

# ICARE



Interagency Collaborative Animal Research Education

September 16, 2020

## **ICARE Dialogues: Optimizing Performance During the Pandemic Crisis: Managing Teams Across Multiple Locations and Circumstances**

**Presenters:** Interagency Collaborative Animal Research Education (ICARE) Project faculty members: Ivonne Chand O'Neal, Lynn Anderson, Jennifer Klahn, William Singleton, and Susan Silk with guest Lynette Overby

A record of this meeting will be posted on the OLAW website (<https://olaw.nih.gov/home.htm>) on the ICARE Project webpage (<https://olaw.nih.gov/education/icare-interagency>).

Silk: It is my pleasure to begin our session. We have two topics today. Both of those topics are related to optimizing performance during the pandemic crisis. First, we will hear about managing teams across multiple locations and circumstances. So it is my pleasure to introduce the lead presenter for **Managing Teams across Multiple Locations and Circumstances**, Ivonne O'Neal and she will introduce her team.

Chand O'Neal: Hello, everyone, I am really honored to be here with you today. My name is Ivonne Chand O'Neal. My background is in cognitive science. I study creativity and I study decision making, critical thinking, and problem solving. I look at it in a number of different domains so that's a little bit about my background and that's the perspective with which I come to you today. I would love to introduce the rest of my team that will be presenting along with me. Lynn, would you mind beginning the introduction, please?

Anderson: Hi, everybody. I am really happy to have such a great audience here today. I am Lynn Anderson. I am retired after over 35 years working in industry, both pharmaceutical companies and contract research organizations. I am a veterinarian by training and ultimately ended up being the IO or institutional official for several different organizations prior to retirement.

Singleton: My name is William Singleton. I have been in the business for 30 years. I graduated in '91 from vet school and have been doing this work for a while. I don't feel that old. Not that I am old but it has been a while.

Silk: You look so young.

Singleton: I know. And I celebrated a birthday on Monday.

Silk: You must have gone to vet school when you were 12.

Singleton: I was 3.

Silk: Happy birthday.

Singleton: Thank you. I have worked in various pharmaceutical companies, academia and start-ups. So what I found over the years, looking at training, how people perform well - it seems like as I am learning and going through our understanding about the business - really everything kind of revolves around teams and the success of your teams. So I am super excited about this opportunity to have this dialogue and discussion to see how you guys are doing with your teams, particularly now as we are dealing with this pandemic and all kinds of other things in our world that might impact how our team performs.

Chand O'Neal: We are glad you are on our team, William. And, Jen

Klahn: Good morning or good afternoon, depending where you are. I am Jennifer Klahn. I am the director of Research Safety and Animal Welfare at UCLA. I have been in administration for 20 years, so I started it at the bottom of the office as a specialist, logging protocols and I have grown with the office. Through the office we now provide administrative support to multiple safety committees, including biosafety, and other groups. Our team was 100 percent based in the office until March of this year. The tag line from senior administration was always you need to be in the office, you need to be in the office. So we have learned a lot in the last six months and I am excited to talk about that today.

Chand O'Neal: Thank you, everyone. We invited you all to send in questions and concerns and topics to discuss today. Thank you so much for your participation. It has really helped to set the priorities for what we talk about. Our goals are the to talk about how the management of teams has taken place during this time, how to become nimble, how have we needed to change the way we communicate with each other? How has it changed the way we have needed to nurture each other and lift each other up and to find ways to be more productive and more flexible in the way we think about how teams actually function and how they work together.

So this session will explore all of these different topics and how people have navigated the situation successfully and what we have learned, what some of the challenges were, how we have navigated those challenges. I would like to begin by sharing a comment from one of our participants. They said,

*We are continuously losing team members to illness or other leave, furloughs and other positions, and being told that no one can be replaced due to negative budget. My biggest*

*pandemic challenge as administrator is operating at a level that is only been more and more short staffed, with management that refuses to prioritize or reduce any workload and seems to believe that sending some employees to work remotely has given us more hours in a day. Frustration and burnout are high, leaving us unable to cope adequately with normal workload, pandemic topics or social unrest, either during or after work hours. Technology and practice have given us practical tools and solutions we immediate for remote work at multiple locations. We have good work-arounds for about any task at this point. We simply do not have the time or mental resources for employees to feel any security anymore.*

So this, I think, really captures this feeling of frustration of discomfort and just not knowing what to do next or really how to help the team function at its best. One thing that is really important to consider as we try to pinpoint how to address aspects of our team dynamic -- it is really important to think about the type of team it is. Is it administration focused? Is it about scheduling? Is it really about the nuts and bolts of how a team interacts with animal welfare? All of those different types of foci really help us how to set up the team to work differently to meet the goals of a project. So with that, I would like to hand it off to William and have him talk a little bit about our next topic: individual team needs.

Singleton: I think that the comment that you read, Ivonne, is significant. If, on one hand, there are resources to do some of the work, but on the other hand, there is that emotional part that is not being cared for, and that is impacting performance and productivity. So has anyone else in the group had similar experience where in some cases resources are available but you are feeling like you are not being taken care of emotionally?

Silk: Well, one of the things I notice, William, is that all the time is the same, so since I work in the room where I also relax, I feel like I should be working all the time.

Singleton: Yes. And so I think too. The comment that was made that while you are working from home, you have more time to work.

Silk: Yep.

Singleton: And so people do need barriers. Like when do you stop working and how do you make that happen?

Silk: I work for myself now, so this is all self-imposed. It is not even coming from someone pressuring me from outside.

Singleton: I would just point out, too, that I think people are reluctant to take time off because - what do you do with your time off? Do you go somewhere? You shouldn't. So, yes, you feel like you are always working, you are always at work.

Hollander: A participant writes to us in the chat line: mental bandwidth issues has been an issue for my staff, especially because one of them is new, so the training this person had stopped.

How do I prioritize their work and support them and also prioritize my own mental health and support my family's needs? It has been a constant struggle.

