



9/23/2020

“Anything that is human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable.”

– Fred Rodgers

September is Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, and while that designation gives us the opportunity to bring awareness to the topic, mental health is not tied to a calendar. The challenges many of us are currently facing are staggering, and will no doubt continue past the current month. From the pandemic to drastic changes in work and school habits to the unprecedented wildfire season and all its associated losses—any one of these things alone would be difficult to shoulder. Together, the weight is enormous, but none of us have to carry the burden alone. If you or someone you know is struggling, many resources can be found from the National Institute of Mental Health at <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/education-awareness/shareable-resources-on-suicide-prevention.shtml>. Please reach out if you need help, check in on your friends and family, and check in on the people who always seem to be checking in on others. It may be their way of asking for help. We're in this together. You are not alone.



## Mentoring Program Accepting Protégé and Mentor Applications

The Forest Service Mentoring Program is accepting applications from employees interested in being a mentor or a protégé. A protégé is an employee who is paired with a higher-grade mentor for the purpose of furthering the protégé's professional development. Protégé applications are being accepted from October 1 through December 31, 2020.

The Forest Service Mentoring Program provides employees with opportunities to broaden their experience, accomplish development goals, and cultivate new skills. Mentoring is an excellent way to transfer institutional knowledge and convey the agency's values, commitments, and expectations.

- Protégés are paired with a mentor one to two grade levels above their own
- Up to 15% official time is approved for use
- Protégé and mentor pairings are between six months to one year long

- After the mentoring period, protégés are expected to give back one year as a mentor

If you are interested in being a protégé, obtain your supervisor's approval and then apply on the [National Mentoring Program Portal](#).

**Mentors are needed** and interested employees are encouraged to apply to become a mentor. Mentoring is a rewarding experience that enables you to grow your leadership skills while contributing your knowledge, guidance, and support to the protégés professional development. If you are interested, obtain your supervisor's approval and apply on the [National Mentoring Program Portal](#).

For more information, visit the [Work Environment and Performance Office \(WEPO\) Training and Employee Development \(T&ED\) site](#). For questions, contact Doralee Cumpian, Program Manager, at our [T&ED Mentoring Program shared mailbox](#).

## Check Your Inbox! Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey 2020

To allow agencies the opportunity to focus on challenges with COVID-19 and other societal issues, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) delayed the 2020 annual FEVS administration until September 16, 2020 – October 28, 2020 with the hopes of maximizing employee participation. Your viewpoints are important because they help us gauge our progress and determine areas to improve our Work Environment. Please save the date and be on the lookout for an e-mail from OPM and take the time to respond to the survey.

## Upcoming Work Environment Webinars, Courses, and Events

### Training and Employee Development

#### New Employee Onboarding Webinars

This series is designed for newly onboarded employees who need a “quick start” to the Forest Service. The webinars are available as a two-day webinar series featuring presentations covering many topics such as leave, work schedules, health and life insurance, Paycheck8, AgLearn, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Specialists are available to answer your questions during the presentations. For the complete 2020 schedule and presentation recordings, please visit our [Training & Employee Development webpage](#).

**Dates:** October 6 - 7, 2020

**Duration:** 6 hours each day

**Time:** 7:00 a.m. Alaska / 8:00 a.m. Pacific / 9:00 a.m. Mountain / 10:00 a.m. Central / 11:00 a.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard

**Type of Session:** Webinar/Adobe Connect Meeting

**How to Join:** [Adobe Connect](#) (Audio is available through your computer speakers)

## Resilience & Personal Effectiveness

The Resilience & Personal Effectiveness program has several [upcoming offerings and many recorded webinars](#) intended to help change our response to stressors, cope with anxiety, and build resilience through medical and science-based techniques.

### Weekly Guided Breaks

Mindfulness Meditation is a simple, effective method that can help us be more productive and face setback with resiliency. The right side of our brain, which is responsible for creating new ideas, will increase in activity when for those who meditate regularly. As a result, improved creativity, engagement, and productivity are often a result. To see the weekly guided breaks schedule, please [click here](#).

