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WELLNESS SEMINAR

Time Well Spent:
Boosting Productivity and
Managing Holiday Stress

11/20/25 | Thursday
2:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

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QUARTERLY WEBINARS

Building Trust Through
Open Communication

11/13/25 | Thursday
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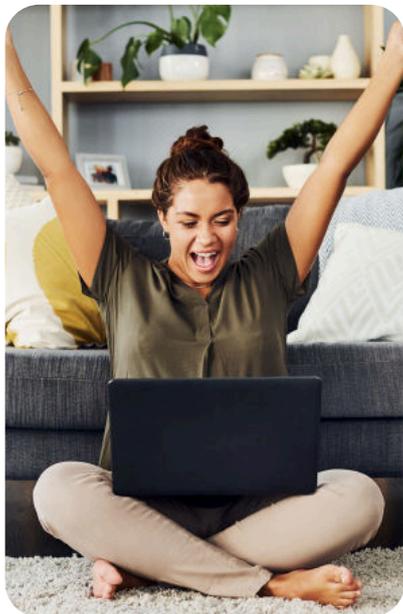
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Time Well Spent: Boosting Productivity and Managing Holiday Stress

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez

The closer we get to the end of the year, the more we start to think about the holidays... and our holiday time off, amirite? However, the hard part is managing the stress that comes with the holiday season and the work we have to get done beforehand. What often tags along with that stress? Procrastination. So, how can we boost our end-of-year productivity (both personally and professionally) and manage our holiday stress? Let's break it down.

Productivity comes from the word productive, which means "having the quality or power of producing, especially in abundance." It also means "yielding results, benefits, or profits" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The challenge of being productive today is that we're often expected to deliver more than we realistically have the capacity for. Enter feelings of stress, burnout, and disappointment in ourselves. So, here's my first tip for boosting productivity and easing the related stress: remember that you are only human and humans are more than numbers, results, and profits.



Second to **giving yourself grace**, take time to reflect on what being productive actually means in your life. At work, productivity may look like finishing that report your boss needs. In school, it may be wrapping up papers and projects before break. And perhaps most importantly, we're productive in our personal lives, too. This shows up in the housework we do, the meals we cook, the laundry we fold, and the moments we carve out for rest.

To stay organized, try tools like The Eisenhower Matrix or a simple prioritized to-do list. Look ahead at the time you have left in the office before the holidays, identify your most important tasks, and plan small, manageable steps to complete them. **Even small progress counts** as forward motion.



Lastly, as we consider the stress the holidays can bring, like challenging family dynamics, the grief of missing loved ones, or financial strain, let's take a moment to remember that the **holidays don't have to be perfect to be meaningful**. Prioritize connection over perfection. Give yourself permission to say "no" when needed. Protect your peace and your time the same way you would protect any valuable resource, because both truly are.



And most of all, remember that time well spent isn't measured by how much you accomplish, but by how present you are in the moments that matter most.

To learn more about this topic, please join the upcoming webinar, *Time Well Spent: Boosting Productivity and Managing Holiday Stress* on November 20th, at 2pm.

References

Vasquez, K. (2024, November 21). Procrastination: The silent saboteur of productivity and mental health in organizations. CE Noticias Financieras. English ed.; Miami.

The Mask of Masculinity: What Men Don't Say

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez

For generations, **men have been told to “be strong,” “tough it out,” and “never show weakness.”** These messages, passed down through families, media, and workplaces, have long defined what it means to “be a man.” Dominance and control were once seen as essential traits of masculinity, but as our understanding of leadership and emotional health has evolved, so have our expectations of men.

Today's expectations of men are shifting. Strength is no longer just about power or control, **it's about emotional intelligence, empathy, patience, and communication.** All qualities that help build trust and connection in teams and organizations. Men are being called to lead in new ways: not by suppressing their feelings, but by understanding them. Not by isolating, but by connecting. Yet, this transition isn't always easy. Especially in high-stress environments where vulnerability can feel risky.



In a time when cultural and political conversations glorify a return to historical gender norms, many men find themselves **caught between who they were taught to be and who they want to become.** Research continues to show the cost of this conflict.

A recent review, *Men's Mental Health Matters: The Impact of Traditional Masculinity Norms on Men's Willingness to Seek Mental Health Support*, found that men who **strongly identify with conventional masculine** ideals—self-reliance, control, stoicism—are less likely to **seek help for mental or emotional challenges (2025)**. The very traits that society once celebrated and normalized can now (and arguably, have always) stand in the way of healing and connection.



This hesitation has consequences in the workplace: higher stress levels, burnout, and even increased risk of depression or substance use. When men feel they have to handle it all alone, both their personal well-being and work performance can suffer.

It's not that strength or resilience are bad qualities, they're vital. But **when the “mask” demands silence, isolation, or emotional suppression, it comes at a cost:** strained relationships, burnout, and untreated mental health issues. As leaders and colleagues, we have an opportunity to shift this culture. It starts by normalizing honest conversations about stress, mental health, and balance. When men see managers modeling vulnerability by taking a day off to recharge or talking openly about their mental health journey, it gives them permission for others to do the same.

So what does healthy masculinity look like today? It looks like balance. It's being strong enough to say, “I'm not okay.” It's showing up for others without losing yourself. It's listening, learning, and leading with both confidence and compassion. The mask of historical masculinity doesn't have to define today's workforce. **Strength isn't found in silence, it's found in self-awareness, connection, and the courage** to take the mask off. So, what does masculinity mean to you?

If you or someone you know could use support in finding that balance, your **EAP is here to help, confidentially, anytime.**

References:
Mokhwelepa, L.W., & Sumbane, C. O. (2025). Men's mental health matters: The impact of traditional masculinity norms on men's willingness to seek mental health support: a systematic review of literature. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 19(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15579883251321670>



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About Our Logo

For decades, enslaved African Americans looked to the North Star for hope, inspiration, and freedom. Neely EAP (NEAP) provides the **hope** that your situation will improve, the **inspiration** to move you in the right direction, and the **freedom** to live your best life.

At Neely EAP, we understand the challenge of balancing work and life stresses while staying mentally healthy. That's why we've partnered with your employer to offer you the following services free of charge:

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- Free Short-Term Counseling and Couch Time Check-In (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Work-life referrals for adult care, childcare, pet care and more
- Wellness Trainings & Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

