

Yay! You Listened to Music and Drank More Water Today!

by Alejandro DeJesus, PAC Lead Mentor Coordinator

As 1:30 rolls around on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays my mind usually seems to slow down, and I become less productive than I had been in the morning. “I **need** to do something else” is what runs through my mind. I pause and shut my computer down; it is also a time for me to temporarily shut down. My energy has dropped, and I must do something else so that I am more productive for the remaining hours that I am working.

What I do for about a half-hour when my energy drops varies between a few different activities. Sometimes I will read, sometimes I will take a short nap or shower, other times I will watch an episode of a show that I enjoy, or listen to some new music (usually something folk). This is also my time of the day to refill my water bottle and make sure that I have eaten something. During this time, I provide my mind/body what it needs – a more restful activity to go with my body’s natural rhythm.

Before joining PAC full-time in July, I was a middle school teacher. During my morning classes I always felt invigorated and peppy. However, for my fifth-hour class, I would hit that natural crash point. I was more likely to give answers during that hour than empower students to think and come up with solutions. I was also less active in getting around to all of the groups during activities. The lesson that I would plan for that class was the same as the others but I was not able to give the students my absolute best effort. I could not get my *need* to be restful and restorative met during that time. During the time I taught I did not recognize this as a part of what I needed in the day. From my viewpoint, it was the result of an early commute and only having coffee in the morning.

Since joining PAC, I have been more aware of my own needs and meeting them. This is the first time in a long time that I have not just recognized what I need, but I’ve actually done something to meet that need. When I do, I am more productive for a longer period in the afternoon and I am in an overall better mood. Everyone has a slightly different set of needs with a similar base. Not everyone has the same needs to meet at the same time. To illustrate the five human needs, Teepa has put together a slide to help explain this during trainings.

Top Five Human Needs and Emotional Indicators of Distress	
Five Expressions of Emotional Distress	Five Human Needs
Angry irritated – angry – furious	Intake Hydration, nourishment, meds
Sad dissatisfied – sad – hopeless	Energy Flow tired or revved up directed inward or outward
Lonely solitary – lonely – abandoned/trapped	Output Urine, feces, sweat, saliva, tears
Scared anxious – scared – terrified	Comfort 4 Fs and 4 Ss
Lacking Purpose disengaged – bored – useless	PAIN Free!!! Physical, emotional, spiritual

What are your own needs throughout the day? What are your signals that you have an unmet need? Who or what may suffer when your needs are not met? Are you a team leader of some kind? What are the needs of your team members, have they recognized them? Are they being provided with the opportunity to meet their needs daily, and are you celebrating those that do?

Care partners can be especially susceptible to *burn out*. This is even more likely if needs are not being met. Those that find a way to meet their needs should also be celebrated. Taking time to not only recognize, but meet the needs you have is an important piece for helping other people. Like being on an airplane, put your own oxygen mask on before helping others.

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