



Team members,

As we near the end of 2022, I'd invite you to take an hour or so and reflect back on this last year – from a work perspective as well as a personal vantage. I find that reflecting and then setting an intention or two, rather than adopting New Year's Resolutions, is more productive, flexible, and attainable.

I've pulled a couple tools out of my Thriving Through Chaos workbook to serve as a guide in walking through an annual reflection process, if using them would be helpful for you. Feel free to print and write or download.

Thanks for all your hard work this past year. I appreciate the unique gifts each of you brings to your work and to our office. Making the world a safer place is no small task and not for the weary! We couldn't do it without you.

Kirsten

Individual pressure points

What personal challenges are you currently facing in the workplace? (list as many or few as you'd like)

What challenges do you or others complain about?

What challenges do you or others seem to avoid talking about?

What areas are running efficiently and smoothly?

What kind of support would be most helpful?

Organizational pressure points

Brainstorm (alone or with a colleague) a list of challenges criminal justice organizations are facing right now.

Where does our organization fall short?

What are we doing well?

What challenges seem insurmountable or the most difficult?

What should our organization be doing differently? Better?

Questions Resilient Leaders Ask Themselves at the End of Every Day

We've been discussing the importance of being intentional on how we spend our time and the importance of aggressively scheduling and protecting time for self-care and recovery. One of the exercises to help bring awareness of how we actually spend our time and re-prioritize was the Day in a Pie. It is just as important for leaders to take an honest look at where their minutes go.

Because of NDAA's work in the wellbeing space, I am often contacted both by line-prosecutors approaching crisis and leaders frantically needing assistance as they are watching their charges -- especially since COVID -- descend the steps to join Wesley in The Pit of Despair:

"I need some wellbeing and sooner rather than later."

"My trial partner is decompensating fast. He's been drinking a lot and is going through a divorce. What can I do?"

"My top litigator quit this week and I have another attorney who hasn't shown up to court in a week. My staff is in turmoil. I know we need this (wellbeing), but I don't even know where to start."

I know two things: 1. I am still learning and struggling with the same challenges other offices are dealing with; and 2. There is no quick and easy fix. At the Wellbeing Task Force, we're taking a three-pronged approach and encouraging leaders to 1) teach and support self-care; 2) incorporate wellbeing and resiliency skills as competencies into the organization's structure; and 3) take steps to change the culture, normalize the need for support and to make that support available to all prosecutors and other criminal justice professionals.

The best leaders I've worked with, who've made structural changes and cultivated resilient organizations, often check-in with themselves by asking challenging questions, such as:

How did I care for myself today?

The word self-care conjures images of golf-rounds, pedicures, and long sudsy baths. Self-care can look like that but caring for oneself is actually more intentional than waiting until you step in a stress pile and need to escape. True self-care starts with a clearly defined big-picture intention that prepares you for better adaptivity in the future.

In addition to the little treats, real self-care is learning resiliency skills, taking care of your body, and getting enough rest. It means using your vacation time, getting away from your desk to eat lunch, scheduling time to connect with your support system and having the bandwidth to nurture those who lean on you for support.

Progress looks different for everyone, but in order for self-care to be most effective, it must reinforce a soft spot and be proactive.

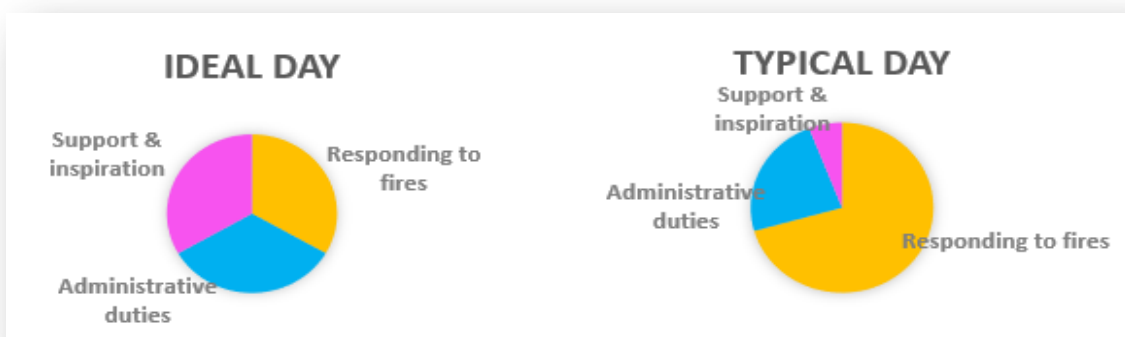
How did I care for my staff today?

