



Work2BeWell Monthly Newsletter

July 2026

Summer often gives us something many of us don't get enough of during the school year: space. Space to slow down, reflect, try new things, spend time with people we care about, and think about who we are becoming. It can also create space for something equally important...our stories.

Every person has a story shaped by experiences, challenges, victories, relationships, and dreams. Some stories are loud and easy to share. Others are still being written. At Work2BeWell, we believe there is space for every story, every perspective, and every voice. When people feel safe enough to share their experiences, it reminds us that we are not alone in what we're going through.

This month, we're celebrating the power of listening, connecting, and making room for one another. Whether you're sharing your own journey, supporting a friend, or simply learning from someone whose experiences are different from your own, every story has value. Together, we can create communities where people feel seen, heard, and understood.

How Are You #Working2BeWell?

**"You are not defined by one moment,
one mistake, or one chapter
of your life."**

— Selena Gomez

American actress, singer, and advocate



As actress, singer, and advocate Selena Gomez reminds us, "You are not defined by one moment, one mistake, or one chapter of your life." That message is a powerful reminder that our stories are always evolving. No matter where you are right now, your story is still being written, and every chapter matters. Growth, healing, setbacks, and successes all become part of the journey that makes you uniquely you.

This month, challenge yourself to create space for stories, your own and others'. You might be surprised by what you learn when you slow down long enough to listen.

Mental Health Tip for July: Choose Your Own Story Starter

Try one of these simple ways to create space for reflection and connection:

- **The One-Minute Journal:** Write one sentence each day about something that made you smile, think, or grow.
- **Story Swap:** Ask a friend or family member about a meaningful experience they've had and really listen without interrupting.
- **Celebrate Your Chapters:** Make a list of three challenges you've overcome and one thing each experience taught you.
- **Create Space to Unplug:** Spend 15 minutes away from screens and notice what thoughts, ideas, or feelings come up.

Every story matters, including yours.

What You'll Need for July



Making Space to Breathe: Creating Breathing Tools for Mindfulness and Stress Relief

July's theme, Space for Every Story, reminds us that everyone carries different experiences, emotions, and challenges. Sometimes the most important thing we can do for ourselves is create a little space to pause, slow down, and check in with how we're feeling. One simple way to do that is through mindful breathing.

Work2BeWell's Make Breathing Tools activity helps create a hands-on tool that supports mindfulness, emotional regulation, and stress management. Using simple materials like pipe cleaners and pony beads, students design a personalized breathing tool that guides them through calming breathing exercises. As they move each bead across the pipe cleaner, they focus on their breath, helping their minds and bodies slow down and reset.

Breathing exercises are a powerful mental health strategy because they help activate the body's relaxation response. When we are stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, or emotionally activated, our breathing often becomes shallow and rapid. Slowing our breath sends a signal to the brain that we are safe, helping reduce stress and improve focus. This activity includes both a basic breathing exercise and a square breathing exercise, giving students a practical tool they can use anytime they need a moment of calm.

Because the breathing tool is something they create themselves, it becomes a portable reminder that they have coping skills they can use wherever they go.

The connection to this month's theme is simple: every story deserves space. Space to be heard. Space to be understood. And sometimes, space to simply breathe. Whether students are navigating summer transitions, processing emotions, celebrating successes, or facing challenges, this activity encourages them to slow down and create room for their own experiences without judgment.

Click Here to Access:
W2BW's Make Breathing Tools Activity

Talk2BeWell Podcast: "When Plans Change: Unexpected Stories & Lessons Learned"

Not every story goes according to plan—and that can be hard, confusing, or even surprisingly meaningful. Check out our new podcast where Dr. Robin Henderson, Work2BeWell's Chief Clinical Officer and Chief Executive of Behavioral Health for Providence Oregon, talks with special guest and recent alumni, Nylee Wolfe, and a couple of our current NSAC members, Ishtia T. from Minnesota and Harper W. from Iowa.

In this episode, they open up about moments when life took an unexpected turn, how they handled disappointment or uncertainty, and what they learned about themselves along the way.

Episode 179: When Plans Change: Unexpected Stories & Lessons Learned

Interested in listening more? Here are some past T2BW episodes celebrating and exploring different stories:

- Ep. 44: Isabella Mercado • Mental Health
- Ep. 61: Mental Health in Low-Income Communities
- Ep. 75: How to Be an Ally
- Ep. 78: Minority Mental Health with the Defensive Line
- Ep. 114: Honor Every Body
- Ep. 122: Mental Health Awareness with Kika's Lighthouse
- Ep. 148: Listen to Yourself - Using Music to Cope
- Ep. 156: When Life Changes, How to Be There

Each T2BW episode opens the door to meaningful conversations amongst peers and amplifies teen voices and perspectives.

Through open, honest conversations, we help students connect with one another and work towards breaking the stigma around mental health.

Want to easily find episodes to accompany lesson plans and activities? Check out this ready-to-go list of all the **T2BW Episodes Categorized by W2BW Curriculum!** It's a great resource for Counseling Offices and Wellness Rooms!

From Our Club Engagement & Community Advocacy Intern

"The Stories That Changed My Story: What a Cross-Country Journey Taught Me About Wellbeing"



A year ago, just days after graduating from high school, I climbed into a green 39-foot RV with five strangers and set off on a cross-country road trip that changed my life. The experience became the PBS documentary Where Wellbeing Grows, where we traveled across the country interviewing inspiring leaders—from the Mayor of Atlanta to a dairy farmer to a researcher at Boston Children's Hospital—to learn how they define and cultivate wellbeing in their communities.

