

League of American Orchestra: Mental Health & Wellness: A Conversation

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>> AMANDA DIAZ: Hello, and welcome to the League of American Orchestra Wednesday webinar series, my name is Amanda Diaz and I'm the Manager of Learning and Leadership programs at the League. Thank you so much for joining us today, we're very excited to present this panel discussion on Mental Health & Wellness in the orchestra field throughout the 90 minutes, we encourage to use the chat and the Q&A functions on the right hand side of your screen, comments in the chat will be seen by everyone but only the speakers will see the Q&A section and use that space to address questions live, to access close captioning, you can use the link in the description which is found below the video feed, after the session, we would Greatly appreciate your feedback which helps inform future league content, the survey link is also in the description. Lastly, this webinar is made possible by a generous grant from Ford Motor Company Fund, with additional support provided by American Express, the Baisley Powell Elebash Fund, the Howard Gilman Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Wallace Foundation, as well as, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. We sincerely thank all of our donors for their support. I'm thrilled to introduce Stephanie Wagner, trainer and specialist at Healthy Minds Innovation.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Hi, everybody. Welcome to our webinar today, we are absolutely delighted to have you here with us, you are joining really for a conversation around mental health and wellness, so as we're getting started here, I want to invite you and the audience to share via chat, maybe where you're from. We'd love to hear from, you know, where you are geographically, maybe what aspect of the musician's world you are in. We want to get to know everyone in our audience today and so we're really here to come together to have a conversation around Mental Health & Wellness knowing how important Mental Health & Wellness is, and oftentimes how stigmatized these conversations are.

So I'm delighted to be joined by a panel of musicians, we also have a well-being expert Lauren, as well as myself to be able to talk about not only what our own lived experiences are of being in the pandemic dealing with our own mental health issues but also ways in which we have been coping. So, our goal here today is to really normalize this conversation, so here's the outline of our next 90 minutes together for the first 45 minutes, we're going to engage the well-being panel around, you know, sort of what are our experiences are and we'll also have an opportunity to take questions. So as things are coming up for you, as you feel inspired by what you are hearing from the group, please use the Q&A button to ask four questions and I will go ahead and ask the questions throughout the presentation as it seems relevant and appropriate.

During the last part of our presentation today, I'll share with you a free resource that is an app, a meditation app that you can use to train your mind to have greater mental health and resilience so looking forward to this conversation today so with that long winded introduction, I'm going to welcome the panel and I'd love to invite each one of you to introduce yourself, if you would. Please maybe we'll start with Julia, Julia, if

you can take yourself off mute? And share a little bit about yourself?

>> JULIA ADOLPHE: Yeah, hi. It's so wonderful to be here. So my name is Julia Adolphe, I am a composer. I live in Los Angeles, and I write a lot of orchestral music, I have some pieces coming up with the Los Angeles philharmonic, Boston symphony, and I really have been using this time during the pandemic to really talk more openly about mental health and specifically my own mental health structure which we'll get into more nitty gritty but I sort of launched this podcast called loose leaf notebook new music box and I talk about my experience with my own general anxiety disorder to help normalize a lot of these difficult topics and really kind of try to get a conversation going at the professional level about the sort of complicated relationship between creativity and mental health.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great, thank you so much, Julia. Aiden, can you introduce yourself next? That would be great.

>> AIDEN FELTKAMP: Hey, good afternoon, I'm Aiden Feltkamp, equity specialist and a writer currently working with American Composers Orchestra as American composer diversity, my back gowned is in opera and orchestra, I started as a cellist and moved into opera and a singer and now moved into opera ready and a lot of my work professional as an administrator operates around being healthy and allow to bring out our true selves by confronting the mental health issues that we deal with. As a, I guess, as a writer, I also am doing some education work online and a science fiction on the side for fun, I live in Jersey City and I'm really excited to be here today.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great, thank you so much, Aiden. All right, Lauren, I will turn it over to you.

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: Hello, thanks, Stephanie, I'm Lauren Aycock, I am a therapist based in Baltimore, Maryland and also a musician, I was classically trained in piano and flute and have my bachelor's in music as a vocalist. And I -- however, nowadays, I more so play in rock and punk bands when we're not in a pandemic, so and I work with creatives and my therapy practice, I specialize in working creatives primarily on relationships and anxiety and trauma. So I'm very excited to be here today to talk about this very important topic.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great, thank you so much, Lauren. And then Sidney, please introduce yourself?

>> SIDNEY HOPSON: All right, thanks, Stephanie, hello, everyone, I'm Sidney Hopson, a percussion and arts strategist based in Los Angeles as well, most of my work as an artist is recording for film and TV as well as freelancing around town, I play often with the daily opera orchestra and some work with the philharmonic and I'm a percussionist administrations monitor in Charleston and excited to be back this year in a smaller capacity and the other half of my life, as an arts strategist I advise the both private and public sector how to build and expand arts program but my work with the government mostly focuses on integrating arts program in larger areas in social impact whether that is counter terrorism or climate change or educational programs but I'm working on a series of policies both on the administration and series around the government. So that's my work.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great, thank you so much, Sidney and I want to provide by way of introduction a little bit about my background, as was mentioned, I am a trainer and program specialist for a nonprofit called Healthy Minds Innovation, we are a well-being program rooted in scientific evidence base meditation practices and I'm excited to share a little bit about that at the end of the program today. And I was originally the first part of my career, a classically trained musician, I have my master's degree in flute performance from the Missouri University and transitioned to the

wellness and got my second master degree in health and well-being from the University of Minnesota and I'm exclusively in the well-being space and also a meditation teacher and so passionate about everything all related to well-being and I'm excited to facilitate this dialogue and the first part of our conversation, I sort of just wanted to find out from each one of you about your own experience with your sort of mental health and emotional well-being in the midst of the pandemic and I know Julia, you had mentioned that this had been a ripe topic for you and I would love for you to invite to share and how this time has been for you and what you have been experiencing in terms of your own mental health?

>> JULIA ADOLPHE: Yeah, so you know, I think we're all kind of familiar with those initial despairing feelings we had at the beginning of the pandemic and the shock and the kind of reevaluation that we all kind of had to do of our lives and you know, I had these 3 big orchestral works that were all sort of postponed, of course, and I was just trying to figure out kind of what to do with my creative energy. And also, you know, feeling quite helpless, wanting to know kind of what I could do to give back and sort of stay present in the music world that, you know, has been struggling to function and adapt. And you know, I kind of realized that so I -- as I mentioned, I had generalized anxiety disorder, I was diagnosed when I was 19, and I have been in therapy and on meditation for that about 13 years, and I kind of realized that I actually had quite a set of tools that I've, you know, developed over the course -- over this decade of therapy and that in a way, I was kind of -- I don't want to say prepared because I don't think any of us were prepared for the pandemic and how it is uprooted our lives but, I felt like it was sort of this big crash course in uncertainty.