Singleton: And I think that is probably a familiar problem to a lot of folks. It is like that balance that we have talked for a long time in the work world. It is about work / life balance and how you need to kind of balance between the two. That is really hard now. I think the reality is there really are no distinguishing lines between work and the rest-- it is all kind of measured together. Like for you, Susan. I mean you are at work and at home - everything is right there. And I think that you were saying the same thing, participant. I am sure a lot of people can kind of speak to that, too.

Silk: You know, this is one of the reasons we are holding this session. So we hope that you get some strategies from what we talk about today, but also just naming this and sharing that it is an experience happening to all of us, helps us bring more awareness and thoughtfulness to our own situation. So you hit the nail on the head, it is a constant struggle and maybe we can help each other with that.

Singleton: Yes. That's the goal. That maybe other folks in this group have had similar situations they can speak about. A couple of things I wanted to talk about in this segment are expectations around performance of work. How have you been able to delineate what is expected? How do you communicate expectations? Communicate just to stay connected and engaged? And finding ways to make sure everyone stays accountable to the work they are doing. So I guess first question would be who is working from home and who is working in the office? And are you doing office or animal facility work? Or are you doing a hybrid and how is that working for you? And I suspect as people are chiming in, it will be kind of a mix -- a lot of people from home. Okay.

Hollander: Mixed bag, it looks like.

Singleton: Yes, yes. So when you think about when you are working, how have you been able to manage the expectations? And this is what we are talking about. Like what is expected of you now? Has that changed now that you are home or being expected do more because you are either working from home or working in the office? Has your level of expectation changed and have there been conversations around expectation?

Klahn: It is a really interesting question, William. I haven't really given that much thought about my expectations. But I know one thing that did change when we went remote is I never used to take a lunch break. I would always just bring my lunch, sit at my desk and eat while I worked. Now I protect my 12:00 to 1:00 every day. If someone wants to schedule a meeting during that time, I don't take it. The flip side of that is that I feel like I am always

working, you know, eight to 12:00 and 1:00 to 5:00 and I check e-mail before and after that, so it is a really good question.

Singleton: I think, though, that's an interesting thing, because COVID snuck up on a lot of people really quickly. All of a sudden you are being asked to do things completely differently and without having firm conversations about what expectations are, people can do a lot of different things. I could do less or take some time to really crank out some work I have never been able to do before that could lead to some of the issues of burnout we have been experiencing.

Hollander: Tracy made a nice comment on the chat at the National Park Service, they have specifically scheduled calls for wellness checks of their staff and discussions of the staff regarding childcare, caregiver needs, and how that relates to their work burden and she said that has really helped.

Singleton: Yes. And that is great, Tracy, thank you for sharing that because that was my next question. In this new environment, how are we staying connected and communicating with those folks who may in fact have to be at work while we are at home? Or if we are working remotely, are we still finding the need to stay connected. And I think there are a lot of different ways in which people have been connected. Many people have done Zoom calls, text messages. I am curious as to what methods are you guys using to stay connected with each other? Are you staying connected with each other?

Hollander: There is so much happening in the chat right now.

Singleton: That's awesome. And hopefully as you are reading the comments, you can learn from each other. Anyone here sick and tired of virtual meetings?

Silk: There is my third one today. I am sick of them. But this one is fun, it is the most fun of all of them.

Singleton: I think that it is really important for us to think about how we stay connected because it is really easy to get disconnected. I think there might have been some comments from the last time we offered this session about getting communication fatigue. Like I always have to reach out and talk, always reach out and connect but I would encourage you to continue to find meaningful ways to stay connected with your team. Because when you think about expectations and burnouts and resources (which we will talk about a little bit later) the only way you will know is if you talk about it. So I think that no matter what mechanism we use to stay connected, that we must be authentic in those moments of connection. They don't have to be long. I think I heard some statistic that people are meeting more but the meeting times are less. So there is not this standard one hour per meeting, but maybe you just need 15 minutes and maybe you need ten, maybe you need an hour, so this allows you to maximize the time you have - to make it meaningful and productive.

Chand O'Neal: There is a meeting I was a part of just last week where a person within the meeting had a check-in with all of us where we had to talk about our high and our low for that week. On a different day, when someone else led the meeting, we had to talk about our favorite sitcom and which character we wanted to have dinner with and why. And there was something about the way it set the tone for the meeting that really kind of made everyone's shoulders not to be up around their ears and maybe relax a little bit and really look forward to the work we had ahead of us. We knew we had a lot to do on that call but it certainly changed the tone of what we were about to engage in together. So there was something nice about that.

Hollander: There were two things I noticed on the chat. Somebody said, "We have lost some senior people, and therefore our workload is increasing." And another says, "I look hideous on my web cam so Zoom meetings aren't my favorite."

Silk: Here is a trick for you. If you go deep into Zoom in the Video Camera section, there is a little button on there that smooths out all of your wrinkles - you will notice how stunning I look today - and it is because I know about this secret Zoom button that you can push. It says, "Touch up my appearance. [Laughter]

Singleton: Really? I will have to find it.

Silk: Well the other trick is - you have got to get your camera at an angle so it is not looking up your nose. [She adjusts her camera, then adjusts it back.] See, this is much better. Have your eyes at camera level. And push that secret Zoom button, touch up my appearance.

Singleton: Yes. I love it. If there could be an upside to the way we have to stay connected with each other, it gives us the space to be a little more personal, like you see me on a bad day and bad hair day or my cat walking across the desk, but, you know, it is a little bit more personable and a little more real and authentic.

Hollander: A participant has a good comment, where she works, on Monday mornings, they do a 30-minute meeting where they talk about anything but work.

Singleton: That is a really good way, maybe after the weekend, if you are not going out, to get some adult conversation time. Does haven't to do with work and get you - kind of - ready for the week to come.

Hollander: Another participant made an interesting comment. He just started his new role two weeks ago and he had to start remotely. He actually is looking forward to going on-site, because he only has met everyone he works with through Zoom and e-mails.

Singleton: Well, so this is rich. I mean I think we can talk a lot about this but I want to be sensitive to the time and to our next speaker. So I will turn it over to Jen and she will talk more about how we stay connected and engaged during this time.

