March 26, 2021

Happening in SRO

You can find this "Happening in SRO" and all similar newsletters on the SRO Intranet Home Page, located at: http://isr-wp.isr.umich.edu/srointranet/ under Recent News.

If you have items for the newsletter or if you would like to highlight an event, please let Ann Vernier or your unit director know.

Housing & Children's Healthy Development Wave 2
(Barb Ward & Grant Benson)

At this time last year, the Housing & Children's Healthy Development project (H&C) was putting together final preparations for launching a Wave 2 face-to-face data collection in late April 2020. Interviewers were hired, questionnaires programmed, the training planned….and then COVID-19 happened.

In May 2020 the H&C research team (Sandra Newman, Johns Hopkins University, Tama Leventhal, Tufts University, Trivellore "Raghu" Raghunathan, SRC/UM), with the support of the funding agencies (NICHD, HUD, The MacArthur Foundation) made the decision to redesign and launch the study as a telephone interview, with a supplemental mail data collection of consent for administrative records matching. We were able to obtain quick approval from the Johns Hopkins and University of Michigan IRBs for the project redesign. We launched the second wave of H&C in mid-August as a telephone study. The redesigned H&C protocol included a five-minute coverscreen (to determine eligibility) and an 80-minute caregiver interview. Households were eligible if the caregiver still lived with at least one focal child from Wave 1. Child assessments and in-home measures were all dropped from the study protocol.

The project was scheduled to end telephone data collection by December 31, 2020. However, due to lower than expected interviewer attrition as well as a lower than expected HPI, the project was extended for 6 additional weeks. We concluded the telephone portion of the H&C data collection on February 6, 2021. Coverscreens were completed with 1501 out of 1786 sample households, and 1413 participants completed caregiver interviews.

<u>Locating</u>

We believe that one of the key items that contributed to the study's interviewing success was starting the locating process early. In February 2020 H&C mailed address update cards to the entire sample. Unfortunately only 100 out of 1789 households returned the cards by April! We believe that this was partly – if not largely – due to problems with the postal service in the early days of the pandemic.

When it became clear that the study would be delayed due to the pandemic, we used the delay to activate our expert locating team. The team began conducting internet searches and making outreach calls to households in early summer to update phone, address and email information, obtain permission to text, and record any other information the caregivers or informants were willing to provide. The locating team gathered information such as name corrections or changes, family structure changes (separations, divorces, deaths, etc.) or information about imminent moves. The locating team also used the opportunity to "talk up" the study, and to let the families know that the Wave 2 study would be starting soon. This outreach effort was a huge success, with the locating team confirming contact information for over 500 (!) families prior to the start of interviewing on August 24.

The early outreach ensured that the interviewing team had plenty of confirmed sample with which to start; interviewers did not get bogged down with incorrect phone numbers or stale contact information. In addition, the respondents were expecting the call from the interviewers. One interviewer described this as "pitching them softballs and setting them up for home runs" from the start. In fact, the interviewing team was completing interviews so fast that we initially could not get gift cards for tokens of appreciation fast enough to keep up with interviewing!

The early boost to interviewing also helped the interviewers achieve huge efficiency in interviewing Hours per interview started low and remained low for most of the study, allowing the study to complete more interviews than budgeted.

<u>Collection of Social Security Numbers via Mail</u>

One key component of the H&C protocol is collecting consent for administrative records-matching for caregivers and focal children enrolled in the study. These consent forms would allow the researchers to gather information from the Social Security Administration and state agencies regarding caregiver earnings, and benefits used by the caregiver and study children. These consent forms were to have been collected in person prior to the pandemic, with the interviewer helping the respondent to fill in the form completely and correctly. The consent forms are complex, and caregivers must complete either three or four forms depending upon the number of children in the study.

The mail data collection was designed following a Dillman-type mail protocol with three consent packets and a reminder card mailed over the course of eight weeks. The packets included a cover letter, a confidentiality brochure, and a brief pamphlet with an explanation of how to complete the forms. The first mailing was launched at the end of October, and the first returns came into the office in early to mid-November.

When the first forms arrived, it became apparent that without interviewer assistance, many were incorrectly completed. The forms for collection of child social security numbers were especially problematic, with 19% of forms returned needing fixes. We temporarily stopped the data collection in November 2020 and discussed options to improve the quality of the forms.