And for, you know, someone with anxiety, uncertainty is like the -- is one of the hardest things to deal with. Uncertainty is lack of control, you know, which is sort of the pandemic has dealt with us in spades and of course this is what life is actually like and it just became so much more apparent, I think, through the pandemic, how little control we might have in certain aspects. So I kind of started with this idea of, okay, I want to start this podcast and I want to kind of share my tools and talk about my creative process because I think the biggest challenge for composers and freelance artists have been sort, well, without any sort of deadlines and accountability and performance, how do we keep going with our art? How do we keep going with our craft? And so, initially when I started the podcast in July, I was very much focused on talking about my creative process and how I was kind of trying to revamp that in the midst of a pandemic. And then, actually both Sidney and Aiden have appeared as guests on my podcast and Sidney was one of my very first guests and he really shared a lot about his experience with me and it kind of was just sort of starting to have these dialogues that I realized I needed to go all in and that meant being completely transparent about my own mental health and sort of not just giving advice from a sort of broad perspective but really getting into, you know, my personal experience of anxiety and how it is intertwined with my creative process and that has really been what has been sustaining me, honestly, through this pandemic is this project, you know, yes, I'm writing and now I have deadlines again which is really exciting because it's like the end is in sight.

But, really for about 6 months, that's really what I was focused on was sort of trying to stay connected with others in our field about really the challenge that this period has had on our mental health and it is a mental health crisis as much as it is a financial economic physical health crisis.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Thank you so much for your sharing, you know, a lot of what you are talking about just is totally resonates so this idea like having this creative energy and feeling like you need an outlet for it and looking for sources to get

that out there. And also, hanging in there in the midst of uncertainty with having, you know, anxiety is really challenging and figuring out ways to not only give back but also how to keep going with your art, so thank you so much for sharing that and looking forward to diving in a little bit more about your strategies about how you handled that in just a little bit. So Sidney, since Julia mentioned that you were on the podcast, curious, you know, what you would like to share about your own experience regarding mental health, maybe some of the communities that are you are working with would appreciate your insight.

>> SIDNEY HOPSON: Thank you, it was such a meaningful interview too Julia and I want to say quickly, I want to thank everybody that has made this event possible, we can't come together enough in these times and so I'm just so grate of the that this venue is here and this conversation is hang, with that said, I know we -- we've all sort of recognized that we are all in this together, you know? And the hard, I think, reality that some of us are facing is that there is a huge spectrum of experiences contained in that broader truth, right? And I've been fortunate throughout the pandemic to be healthy, to be secure, you know, not facing food scarcity, things that millions of people can't say right now and many of our colleagues can't say. You know? And so for me, this time has been focusing on using that bandwidth that has been such a gift to be able to -- really, to give back. And for me, the way that has manifest has been focusing really intently on policy because for me, I can't really disassociate mental wellness from the larger structures that encompass us and for me, I have been working a lot to try to drive the current, you know, administrations arts policy protocols to have very intensive talks about COVID relieve, to talk about new grants and new programs to not only help revitalize the arts sector but to put us on a better footing than COVID and when I see colleague after colleague who has either had to choose between -- you know, tempering their aspirations and were completely reinventing themselves or having to move across the country to be able to afford rent and feed their families, you know, that has weighed on me in many ways more than my own sort of personal challenges during the pandemic and the last few months have been very much focused on social aspects, now with that said, you can draw a straight line from that to institutional practices, of course, and industrial practices and so, for me, my journey for the last year has been very honed in on trying to address everything from racial disparities to general inequities across the board in policing and take ago I more practical role in shaping policy in my community and just trying to identify points of systemic disenfranchisement and powerlessness and to directly engage them.

Now, how that has connected to my artistic journey is ultimately, you know, as Julia and I shared in that interview, you know, for me, I grew up in a community where, you know, we didn't talk about mental health, and even at home, we didn't really talk about mental health, and so, I was entering graduate school, really finishing graduate school when I was finally beginning to even consider the idea that anxiety, which I had, you know, in hindsight suffered from crippling anxiety for so many years had really been governing so much of my behavior and I was making so much fear-based decisions and so much of my life was rooted in this kind of fight or flight response to both career pressures and financial challenges and so, for me, my art became yes, a way of helping me refocus and recenter but it was ultimately the relationships I built with my community through my art that helped me kind of ground myself in larger ideas and larger truths and for me, so I guess what I'm trying to say is that, you know, I directly -- my own definition of my own mental health and my own wellness is deeply grounded in the security of those around me. And deeply connected to my community and to the institutions I work with, and the organizations I partner with because my, you know, also

my future is tied into their future as well too. So for me, holistic wellness in a sort of comprehensive, you know, sense of wellness, means really connecting yourself to your environment.

And just being empathetic both to the individuals and the institutions that you are working with and trying to put yourself on the best footing, the best economic footing and having the best control over the policies that affect your life, and then, of course, the day-to-day, just healthy diet and exercise and all of that stuff, so that's been my journey, has been just trying to take a very broad lens to my environment to approach everything very intentionally and very specifically.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Wow, I'm like so inspired by your very holistic view of well-being and the passion and the energy that you are putting forth into these areas to make a really positive impact in the areas you were talking about in terms of racial disparity, gender equity, climate, sort of all of the areas so really I'm really appreciating that holistic view of well-being because certainly, altogether of those factors play a part in emotional well-being so I want to turn the conversation over to you, Aiden. As sort of the diversity director and emerging composer, I'm curious about what impact perhaps the pandemic has had on your work, you know, related to equity, diversity and inclusion and what are you seeing from the, you know, the people that you are working with and I'd love to hear about your own experiences as well.

>> AIDEN FELTKAMP: Sure, as an administrator in the arts and in the organization rye at the beginning of the pandemic, are still -- kind of the newspaper one go to how to support artist, not only monetarily immediately but creatively because I think that is as equally important and as we're doing that, how to give these artists and space and leeway because I think a huge part of the pandemic has been about learning how to allow yourself and others to be unproductive and you know, to be coming back with a different timeline or a different work structure that you are either used to them from them as an outsider or inside, and I think that was a large part of it, there was a large commission with 20 house concerts and it was really fun because we got to jump in and work with musicians and composers right off the bat creating new work that was specific to this time period, it was mostly solo work and it was basically whatever the composer wanted to write about. That's what they got to write about and I think that that was really exciting because I know for me, I was a little like, you know, obviously, we're all bumped out by what happened by a large part of my job is running the orchestra readings program where we allow emerging composers to have their work read by professional orchestrators, rather it's other APCO [phonetic]s around the country and we had these countries for 9 months to a year and all of the sudden postpone, it sucks to everyone that was looking forward to have their piece read by everyone and it also feels like this stalling like we have to wait or something to create something to see the outcome of something because I think so much about being an artist is just seeing -- at least for me is seeing the outcome and I know it can be really hard when you are like working, working, or waiting, waiting and not seeing that and so I guess it was a matter of creating a program that could kind of be very short term and but have longer term impact, so that these pieces are existing beyond the pandemic even though they were written during the pandemic.