Klahn: Okay. Thanks, William. I was really enjoying reading the comments in the chat, because I found that I would read one comment and I could relate to it and read the next one and it would be almost the opposite but I also could relate to that. So I found that really interesting. Similar to the last participant's comment, my office, which again I will say was 100 percent staffed in the office up until March, we have recruited two new staff since we have been remote. There are two new members of our team who have really never met anybody else in the office and so we have had to try to find ways to make sure that they felt engaged and that they get to know their colleagues. One of the things we do is we have weekly staff meetings via Zoom. When all of this started, there was some guidance from leadership about how to use Zoom because – again - I mentioned leadership wasn't the biggest fan of people of telecommuting, but they felt this is what we have to do.

One of the recommendations they made was that for all Zoom meetings, video should be on all the time. That was tough for me, because those first couple of weeks I was in pajamas and I wouldn't shower until 6:00 o'clock at night and make-up was optional most of the time. I was having a really tough time and the idea that now I have to be on Zoom. And it was cold, too. It was March, it was cold. I was wearing a bathrobe and sitting in my kitchen freezing. So it was a struggle, but I made the commitment to having my video on and just seeing each other's faces and being able to kind of see how people are responding to the various things. We always start our team meetings - even before all of this - we would start with our team meetings with "What did everybody do over the weekend? Did you watch anything good? I saw this great movie." So that was great.

I love that people are responding in the chat. So I appreciate that, you know, we all had a similar experience here. So, yes, so we were doing weekly team meetings. Is everybody doing some sort of regular check in with their teams, either weekly or monthly, you know, everybody together or one-on-ones? I see a yes. Nobody is out there daily?

Hollander: Yes. Yes. Regular check-ins weekly. Yes. Two times a month. Weekly. By phone conference, no video.

Klahn: Yes, after a while video does get a little tiresome, you always have to have your game face on. We found that folks were really struggling initially and so in addition to our recurring staff meeting on Mondays we started having a meeting on Fridays and the point of the Friday meeting was for everybody to connect at the end of the week. We started off by asking, "What kind of challenges were people facing?" But after a couple of weeks it became more, let's play a game, let's watch a movie. Way back in April we decided at the end of the day on Friday we wanted to watch Cats, the recent release of Cats, which is really awful. But it provided an excellent bonding experience for everyone. Is anyone doing any kind of fun activity with their teams? Yes. Go ahead.

Participant: Okay. We did, which was just recently, and another participant can speak to this because this is a team he runs in our office, and it was kind of fun. During our team meeting, at the beginning, we each had like 60-seconds to go in our house and get something we think an eighth grader would not have any idea what it is. We had to share it and explain what it was on the Zoom meeting. So it was a lot of fun. This is a new group that he is managing a team that is doing all kinds of different things for all of our groups in our office. Ours is a very big program and we have multiple groups and multiple teams. So trying to find things to keep us active and busy is good too, plus our university runs *The Healthy Program* so we are also giving ideas of ways to stay healthy, mentally, physically, financial situations, things like that. So we start to send out it tools like that and they ask us to have champions who spearhead things.

Another participant: I am happy to mention this and to give a little bit more context, I am an animal care director at my university. One of the components - I think it has a lot to do with our leadership identifying of a lot of problems we are discussing. Kind of their ability to know people's priorities and responsibilities. It is incredibly important to remain flexible. Many of us have our own specific roles and responsibilities that are defined by bullet points, and are siloed objectives of what you need to get accomplished every month but very rarely do we anticipate what we professionally have been calling a RUCKUS team, it is like a SWAT team. We have Individual members from individual groups and we do a weekly meeting, basically to plan out a kind of organizational project management in mental health. We have diversity, equity, inclusion conversations. We have all hands on deck, literal a SWAT team, and we have been able to utilize that for our COVID-related projects where it is just like nobody has the bandwidth to do this but our RUCKUS team does because we created that platform. Reengagement concerns, collaborations and partnerships with other facilities in the administrative departments in our area as well. Accreditation came our way, so we were able to flex our RUCKUS team as well and we created this very intentionally and being mindful of who was on the team and now I am proud to say our team itself is actualizing with their own projects they need. These includes things like fun games in a staff meeting or just check in and developing new ideas around. We are calling it a buddy system where we would buddy up with a random person in the staff and just a ten-minute Zoom check in on each other. These this are things we document and certainly those are lessons learned in project management just in terms of the overall application. I will stop talking now, but I wanted to plug us a little bit.

Klahn: Yes. That's great, thank you so much for sharing that. I love the idea of a RUCKUS team and the buddy system is something I will probably have to think about applying to my own team because that sounds amazing. We had a lot of great ideas that people were sharing in the chat -- not talk about work, just talk about life in general, a scavenger hunt on Zoom, a book club, these are all great ideas. One comment that really hit me, though, was a participant said, "I keep meaning to plan things but motivation is working against me. I



have a lot of ideas but to the coordinating and planning portion outside of work has been really difficult.”

I am sure a lot of people can relate to that, because here we are in our homes in a lot of cases and we feel like we are constantly working. We know how important it is to keep morale up, to connect with our colleagues, but we have work. We have visits and we have everything we need to do to keep our business running. The motivation is there, but, you know, just the bandwidth to accomplish this can be really tough. So I love the idea of creating a team who prioritizes these things, the RUCKUS team and maybe that is one way to get that addressed.

For my own group, I have one person who always wants to plan the team picnic or the holiday party or birthdays. So that is who I have gone to - to say every other Friday meeting, we want to play a game. They have taken that on. It is really helpful to have those people who enjoy doing that and give them the reins.

Chand O’Neal: I work with a team where there are a lot of youth who are in marginalized communities that are struggling with a lot of real personal issues during this time of isolation. They have structured this sort of buddy system as well, but they are available to each other to talk about things that they don't want to talk about with other people. It really is a well-being check. It is about - what are you struggling with? How can I help you? Especially when people aren't really feeling comfortable about bringing that out in public during a team meeting, it might be a way for people to know how each other are doing on a more personal level if you find that your teams need that, it seems to work well.

