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How Haley & Aldrich staff prioritize mental wellbeing to stay safe and focused on the job

Today kicks off [Construction Safety Week](#), which is an annual campaign dedicated to refocusing on and recommitting to safety. Each year, H&A shares the perspectives and experiences of our staff in order to recognize Construction Safety Week. This year's theme, "Committed to holistic safety," focuses on the risks you can't always see, like stressors and distractions that interfere with our ability to stay present, focused, and safe on the job.

We interviewed staff members on the importance of mental wellbeing and how it affects their ability to stay safe and focused on the job. Here are their perspectives:

What actions do you take to support your wellbeing so you stay safe and focused on the job?



Jason Grant
Senior Project Manager
Walnut Creek, Calif.

"I have always tried to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. I have been commuting by bicycle for more than 15 years and really enjoy the feeling of breathing in fresh air first thing in the morning. One of my daily rituals before turning down for the night is performing a stretching routine that evolved from my younger athletic days starting more than 30 years ago. This helps to both soothe the daily body aches and calm my mind so I can be ready to go again the next day."



Diana Rattanasith
Senior Geologist
San Jose, Calif.

"Staying active outside of work is key for me. I'll go on a run, mountain bike ride, or hit the climbing gym during the week. Comfort food and beer is for when being active is less appealing. I notice if I take the time to be active outside of work that I'm more focused and efficient during work – it's like night and day. Making time for self-care helps me stay safe and focused on the job."



Cheyenne Waldman
Project Manager
Oakland, Calif.

"Going for a run greatly helps my mental health/clarity. After doing a good long run I feel less stressed and I often think through and solve some elusive technical project solutions while running, so it is a win-win! Another thing I try to do is make sure that I have at least one day of the weekend that I don't log onto my work computer. The combination of these two things is also helpful for keeping me sane and emotionally healthy."

How does your mental wellbeing affect your performance in the field or at the office?-

"To me, having a healthy mental state is essential to not only performing well at work but performing well in life. If I'm having an off day, it may take me longer to process information or I may need to take frequent breaks. I try to remind myself that I'm only human and it is normal to have "slower" days. Detecting symptoms of burnout is something I've become more aware of and planning to use PTO for a long weekend to unwind is very helpful. When I go back to work, I feel mentally awake, refreshed, and more confident about my job performance."



Anna Finigan
Geologist
Tacoma, Wash.

"Clear thinking and effective communication are critical factors in successful navigation of the challenges inherent to construction work; stress and fatigue can negatively impact those factors. I strive to minimize those impacts by being prepared, rested, and finding time outside of work to exercise."



Mike Reid
Technical Specialist
Oakland, Calif.

"When I am stressed or overwhelmed, I ironically get worse at my job. I get so overloaded that I become inefficient and procrastinate things further. When I am clear headed, well rested, and happy I become more proactive at staying on top of and staying observant during my work."



Reid Shipley
Staff Engineer
Oakland, Calif.

How do you unplug from work?-



Crystal Amato
Project Manager
Cleveland, Ohio

“Being outside and in nature helps put me in a calm mood. It’s just so refreshing to be in nature and forget about work responsibilities for a while. I also enjoy painting, home improvement projects, and spending time with my family and friends. If I don’t take time away from work for the activities I enjoy, I start feeling somewhat isolated as I have been working from home during COVID. Having an activity planned gives me something to look forward to and helps to keep

me focused at work so that I ensure all of my target workload is complete before unplugging for the day or weekend.”



Kathryn Lindenschmidt
Geologist
Dayton, Ohio

“I always try to set aside time to stay active and to do what I enjoy after the workday. When I am out of town, I explore the local parks or run on the hotel’s treadmill. When I am at home, I take a fitness class or run around my neighborhood. I believe that setting aside time for personal activities even during busy workdays is so important to relieve stress.”

How do you stay mentally present when juggling stressors either at work or home?-

“I tend to compartmentalize tasks into categories and focus on working on all of the necessary tasks in a one category together before moving on to another category.”



John Austgen
Construction Project Manager
Indianapolis, Ind.

"To effectively manage stressors in the workplace and at home, I utilize a planning and scheduling method. I set aside dedicated times to address non-critical issues. For example, during work hours, I do not take non-emergency personal phone calls. This prevents the introduction of a non-critical stressor into my workday and helps avoid mental "drift" while working. The inverse also applies to my dedicated free time away from work, I do not take non-critical business phone calls. This allows me to be completely present with my friends and family and gives me the opportunity to focus on any personal issues away from work without mixing the two."



Nick Schaffer
Geologist
Cleveland, Ohio

At Haley & Aldrich, we understand that the best way to promote health and safety is to ensure it's an embedded tenet of our culture. That's why we integrate health and safety into all facets of our business operations — in the field, our technical work, and our offices. [Visit our health and safety page to learn more.](#)