. An opportunity to meet one another, create a community of support, and learn about resources.

Articles

- [Connecting seniors and students during COVID-19](#) (The Christensen Institute)

FOR MANAGERS

[Five is the magic number of people for making Zoom calls effective](#) (Prof. John Hollenbeck, MSU)

“The enemy of large teams is the number of communication links that have to be managed. As team size grows linearly, the links among team members grow exponentially. A five-person team has to manage 10 links, while a 10-person team has to manage 45. And a 15-person team? Forget about it: 105 links.” “Does this mean we can never have a business unit bigger than five or an organization larger than 150? Of course not. It’s not the absolute size of a group that matters, it’s about how we organize individuals and the communication links among them.”

Check out the full article learn about arranging teams and meetings for greater effectiveness.

Local information for New York City-based employees

- [General health and wellbeing](#)
- [NYC Parks@home](#)
- [Free meals](#)
- [Domestic violence](#)
- [Child care programs](#)
- [Family life services](#)
- [Teens Take on COVID](#)
- [Department for the Aging](#)

About the Weekly Update:

Information provided by Cornell Work/Life, Cornell Wellness, and the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program. Explore [past editions](#) or email wellbeing@cornell.edu to ask questions, request assistance, or suggest a resource. Visit [HR Resources](#) for more details. Resources shared do not indicate an endorsement by Cornell University.