At the end of every day ask, "How did I care for my staff today?" OK, I get how busy you are. I'm not talking about bringing homemade muffins and lattes every morning but, rather, evaluating the basic structure and values of your organization to prioritize employee wellbeing. When individuals are functioning at optimal levels the office as a whole sees cascading positive effects in performance, cost-effectiveness and longevity.

How did I utilize my work time today?

Another important reflection is, "How did I spend my time today?" As leaders in high-stress workplaces, our supervisory role consists of three general functions: 1) our administrative duties, 2) support and inspiration (mentoring), and 3) responding to fires. The manager's pie chart fluctuates with the flotsam and jetsam of the criminal justice system but when time is limited -- and let's be real, there's never enough time -- the support and inspiration piece of the pie usually loses the competition for our attention. Ideally, our time would be divided (mostly) equally, though that varies for each of us.

The administrative duties are pretty obvious -- it is what we think of when we decide to throw in the proverbial hat to lead an office of underpaid public servants engaging in some of the most challenging work. This piece is made up of day-to-day tasks like preparing the budget, attending meetings, coordinating training for staff, overseeing court assignments, rolling-out initiatives and



conversing with the community. It also includes writing policies, establishing procedures and work-flow analytics. For many, it also involves frontline work.

The regulatory/responsive piece is more reactive, akin to putting out fires, catching rabid dogs or playing whack-a-mole. Some overlaps with admin duties, but usually includes the stuff that isn't on your calendar yet sucks up a huge part of your day, like running into court for a revocation hearing when your deputy calls in with a sick kid or dropping the brief you are writing because the police chief and his three captains show up to visit. It includes all aspects of progressive discipline and the never-ending efforts to try to keep the peace inside your office and among multiple agencies.

Finally, we take on a **mentoring role and have a duty to inspire**. Our responsibility to support, mentor and inspire our employees -- the last and unfortunately least piece of the pie -- is often left on the if-I-have-time shelf which usually collects dust. Spending time building up people is like investing money in a compounding interest account -- it pays off in the long run. If you are able to keep your people in a healthy space, you'll ideally gain all that time you currently spend talking people off the proverbial ledge. Instead of reacting to a personnel calamity, which is occasionally necessary, consider the benefits of preventing that crisis from coming to fruition in the first place.

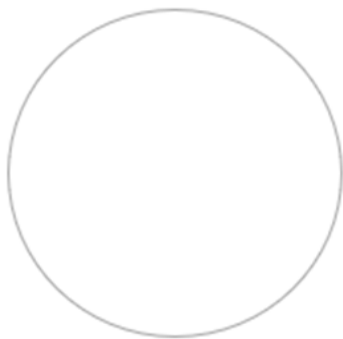


Tool: Your day in the Pie

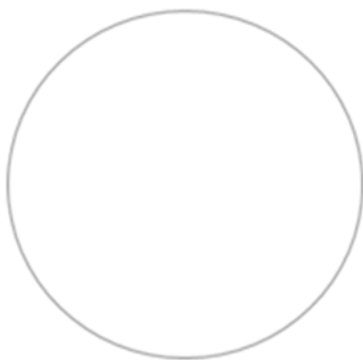
What percentage (approximately) do you spend on the following tasks?

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|--|---------|
| 1. Administrative (email, calendaring, etc.) | _____ % |
| 2. Office work/casework/prep | _____ % |
| 3. In court/in the field/meetings | _____ % |
| 4. Deep work (uninterrupted research, writing, planning) | _____ % |
| 5. Engaged with others (talking with co-workers) | _____ % |
| 6. Self-care | _____ % |
| 7. Other _____ | _____ % |

Fill in the pie chart accordingly.



What would your ideal work-pie look like?



What changes could you make to move toward a schedule that better reflects your priorities?

The six domains of wellbeing

Wellbeing is made up of six different – but related and sometimes overlapping -- areas of our lives. Each is important and impacts the others.

1. Physical health and safety domain

Exercise. Keeping our bodies fit improves brain function, reduces stress, increases longevity, and contributes to overall health. For some that means running 100 miles a week. For others it means logging 10,000 steps a day. And for others, it means playing in pickle-ball tournaments.