I think that's part of it and then, when it comes to diversity equity and inclusion, this is something that obviously ACO has been working on for a long time. So much so that they brought in a full time person to do it and this is when it really needs -- this is when it really matters, it always matters but doing the work up to this point was important, like I'm glad that a lot of people are starting it now but I kind of wish that more people had started earlier so that when it came to this, that, you know, there's many

kind of like fire points throughout history and where things just really become really explosive in terms of unveiling the inequity that has been there all along and this is one of them and I think the best that can come from this is people staying engaged with what they now see and what they now understand about the inequity that has been built in all along.

So I think it's just continuing the work and keeping -- keep learning, keep working and keeping it at the forefront of our minds, I think that is a huge part of it.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great. Thank you so much, Aiden. There's a comment that someone made but I feel so perfectly captures what you said which is flexibility and a new understanding of timeline productivity has been so necessary and so hard and also just very much appreciating your message around staying engaged and continuing to just show up. So thank you for that. I'm curious now to turn to Lauren, who's the well-being -- one of the well-being experts in the group, as a therapist, Lauren, I know you work a lot with creatives in your therapy practice and just curious if there are any bills or enhancements that you want to make what you see in your own practice working with creatives from what the group has shared so far, any additional things that you would like to highlight that you are hearing from your clients?

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: Yeah, so all of the above, everything that Julia and Sidney and Aiden all shared, yes. Hearing all of that for sure. It's been a big topics of conversation. A lot of anxiety people really feeling shut down. Feeling really stuck. And trapped. Particularly those that are dealing with a lot of financial anxiety. Particularly those that have their careers are musicians, like that's what their job is. And, you know, I actually don't have a lot of classical musician clients right now but you know, I have some that are just gigging musicians around town and that's their job and they don't have that job anymore. Basically. You know? And so, that's been very difficult. And trying to like Sidney was saying, right? Some people pivoting and having to pivot and say I have to find some way to feed myself or feed my family. People struggling with substance abuse and having no schedule or structure has been a real struggle for people.

And struggling with parenting and working at the same time, all at home. And the balance there and then trying to find somewhere to fit in the creativity, I know for me that's been a thing, you know? I'm working a therapist and I'm married and I have a 2-year old and having the energy to create, to play music, anything like that is really hard.

And, I think what's -- and there's also just been, you know, an increase in suicidal thoughts because people have been feeling so trapped and so depressed and there is so much grief and not just grief about people passing away, which is of course huge but also just the lost, there's grief in this -- as a tremendous amount of lost and while some things will come back, some things won't and there is a lot that has ended and we lost. So I think really acknowledging that there's grief that's not necessarily related to death that you are probably experiencing some amount of grief, whether or not you know somebody who has died. And even, you know, just acknowledging that we're hearing about death all the, too. Will give you grief, there is collective trauma in grief there. What I think has been very unique to musicians is, you know, there's no performing, right? So, that's just being able to do that is -- that's our coping mechanism in a lot of ways, performing like Aiden said, all of the waiting and you actually get to see the outcome, right? So that's hard.

And not having your community in the same way. Because you're not performing, you're not getting together, you're not rehearsing the same way. And then even the piece of should I or shouldn't I create? Can I or I cannot create? Some people are

really blocked and I think I said this to you, Stephanie when we spoke, some people and I'm one of these people, some people are -- like they create when they're done, when the thing is done. They process afterwards and some people create as it's going on and they're processing through it. So the people who are creating through this, like, it's like, wow, so cool! But then those of us that don't, it can feel really difficult, like I'm not making anything right now and that takes a toll too on your mental and emotional health.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Thank you so much for normalizing just so much of what people are experiencing right now and I think, you know, the fact that we oftentimes associate grief with only physical death but the truth is that grief takes many forms, you know, there is the grief and the loss of the life that we knew pre-pandemic, that life will never be the same, you know, I don't think in this lifetime, there is the grief and loss around of course financial circumstances, of course, the deep sense of meaning and purpose, that many musicians are lacking as a result of not being able to perform or create in the ways that they had done previously.

So, I just really appreciate your normalizing a lot of this experience and so, you know, part of what this is requiring from us collectively as human beings is to adapt to sort of extraordinary circumstances and to try and figure out ways to navigate, you know, uncertain territory to be able to manage our anxiety and to be able to remain in social connection and to be able to find a sense and meaning and purpose that not be in the purposes that we had found it before so I'd like to move the conversation now into maybe like strategies that have either worked for you in terms of supporting your own mental and emotional well-being or things that you are hearing from others because part of what I'm hoping that audience can take away today are some things to try perhaps that they have not thought about from you all. So maybe I'll start with Aiden, Aiden, I'd love to hear from you in terms of -- you know, how have you been finding meaning? How have you been tending? How have you been coping? What are some of the strategies you have employed?

>> AIDEN FELTKAMP: That's a great question. At the beginning of the pandemic, I felt super uncreative and super unmotivated like doing work for work during the work hours was easy because this is the set amount of hours that I do work and this is what is on the plate to do today and that's it. And then after work it was kind of like, you -- normally I would be doing so many things and now it is he adjust kind of like, and I had to like, first of all, allow myself to relax because I think I was on edge like so much and it makes sense, like, we're all on edge, basically, this whole year, even if you had like the smoothest sail, you know, something I heard at the beginning of the pandemic that I keep reminding myself that we are all in the same storm but we're all not in the same boat so no matter what your boat is, everyone is just living in this high energy like high anxiety space right now. Because of the situation.

And so, I think just coming to begin with that and being okay, it's okay to be overwhelmed and to just relax and not need to be like just motor and running and creating all the time and maybe 2 or 3 months after that, okay, now I can actually do stuff but I didn't feel able to jump into the normal things that I would be doing so I found, like, totally different things that I'm like, what have I always wanted today to do but never did which I'm sure a lot of people have been thinking and so I went back into programming because I love programming and so I picked up a new language and started making weird artsy things with programming and that's been like really fun. And really outside of what I normally do and very low stakes because like if no one sees it, it doesn't matter, you know? Kind of -- it's just for me.

And so I found that finding joy in things just for the sake of it was really important. And then, of course, on the flip side is like spending as much time as possible with

people I love, whether that is in person here with my partner or like Facetiming, I'm finding it hard to stay social whenever it's not in-person, like taking time specifically for that, I think, but like Sidney said, I'm been so incredibly lucky to be healthy and employed and all of these things and so, I don't know that I can like give like super technical practical advice but from a creative and brain health stand point, that's kind of what has worked for me.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Well I appreciate what you are saying is that I heard two things. So, allowing yourself to relax which I think can be really hard and to be okay with being overwhelmed because when I think about the experience that we normally have of feeling difficult emotions, what happens is that there is oftentimes so much resistance to the pain of that experience and it's like the more we resist, the more we try and push it away, it's almost like the bigger and the stronger and the more overwhelming it becomes, so if we can rather than resist what's happening, sort of the develop a different relationship to it, perhaps even befriend it in some way that level of acceptance, there can be some warmth, some space, some opening there, I think, to just navigate it differently, so thanks for saying that, I think that that is super helpful and I also, somewhat resonated with one of your quotes, Aiden, we're all in the same storm but not all in the same boat so thank you for saying that, that needs to go on a t-shirt somewhere. All right.