We worked with the research team to develop two interventions. First, we designed "mock ups" to ship with the packets in order to help H&C participants better understand how to complete the forms. The “mock ups” were examples of forms fully completed for an imaginary family, with arrows, notes and tips, and highlights for every space and box that must be filled. Second, we implemented a process to send incorrectly-completed forms back to families with instructions and notes on how to fix the forms.

After receiving IRB approval, the mail data collection was re-launched in January. The inclusion of the “mock ups” appears to have improved the quality of forms returned. The error rate for the child forms has been reduced from 19% to 8%.

This component of the data collection is still ongoing, however the number of forms returned has been far lower than desired. We believe that the sensitivity of the information being collected is impacting the response rate.

We wish to thank all of SRO for the tremendous effort that all units put into making this a successful second wave. The DMSS group immediately developed budgets for revised work scope, the TSG team overhauled all of our instruments and – with members of the DMSS team – updated reporting tools in record time, FSG continued to juggle ever-changing invoicing and cost monitoring requirements, DCO fielded a successful revised training and data collection protocol, and PDMG completely rethought how to manage and support a staff with minimal in-person footprint. We are so appreciative of how responsive, thoughtful, and collaborative the entire team was, allowing us to come up with solutions to new problems and implement them days, if not hours later. And of course, this study would not have happened without the amazing interviewing, team leading, and locating staff.

The CCP Corner: Coping with Grief and Loss
(Aimee Miller)

Over the past year, we have experienced many losses, including the loss of our sense of normalcy, routines, and even the loss of loved ones. The feelings associated with grief and loss can be difficult to process, which may result in avoiding those feelings. Recognizing our grief helps us acknowledge those losses and begin the recovery process. The articles below discuss grief, ways to cope, and how to help those who are grieving.

- Feeling Grief over the Loss of Normalcy
- How I Learned to Find Joy During Times of Grief
- Overcoming Grief: Beyond the Five Stages

SRO Wellness News
(SRO Wellness Committee)

FOCUS ON FINANCIAL – This month we would like to share resources available to help with increasing our financial knowledge.

ASSET HEALTH – The new Asset Health portal through M-Healthy has various Knowledge courses aimed at the various dimensions of wellness. One of them is **Path to Financial Wellbeing**. The course description: *In this course, you'll learn about the Six S's and gain insights into living within your means, saving, and making smart investments to achieve long-term financial goals while enhancing quality of life. Financial wellbeing is an integral part of overall health, your most valuable asset.* Asset Health Website

RETIREMENT – The more informed we are, the better we can make informed decisions. The University has produced a document that shows retirement milestones based on age and years of service. This document gives a general overview of some of the areas for focus as we start and end our employment at the University. Retirement Milestones

How do you know when you are eligible for retirement from the University? The University uses a point system for eligibility that is based on your age and years of service. Retirement Eligibility

Planning for retirement website – This website has a wide range of resources for employees such as retirement information group sessions, checklists, and other resources. Planning for Retirement - U-M

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE—Ashanti Harris: *I attended a virtual retirement information class conducted by U-M Benefits Office this month. It was held in the evening from 5p-6:45p (but went past 7p with questions). The presenter gave a general overview of the information that is found on the website and after each section would answer some general questions. It was a good session and some participants had their spouse/partner with them. I am at least 15 years from retirement so this specific class might not have been as applicable for me at this point in time, but my personal opinion is if you are closer to retirement (7 years or less) it might be a great overview to help organize your planning. They also recommend scheduling an individual appointment when you are 6 months from retirement*.

RETIREMENT PLANS – Retirement plan sign-up happens when hired. How often do you look at your plan or make adjustments? The SRO Wellness Committee will be scheduling two Lunch and Learn sessions with TIAA and Fidelity to give an overview of the retirement plans. You can then reach out and schedule virtual one-on-one sessions with an advisor to review your personal portfolio. More to come!

FINANCIAL WELLNESS - What is important to you? Planning for college for yourself or dependents, buying a house, credit repair, etc. It is important to assess your financial needs.

U-M Credit Union has various sessions on Homebuyer Education and Savings Essentials. You do not need to be a member. Other credit unions and banks have similar workshops on their websites, so we encourage you to explore these resources. U-M Credit Union Financial Workshops

Legal Services Plan is an option you can sign up for during open enrollment. You can have them help with resolving a variety of legal/financial issues as you move towards financial wellbeing. Description of U-M Legal Services Plan

NEXT MONTH – In April 2021 we will focus on the Social Dimension!

