

The Importance of Self-Care for Healthcare Professionals

The Hawaii Keiki: Healthy & Ready to Learn (HK) team consists of RNs, APRNs and administrative staff who work tirelessly day-in and day-out to ensure HI Department of Education students are healthy and ready to learn. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted Hawaii in the spring of 2020 and after the first five months of the pandemic the HK team was fatigued. That semester's burden saw the closures of schools, remote learning and further decreases in access to healthcare. The HK administrative team recognized the need to help the nurses refuel. They developed creative and innovative well-being programs and initiatives for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.



Leading into the second school year impacted by COVID-19, the HK administrative team wanted to maintain a focus on staff

wellness and build upon the team wellness program implemented in fall 2020 by the HK program manager, Sarah Mercado.

“Resilience” is the theme of the current school year. In September 2021, the program launched a month-long Happiness Challenge, spearheaded by Laura Trinkle, HK director of operations, administration and relations. Trinkle, who has more than 29 years of military service, was inspired by the nurses and developed the wellness program emphasizing the importance of caring for oneself while also caring for others.

The HK Happiness Challenge focused on how small changes can make a big difference in your happiness. Every morning, the HK team received an email from Trinkle identifying a small challenge in one of eleven areas:

- Relating
- Kindness
- Giving
- Appreciating
- Direction
- Emotion
- Acceptance
- Resilience
- Meaning
- Mind & body
- Trying out

The overall goal of the Happiness Challenge is to take time to invest in yourself and take the small steps that science shows will help improve personal happiness. The HK Program will continue to highlight different resiliency strategies every month during the school year.