

Rutgers ScarletWell – Wellness Tips for Department Chairs

Rutgers University Department Chairs play a crucial role in supporting the wellness of faculty and staff by incorporating wellness-focused practices into meetings and leadership. Below are some tips and strategies chairs can use to foster wellness. ScarletWell is available to provide training and to lead wellness activities for your unit (see the Trainings and Workshops tab on the [ScarletWell website](#)).

Embed Wellness in Meetings:

- Begin meetings with a brief wellness check-in, asking how everyone is doing and providing space for faculty and staff to share what they are doing for their wellness. If the agenda is too full for this, invite others to join you in the meeting room 10 minutes early. This fosters a sense of belonging, making space for time to discuss things other than work.
- Start or end meetings with a short mindfulness exercise or deep-breathing activity to set a positive tone for the discussion.
- During longer meetings, schedule brief breaks to stretch, move, or simply take a mental pause to focus and reduce meeting fatigue.

Recognize and Appreciate Efforts:

- Regularly acknowledge achievements of faculty and staff during meetings and through email.
- Take time to personally thank faculty/staff for their contributions. A simple note or verbal recognition can go a long way in making individuals feel valued and supported.
- Regularly share any positive messages you receive from students and alumni.

Peer Support:

- Encourage and support peer mentoring or buddy systems within the department, where faculty and staff can share experiences and offer advice.
- Organize informal social events, either virtual or in-person, to strengthen community connection (e.g., chair's monthly wellness walks or coffee break).

Prioritize Wellness Self-Care:

- Remind everyone to take time for themselves each day, even if it's just a short walk, a few minutes of deep breathing, or engaging in a hobby. Emphasize that self-care isn't selfish.

Culture of Flexibility and Understanding:

- Demonstrate a healthy work-life balance by setting boundaries for yourself, such as not sending emails after hours or encouraging others to disconnect after work. Leading by example will encourage others to do the same.

Utilize University Wellness Resources:

Regularly share information about [wellness resources](#) available at the university, including mental health services, recreation activities (<https://recreation.rutgers.edu/rurec2go>), and employee assistance programs. Encourage them to take advantage of these resources and supports.