So, Julia, maybe I'll turn it over to you, you know, I know you have done a lot to sort of tend to your creative energy during this time, so I would love to hear your perspective on strategies that you have been using during this time?

>> JULIA ADOLPHE: Yeah... just kind of taking it all in. Yeah, I think, you know, the biggest thing, the biggest challenge has been sort of accepting that life is different and that sort of the way -- I'm just changing my own expectations of myself and I think Aiden was alluding to this also but, you know, a successful day of composing might just be 20 minutes, you know? And that, you know, there is no way that would cut it in, you know, prepandemic life. But that kind of just showing up is enough and, you know, I was -- you know, I'm lucky to have a therapist that I really, you know, respond to and you know, she usually doesn't give me opinions but she has started to during the pandemic, it's been one of our adaptations as she started to give opinions but she really, you know, was encouraging me to kind of let go of trying to operate as if, you know, I still had deadlines, trying to operate if there was still a performance, trying to operate and I think it really sort of -- it's an existential time because it's also sort of a lot of us, I think, especially, you know, we go into the world of classical music, you know, where a lot of us are, I think, defined by our work and by our love of art and our love of music and so, when your job as you know it is taken away from you in some form, you have to really figure out what else is there? , you know, what else of you is there that is important and that you want to share? At the beginning -- the first couple months of the pandemic, I schedule a phone call with someone every day, so like a different friend or a different -- and I felt like that was the thing that kind of got me out of bed and got me, you know, with sort of, well, okay, I need to do the dishes before I talk to my mom or, you know, these very simple things that just sort of like and I kind of realized over this that what I needed -- what I needed in a given day is some sort of creative activity, some sort of connective activity, so like connecting to another person or a group of people. And then some sort of like fun silly activity that's just like totally meaningless. Has no consequence.

And then something that sort of helps my physical health, so like exercise or -- yeah. And just sort of having those four goals for myself for the day and it was sort of, you know, it's not about work hours, it's not about meeting deadlines, it's just about

these four things that I need every day and if I get to them, great. And, yeah, I think, you know, it sort of goes back to this idea of boundaries and, you know, I think it's very different for people who are actually working in organizations and I'm a freelancer and I can't speak to sort of the demands of the adaptation in organizations and I'm sure that that's very different. But, that's sort of been how I am kind of thinking about how to restructure my life.

And some of the things that I have discovered, I will keep moving forward.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great. Yeah, you know, so it sounds like what you have done is you've really determined the areas of your well-being that really need to be tended to and you're focused on those four things, you had mentioned creative activity, some sort of connection, making sure there's fun and then tending to your physical well-being and really making sure that those areas are nurtured and then maybe anything above that is, you know, of course, overachieving on some level but you're also talking about how changing expectations about your output, so not holding yourself to a prepandemic standard it sounds like has been an important part of what have you been doing as well.

>> JULIA ADOLPHE: Yeah.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Yeah, thank you. Thank you. All right, Sidney, what about you? What would you like to add to this conversation?

>> SIDNEY HOPSON: You know, there are two -- I have a lot of thoughts I have every day but there are two thoughts I have in particular that keep me grounded. At least help keep me grounded and one is that I think about sort of a spectrum between comfort and solutions and I think we have limited bandwidth every day and sometimes when are you managing trauma, you just have to seek comfort and rather that is a phone call with a friend, rather that is staying in bed, rather that is buying blackout curtains and using them religiously and rather it's playing music or rather it's not making music and there is the time where the only fix is to find a sort of tackle solution which is to say okay, I have no money so what do I need to do to get the money, have you to compartmentalize in that sense so I'm set aside a few minutes in the morning when I wake up, sort of check in the afternoon and again before I go to bed and say okay, right now, what do I need to be in a sustainable place, right? And also, what am I capable of providing to those around me, right? So what extent of comfort verses very just, you know, very cut and dry problem-solving do I have the ability to do right now? In order to not only, you know, end the day a little better than I started but actually make at least those baby steps back to a sustainable place, right? Because we all know that wellness without security stability tends to not travel far. So that is number one.

Number two, I think a lot about, it's actually a term I pulled from a great book by Vivian called storm of the -- and for every story there is a situation with the story but too often that situation becomes emotionally pervasive it can begin to take on the identity of being our story, right and so being able to look at your disposition and say right now times are incredibly different, they are traumatic, they are hard a million ways to Sunday. With that, so these are situations.

The story is what you do to navigate it, right? And so being able to separate the two. And to be able to achieve objectivity to be able to say, look, right now, the world around us is a hot mess but that does not define us and making the conscious steps to again seek comfort and solutions as needed to be able to maintain that clarity for me has really helped me navigate this time. And of course, like all things, it's easier some days than others and also sometimes comfort is a tactical solution, sometimes finding the things that make you feel better and what you have to do and have you to determine

that for yourself in your own journey but those two things have really helped me to again keep my feet on the ground and help me to be able to analyze, look what is happening as a result of the choices I'm making proactively or is the environment shifting around me and for those with families and just, you know, a particularly high number of obligations were timed and emotional bandwidth is short, I think just having that sort of totem that idea that thought that notion that brings you back and in 30 seconds or less allows you to take a very quick immediate inventory of what you are capable and what you feel capable of doing, what you don't feel capable of doing and subsequently what you then need to bring in and search for and bring in is critical because nothing is more eye opening to find out what needed to bring in friends to support me, so allowing myself to be honest and vulnerable and open with myself has helped me so much but just again, situation of the story and just comfort verses solutions and I try to think of those two spectrums and yeah, they've helped me a lot.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Thank you so much, yeah, the power of self awareness to do that inventory and to see what we can control and what we can't control and really listening to when we might need nurturing and comfort and seeking that out in different ways rather it's through social connection or taking a nap, you know? So thank you, thank you so much for that, now, Lauren, I wanted to turn to you, you know, in terms of your working with creatives, so what types of things do you think that creatives should be focused on right now in terms of their mental and emotional well-being?

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: So, it's interesting, you know, the way that Sidney said about the story, the situation of the story, you know, and my thought, right, is also, noticing the story that you are telling yourself about you, about your predicament that are you in right now, the feelings that you are having, your finances, your ability to create all of that, noticing that the story you tell yourself about it and can you, is it a story that's serving you? Is it a story that's helpful to you? Or do you need to apply a little self compassion into that story, right? Can it be like Sidney said the world is a hot mess right now and to I'm having a hard time and so why this is why these things are happening and so I think -- not I think but I know, when we go through a trauma, our old traumas come up and a lot of us have gotten thrown into old childhood trauma and that brings up our old school coping mechanisms which for a lot of us is I'm bad. And I have control over this and I'm not good enough and that's why these things are going on.

