

## RTAP Peer Roundtable Notes

### Stress Management

1/30/2025 | 1:00–2:30PM | Online

#### Attendees

- |                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Crystal Gauthier | 10. Stacy Struck         |
| 2. Joanne Brackey   | 11. Melinda Estey        |
| 3. Randy Jahnke     | 12. Stephanie Noerenberg |
| 4. Pat LaCourse     | 13. Scott Stark          |
| 5. Amy Nieland      | 14. Lezlie Grubich       |
| 6. Jeremy Monahan   | 15. Jaycie Kratky        |
| 7. Cecilia Kenneh   | 16. Mariah Kathan        |
| 8. Kirk Kuchera     |                          |
| 9. Cathleen Amick   |                          |

#### Roles

- Timekeeper: Pat LaCourse
- Parking Lot: Joanne Brackey
- Conversation Encourager: Jeremy Monahan

#### **Biggest Challenges:**

- Making sure to remember that we are all in this together.
- Having community support and managing relationships with contractors.
- Having too much stress, worrying about too many things.
- Staying mindful of employee stress as a manager.
- How to share what bothers you with others.
- Managing having multiple stressors in a row on the same day and not feeling buried.
- Managing being short staffed and never feeling caught up no matter how many people are hired How do other agencies keep their agencies fully staffed?
- Trying to make sure that everything is engaging, viable, and pertinent to everyone so that everyone feels like they are getting something out of training and other meetings.

#### **Stress Management Tips**

- Remember that you don't have to have all the answers all the time. Remember that when problems come up, you have a team, you don't always have to be the one who comes up with the solutions. Take time to think through solutions together before trying to handle it on your own.
- Keep things in perspective
- Put different tasks and stressors into different mental silos.
- Remind everyone that we are on the same team/same side of the table. We can tackle a problem better as a team rather than on our own.
- Turn off/down the lights in your office to reduce sensory overload
- Take a full lunch, off site.
- Allow yourself to take breaks.
- Reduce background noise as much as you can as it can be hard to focus when hearing external arguments or other conversations and noises.
- Start the day with the hardest task first. If you focus best in the morning, it can help you feel a sense of accomplishment and then everything else feels easy for the rest of the day.
- Know yourself and when you are the most productive to plan your day for success.
- Enjoy your commute. Make a plan for your day on the way to work. Use the commute home to unwind and de-stress so you can leave work at work.
- Having a routine and being able to plan out your day.
- Come up with a process/procedure for when things get overwhelming, such as when there are many incoming calls for dispatch.
- Understand yourself and what can work best for you. Everyone is going to manage their stress differently.
- Create lists and organize emails to make the work more manageable.
- Progressive muscle relaxation/clenching and relaxing different muscles can help you calm down in the moment.
- Take a walk around the building a few times, fresh air can help change your perspective on a problem.
- Take a deep breath and give yourself a moment before you respond or react.
- Have people around you that you can trust to talk through situations.
- Ask yourself why you're upset.
- Model your response to stress for the rest of your team. They are watching you to learn how to respond themselves.
- When you're talking to someone about your stressors, understand if you want solutions/advice or if you are venting, and ask for what you need. There is value in

getting things off your chest, saying things out loud, and talking to others can give you perspective or help you reevaluate the situation.

- Reach out to other transit directors or peers for support.
- Take things one step and one day at a time.
- The team part of it is so important. Make sure that everyone is in a comfortable situation to feel like they can reach out when they need support.
- Remain calm and do your best not to panic. Take a deep breath and walk through the facts vs. the emotions of a situation.
- If your agency or insurance has an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) that can be helpful. If anyone uses Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) for insurance, they have an EAP resource.
- Brené Brown, author, teaches that it's okay to be vulnerable. She has books that can be helpful for leading with vulnerability.
- Think of stressful moments as an opportunity to notice how you react and how you cope with stress. You have the power in how you choose to respond to a situation. If your way of coping isn't where you want it to be, you can work towards finding methods that are more helpful for managing stress.

#### **Ask a Peer:**

**Is anyone interested in doing team building activities at the spring workshop? Such as golf or hiking, different social activities to build relationships?**

- Team building is always memorable
- Anything that we can do to expand our networking with joy and stress relief is a great idea!
- Suggestion to post sign-ups to organize group activities and informal gatherings so people can also self-organize.

**Next Peer Roundtable:** February 20, 2025. Topic: Navigating Challenging Passengers