

ALA ThinkTank Action Brief: Main Takeaways & Action Items

🧠 Personal Wellness and Self-Care

- **Take Breaks Without Guilt:** Use PTO, mental health days, or even short 15-minute breaks to reset. As one speaker shared: "PTO = Prepare The Others." Taking care of yourself is also taking care of your community.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Begin your day with intention, journaling, or a moment of gratitude. Simple practices like "mindful walking," "intentional listening," or daily affirmations can create balance.
- **Set Boundaries:** Know your limits and communicate them. Prioritize rest and emotional safety, especially when working with vulnerable or emotionally demanding populations.
- **Find and Celebrate Library Joy:** Reflect daily on what brings you joy in your library work. This keeps motivation and passion alive during difficult times.

🧑🤝🧑 Team and Staff Culture

- **Host Staff Listening Sessions or Town Halls:** Create space for honest dialogue about challenges and wellness needs. Use the feedback to inform policies and build trust.
- **Create Peer Support Networks:** Encourage connection through empathy circles, informal "coffee chats," or monthly cross-team gatherings (e.g., "Bring Your Own Cup" events).
- **Model Vulnerability as Leaders:** Supervisors should normalize talking about wellness, sharing personal experiences, and encouraging emotional openness.

- **Offer and Promote Wellness Tools:** Integrate wellness supports into the workday—like mindfulness breaks, EAP referrals, and mental health trainings.

📚 Workplace and Program Initiatives

- **Embed Wellness in Programming:** Offer initiatives like guided meditation, poetry clubs, journaling prompts, or pet therapy sessions for staff and patrons.
- **Train Staff on Trauma-Informed Practices:** Equip employees to navigate emotional challenges with both patrons and colleagues.
- **Encourage Cross-Department Collaboration:** Include all staff, from shelvers to administrators, in wellness efforts and decision-making.
- **Rebrand for Resilience:** If DEI efforts face external resistance, consider rebranding (e.g., "Belonging Committee") to continue advancing equity and inclusion.

🏛️ Community-Focused and System-Level Actions

- **Prioritize Safety and Emotional Support:** Especially during incidents (e.g., bomb threats, challenging patron interactions), libraries must respond with compassion, clear communication, and immediate resources.
- **Involve Youth in Advocacy:** Engage young patrons in efforts to resist book bans and advocate for intellectual freedom.
- **Share Best Practices Across Libraries:** Participate in networks, webinars, and ThinkTanks to learn, adapt, and implement wellness strategies.
- **Advocate for Institutional Change:** Use data and stories to push for long-term commitments to emotional wellness and equity in the workplace.