And so, we really need to check those stories about what we're telling ourselves, so talking with your community. Staying connected, and again, noticing even the story you tell yourself about that because I have heard from a lot of people, a lot of clients, you know, I don't want to reach out because I feel like everybody is going through something right now so I feel like I'm being a burden, you're not being a burden, in fact, I think sometimes one of the biggest, the greatest gifts we can give to people is offering the chance to help you. Because people feel better when they are helpful.

And that's -- and they're useful, right? I think -- that's how we survive as a species is helping each other and so naturally our brains feel, give us a little hit when we're helpful because it's like yes, you're helping your species to survive. You know, I made some notes here and I have a lot of things. So prioritizing rest. Right? Prioritizing rest. Looking at your capacity and your energy, I think, Sidney, you said that as well. You know, each day, your energy each day will be different. And do not judge yourself, measure yourself by your best day because that's every day, just once a month, in your life generally, probably, that probably happens once a month, just general, so don't judge yourself based on that, and also knowing that it's okay to be joyful, I think sometimes because things are so hard and because there's so much in the forefront

right now, right? About how we're truly messed up our systems are and we care so much, so many of us and I think creatives in particular are very empathic. That, knowing that it's okay to have fun, it's okay to put down for a second and have a good time or to play your instrument or to do something that's -- like Julia said, is just fun and has no consequences, right? And if you can't be joyful then maybe looking forward to future joy.

Because that will happen. And then, you know, someone mentioned in the chat and I wanted to address this someone said what about relationships? Because I didn't mention relationships when I said what people are going through, right? People are having trouble in their relationships and, you know, because some people have ended up, they're with their partner and they're going like, oh, I don't know if I want to be with this person anymore, that's happening. Or, you know, you're just with your partner so often that it's like I'm really board of you, right? Or people not in relationships. And people who are single or living alone that has been difficult for people and there's loneliness there and I want to address relationships, right? I heard a great recommendation from somebody that attended something about relationships during the pandemic and I want today share this is maybe creating a list of complaints with your partner of like these things didn't bother me before the pandemic but they do now.

So, maybe we can have a conversation about that. Right? Just like trying to adapt to like now we're with each other 24/7, if you are working -- if you are lucky enough to be working from home and to be home that, you know, okay, we'll try to adjust that. Right? I think my husband and I have is sort of naturally had those conversations, sometimes just coming up because it's like, I'm so upset about this, it's like, okay, we'll deal with that and again for people who are living alone, who are single, right? Like, looking forward to future connection in that way or, you know, I have seen a lot of people who are dating independently, it's lot about risk tolerance but it has happened and really staying connected to your friends, really staying connected to your friends, your friamily and making sure you check that story when it tells you that I'm being a burden.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Thank you so much, Lauren and I know when you and I had our initial conversation, this idea of self compassion is really, I think, really important. A lot of the work that I do sort of in the health coaching space and even within my meditation classes, there is something about this time where people are being very very harsh on themselves to your point, like you had even mentioned judging yourself against your best day but I think even people who have a very high bar for themselves in terms of like perfectionism and overachievers and they want to -- they want to do all the things and they sort of feel like they're failing on every level, like there could be this real narrative that comes up in the mind that is just very harsh and so, how can we develop a different narrative, how can we talk to ourselves kindly like we would talk to a friend or a child rather than being so critical of ourselves is just such an important part of, I think, navigating this time is sort of developing a healthy -- a healthier relationship with our inner narrative. Thank you so much for sharing that.

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: Yes, absolutely.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Yeah so there were a couple of questions in the chat... so let me just ask this one about burn out and nonprofits and any of you are welcomed to answer. So a question comes from Zoey Thomas, for example, who work in nonprofits have a unique relationship with burn out, any advice on how to balance working and a mission-driven organization with valuing your personal well-being? Does anybody feel inspired to answer that question?

>> AIDEN FELTKAMP: I mean, I'll try.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great, thank you. Love it.

>> AIDEN FELTKAMP: That's so tricky. Yeah, the burn out is so real and especially now where, I feel like, I thought that I would have less work because of the orchestra is not performing, no orchestras are performing but I think we actually have way more work than usual and, you know, I think it's partially just actually like having more work to do like wanting to do digital things or building new programs or adding, adding. And it's also this creative -- having to take a creative 180 all the time like oh, this isn't going to work we need to do this or rethink this entire program or we need to delete this program and make a new one like there is a lot of creative energy going into that and I think that it's easy to dismiss it that we're not performing right now, why am I so tired, why do I have so much work, but I think it's really important to be clear with, you know, have a frank conversation with your supervisor and say, hey, like, you know, these are the hours that I'm working at work and these are the hours that I'm not working at work and, you know, kind of reinstating those boundaries and if you feel comfortable, like, have those mental health conversations.

I know that, you know, I've been lucky, I had supervisors that I can have frank conversations about mental health with. And I've in the past had ones who were not. So only you know that but if you can, I think being courageous in talking about it can be helpful if not, then it's really about boundaries and being really strict about it and, you know, it sucks but I don't really know how else to navigate that because at the end of the day, capitalism just wants to like eat up all of your time and you know, that's just something that you have to always be protecting yourself against, no matter what job you're in, I think.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Yeah, I think that issue of setting healthy work boundaries is really key and is also super challenging when you're working from home but I think you're right, you know, advocating for yourself, talking about what you need with your boss, with your team, trying to normalize organizational conversations about well-being is really important and then, looking at what you as an individual can control in terms of your own boundary setting around work because it can be easy to let it filter into every nook and cranny of your day when you are setup at home and so, it's sort of having enough strength in those hard moments to say, okay, I've set myself that I'm only working from this time to this time today and then you actually shut down your computer when the day is done and in fact, I've had some clients who have talked about -- they've created sort of commuting rituals for themselves which I think is a great idea. So what'll do is close their computer at the time they'll normally be done with their day and what they'll do is create a commuting ritual, they'll walk around the block and they'll drive somewhere and they'll listen to a podcast to do something to symbolize like this is the end of the day.

So anyway, just wanted to share that as something that has been helpful.

Sidney?