**Date:** Friday, September 25, 2020

**Time:** 7:00 a.m. Alaska / 8:00 a.m. Pacific / 9:00 a.m. Mountain / 10:00 a.m. Central / 11:00 a.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard

**Type of Session:** Conference Call

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Call -in Number:** 1-888-844-9904; Passcode 5637452#

**Hosted By:** Michelle Reugebrink, Work Environment & Performance Office

### Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

We will offer another MBSR series starting September 29, 2020. Please contact [Michelle Reugebrink](#) to sign up before September 24, 2020.

**Dates:** Tuesdays September 29-November 17, 2020 (2 to 2.5 hrs. each Tuesday for 8 weeks)

**Time:** 7:00 a.m. Alaska / 8:00 a.m. Pacific / 9:00 a.m. Mountain / 10:00 a.m. Central / 11:00 a.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard

**Type of Session:** Conference Call (More information will be provided at sign-up)

**Hosted By:** Michelle Reugebrink, Work Environment & Performance Office

## Recorded Webinars

### Communicating Effectively During the Performance Appraisal Process

Performance-based discussions are often challenging and can sometimes be stressful. Effective communication can change the climate of these conversations by creating a space for meaningful and productive dialogue. Join us to discuss this more, learn some new techniques, and share ways to make this process more valuable by communicating respectfully.

<https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/puswq69edtmz/>

**Playing time:** 1 hour, 37 minutes

**Presented By:** Linda Burroughs-Glover, Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist, Conflict Management and Prevention Center Manager (CMPC)

**Noticing Our Response to Our Stressors & Anxiety: Foundation for a Healthy and Productive Response (Part 2 of 5) \*Can be attended as a 5 part series or individually.**

At times like these, it can be difficult to remain calm and focused. It's easy to get caught up in fearful or worried thinking about what might happen. Stress and anxiety are a part of life, especially during these times of uncertainty—however they don't need to control your day.

<https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/p3gs2y4mqp6g/>

**Playing time:** 1 hour

**Hosted By:** Michelle Reugebrink, Work Environment & Performance Office

## Conversations with Colleagues

For several weeks, employees have been gathering virtually for conversations meant to create a space for us to support each other, share their thoughts, listen, learn, and be heard. You can listen to these powerful conversations at the links below.

9/1 – Panel reflecting on conversations <https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/p4y6jafdluo3/>

8/20 – Shane Zimmerman, Rebekah Prather, and Carolyn Warden

<https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/psehsxiqkw5u/>

7/31 – Mary King and Mike Donaldson: <https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/ptnhrdh3glmd/>

7/23 – Jeff Patterson and Kenneth Titus: <https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/pw33wvx1ws14/>

7/17 – Jeff Patterson and Kenneth Titus: <https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/pkdyuagz99r6/>

7/10 – Marla Collins and Tina Bailey: <https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/pokmu41g49yr/>

7/8 – Marla Collins and Tina Bailey: <https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/po799vv8lnhe/>

## Keep the Conversation Going: Be a Host!

You don't have to wait for the next scheduled Conversation with Colleagues to keep up this vital dialogue. WEPO has the resources to help you host your own Conversation! Contact [Rebecca Wallace](#) for a facilitator's guide that provides tools for holding respectful conversations on challenging topics. The Conflict Management Prevention Center also has a [list of facilitators](#) available to assist, or contact Brandy Billie-Moore, Amy Padilla, Lois Lawson, or Rick Balolong in the [Civil Rights office](#).

## Additional Tools and Resources

### September is Suicide Prevention Month

Check out the REACH suicide prevention campaign: <https://www.wearewithinreach.net/>

## **Shareable Resources on Suicide Prevention from National Institute for Mental Health**

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/education-awareness/shareable-resources-on-suicide-prevention.shtml>

## **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Visit this [sharepoint site](#) for more information on the Employee Assistant Program.

## **National Institute for Mental Health**

The National Institute for Mental Health is a great source of information to help us navigate these challenging times.

[Mental Health Resources](#)

[Shareable Resources on Coping with COVID-19](#)