Klahn: Yes. Absolutely. I had some other things I could keep talking about but I don't want extend into Lynn’s time so maybe I can pass this off to Lynn to talk about multiple site dynamics and other topics.

Anderson: I just wanted to add a comment about how an organized, prioritized plan for -- I found, both professionally and personally that it really helps for me- at the end of each day - to make a list of the things that I want to get accomplished the next day and to prioritize them. And I would say more often than not I don't get to everything on the list and so what is left over then gets put into the following day. But that has been very helpful for me to be a little bit more disciplined.

The other thing I think -- we all have to set boundaries in terms of the time -- this has been mentioned before. Cut yourself off at 6:00 o'clock or 5:30 or whatever time it is and you just have to be disciplined and not go back and check e-mail. It’s difficult. I did that for years. I worked remotely for probably the last 15 years of my career and my experience was that it could really increase my productivity, because I have fewer interruptions and don't have people popping in just to chat. But on the other hand, it is very lonely. And so it is really important to keep in touch with your team, with your colleagues. One of the ways to do that was just not having regularly scheduled team meetings but also having one-on-

one meetings with my staff, at least once a week. Even if it is only ten minutes, 15 minutes, just to see how things are going, because some people just don't want to talk about those things in a group meeting. I encourage you to do that as well. The other thing, and this goes to the mental health aspect, get up and move around. There were days, honestly, where I would go for 13 hours without getting up and moving from my desk. My husband would come in and bring me food or whatever but really you have to get up and move around. That goes back to being disciplined and setting boundaries.

I did want to address one question that was sent in ahead of time and I will read it to you. This person said that they *have challenges related to having to do atypical work hours due to working remotely. And they wanted help with when to extend deadlines and how to ask federal agencies or institutional leadership for guidance on what to do in these situations.*

That is a two-part question. Having to do atypical work hours, that is a challenge, especially if you are working, as I did at one point, with people literally all over the world, from China to Canada. To Germany and then throughout the United States. You have to be mindful of setting meetings, if you are working with an international group, and even across the United States, don't expect people to come to work at 5:00 o'clock in the morning just because you are on the west coast, and so forth. So that's one of the reasons this program is scheduled from 1:00 to 4:00, because so many of us are west coast folks.

As far as the second part of that question, and I can't stress this enough, don't hesitate to call OLAW and USDA. You know, they really truly are there to help you and hopefully you are getting a chance to interact with some of these folks on these **ICARE Dialogues**. But OLAW, you can call OLAW (301-496-7163) and ask for a waiver on doing inspections and that waiver doesn't expire, so, yes, you need to confirm that with OLAW. As I understand it, the USDA doesn't even require a waiver, and I think the important thing is -- if you can't meet deadlines, that you document that somehow, whether it is meeting minutes or IACUC meeting minutes, it is an important document not only that you had to extend deadlines but why you have had to extend it. Anybody from OLAW want to elaborate on

OLAW: Yes there is a waiver that is available for the facility inspection and it is going to be talked about in the next session as well. But you can contact the Division of Policy and Education and ask for a waiver for your facility inspection and also to talk about some flexibility to use to be able to complete those, if this pandemic goes on and on. But don't hesitate to call OLAW and ask questions. We are here for you. Everybody is available one way or another, through e-mail, most of us have our office numbers able to be used at our remote locations.

Anderson: Somebody from USDA? Carolyn, can you comment?

McKinnie: Yes. Here I am. Like Lynn said, we do not require a waiver if you are not able to -- conduct those due to COVID. What we are asking is that when you are able conduct an inspection to do so, then you would continue six months following that for the next

inspection and, just like Lynn said, to request that you would document that so that when VMO asks for the records -- that would be there in the minutes, the reason that you had to postpone your semiannual inspection. Okay. Great. Well, I am mindful of the time as well so I am going to move back to our fearless leader.

Chand O'Neal: Yes. Here is comment that came up in the chat and Lynn might have some input on this one. How are people handling difficult conversations right now? I am happy to talk about a couple I have had, but Lynn having done so much remote work, I imagine that you had a couple of these over time. Do you have any advice for the group?

Anderson: It is not easier to have those conversations remotely. When I first started working remotely there was no such thing as Zoom and because of security reasons we weren't allowed to have cameras on our computers. So I wasn't able, in my last position, to see people during those conversations. And I think body language tells you a lot when you are having those difficult conversations. So I would encourage people to be direct but to be understanding. There may be a reason you have no idea about which is causing -- is the underlying cause of what brought this to bear. Does anybody else want to comment on that?

Chand O'Neal: You can't ignore it. You have to deal with it.

Klahn: Yes. My own experience has been - get to the point of the difficult conversation where we are having an exchange by e-mail and each email back and forth is escalating and trying to be mindful of, wait a minute, this is the point we need to stop and take this to a different platform, either we hop on a phone call or we need have a Zoom meeting. Because you can't just walk next door to somebody's office and say what the heck do you mean? And so trying to be mindful of how electronic conversations might be escalating and people are getting frustrated and pulling the plug before it gets too bad.

Anderson: I have a personal limit of about three e-mail exchanges and if we can't resolve something in that, then it is time to at least pick up the phone.

Chand O'Neal: That's good. Thank you both. Well, I am going to talk about a couple of things and then we have a special treat. And in terms of team building, I know we have come up with some really great examples. A few more that I have encountered or that I have heard about are playing games like Two Truths and a Lie, the Lockdown Edition. And then my sister was involved in a team where they invited a chef to have everybody buy the ingredients ahead of time and they prepared a meal together and they actually ate it all together on their Zoom call. There was something really lovely about kind of having that party preparation time together and she said that was an amazing experience and really was different and wonderful in a in a good way.

For the treat, I have invited Dr. Lynette Overby, who is a professor of dance, to join us today in another experience that we have used at the College Board. She and I worked on a

project together where we built a class, AP research for high school students. When we do these remote readings where we assemble at convention centers in Salt Lake City to grade these papers, for eight hours a day for two weeks, we really need a mental break in order to see these papers with fresh eyes and read them anew every single time. What has been incredibly instrumental in helping us reset on our breaks, to really bring us back to read these papers and give the student the credit, time and energy they deserve for that work is guided meditation. She is going to lead us in a guided meditation today.