>> SIDNEY HOPSON: Yeah, just to add onto that, I know this can be a difficult topic to have, but if there is a moment to have these conversation is apparently now and without preaching too much about labor law, I think it's important to be able to very strategically analyze if the source of that burn out is just because the disproportionate amount or the expectation that is falling on middle management and the workers to cultivate the life blood of the organization or is it from possibility disparities over action at the board of the executive level and I know that is a hard conversation to have but by the end of the day, it's such an endemic issue throughout, not just the United States but that the actual rank and file workers end up getting grinded to the bone before discussions about alternate development plans and casting a wider net and bringing

new partners into the organization becomes a topic of communal discussion and especially when we're in an amazing fertile time for digital content the ability to track now with eyes and ears, I would argue it has been greater than it has been before and I would object that the reason for any 1 person's burn out for any mismanagement mean, I think it requires an articulate conversation to say look, we have so much bandwidth emotional and physical and I would argue we all have a little bit less than we had 12 months ago and if the company and the organization is committed to the well-being of its staff than part of that comes with the moral obligation to look at every sort of factor and every nook and cranny and every bolt in the machine to say okay, how to build our institution as necessary to bring in more and more smaller one-time donors if necessary if that means getting a bunch of Band-Aids until COVID has gone through, then fine if that what is means to protect the emotional well-beings of staff and employees, I'm with it, then. Of course there will be a lot of opinions and many of them will be entirely accurate but I think it's something that should be discussed before, again, rank and file workers, you know, find themselves sort of trapped in the situation and feeling like, well I'm just burn out, how to push myself further because I see that so often. And so just wanted to tag that on.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Great. Thank you. Julia?

>> JULIA ADOLPHE: Yeah, so, I think burn out is an interesting word or an interesting phrase and it can sometimes also be one of those blanket phrases for really being uncomfortable or unhappy in some way. I think we have a lot of phrases that are sort of in the vernacular that are more accepted than others and I think, eventually, as mental health becomes more talked about, we'll have a larger vocabulary. So, of course, not to pinpoint anything about the particular person who asked this question, who I don't know, but I think, you know, for me, when I feel burned out, it's often that I'm feeling some kind of reexperience of my own trauma, a reexperience, you know, I'm feeling anxious, I'm feeling sad, I'm feeling helpless, I'm feeling -- and it can be so easy to take all -- like, yeah this is the situation and story idea, again, sort of take all the aspects of the situation that we're in. And say, it's because of this. It's because of this, it's because of this that I feel this way and if these things were different, I wouldn't feel this way.

And that might be true on a surface level but I guess this is all to say, if you are really struggling like if are you really feeling lonely, if you are feeling nothing to look forward to, if are you really feeling angry all the time, the solution may very well to ask for help and that means professional help in my opinion. That means looking for a therapist, looking for, some sort of group counselling, I think that's also, you know, part of why we're here today is to talk about this idea that, I think, in my experience, the pandemic has just amplified all of our existing problems, so yes, some people have new real problems, you know, to deal with, but for those of us who are maybe feeling harbor judging ourselves because not that much has changed, it's only a global pandemic, why aren't I doing okay? This sort of idea that, you know, it's just shining light on struggles we already have. Because so many of our outlets, so many of our relationships are gone or impacted. So, we just have a lot less support.

So this is just to say from my personal experience that therapy talking to someone, asking for help, there are so many ways to do this virtually now and, you know, for not that much money which is kind of that's new. Right? Therapy is usually very expensive but now there's more options so that is just my \$0.02 on burn out.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Thank you so much, Julia, yeah, I'm curious, Lauren, there was a question that came newspaper the chat and there is also sort of a partner question that I want to ask. So, how does a person decide if therapy is like the

right path for them? How do you know if you are a good candidate for therapy? There might be people out there that might be like, how do I know if I actually need therapy? But then a partner question to that and maybe just take this in whatever direction you want, how to normalize conversations about mental health at work? So kind of two things there. But I think that they're sort of related too. So would love to hear whichever direction would be the most useful for you to take it from the way you receive it.

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: Sure. Yes, so first of all, I'd say if like, how do you know whether or not you're a good candidate for therapy, I would say, like if you -- to me it's about level of functioning, in a lot of ways, so if you feel like you really cannot function very well, and like -- and there's a lot of high functioning people who also have stuff going on for sure, right? But like for instance, I would say with myself, I didn't become a therapist until I went to therapy and had an incredible therapist and she actually said to me, you'd make a good shrink and I was like hmm.

[Laughter] but I was like going through a divorce and I was highly anxious, I was having panic attacks all the time. And I went to the doctor and I didn't know that I had been dealing with anxiety all my life, I was just like I had IBS and I was really tense and kind of hyper, you know? And I go to a doctor and she would be like you're having panic attacks, you're really anxious, I thought I was dying, I didn't know, you have anxiety, oh, wow. And she was like go see this therapist and she was amazing, so, you know, if you are really struggling, just like Julia said, if you are really struggling, if you are anxious all the time or you feel on edge all the time or perhaps you have something physical going on that's new, like for me, I had really bad IBS, something physical, listen to your body, right? If your jaw is clenched all the time if you are like this all the time, your body will tell you that you are not okay.

If you are feeling nauseous all the time, something like that, go to the doctor, if you have access to a doctor. And/or if you feel like -- and you are really struggling with all of these things and talking to your friends or you feel like it's really hard to talk to people, and none of it is really working, go. Seek a therapist. If you're feeling like you can't get out of bed. If you are feeling like Julia said, really angry all the time. All good reasons to seek out a therapist. I will say, even though I'm therapist, therapy is not the answer for everyone. It is not a catch-all. It doesn't make everybody all better all the time. Some people really really need community. Some people really really need to address their physical health first. Some people -- and then just like you said, so this kind of goes into the how do we normalize conversations about mental health, right? We have them. And we keep having them, that's how we normalize it because the more we have these conversations, the more normal it will feel to everyone. Because it will just be part of our culture. Wouldn't that be amazing? And really normalizing, I think, that we're all imperfect and we all have our weirdness and especially creatives have our weirdness. And, you know, that's all okay.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: That's great. Thank you so much. I appreciate that kind of filter around the level of functioning and also acknowledging that it's not the thing for all people and that there are other areas of well-being that maybe are the priority physical health, they're also financial consideration, of course, there was a question, actually, I'm going to transition, I think, into a brief presentation around this free resource for people.

But, if you, Lauren, want to take a look at the final question in the Q&A, there is a question about mental health and financial burden, so we can come back to that. So I think what we're going to do next is that we're going to transition into a really brief presentation that I want to lead you through about a free resource for you that is designed to help you develop resilience and can really support you in your mental

health and well-being. And then once I'm done with the presentation we'll open it back up for questions again.

So as I mentioned earlier, I'm a trainer for well-being program that is called healthy minds innovations and we are nonprofit that is affiliated with a research tuition at the University of Wisconsin Madison at the center for healthy minds and we have a free meditation app that's designed to help you develop greater resilience so if you are familiar with the term resilience, resilience is the capacity to bounce back from adversity and from difficulty more quickly. And so given that, you know, today is all about mental health and well-being, I wanted to provide you a little bit about this resource. Give you a couple of techniques to try and then share a little bit about the scientific basis for the program.

