WiN’s vision is to help develop women into their fullest professional potential. While positive progress toward that goal often means leadership training, mentoring and other services, personal well-being should not be overlooked. Many resources are available for support to include physical and mental health, motivation and wellness. Maintaining a balanced lifestyle and optimal wellness is key to obtaining your goals. This document outlines tips, resources and advice for making positive progress and getting the support you need.

www.winnrcs.org

Women in NRCS (WiN) membership is open to all conservation partners, FPAC, and those whom support WiN’s mission and vision.
The work we do as public servants is important. Lapse in appropriations the past few years has caused frequent furlough situations. The following pages are resources and suggested tips to guard yourself and maintain your optimal physical, mental, and financial well-being during trying times.

**BEFORE FURLOUGH**

- Obtain co-workers’ cell phones/personal emails to remain in contact for moral support.
- Bring home work plants and food.
- Gather 2 paystubs, SF-50, passwords, and any veteran paperwork needed for unemployment.
Women in NRCS (WiN) Support Resources

**Physical & Mental Health:**
- Stay busy and create a list!
- Spring clean your home
- Develop personal interests you’ve “never had time for” (piano, quilting, planning a wedding, Tai Chi, cutting your own hair, changing the oil in your car)
- Begin a new fitness routine or increase your current routine
- Socialize and catch up with friends
- Go to doctor appointments as necessary
- Ensure to take all needed medicine
- Utilize health saving accounts and insurance
- Seek out low cost entertainment by utilizing community parks and libraries

**Income:**
- File for unemployment
- Line up other work

**Managing Resources**
- Defer payments, as needed
- Negotiate with creditors
- Create a “needs” budget (via Excel, QuickBooks, Apps)
- Only pay “needs” (consider cancelling internet and cable)
- Reduce your “wants” (coffee, pet grooming, etc.)
- Insure and drive one car, the most fuel efficient. Park the others for now. Work with the bank or sell the extra vehicle, if possible.
- Utilize public transportation, if available
- Shop at discount stores (Grocery Outlets, Thrift Stores)
- Cook budget meals at home and reduce food waste. Utilize meat sparingly or cook dried beans and legumes. Google budget recipes or frugal recipes. Cook from your pantry, shop with a list when you are not hungry.
- Utilize local food banks in times of need. That is what they are available for. Pay it forward when resources allow.

**USDA EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

(800) 222-0364
TTY: (888) 262-7848
Open 24/7, Available to spouses of government employees.
Manage Stress in Tough Economic Times

Pause but don’t panic. There are many negative stories in newspapers and on television about the state of the economy. Pay attention to what’s happening around you, but refrain from getting caught up in doom-and-gloom hype, which can lead to high levels of anxiety and bad decision making. Avoid the tendency to overreact or to become passive. Remain calm and stay focused.

Identify your financial stressors and make a plan. Take stock of your particular financial situation and what causes you stress. Write down specific ways you and your family can reduce expenses or manage your finances more efficiently. Then commit to a specific plan and review it regularly. Although this can be anxiety-provoking in the short term, putting things down on paper and committing to a plan can reduce stress. If you are having trouble paying bills or staying on top of debt, reach out for help by calling your bank, utilities or credit card company.

Recognize how you deal with stress related to money. In tough economic times, some people are more likely to relieve stress by turning to unhealthy activities like smoking, drinking, gambling or emotional eating. The strain can also lead to more conflict and arguments between partners. Be alert to these behaviors — if they are causing you trouble, consider seeking help from a psychologist or community mental health clinic before the problem gets worse.

Stay up to date with USDA furlough communications here: https://www.dm.usda.gov/beprepared/index.php

Citation: https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/economic-stress
Turn these challenging times into opportunities for real growth and change. Times like this, while difficult, can offer opportunities to take stock of your current situation and make needed changes. Think of ways that these economic challenges can motivate you to find healthier ways to deal with stress. Try taking a walk—it’s an inexpensive way to get good exercise. Having dinner at home with your family may not only save you money, but help bring you closer together. Consider learning a new skill. Take a course through your employer or look into low-cost resources in your community. The key is to use this time to think outside the box and try new ways of managing your life.

Ask for professional support. Credit counseling services and financial planners are available to help you take control over your money situation. If you continue to be overwhelmed by the stress, you may want to talk with a psychologist who can help you address the emotions behind your financial worries, manage stress, and change unhealthy behaviors.

Women in NRCS (WiN) Support Resources

Employment Organization Involvement

- Take advantage of employee organization member benefits.
- Participate in committees—these activities are great resume and networking builders!
- Work on professional development opportunities, find free resources online or reach out to your national network that you’ve worked with.