We welcome your suggestions and comments for ways that we can share dimensions of wellness programming to SRO staff. You can reach us at: srowellcomm@umich.edu

Virtual Meeting Guidelines

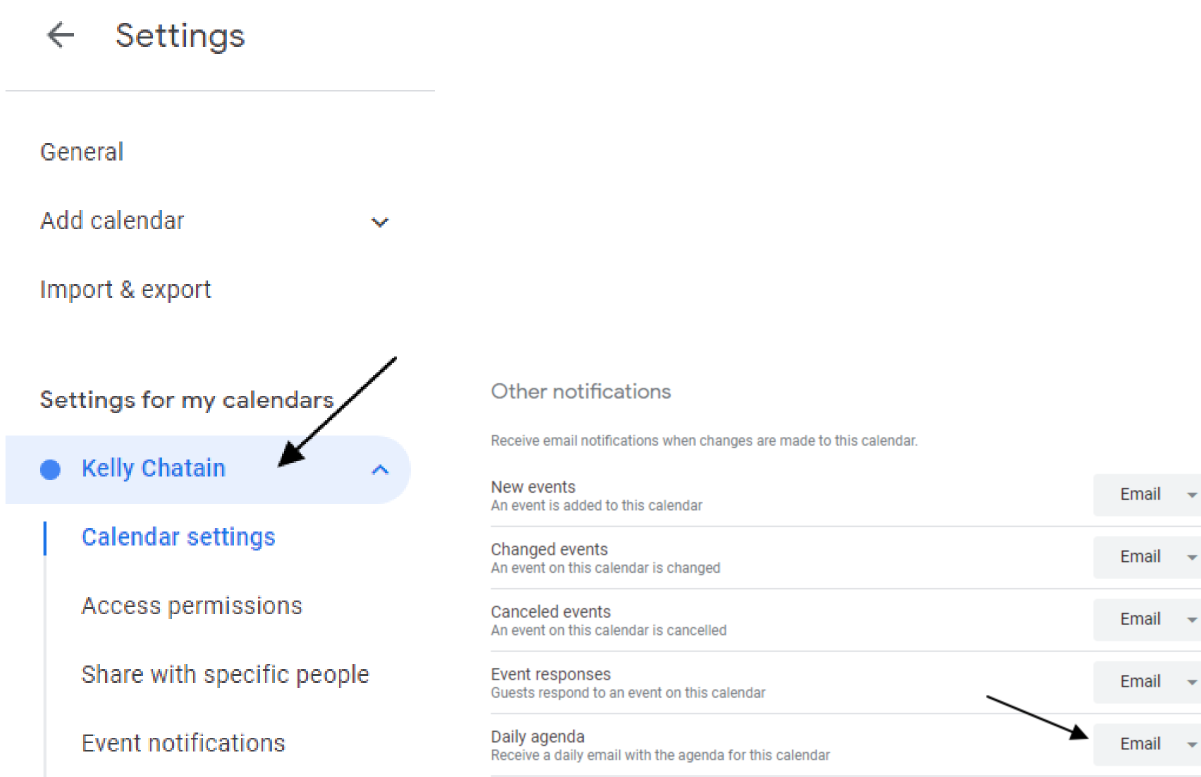
(SRO Wellness Committee)

The SRO Wellness Committee, with review by SRO Supervisors, has developed a set of recommendations for virtual meetings to help minimize video fatigue with our increased use of video meetings. You can find the guidelines on the SRO Intranet under Remote Practices here: http://isr-wp.isr.umich.edu/srointranet/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/VirtualMeetingGuidelinesMarch2021.pdf.

Tips and Tricks

(Kelly Chatain)

Time may feel…different since the pandemic began a year ago. A helpful way to get yourself oriented is to have Google Calendar email your daily agenda first thing in the morning. The agenda includes all tasks and events for the day. To set this up, first go to Google Calendar's **Settings**, click on your **individual calendar**. Scroll down to **Other Notifications** and choose **Email** from the dropdown menu next to **Daily Agenda**. That's it! The email goes out at 5am every morning.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Add calendar
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Settings for my calendars
Kelly Chatain
Calendar settings
Access permissions
Share with specific people
Event notifications
Other notifications
Receive email notifications when changes are made to this calendar.
New events
An event is added to this calendar
Email
Changed events
An event on this calendar is changed
Email
Canceled events
An event on this calendar is cancelled
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Event responses
Guests respond to an event on this calendar
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Daily agenda
Receive a daily email with the agenda for this calendar
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