Overby: Thank you, Ivonne. Thank you, I am glad to be here and share a really simple tool that can be used by you or your team or even your family. So this is a guided meditation using imagery. And what I need you to do is first to sit comfortably in your chairs and make sure your legs and your back are supported. And I am going to try to play some music as we are doing this, see if that works, if you hear it from here. Can you hear the music?

Multiple voices: Yes.

Okay. All right. Okay. So what I would like you to do is to focus on your breathing and inhale. And then exhale like you are blowing through a straw. Again. Focus on that breathing. We are going to do a progressive relaxation to start, so I want you to tighten the muscles in your hands and your arms, tight, tight, tight, then release them and let go. And -- and a deep cleansing breath.

And tighten your muscles in your legs and feet, tight, tight, tight, and release and let go. And deep cleansing breath. And you close your eyes during this. And I would like you to tighten the muscles in your stomach and your chest area, tight, tight, tight, and release and let go.

And tighten the muscles in your face and your forehead and your nose and your ears, your whole face, tight, tight, tight, and release and let go, and let the tension drain from your forehead the and from your cheeks and deep closing breath. And now let's tighten everything, hands, arms, legs, toes, knees, elbows, and release and let go. And again taking a deep full cleansing breath, inhaling as fully as you can you can, breathing deep into your belly, breathing all the air out.

And feel the breath going to all of the tight places, loosening and warming and softening them and then gathering up all of the tension and breathing it out so that more and more you can feel safe and comfortable, relaxed and easy watching the cleansing action of the breath with friendly but detached awareness. And any unwelcome thoughts that come to mind, those too can be sent out with the breath.

Release with the exhale. So that for just a moment the mind is empty for just a split second. It is clear and free space and you are blessed with stillness. And any emotions that are rolling around in there, those too can be noted and acknowledged and sent out with the breath. So your emotional self can be still and quiet like a lake with no ripples.

And this is a favorite place imagery. You are going to imagine a place that doesn't have to be real. It could be a place that you would like to go and some place where you feel safe and happy. So now imagine that place and allow the place to become real to you looking around, taking the place in with your breath, enjoying the colors, the scenery, looking over to your right and over to your left, and now listen to the sounds of your favorite place.

Whatever it might be, if it is wind or water or birds or crickets or a whole multilayered texture of sounds, just let your ears become familiar with the beautiful music that is special, that is safe.

And feeling whatever you are sitting against or lying upon or perhaps feeling the texture of the ground beneath your feet, or sitting on a nice warm rock in the sun, and feel the air on your skin, crimp and dry or balmy and wet, perhaps you are inside feeling the warmth of a cozy fire or outside, but just enjoy the feel of the place, your special place, on your skin.

And now the smell. Its rich fragrance. Is it soft, full scent of flowers or maybe a sharp salt sea air or a sweet meadow of grass. But take in the smells of your favorite place.

So now just take it all in, all the richness of it, all of your senses. You are becoming more and more attuned to your favorite place, to your safe and beautiful special place. And just feel thankful or happy to be there. And let your body soak in the vibrance of the place. Let its richness penetrate all the way into you. So just threat beauty of the place nourish you, taking it in with every full deep breath, all of the way down into your belly, all the way to the tips of your toes, feel the penetrating warmth and the power of the place, soaking into your skin, down through muscle and bone, all the way to each and wherever cell, reaching down to the peaceful stillness at your very center. And so knowing you can call forth this place, whenever you wish, once again, fill yourself, feel yourself sitting in your chair or lying down, just breathing in and out rhythmically and easily and very gently and with soft eyes let yourself come back into the room whenever you are ready knowing in a deep place that you are better for this. And so you are. And so if you could just, everybody stretch breath. And let it out.

Chand O'Neal: Thank you so much, Lynette. Thank you.

Overby: You are quite welcome. I can do it any time.

Chand O'Neal: Absolutely. Now if you all could please put in the chat how that made you feel. What did that do for you? Did it rejuvenate you? What was that good for? We are glad you are back, William.

Singleton: Yes. Great break. Absolutely, very relaxed. And really, it wasn't that long.

Chand O'Neal: I really want to underscore what little amount of time that was, from our time together, just overall, and what it did in terms of really abbreviated amount of time. So it is something to think about in terms of taking a moment with each other to really go to that place during a meeting. I think it is a really excellent example of how it made us all feel. So thank you again, Lynnette. I appreciate it. Thank you.

So, you know, in keeping with the spirit of managing teams, I have been working with my team and letting them know ahead of time that I actually have a board meeting I have to attend today. I worked with Susan - this is a prime example of what we are all doing in terms of trying to figure out how to manage our multiple responsibilities. Susan has agreed to take over for me at this moment in time so I can hop on to my other Zoom meeting. I want to thank you all for your participation. Susan is going to be your fearless leader from this point forward and walk you through the rest of our session. So thank you all for your time and your participation. It really has been a pleasure.

Silk: Thank you, Ivonne. Let's see. Who is next? Jen. You are next.

Klahn: Yes. Thank you. I want to hit on a few topics dealing with meeting fatigue, addressing uncertainty and the idea that everything is urgent or isn't. And, you know, that guided meditation was a great way to deal with meeting fatigue. I mean, I added this to the chat. We are all just so busy and I personally would have a really hard time with being able to stop myself during the day to just take that time but I really needed that. So to the extent that we can build those sorts of moments into our day to just recenter ourselves and like clear our minds for a moment, I think there is so much value to be gained from that. So, yes, so thank you again for that great meditation.

