



Well@Work Podcast
Season 2, Episode 6:
Pause, Reset and Nourish

Welcome to the Well@Work podcast from the University of Kentucky Center on Trauma and Children. This podcast is brought to you by grant from SAMHSA. On this episode, Dr Ginny Sprang discusses the pause, reset and nourish framework for self-regulation. And now, Dr Ginny Sprang.

Hello, I'm Dr. Ginny Sprang and I'm here to tell you about one of my favorite ways to calm down: pause, reset and nourish.

All of us face a variety of stressors on a daily basis that come from multiple directions. COVID has complicated the way we move through the world. Most people have probably read at least one magazine article with suggestions about methods to manage stress--from yoga to kickboxing to journaling and meditation. These and other self-care techniques can certainly be effective; however, for most of us taking an hour for our self might seem impossible. That's why the PRN framework is a helpful strategy as it only takes a few minutes to go through three simple steps--Pause, Reset and Nourish. Like medications you take "PRN" or as-needed, you can repeat this as frequently as you'd like throughout the day. Employing these resiliency-building practices in the middle of a pandemic helps reset and rebalance our nervous system, allowing us to move through the day better equipped to navigate whatever challenges may come up.

Think about this example. Sarah is a healthcare administrator who is working from home for the day because her child is in quarantine due to the pandemic, sound familiar? She keeps having to switch back and forth between a crying child and finishing a work-related phone call, causing her to feel embarrassed and anxious. She tries to refocus but her child interrupts her a few minutes later. When she has another free moment, Sarah is feeling frustrated and agitated and is preoccupied with when she is going to be interrupted again. This is where the PRN framework could be a useful tool.

The first step of the PRN framework is Pause. Take a moment and check in with how your body feels. Start by taking a slow, deep breath from your diaphragm, then repeat this breathing technique 3 times. As you become more aware of how you're feeling, you might notice you're holding stress or tension in certain parts of your body or you become aware of repeating thoughts or intense emotions.

Once you've gained awareness of your internal experience, the next step is to Reset. This entails actively doing something that will help you feel steadier, calmer, and more



confident. Use the awareness you gained from the Pause step to guide your choice about how to Reset.

If your mind feels too full, you can reset by having a quiet moment. This could include the breathing technique you used earlier, practicing mindfulness, taking a short walk outside, or looking at a picture that makes you smile. If negative emotions are overwhelming you, focus on a memory of a positive moment, sharing gratitude, watching a short funny video, or talking with a friend or loved one. You can reset self-critical thoughts by interrupting them with self-compassion; it can be helpful to talk to yourself as if you were a caring, supportive friend. Something like “it’s OK, you’re going to be OK. Doing the best you can is all you can do” or “You’re strong, you can definitely do this”

The final step is Nourish. Focus on something that helps you remember your own strength and resilience or that reminds you to take time to care of yourself. Take a hot bath, go for a walk or run, have coffee at the park with a friend. Try to think about something that’s been rewarding or meaningful to you; it can be related to your family, job, or anything you value. For a different approach, you can try engaging in moments of light-heartedness or playfulness with others. This might include a family activity, laughing with a coworker, or simply doing something nice for another person.

As you Pause, Reset, and Nourish, remember to be kind to yourself. These pandemic times are incredibly challenging for everyone. Adapt your approach to your unique situation, values, and needs. The most important thing is to intentionally create space to use these PRN strategies frequently enough to make it a habit. You want to slow down and listen to your body, reset your nervous system from stress to safety or from crisis to confidence.

Remember- we are all in this together- stay well at work!

Thank you for listening to this episode of the podcast. Follow the link in the video description for more resources on our Well@Work website. And of course, stay tuned for more episodes on topics that will keep you well at work, home, and school.