



Wellness @ Work

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01. Normalize Rest
Model taking breaks. Don't just allow rest—demonstrate it.

02. Protected Time Boundaries
No-meeting blocks. End-of-day respect. Let people log off without guilt.

03. Emotional Check-Ins
Create space to ask: "How are you—really?" (Not just task updates.)

04. Flexible Work Rhythms
Trust people to manage their energy, not just their time.

05. Wellness Conversations
Talk about burnout, grief, stress, and capacity—openly and without stigma.

06. Daily Micro-Recovery
Encourage small resets: a walk, breathing, stepping away before the next demand.

07. Clear Workload Expectations
Be honest about priorities and limits to reduce overwhelm.

08. Support Systems
Encourage peer support, mentorship, so no one has to carry hard things alone.

09. Permission to Say No
Create a culture where boundaries are respected—not punished.

10. Celebrate Sustainable Wins
Not just outcomes—but how the work was done (without exhaustion).

11. Leadership Modeling Wellness
If leadership is burned out, the culture will be too. Period.

12. Post-Stress Recovery Practices
After big pushes, build in intentional recovery—not just "onto the next."

The Balance Axis™

This model isn't just a list of wellness practices.

It's grounded in the reality that wellness doesn't happen by intention alone—it requires structure.

That structure is what the Balance Axis™ provides:

- Planning → How work is designed
- Prioritization → What is protected and valued
- Partnership → How people are supported

When all three are present, wellness becomes sustainable—not accidental.

1. Planning: Designing for wellness

Planning is about how the work is structured before burnout happens.

These practices fall under Planning:

- Protected Time Boundaries
- Flexible Work Rhythms
- Clear Workload Expectations
- Post-Stress Recovery Practices

If we don't plan for rest, recovery, and realistic workload, people will always be reacting instead of functioning sustainably. Planning ensures that wellness is built into the system—not left up to chance.

Wellness fails where planning is absent.

2. Prioritization: Protecting what matters

Prioritization is about what we choose to value and protect in real time.

These practices fall under Prioritization:

- Normalize Rest
- Daily Micro-Recovery



- Permission to Say No
- Celebrate Sustainable Wins

Even when structures exist, people still need permission to use them. Prioritization shifts the culture from “everything is urgent” to “what actually matters gets protected.”

If everything matters, people burn out trying to do everything.

3. Partnership: Supporting people well

Partnership is about how people are cared for, connected, and supported within the work.

These practices fall under Partnership:

- Emotional Check-Ins
- Wellness Conversations
- Support Systems
- Leadership Modeling Wellness

Wellness is not an individual responsibility alone—it's relational. When people feel supported, seen, and not alone in their experience, they are more resilient and engaged.

People don't sustain well in isolation—they sustain in connection.

**Wellness is not sustained by what you intend—
but by what you consistently
invest in.**



01. Normalize Rest

This is a *Prioritization* practice—because rest must be treated as essential, not optional. Model taking breaks. Don't just allow rest— demonstrate it.



Rest has to be visible, not just permitted. When people can take breaks, pause, and step away without apology, it reinforces that rest is not a weakness—it's a requirement. A culture of wellness begins when recovery is normalized, not something people feel they have to earn.



Activity: “Permission Audit”

Ask participants to write down:

- When do I feel allowed to rest?
- When do I feel guilty resting?

Then discuss: What messages have shaped that?

⇒ Close by asking: What would it look like to model rest this week?

02. Protected Time Boundaries

This is a **Planning** practice—because wellness must be built into how time is structured. No-meeting blocks. End-of-day respect. Let people log off without guilt.



Wellness requires structure. No-meeting blocks, clear start and stop times, and respect for off-hours protect people from constant demand. When time is guarded, people can focus, complete their work, and disengage without guilt.



Activity: “Calendar Reality Check”

Have participants pull up their calendar and:

- Circle time that is protected
- Highlight time that is constantly interrupted

Ask: Where can you create one protected block this week?

03. Emotional Check-Ins

This is a *Partnership* practice—because people need to be seen, not just managed. Create space to ask: “How are you—really?” (Not just task updates.)



People are not just producing—they are experiencing. Creating space to ask “How are you—really?” builds trust and awareness. When emotional check-ins become normal, leaders can respond to people, not just performance.



Activity: “One-Word Check-In”

Go around (or in pairs) and ask:

“What’s one word that describes how you’re showing up today?”

Then ask: What would support you today?

(Simple, but powerful.)

04. Flexible Work Rhythms

This is a **Planning** practice—because sustainable work requires alignment with energy, not just time. Trust people to manage their energy, not just their time.