Diet & nutrition. Paying attention to what goes in our bodies reaps short-term and long-term rewards. We should try our best to eat balanced meals, maintain a healthy weight, consume daily recommended nutrients which, for some, includes supplements & vitamins. This also includes limiting consumption of excessive amounts of alcohol and other harmful substances.

Sleep. Eight hours a night may seem undoable, but getting adequate sleep is critical to maintaining physical, mental, and emotional health.

Routine medical & dental care/illness prevention. We are blessed to live in a place where we have access to quality medical care, including preventative care. People who get routine check-ups and recommended health screenings have longer life expectancy. That math is easy.

Physically safe environment and avoidance of injuries & harm. Living and working in a physically safe environment is less intuitive than other aspects of physical health, but equally important. Take steps to ensure workplace safety and security.

2. Mental/intellectual domain

The mental health domain of wellbeing encompasses the goals of mental fitness, intellectual growth, and creativity. Mental health covers mood and personality. According to one definition, "being mentally well means that your mind is in order and functioning in your best interest. You are able to think, feel and act in ways that create a positive impact on your physical and social wellbeing."⁹ It isn't about always being happy but, rather, about productively managing life's challenges.

3. Emotional domain

This domain is all about self-regulation. Someone who is emotionally well can be described as able to experience, regulate and express emotion. Emotional intelligence

[EI] is defined as the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. Psychologist Daniel Goleman who brought the idea of EI to the mainstream, says the five elements of EI include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Goleman says, "By teaching people to tune in to their emotions with intelligence and to expand their circles of caring, we can transform organizations from the inside out and make a positive difference in our world."¹⁰

4. Social domain

The social wellness domain embodies one's ability to connect with others. The skill of forming relationships and the ability to rely on those relationships to enhance one's own wellbeing, is a critical piece of processing secondary trauma and managing stress and anxiety. These relationships include partners, family, friends, co-workers, and others. In fact, "social connection can lower anxiety and depression, help us regulate our emotions, lead to higher self-esteem and empathy, and actually improve our immune systems. By neglecting our need to connect, we put our health at risk."¹¹

5. Spiritual domain

Spiritual wellness is defined as expanding a sense of purpose and meaning in life, including one's morals and ethics.¹² Spirituality is about finding, defining, and living in alignment with our purpose. We can enhance spiritual wellness by exploring and clarifying our values, searching for meaning in our work and life, and acting in ways consistent with those.¹³

6. Occupational/financial domain

The sixth wellbeing domain is occupational wellness, a general term that encompasses aspects of a successful, rewarding career. To be occupationally well, your daily work is in alignment with your values and purpose. On most days, you find your job motivating and interesting. Your duties are challenging and rewarding, and the training matches your learning style. Your career path has tangible opportunities for growth and promotion. Your schedule and necessary energy commitment allow room for personal and/or family development outside of work. You have the ability to work independently and also have access to meaningful support. You are able to create connections with co-workers. The pay is commensurate with your obligation and is enough to support you and your family. You didn't likely sign up for a career in criminal justice to become wealthy, but your salary should be enough to sustain a reasonable lifestyle in your area.

Wellbeing abs -- a six-pack



Rank your personal domains from strongest to weakest.

For your two strongest domains, what practices do you engage in that lend to their strength?

Which area needs the most work? _____

What specific self-care activities would strengthen that domain?

Yearly review. An annual review of your personal achievements can be so much more productive and useful than declaring New Year Resolutions. This end-of-year commitment to spending a couple of hours reflecting back over the last 12 months is an opportunity to evaluate and evolve a personal values statement.



What are my driving values? (hint: look at the 6 domains)
Supporting values?

Did I live my life in alignment with each of my values?

What went well?

What areas could use some work?

Did I do good? Is anyone suffering less because of my actions?

What did I learn? Did I stretch, grow?

What am I grateful for, in order of priority?

What do I want to accomplish next year? In 5 years? 20?

The Why Worksheet

Why the *why* worksheet? Because remembering our purpose infuses meaning, conjures enthusiasm, informs our direction, and reduces burnout.

1. Go back to the you when you decided to take on this career instead of becoming an astronaut or something else. What motivated you to get into this work?
2. List the names of 1-3 people or mentors who held a lantern so you could see your path?

3. Go back to the you when you first started the job. Who is the mentor — historical or actual — you most admired? What qualities were you drawn to?

4. Name a work event that was important to you.

What was significant about it?

5. Identify a time when you were at your very best, professionally?

6. What skills have you developed that you are proud to use/share/gift?

7. Who benefits from your gifts?

How?