Citation: https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/economic-stress
WORK:LIFE BALANCE NUGGETS
Article Submitted by Terrell Erikson

1. Work effectively every hour then leave it.
2. Closely guard your time. If a coworker asks you to complete additional tasks, say you need to check your calendar first and get back to them. Set boundaries.
3. Put your health first!
4. Exercise and meditate—walk at lunch, take the stairs instead of the elevator.
5. Designate your evenings and weekends as family times.
6. Unplug! Check mobile devices once or twice a day only.
7. Don’t strive for perfection. Sometimes if something is broken and it’s not your job, don’t take it on. Let it go, let it fall apart.

JOIN A BOOK CLUB
**To Do List Ideas:**

- Make medical appointments
- Begin new fitness routine or increase your current routine
- Spend time on hobbies, or learn new ones
- Learn a new musical instrument
- Learn how to cook a new signature dish
- Visit your local library or art museum
- Quilt, bake, or learn how to use your digital camera better
- Relax! Spend an afternoon reading piled up magazines
- Organize your photos
- Start drawing or painting
- Complete necessary yardwork: winterize, plant bulbs for Spring, or start your garden
- Go to a movie in the middle of the day
- Window shop, have a home spa day, or write poetry
- Work on organizing your personal computer, delete old emails
- Begin writing your family history or a memoir
- Review your household budget

---

**WELLNESS**

**To Do List Ideas:**

* Get active—work out, help neighbors
* Volunteer at church, your local schools, food banks or other civil organizations in your community
* Get ready for seasonal sports by checking out your skis, skates, and other equipment
* Meal prep crockpot meals for when you go back to work
* Correct your pet’s bad behavior during this time by spending more time training them
* If you have family within a couple hundred miles, hop in the car and go visit them
* If you have school age children, visit them at lunch time in school
* Pack a lunch and meet your spouse or partner for lunch at their job.
* Take a walk in nature
* Meditate or practice yoga
* Sign up to be a substitute teacher
* Sell your crafts on Etsy
* Complete a home improvement project
* Make your holiday and birthday gift lists
* Make a collage of kid’s drawings and artwork or get them framed for holiday gifts
* Plan a yard sale. discard, donate, or sell (outgrown or outdated) kid toys or clothes
* Complete home projects you’ve been putting off
Co-workers

We all have co-workers, managers and supervisors. We all have a variety of views, personal and political. Start preparing your strategy for dealing with comments that “may be made” regarding what has happened over the last couple of weeks. Remain calm, professional and avoid being pulled into a debate. If you are a supervisor of staff, they will look to you and see how you proceed. You must show leadership and professionalism. Welcome them back, let them know that you’re happy to see them and focus on what steps need to be taken to get the work done for the week. If you see or hear employees making comments about the politics of the shutdown, gauge the reactions of the other staff members. If you see signs of discomfort or anger, step in and refocus the conversation on work. You may have to make a “short” speech reminding the staff that we are all government employees with a variety of views that we are entitled to, however, let’s not make each other uncomfortable. If you are the employee and your supervisor is not taking the lead in ensuring that political talk is not getting out of hand, you take the lead in stating the same. We are all government employees with a variety of political views, but we share a common goal in our dedication to helping people who help the land, so let’s get back to work. Don’t be bashful, don’t be shy. Be firm and it won’t be long before things will calm down and we will get past this.

RETURNING TO WORK

*Article submitted by Sharyn Alvarez*
Customers

It is possible that when you come back to work you may have to deal with some disgruntled customers. You will have to hear comments on any number of topics. You need to be prepared. It would be a good idea if you and the office staff are all using the same talking points. But if that is not the case, prepare your own. Keep your comments simple. You can say something like, “I regret the inconvenience, how can I help you now,” and smile. You are a government representative and some customers may feel that they can vent their frustration to you. It may be hard, but try not to take their comments personally. Admit that you do understand their frustration: “if we can put it aside and focus on what you need now, we can take steps to help you.” It may be a good idea to have another employee listen in and come to the desk to back you up if necessary. We are living in unprecedented times; however, if we think ahead and are prepared and have each other’s backs, we can and will deal with any challenges effectively.

*Suggested Phone Apps & Resources:

- Mint.com (budgeting)
- Every Dollar (budgeting)
- Poshmark (selling designer clothes)
- Shop savvy (coupons)
- Mindbody (exercise/workout class promos)
- Meet Up (social)
- All Trails (exercise)
- Head Space (meditation)
- Oak (meditation)
- www.budgetbytes.com
- www.afrugalchick.com
- Clark Howard, Dave Ramsey, Rachel Cruz
- Amazon (free books with prime membership)
Women in NRCS (WiN) Support Resources

WiN offers various member services, including book clubs, “In-it to Win-It” bi-monthly calls to include training, professional development and member support, scholarships, national leadership trainings, and more. Our organization is a 501c3 non-profit employee organization recognized by NRCS. We encourage everyone to become involved to the extent practicable for you by joining a committee. Visit our website below to learn more about opportunities that WiN provides, and gain a network of support via a WiN membership!

www.winnrcs.org

Women in NRCS (WiN) membership is open to all conservation partners, FPAC, and those whom support WiN’s mission and vision.