Hollander: You know, I am finding, I would like to make a comment. I don't know if any of you have kids. I have two kids in there, and they are in school right now but they are doing it online so they are here at home. And my son is up on the third floor at the desk doing his school and yesterday I heard all of this ruckus going on up there and I went up and he was jumping around and doing stuff. I said, "What are you doing?" He goes, "I am in English class." I said, "Why are you jumping around?" And he said, "Well our teacher told us to take three minutes and jump around and wiggle around and just to relax and -- because we have been sitting still so much." I thought, that's really awesome that she took the time to -- they are sitting at home at a desk, just like we are, sitting, at our kitchen table or whatever, so having something like that, I think is really a good idea to just make them sort of chill for a second and get their head back.

Participant: I think that is great. Because I shared in the chat earlier - in our offices we were allowed to have sit-stand desks and when they sent us home it is like you are not going to let me take my si- stand desk. It is like 150 pounds to carry out of the university. So when I got home, I decided I would make my own sit-stand desk. It won't win anything on Pinterest but I took three books and set up across an eight-foot table so I could stand

every day versus sitting because if you can play music and you can dance and keep your movements. I did that so I could keep moving.

Hollander: I think standing is more alert too.

Participant: Yes. It does keep you a lot more alert, I agree. I don't have little kids, mine are all teenagers so they figure it out on their own which is nice, but I feel bad for those with younger kids because it is constant interruptions. So --

Hollander: So, what do you do when you get tired of standing?

Participant: I don't. I usually stand about eight or 10 hours a day. I will sit down for some meetings or maybe go outside. But I actually get on my dance shoes and stand at every meeting pretty much. And I just think it does keep me more alert than if I was sitting all day long and then you get more tired. So -- it is just kind of my demeanor. I kept my same pattern of everything I was doing while at work. Before I went to work, I would always workout so I try to get up every morning and do my workout. That way I keep in the same routine. I think if we don't stay our same routines, that's when we fall back or fall behind on a lot of things.

Hollander: Tracy says she uses a free app called Insight Timer that has numerous meditation relaxation options from a couple of minutes to hours. You can set a timer yourself and it will go off and remind you to do some sort of short meditation, relaxation kind of thing. That is another idea.

Silk: Well, we are making meeting records, recording and posting these sessions [<https://olaw.nih.gov/education/icare-interagency>]. This is the second time Lynn get has done a guided meditation for us, and participant, if you wanted to, you could read one of those to your group, that would be an easy solution for you. I haven't figured out, Jen, how you can do it by yourself with your eyes closed. [Laughter]

Klahn: There are apps but just for motivation to stop and find the time. This is really great. And, Mindy, thanks for bringing up your experience with your son. This is a matter that I personally have no experience with because my kids are furry and four legged and ignore me all day because they are cats. But I know a couple of my staff have children of varying ages and this is definitely something that they are struggling with, remote school or how to make sure their children have the support they need to stay occupied or to do their schooling. But at the same time juggling their own responsibilities with work, so that is an issue that I don't think we have addressed. I don't know if anybody has any thoughts on that?

Participant: I have two teenagers and two in college. There are more e-mails and more things to deal with and to follow up with on a daily basis, because we went back in a hybrid system. I think I have four times as many e-mails to have to try to keep up with, so I end up

being up late at night, trying to keep up with all of the emails and get everything on the calendar. It is pretty crazy and pretty difficult to manage. I think I have the work thing down and now we are doing everything remote and then they threw in all of these things when the kids went back to hybrid and it is like - oh boy that is a little tougher.

Klahn: That really sounds overwhelming and a good opportunity to explore setting boundaries. So for example, when you are scheduling your meetings, can you schedule them to end early? Sometimes we will say, oh we need to talk about this topic here is an hour. And then you get people in the meeting and they just want to talk for the full hour, even though they don't have anything to say the whole time. Or maybe they talk for the full hour and then you have another meeting scheduled immediately after and I need a break or I need to do something else and not be on video. So one of my colleagues had recommended scheduling meetings to end early, five to ten minutes early. That way you have an opportunity to stop and stretch and maybe get a snack, refill your coffee, go pet the cat, do something different. I think that's a good strategy.

Something that has come up a lot for us in this six months of being remote - is periodically we will get these communications from senior leadership, maybe it is the chancellor, maybe it is the system-wide chancellor, the UC chancellor, maybe it is somebody in our group and there will be some information about - okay well you were going to come back in September and now it is going to be 2021. Or, we guarantee you we will have your job until January 15 of 2021. These messages are great leadership. They are being transparent and giving us information, but at the same time people have questions and they don't understand what it means. As the leader of my group, I try every time we get one of these messages to address it right away. Do you have questions? Are you misinterpreting the intent of the message?

It may sound like a positive message to me, but maybe somebody else is reading it a very different way. So I think it is really important that every opportunity we can, we address whatever uncertainty people might be feeling in these times. If we have information, if we are in a position to share it, that we do take that opportunity to share, just to keep everybody informed so that misinformation doesn't happen. It is amazing what people will misinterpret. We had a communication very early on that because of the budget situation there would be no merit increases for the coming year. And one of my staff had read that and thought that it meant they weren't going to get paid. No, no, no. That is not the case. But, you know, I would never have thought that is how they would have interpreted it. So it is really great to have those conversations.

Participant: I think the session is really interesting. I was in a business psychology seminar, a few years ago and the speaker said, "Why are our meetings one hour long?" They are always one hour long. We always seem to make them an hour long and the only logical reason that came up is because the default for when you make a Google calendar meeting. Is that they are an hour long but they don't always have to be.



I will also mention too, our university is a big place so it takes our students forever to get to from one side of campus to the other, so we jokingly have this thing called university hour -- I am sure everyone has their own version of that. If you have a 10:00 o'clock class we really don't start anything until 10:10. If we have an 8:00 a.m. meeting, we start at 8:10. I don't know about you but when I am in a meeting, the majority of the work or contact that gets done are the five minute in the hallway before and after a meeting. And never during the meeting, right?

And so that kind of not starting until 8:10 people log in at 8:00 o'clock and talk about it and, you know, kind of get that social time and then we start the meeting and that's actually something that is a carry over for something that is university time, like worked out really well and that is actually super coincidental, because I am late for a university time at 2:00 o'clock so nice to meet all of you and see you. Perfect.