Not everyone works best the same way or at the same pace. Flexibility allows people to manage their energy, not just their schedule. When leaders trust people to work in ways that support their capacity, performance becomes more sustainable.



Activity: “Energy Mapping”

Have participants map their day:

- When do I have the most energy?
- When do I feel depleted?

Then ask: What task could you shift to align with your energy?

05. Wellness Conversations

This is a **Partnership** practice—because what is acknowledged can be supported. Talk about burnout, grief, stress, and capacity— openly and without stigma.



Burnout, grief, stress, and capacity should not be hidden topics. Open conversations reduce stigma and create clarity around what people are carrying. When wellness is discussable, it becomes actionable.



Activity: “Name It to Normalize It”

Give a prompt:

⇒ “One thing people in my role carry that isn’t often talked about is...”

Let them write or share.

⇒ This creates immediate depth and honesty.

06. Daily Micro-Recovery

This is a **Prioritization** practice—because small moments of recovery must be protected throughout the day. Encourage small resets: a walk, breathing, stepping away before the next demand.



Wellness is not built in big moments—it's built in small resets. Short walks, deep breaths, and intentional pauses between tasks allow people to recover throughout the day. These moments prevent depletion from compounding.



Activity: “2-Minute Reset”

Pause the room and guide:

⇒ deep breathing, shoulders drop, eyes closed

Then ask: What did you notice in your body?

⇒ Show them recovery in real time.

07. Clear Workload Expectations

This is a **Planning** practice—because clarity prevents unnecessary overwhelm. Be honest about priorities and limits to reduce overwhelm.



Unclear expectations create overwhelm. Being honest about priorities, timelines, and limits helps people focus on what matters most. Clarity reduces pressure and makes work more manageable.



Activity: “Priority Filter”

Ask participants to list their top 5 current tasks.

Then: Circle the top 2 that actually matter most

Discuss: What’s creating pressure to treat everything as urgent?

08. Support Systems

This is a *Partnership* practice—because no one sustains well alone. Encourage peer support, mentorship, so no one has to carry hard things alone.



No one should have to carry hard things alone. Encouraging peer support, mentorship, and collaboration creates a shared sense of responsibility. Strong support systems make difficult work sustainable.



Activity: “Support Mapping”

Have them list professional supporters and then emotional supporters.

⇒ Where are the gaps?

Then ask: What support do I need that I haven’t asked for?

09. Permission to Say No

This is a **Prioritization** practice—because protecting capacity requires clear boundaries. Create a culture where boundaries are respected—not punished.



A healthy culture respects boundaries. When people can say no without fear of punishment, they are able to protect their capacity. This creates trust and prevents silent burnout.



Activity: “Boundary Script Practice”

Give them this starter:

⇒ “I’m not able to take that on right now because...”

Let them fill it in and practice (alone or in pairs).

⇒ This builds real-life skill, not just awareness.

10. Celebrate Sustainable Wins

This is a ***Prioritization*** practice—because what gets reinforced becomes the standard. Not just outcomes—but how the work was done (without exhaustion).



Success is not just about outcomes—it’s about how the work was done. Recognizing effort that is effective without exhaustion reinforces healthy patterns. What gets celebrated gets repeated.



Activity: “Redefine Success”

Ask: “What is one thing you completed without exhausting yourself?”

Then: “What helped you do it differently?”

11. Leadership Modeling Wellness

This is a *Partnership* practice—because culture is shaped by what leaders consistently demonstrate. If leadership is burned out, the culture will be too. Period.



Culture follows leadership. If leaders are overworked and depleted, the team will mirror that behavior. When leaders prioritize wellness, they give others permission to do the same.



Activity: “Mirror Check”

Ask leaders: “What behavior do your team members feel they have to copy from you?”

Then: “What do you need to change to model wellness more clearly?”

12. Post-Stress Recovery Practices

This is a **Planning** practice—because recovery must be intentionally built in, not assumed. After big pushes, build in intentional recovery—not just “onto the next.”



After high-demand seasons, recovery must be intentional. Moving immediately to the next task without pause leads to long-term burnout. Building in recovery time allows people to reset before re-engaging.



Activity: “Recovery Plan”

Ask participants: “What do you usually do after a high-stress period?”

Then: “What would intentional recovery look like instead?”

Have them write one specific recovery action they will take next time.



**Wellness doesn't happen by accident.
It happens by design.**

**When organizations plan intentionally,
prioritize what matters,
and support people well—
they don't just reduce burnout,
they create environments where people
can thrive.**

**Bring Dr. Peggy Trusty to your
organization to move from burnout to
sustainable performance, and build a
culture of wellness that lasts.**