So, we'll go ahead onto the next slide. So of course, we have been talking about during our time today how we're all just sort of navigating the pandemic to the best way that we can. And perhaps this image resonates with you, you know, the fact that you might be laying in bed in the middle of the night just overcome with stress and overwhelmed with anxiety and can't fall asleep or you are up in the middle of the night and we find ourselves really digging deep in our well-being toolbox to just find some ease and for some of us, we've gone down the path of like unhealthy coping mechanisms and for some of us, we're kind of going in the opposite end like trying to find, you know, healthier well-being solutions. So as I'm giving my presentation, I'd love for you to share in the chat box, what are some of the things you have been navigating at this point in the pandemic and as you're doing that, I will move into sort of talking a little bit about the scientific basis of our program.

So, the next slide, basically, shares a really important point about our program is that one of the scientific insights that has emerged from the work of the field of contemporary neuroscience that well-being is a skill that can be learned and the science of training the mind is based on this idea. Change is possible because our brains actually have the capacity to change. So if you go onto the next slide, you might be familiar with a term that's called neuroplasticity, it essentially means that our brains is have the power to change and they are constantly changing to the response to our experience however it's usually the forces around us that are driving that change and that change isn't always positive and think of all the moments during the day where you have a notification on your cellphone or are you pinged by your e-mail. Each time that notification goes off, it's sort of like capturing your attention and it's habituating you towards distraction and when we train our minds towards practices like awareness meditation, compassion meditation, when we train our minds with intention, what we're doing is actually harnessing the capacity of our brain to change and we can actually re-wire our brains to work in a healthier way, so that rather than only experiencing well-being in those fleeting random moments of our lives, we can actually experience well-being more of a baseline regardless of what is happening in the external circumstances and essentially what neuroplasticity is pointing to is that things can be different and that change is possible.

So on the next slide, we have a well-being framework that's rooted in neuroscience and what our research shows is that there are four really important dimensions of well-being. Kind of rooted in a healthy mind, you can consider these to be sort of keys to resilience and these are skills that we can learn. So the first of these areas is awareness and this kind of goes back to something, I think, it might have been Sidney talking about the importance of self-awareness, so self-awareness and awareness is just our capacity to be present. This is the capacity to know what's going on in our own minds, to be able to do things like regulate our attention. Resist

distraction, and even to be able to kind of see those challenging thoughts and emotions that we have in real-time.

And we can kind of self-regulate, we can of course correct and we can see them happening and rather than reacting from a place of being overwhelmed by a challenge thought or emotion, we can respond differently and the skills trained in here are things like mindfulness, attention and self-awareness and the next skill set is relate today compassion and these are qualities that help us nurture and develop healthy relationships and when you think about relationships, it's easy to feel connected and warm to people that we care about and people that we like but it's more challenging to feel a sense of warmth and connection to people that we don't know and people that we don't like so here what we're doing is working on training our minds and to help widen the circle of inclusion, to include people in our circle of care, people we don't know or like and train our minds in the appreciation and compassion and this goes back to what Lauren was talking about earlier that self-compassion is one of the key ways in which we can sort of develop a different relationship with that inner critical voice and that inner critical story going on in our minds and this is one of the ways in which we can learn how to do that.

Insight is an area that is coming out of the world of psycho therapy and these are skills that help us to get curious. And to help us develop a healthy more flexible and adaptable sense of self. So we learn skills like self-inquiry, through our self-inquiry, we get to know our thoughts and our patterns and our emotions and more deeply and gain greater self knowledge and we learn to step back and see our thoughts as thoughts and see our emotions as they're happening and be able to take off the glasses through which we see the world and be able to begin to see things more clearly.

And then purpose is an area in which we can develop skills to bring our values to the forefront of our experience. So purposes is really feeling how we live our life and that it's meaningful and we can stay deeply connect today what matters, our values and beliefs and we can keep these values and beliefs front and center throughout our day and our purpose helps us to stay motivated and the skills developed here is clear defining purpose and defining meaning and purpose, and one of the things on the next slide is one of the ways to train our minds in skills that I'm talking about here is through practices of meditation, we have a program that's called the healthy minds program, so if our moderator can chat in the chat box the web address, it's [hm innovations\(dot\)org](http://hminnovations.org), the healthy minds program, can you download it at your apps store, so essentially, this is a step by step training program in your mind to cultivating greater resilience, there are podcast lessons where you learn a little bit of well-being and each of these lessons are about 5 to 7 minutes and there are many many meditations, you get to choose whether you do a seated practice or an active practice, so an active practice is where you are meditating with some kind of sort of light sort of activity like walking or gardening or cleaning your house, you can choose the speaker whether it's a female or male voice and then you can also choose the length of time that you are practicing so anywhere between 5 and 30 minutes so this is a really great resource here for you to be able to sort of work on cultivating greater mental well-being and especially at this time during the pandemic, it seems like a good thing to do.

So we have done some research on our program and since it's relevant to things like anxiety and depression, I will share the resultses, the health minds program has shown to decrease stress by 28 percent, and reduce depression by 24 percent and anxiety symptoms by 18 percent and can increase social connection even by the absence of physical connection by 13 percent. So what I want to do here is that I want to introduce you to a couple of brief tips. I'm going to have you skip the next slide and

go directly into the tips because I think it's important that we get back to the Q&A, I don't want to take too much time here.

One of the things that we can do even if we don't cultivate a regular meditation practice is to just practice awareness as frequently as possible throughout our day and one way that we can do this is that we can choose an activity that we do regularly like walking to the bathroom, logging onto our computer, something that, you know, something that we do regularly and we can use that as a reminder to take 3 intentional deep breaths. First of all, the breath is extremely powerful in terms of regulating the nervous system and engaging the parasympathetic nervous system and to cultivate greater awareness throughout the day is beneficial to see the role of your own thoughts and emotions to work more skillfully with those challenging thoughts and emotions that may come up for you.

And then the next tip here is around practicing appreciation and of course appreciation is widely used as a well-being practice. As we are speaking about appreciation here, what we're talking about is the skill of noticing the positive. So we have for biological and evolutionary reasons, we have what is called the negativity bias and that means that we have a tendency to notice what's wrong rather than noticing what's right and it's something that has been with us ever since we were cave people it really served us well when we were seeking threats in the environment and trying to stay away from the saber tooth tiger but what's happened is that this mechanism has carried forth into modern day and it's not so useful so we have a tendency to respond with a very stressful response to simple things like a single emotional threat so what we can do here is reorient ourselves to the positive things that are happening in our lives, the fact that we have the opportunity for example right now to take part in this conversation, you can appreciate relationships in your lives and/or other circumstances that might be more positive, so, really on taking a practical approach to appreciation and notice something positive about something or someone every day. So, on the next slide, you'll be able to see just our contact information here. Again, we are called Healthy Minds Innovation, our program is called the Healthy Minds program, HM innovations(dot)org, you can find out more about us there but I wanted to point to this as a free resource for you that can potentially support your mental health and well-being during this challenging time. So you can stop the slide share. Thank you so much.