Hollander: Another participant made a comment about that. They have been making meetings for 45 minutes instead of an hour. I think that goes to what the last participant was saying and what another participant said earlier, rather than just that default one hour, to make it 45 minutes and then you have 15 minutes to go do your bio break or eat your lunch or whatever.

Klahn: I thought it was really interesting knowing what the participant was saying how that has carried over too, now because I find for us - somebody is one minute late to a Zoom meeting we are like, are they coming? Should we e-mail them to make sure they are come something.

Silk: I did that today.

Klahn: What could you possibly be doing? You have to be sitting at home. [laughter]  
You're not doing anything. [laughter]

So the last thing I want to say is, just this. Recognize that not everything is urgent. It feels like everything is urgent because of what we do, the work that we are in, and the fact that we can be surrounded by our work at all times if we are working remotely. But we have to remind ourselves and our teams that not everything is urgent, we need to take breaks. We need step away from the computer and we need to prioritize. It is okay to tell somebody I can't get to that right now, but I will respond within X number of days. This constant responsiveness can be very overwhelming and exhausting. Just as an example, I mentioned earlier that we manage IBC. IBC has been reviewing a lot of applications for COVID studies. That is pretty urgent right now, so they have been holding ad hoc meetings multiple times a month, previously it was two meetings a month and now has gone to, in some cases, six meetings in one month. They had a meeting at 5:00 o'clock on a Monday one time to review a study and it is this constant pace, and it's compounded because you also have to generate minutes and correspondence and approval. It is this constant urgency, and it is exhausting.

That's an example of something, yes, we want to prioritize in the short-term, but then you have to balance that with, okay some of the other things need to maybe not be made as urgent.

Participant: I think it is really important. I think somebody already said it, setting boundaries, basically for time frames. So like for instance in different parts of our offices you have your leadership and then you have different groups and teams that are not on salary. It is very different for the leadership, so they figure they can contact you any time because you should always be doing things. Right? Where other staff members that's not their time frame, so before we left, we made sure everybody knew what everybody's time frames were. And that they stay with their set time frames within their boundaries and that we respect those boundaries so we are not bothering them on their own time. So I think it is really important to make sure that people are staying within individual's boundary.

Klahn: Yes. Thanks for sharing that. That reminds me of a conversation I recently had with one our assistant vice chancellors. They all agreed not to send e-mails on Sunday, and then immediately broke that and it is like, wait, there are so many things wrong with this. A participant made a comment in the chat that they are putting their office hours in their e-mail signatures.

Silk: That's a great idea. I heard something on the radio, a term I liked --*hygiene theatre*. They were talking about things that people do that are unnecessary or not helpful that burn up energy that we could use for things that we need to do. So, you know, wearing a mask that is not over your nose is hygiene theatre. It seems like if we saved ourself for things that matter- well -- this is addressing your idea of urgent and not urgent. When things really are urgent then we have something left over for dealing with them.

Anderson: There have been a lot of studies that show that working excessively long hours is actually counterproductive, that you have to take a break and your mind needs a break, not to mention your family and friends need to have attention. It is surprising how much you can accomplish if you do keep within the boundaries and priorities.

Silk: And you don't have to spend the whole next day correcting the mistakes you made in the 12th and 13th hour.

Klahn: I guess we are trying to move on to William, aren't we?

Singleton: This has been such a rich conversation, and so in this section I was going to talk about resources. And I see our time is kind of running low. I want to...

Silk: William, we do have time. You go ahead and take the time that you need. We built some extra slush time into the end of this talk.

Singleton: I love a little slush fund. So when we think about resources, particularly around COVID and how we had to shut down, I think many of us in this conversation are people who are working administratively. I am actually curious how many of you are in the animal facility? And if you are dealing with some of the same kind of issues and how the issue of resources impacts you? Whether it was looking for -- trying to get the appropriate amount of PPE or researchers were coming into the animal facility and stealing masks, not stealing them, they weren't stealing them because they wouldn't do that, they were borrowing them. Or just other resources that you needed to get your work done and making sure that you had those in place. So I am curious if you had any challenges around that. And if so, have they kind of balanced out now in so in terms of getting the job done you have to work around the materials around that you need.

Participant: I know early on in our facilities they did have an issue with resources being taken and then they had to find some sort of way to secure some of the PPE because people were taking them. Because we are attached to a hospital, a lot of labs gave up their PPE when hospitals called for it. And then soon when they started to ramp back up, they were starting to get more supplies. So that kind of balanced out after a few months.

Participant: It did have an impact in the beginning but now it is sort of working itself out.

Singleton: The one question I still am curious about communication between animal facility people and administrative people, between administrative people and research people. How is that working for everyone? Are the resources working for you?

Participant: Our quality assurance specialists actually started Zooming so they could still continue to do work with the researchers. Virtual has gone over very well with the researchers. Researchers are very welcoming of that because a lot of times with PAM there a lot of downtime. As far as administrative resources in our office, we lost people before COVID with either retirement or going on to new jobs. That left some of our team short, so we used the resources within the same office and shifted people to where we needed the help. We weren't going to hire new people at that time. So people went from doing quality assurance to doing IBC, so there was some training that had to happen there. But we tried to make it work with the resources that we had.

Singleton: That's good. And that segues to another concept. When people have staggered work or shifting work teams and then somebody takes time off or someone has a health issue where they can't be there. How do you work around not having the physical bodies there to do the job? I think that idea of having some type of cross training or where people can move into different roles is really important.

To me that is one of the celebrations of the team. The idea of the team is that sometimes you have to step up and be in a role you weren't planning to be in but that's a part of the team. So we step in where we can to get the job done. That is how I think teams can be vibrant and really helpful.

Silk: A participant wrote in the chat they have quarterly meetings with their lab facility people and the researchers and PIs on teams, which I assume is a virtual meeting.

Participant: These e-mails and teams touch base with lab facilities folks and e-mail those lab animal facility folks related to compassion fatigue issues to give them ideas on mindfulness, meditation resources available and also let them know the admin folks are thinking of them. It was done pre COVID so we just continued doing that.

