Thriving at Work by Managing Your Energy
(Adapted from a handout by Rayna Schroder)

Managing Physical Energy

- Exercise is brain food.
- Our energy diminishes not only by over using, but by under using it!
- To sustain full engagement physically, take a recovery break every 1.5-2 hours (although we are not allowed any “official” breaks...)

Managing Emotional Energy

- When we are in a good mood, we become more curious, creative, and better at problem solving. Our immune and cardiovascular systems get a boost, too.
- Happiness is 50% genetic, 10% circumstances, 40% choice
- “Fill your cup” by doing things that you love and spending time with people you enjoy.
- Negative emotions cause tunnel vision - can only look at one option/solution.
- Negative emotions are like gas-guzzling cars: they draw our energy stores rapidly.
- The best way to manage the emotional reaction of others is to manage our own reaction. Choose a response rather than react based on instinctive emotions.

- Understanding Triggers. Psychologist Albert Ellis’ 3 categories of triggers:
  - I must behave well.
  - You must treat me well.
  - My world must be arranged well.

If we expect a situation to be difficult, we will come under stress that may “trigger” us; our response is to fight, flee, or freeze. We are “emotionally hijacked.”

- Emotional Expression and Management Tools to Shift Emotions:
  - Manage your “anger bucket.”
  - Identify moods and emotional triggers. If triggered, have a plan to remove yourself. Go to your “happy place,” play soothing music, go for a walk.
  - Create positive rituals to help restore your objectivity to shift from “fight or flight” mode into “relax and center” mode. “Habits of success” - don’t have to think, we just do them.
  - Acknowledge and validate a person’s current emotional state. When you empathize with someone and allow them to experience their emotions instead of denying them, people get their emotional needs met.
  - Ask a question. Shifts you and/or the other person out of the emotional part of the brain into thinking part of the brain. Ask, “What can I do to help? What do you need?”
  - Seek to learn more about the other person’s point of view and possibly gain insight into what emotional need is unmet for them in the situation.
  - Use your strengths. Listen, use humor, empathize, use your creativity or flexibility, be positive.
Managing Mental Energy

- Capacity to focus
- Give the conscious, thinking mind intermittent rest.
- Power of meditation
- Use both sides of your brain. If you’re doing an analytical task, take a “break” and do something creative instead.
- The power of focusing on one task at a time - “mindfulness.” “Multitasking Makes You Stupid.”
- Suffering is wanting things to be different than what they are. **Accept** your situation, but don’t have to **acquiesce**. Make a plan for how to deal with it/change it.

Managing Spiritual Energy

- Connecting to a deeply-held set of values, to a purpose beyond our self-interest.
- Values are qualities such as freedom, humor, trust, imagination, honestly, etc.

To help clarify your values, answer these questions:

1. Describe a time when life was good. What was happening, who was involved, how were you feeling? What values were being honored and respected?

2. Describe a time when you were very upset, things were not going well, or you were having a problem with someone. What values seemed to be compromised, diminished, or dishonored?

3. What qualities do you think your circle of friends & family most appreciate about you?

If you are in a situation that dramatically conflicts with your values, you will only be able to live in that environment for so long before you get sick, act out, or quit (and you can quit without physical leaving).

“Wellness in the Library” subject guide: [http://harford.libguides.com/librarywellness](http://harford.libguides.com/librarywellness)