



#MonthlyMotivation Avoiding Overflow

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[Olivia] I'm Olivia Bower and I'm one of your internal EAP counselors. I hope you're all doing well on this sunny Tuesday morning. Well, welcome to your May monthly motivation. So, our topic today is avoiding overflow. So, we're going to be talking about our emotional capacity and what we can do before we reach our limits. So, you know, for some of us, the summer might be a time to slow down. It might be even busier if you have a lot of plans. Either way, whether you need some help balancing everything right now or you want to prepare yourself for the busier times, it could be helpful to reflect on your emotional capacity. So, first, you know, we want to think of your emotional capacity kind of like a bucket. And stress might be like the water inside. So, everybody's bucket is a different shape or size. They might hold different amounts. So, think about how you would describe your bucket. Sometimes it might feel like a fire hose is filling up your bucket and other times it might feel like your bucket is getting full because, you know, cup after cup keeps getting dumped in. Sure, that's not the fire hose, but the little amounts are starting to add up. So, all kinds of circumstances in our lives can impact our buckets and our ability to manage stressful things. So, we want to figure out some ways to keep our buckets from overflowing.

So, we can first, you know, think about what's going into our buckets. We want to be intentional about what's filling them. You know, are we committing to things we don't really want to do out of obligation? Are we saying 'yes' to things that actually do match our values or goals? So, you know, take some time, figure out what can you say 'no' to, what can you delegate, what's actually going to add some meaning or joy to your life.

We also want to think about, you know, the warning signs. Our buckets don't usually overflow suddenly. Things are building up. So, you know, figure out what your warning signs are. Maybe you're more easily irritated or you shut down. You know, sometimes we can have physical symptoms like fatigue or headaches or muscle tension, maybe stomachaches. You know, we want to catch these warning signs earlier. So, it could be helpful to regularly check in with ourselves. It's helpful to do that to check in even when we're not feeling stressed because it builds that habit. So, check-ins, it could look like checking in with your emotions throughout the day. You know, how are you feeling



when you wake up? How are you feeling when you're at work? A feelings wheel like the one on the screen could help you better describe your emotions and what you're feeling. You also want to pay attention to your physical needs, too. It can be easy those busy days to forget to drink water. Sometimes we forget to take a break for lunch. But if we're regularly checking in, it can help us remember to take care of those physical needs, too. So, when you start paying attention to your warning signs, you know what they are, you notice them. Don't keep pushing harder. We want to try to use our skills to lower our water level. And maybe sometimes life is happening, you know, we can't delegate things. Maybe there are things we can't say no to. Stressful circumstances come up. We also can't change the shape or the size of our buckets. What we can do is figure out how to lower the water level. So, things that help you lower your water level depend on what works best for you. I like to verbally process...maybe sometimes too much. So I'm going to talk things out with my partner or a friend. You know, maybe you like to journal or write down your worries. Maybe regular exercise helps you get out that extra energy. Maybe, you know, having rest or quiet time is something that helps you feel recharged. You can even combine a few of those or use different tools at different times. It just depends on what is the best for you. So, if we can let water out regularly in these small ways, it's easier to avoid overflowing.

We can also take some steps to reinforce our buckets. So, you know, maybe your bucket's got some leaks, maybe it has a flimsy handle right now. A sturdier bucket makes it less likely that we spill. So, to make our bucket stronger, we want to make sure that we're taking care of the things that are in our control like sleep, nutrition, hydration. You know, we can practice a growth mindset instead of self-criticism. That just means, you know, we're not failing. We're learning. Everything's a learning opportunity. We can also develop some coping skills that help us regulate in those stressful times like deep breathing or grounding exercises. So, you know, take some time to think about what's going to help you reinforce your bucket. What are the tools you can easily use? And I'd love to hear these things in the chat from you guys. You know, now or at the end. Just think about, you know, what are the tools that help you reinforce your bucket. You can also ask for help carrying your bucket. So, this means delegating when you can, asking for accommodations or support. You can share what's in your bucket with the trusted person, whether that's a friend, your family, your manager, you know, us, your EAP team. Other people can help us carry our buckets and we don't have to wait until they're already overflowing to ask for help. It looks like we've got some good ideas

in the chat for reinforcing our buckets. Taking walks, journaling, listening to music, those are good. Connection, community. Yeah, very helpful especially, you know, to know you're not alone. You're not carrying things by yourself. Yeah, I think you know something I talk a lot about is decompressing at the end of my day with music on the way home. I've got a couple different playlists that I listen to depending on the mood. So, you know, I've got like a loud angry playlist for the days that need that and then other days I've got a soft and supportive playlist. Just depends on what I need that day. Yeah, you guys have some great ideas. Going outside, scheduling time for yourselves. That's awesome. Yeah, keep thinking about, you know, what helps. I also want to remind you of the other tools you have access to through your EAP benefits. So, just a reminder, we serve OSU main and regional campuses, the extension offices, and the Wexner Medical Center. So, you probably know us most for our five free counseling sessions per issue per rolling calendar year. We also offer wellness workshops and programs like your monthly motivation, manager support, and consultations. We're part of the university and medical center's critical incident support teams and we also provide work life resources and referrals, legal consultations and life coaching through our partner. So, our primary objective is just to provide non-medical short-term solution-focused counseling and work-life support. This is how you can access us. Feel free to screenshot this or take a picture. You can always call the 800 number, 800-678-6265.

That's answered 24/7/365 by our partner All In One Health. That's where you can request counseling, work-life resources. There's also an option for in-the-moment support if you need 10 to 15 minutes to talk. We've also got the portal. That's through the OSU Health Plan website. That's where you can access, you know, articles, calculators, forms, all kinds of things. You can request work-life counseling, work-life resources and counseling there, too. And then last, we've got our email, EAP@osumc.edu. If you have any questions about your EAP benefits, you want to request a manager consultation or an EAP workshop, you can always email us there. That email is answered by our internal team and we try to get back to you within 24 to 48 hours. So, you know, these are great tools that you can also add to help manage your buckets. Yeah, I thank you all for joining today. I'd love to hear, you know, if you have any last thoughts about your buckets, you know, noticing what your warning signs are, the things that help you kind of control the water level a little better. Just love to hear any last thoughts we have. [audio ends]