All right. So Lauren, did you have a response to that question about a Fordibility and do you know any resources for affordable mental health resources?

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: So so much of it varies about where you live, first of all. But there is a great nonprofit called open path psycho therapy collective and they have, I think, it's open path psycho therapy(dot)org is I think what their website is but if you go there, that's a bunch of private practice therapist, it's a directory of private practice therapist that will see people from anywhere between 30 and \$60 a session. Which is, you know, very inexpensive as far as therapy goes.

Many insurances do cover therapy. And if you find a therapist that you like who doesn't take insurance, a lot of insurances will reimburse you some amount so you can always call your insurance company and ask. If you don't have insurance, so, you could try open path which again is a national thing, I would look around in your area too to see if there are any places that offer pro bono know inexpensive therapy, in Maryland we have the inexpensive therapy which is a project I'm apart of where private practice therapist volunteer their time and take one or two pro bono know yous at a time and that is for people that are uninsured or underinsured and that is my first recommendation, there is also things like Better Help and a couple of other ones that I know of. Those sort of online therapy things that are, I think, they're usually somewhat around 25/\$30 a

month to have sessions with a therapist or texting or chatting or e-mailing with a therapist.

So there are all kinds of options out there. Also, group counselling. Which is often very inexpensive. Or even just finding a support group, there are a huge amount of online support groups out there for all kinds of things, just mental health or in particular or addictions, specifically -- I'm trying to remember -- I think it might be NAMI, the national association for mental illness, they have good support groups, so if you just Google support groups, you'll probably find some free support groups and especially in community, you can sometimes do speedier healings than a 1-on-1 therapy session so yeah, that is all the thoughts I have on on that for now.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: That's so helpful and thank you so much for mentioning that group therapy because it's my own experience as group coaching that it's my experience that a lot of peer to peer experiences, a lot of healing can occur from a group. So thank you for that. Yeah.

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: Absolutely.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Someone asked a question that I can answer superficially and if there are notes afterwards, I can send the link to the research article but the question is that research indicates that the most significant factor in human well-being is social connection, can you expand a little on this finding? So there is an are research study that has been done, I believe, that looked at loneliness and feelings of isolation and loneliness compared to obesity and found that actually the impact of loneliness and isolation on mortality was, I think, more than double the risk over physical health like obesity which I thought was a really interesting finding because when you think about well-being, you often think about really the physical, right? You think about the body, and you know healthy eating and exercise and this was demonstrating the importance of social connection on health and so I'll see if I can find that research study and see if it can get distributed to you all. Okay. Let's see...

>> JULIA ADOLPHE: I just wanted to add one comment while you're looking at the chat questions. I also wanted to share when I was looking at all of your practices on the health minds, a really important practice for me has been journalling and it does kind of substitute almost a therapist in certain ways but just having a practice where you are just getting everything that you are thinking and feeling out on paper without judgment, that can be a really important practice gratitude journalling and then I also just wanted to say that all of these practices meditation, deep breathing, walking, a lot of the self-care things that we hear about are all incredibly important but I just wanted to say as one who technically have a mental illness that requires medication and none of those practices -- none of those practices would impact me if I didn't have the initial medication that I'm on so that is just to say that there are certain times you're in a situation where, like I remember my psychiatrist said if you want today do yoga to feel better, you'd have to be doing yoga 24 hours a day and so that's just to say for those of you that have tried a lot of you, the meditation and have been frustrated, and you are struggling, it could also be that you need a psychiatric evaluation, so just wanted to put that in.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Yeah, thank you so much, like having some kind of baseline of mental health to be able to work with, I really appreciate that perspective.

>> LAUREN AYCOCK: I was going to say the same thing if you go to therapy and not made a lot of progress, sometimes medication is the answer or even if you have access to a doctor, perhaps, but you don't have coverage for therapy. Right? Or the money for therapy. Then maybe discussing what sort of medication options there are because again, especially if your functioning is not going well.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: Yeah right --

>> SIDNEY HOPSON: Sorry, the last few minutes here. You know, I just want to say because I would be remiss not to as this gathering of course is orchestraal representatives and musicians, I just wanted to reinforce how critical as we develop ask cultivate and search and settle on practices for ourselves and our care, I do hope this conversation in its own ways is communicated to the other musicians and staff members at various institutions and it is so critical that as that process continues, that ultimately, it has to get measured against the basic question of like are we making a place for everyone, right? Because mindfulness, is of course so critical, that is why we are all here but there are a few things that are devastating as being deeply aware of something that is terribly wrong, so clarity is critical but we have to be able to understand, that for example, for me, as a black musician, I and so many of my colleagues are very aware of what it means to participate in an ensemble that uses narrative that is promote the universality of music but still maintain very exclusive practices or music is a universal language but there are essentially 50 guys that spoke it well and to essentially exist within this space where, you know, to simply go to work is to inadvertently participate in a cultural erasure, even your own erasure is very devastating and as we have this conversation about wellness and well-being, I just hope we continue to connect the dots all the way to every individual in our sphere of influence, to every individual on our payroll, to every individual in the audience and that we really take a hard look at the full extent that we are committing to these practices because I guess we need to start, often in our own circle and our own heads and our own world and our own space as again, we collectively and as a community as an industry, hopefully again continue to normalize this, I just really hope we also commit to extending these lessons and these values in just the day-to-day treatment and interactions and programming and financial practices that we maintain in executing the functions of our organizations so that's my sermon.

>> STEPHANIE WAGNER: That is such an inspiring way to close. Thank you so much, Sidney, I really appreciate those words. So, we are at the end of our time together. A lot of just wisdom shared within this group so I want to deeply thank each and every one of you for first of all, showing up totally authentically and sharing your own experience and what you have been navigating and what has worked and been supportive for you and you know, I know each one of you is on social media so this information has been distributed, I'm on social media, I know your websites were included in the invitation, so please check out everybody, what they are doing and you got lots of hopefully information and things to try going forward from this point so many many thanks to the League of American Orchestra for putting on this amazing event and Amanda, do you have some closing words you'd like to say?

>> AMANDA DIAZ: Yeah, just a few things if you are done, Stephanie. Well, thank you all so much for being apart of this really important discussion. We hope to continue these in the future because this is a topic that really is an ongoing concern and we hope to provide resources to help everyone and bring attention to this topic, I hope you found this webinar to be helpful and you're able to take away some tips in talking about and taking care of your mental health, everyone who registered for the discussion will receive an e-mail with the recording and the PowerPoint and the transcript. A final reminder, if you can, please fill out the survey to share your feedback on today's session.

We look forward to seeing you at our next webinar: Arts Industry Data Analysis: Pandemic Response with Erik Gensler and Capacity Interactive, taking place in two weeks on

Wednesday,
March 10, at 3 PM Eastern.
Thanks again for joining us today. We look forward to seeing you soon!

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