Silk: There was also a comment from another participant. This is back to connecting to the animal folks. They use Zoom, but they use it on cellphones.

Singleton: So you don't have to be standing at a desk to do it. And hopefully they have a WiFi access or a way of getting a signal.

Silk: There was another comment made that they use e-mails and Teams, because sometimes cellphones don't work in the vivaria so they had to purchase external cameras and microphones.

Singleton: That is great. It is exciting to me to hear people are still trying to find meaningful ways to connect with everybody.

And here's an important comment. They have to take time to check on people emotionally. I think it is one of the resources that we don't think about so much, because everyone is just going and going and going and not taking the time to really feel like what do you need to help you manage the crisis that you are having? Like what do you need to manage your frustrations, your disappointments, your lack of ability to understand what is happening?, All of these are really great things but I think idea of how do we make sure people have the tools to be successful is really important. You know, how we come together, be there for each other to make sure that the work gets done. So I am going to turn my section over now to Lynn and she can follow up.

Anderson: Okay. I think one of the things to remember when you are working with teams is to celebrate accomplishments, to take a few minutes during each staff meeting, for example, to talk about what has gone on and celebrate, because as William said, we have to celebrate accomplishments both individual and team-oriented. Another thing I want to talk about if you are working across multiple sites - multiple facilities. You can use these meetings as an opportunity to focus on best practices. I had the responsibilities for animal care in facilities in five different locations in the United States, but their missions were different. Because of that their site-specific practices may differ. In a case like that, you really want to focus on outcomes, not how things are processed, but focus on outcomes. When things work well, then you can share those across sites and hope hopefully learn from each other. Hopefully we have been learning from each other during this dialogue today. I think to give this back over to Susan, because she is going to wrap it up and anything I can do to help you, just let me know.

Silk: Thank you. What a team. Now, we have tried to integrate the questions that you sent us and the comments that you are making into our discussion today, but I want to issue a call to everybody. I think this discussion has been profound and meaningful and wide-ranging, so I would like to invite you to speak up if there are some other issues or ideas, if you made a comment that was missed, if we somehow overlooked your question I want you to bring this to my attention.

There is one question I know that we did not address so I am going to bring that up while you think about the other things you want to bring up. One of our participants commented, "Public transportation has been challenging because of the increased threat of crime and lack of police presence."

There are a lot of issue about public transportation. How do people get to work in the big cities? And what kind of issues are we seeing with odd staggered work hours? Some of our colleagues have talked about difficulties with police or campus security asking people what are you doing going into this building? The answer is, "Well, I am a post doc and I work here. I am doing my research."

Participant: My institution has been dealing with racism and public unrest. We incorporate this in our staff meeting discussions. To give you an idea of the demographics here, we pretty much have got 80 percent white people and then we have got the Latinx community and then there are people like me, Asian Americans, and also the international students. But because of learning remotely, it has been fairly quiet, in terms of the demographics. And I say this because I am the only person of color in my office. It is a predominantly female group and when we have these conversations, we know that the people of color often carry the burden of those discussions and bringing up uncomfortable issues, right?

To so having to the institution deal with this by having a book read dealing with black racism issues that we are seeing on campus that -- and I am also seeing other things come up as well, including ableism, those microaggressions, and understanding how little some of this my colleagues know. They know so little about this and it didn't occur to me to, until we started talk about this. And I realized that I did have to shed some of that protection to share with them. Look, you know me, then you know someone who is going through this, and how does it affect our work? It affects our work because I don't have the mental capacity to deal with an angry PI today. That's how it affects my work. That means I am not ready to extend an e-mail and so trying to figure out how to navigate -- and having the sense of mind to tell my boss. And my boss gives me that space and says, "I will deal with it."

Some of them just knowing that our institution is trying to have these conversations and then also if I say something about how in inner school districts, we have the black and brown kids who are struggling with food insecurity. And how does that impact our work?

And one of the things we do also in our institution, is we have the Clifton Strength Assessment, so we have a way to identify what we are good at and why we like to do those things. And one of my strengths is connecting the dots. I often ask at staff meetings when we have these book readings, we kind of dive deep and I come back out and in a broad umbrella way share with them how I see this in my inbox every day. Because that's the question I get. Why do we have to talk about this at staff meeting? And I say this is why - because in my inbox I saw this and this is how I dealt with it. So I found that to be very validating and I just wanted to share some of that with you all.

Silk: I think that is so generous of you to share that with us. Thank you. And I certainly agree that you are a person who is good at connecting the dots. I have seen you do that over and over. We don't exist in isolation. Our animal care use programs exist within the culture that we are a part of. The borders and the boundaries are all crazy now. At one of our earlier **ICARE Dialogues** William said, "I don't know who is cooking behind you but she is cooking up a storm, and it looks good." And we all wished that we could smell that fooled cooking. And so I just think it is generous of you to share your thoughts and feelings with us so we can understand. Thank you.

Singleton: There was a question someone said it is very tough for parents, especially mothers to balance their jobs as well as take care of or help with virtual schooling with their children. I think it is a real issue we are dealing with, and the one advice I would give is don't be so hard on yourselves, because what I found is everyone is going through it. I think parents want to do right by their kids and they want to make sure their kids are doing the right thing, but it is really hard.

Silk: You have a child that is in school, don't you?

Singleton: Yes. She is eight, yeah, yeah. So -- yeah. Just try not beat yourself up if you feel like you have given them one hour too much of the iPad or something because I think we are going through a tough time and there is enough stress in our lives to like stress about. Kids are resilient. They will figure it out. I am hoping.

Silk: Well, you know, I think if we love them enough -- we live in an academic world, and are very concerned with educating our children. I feel some fear for the part of society that is not so academically inclined. We need all of the children to be educated.

Klahn: There was a final message that I wanted to share from the chat, one of the participants suggested that those without kids at home give their colleagues with kids a little slack.

Silk: I think that is a good note to end this portion on, and let's take a break. I hope lines aren't too long at your refrigerator.

Hollander: I have kids. My refrigerator is empty.

Silk: That's perfect. [Laughter].