What surprised me most was that no two stories were alike. Every person we met had taken a different path, overcome different challenges, and found a unique way to make an impact. Yet they all shared a common belief: wellbeing grows when people feel seen, supported, and connected.

Mental health touches all of our lives in different ways, which is why it is so important that untold stories are amplified. Throughout the journey, I was reminded that some of the most powerful lessons come from simply listening. Every conversation challenged me to think differently about wellbeing and reinforced the idea that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Progress starts when people feel comfortable sharing their experiences and when others are willing to listen.

That commitment to storytelling has continued through my work with Work2BeWell, first as a member of the National Student Advisory Council and now as a Club Engagement and Community Advocacy Intern. Through that work, I have supported student-led mental health clubs across the country and helped connect young people with resources, community, and opportunities to create change.

The theme "Space for Every Story" perfectly captures what I experienced on the road. Every story matters, every journey is different, and each of us has something valuable to contribute. Whether or not you ever live in an RV, I challenge you to get out into your community, listen to diverse perspectives, and allow their experiences to shape your own.

You can watch Where Wellbeing Grows for free on PBS. Made possible through support from Juilemon, Pinterest, and the Lisa Stone Pritzker Family Foundation, the documentary is a reminder that every story has the power to inspire change.

Watch the PBS Roadtrip Nation "Where Wellbeing Grows" documentary here:
<https://roadtripnation.com/roadtrip/where-wellbeing-grows-documentary>

Anjali Verma (@sheNer) recently completed her first year as a Public Policy and Political Science and Coca-Cola Scholar at Stanford University from Bucks County, Pennsylvania. In 2025, she became the inaugural President of the National Student Council, representing millions of students nationwide. Passionate about mental health, school safety, youth leadership, and public health, she mentors student club leaders through Work2BeWell and serves as a Reagan's Message Ambassador supporting student-driven mental health. Anjali has presented at the U.S. Department of Education, collaborated with White House officials, and addressed the U.S. Senate Youth Program as its student speaker. Over the summer, she co-founded a free college application support service initiative that connects 300 college students with nearly 500 high school seniors nationwide. She is also co-starring in a PBS documentary on mental wellness and social impact with Roadtrip Nation, and her advocacy has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Fox. Anjali is honored to be back with Work2BeWell for a fourth year to support activation efforts and is inspired by the teen changemakers she gets to collaborate with. Anjali #Work2BeWell by taking digital camera photos, FaceTiming friends, going on sunset runs, and spending time with animals!



Check Out Our New Wellness Wear Today!

Trusted Resource

Every Story Can Shape the Future: Why "Wellbeing For All" Matters

July's theme, Space for Every Story, reminds us that everyone's experiences, perspectives, and journeys have value. Sometimes the most powerful way to understand ourselves is by listening to the stories of others. That belief sits at the heart of Wellbeing For All, an interactive career exploration platform created by Roadtrip Nation with support from Juilemon.

Inspired by the Where Wellbeing Grows documentary, Wellbeing For All introduces students to individuals from many different backgrounds, careers, and communities who are working to improve mental health and wellbeing. From healthcare professionals and researchers to community leaders, educators, and advocates, the platform demonstrates that there is no single path to making a difference.

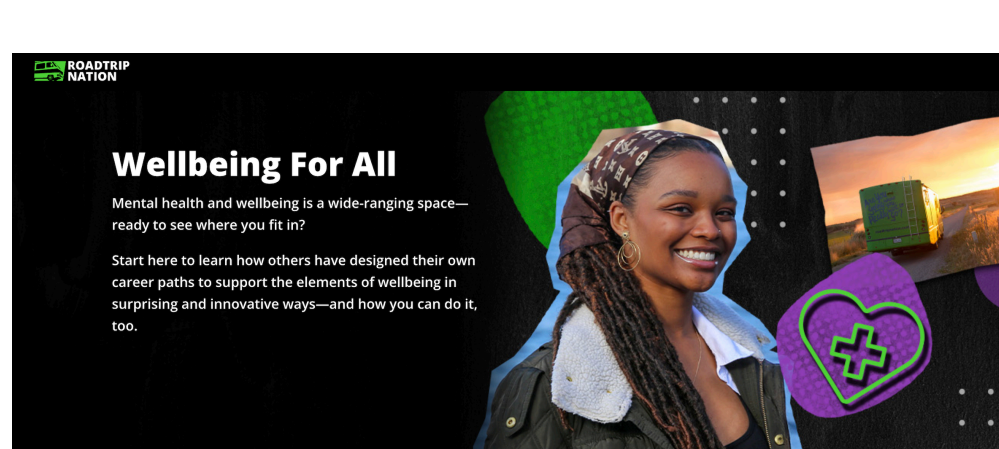
This resource aligns closely with Work2BeWell's mission to help young people feel seen, heard, and valued. Both organizations believe that sharing experiences reduces stigma, builds connection, and creates opportunities for growth. By exploring diverse stories and career journeys, students can see themselves reflected in others while also discovering new possibilities for their own futures.

What makes Wellbeing For All especially meaningful for this month's theme is its emphasis on listening. Each story offers a different perspective on wellbeing, reminding us that mental health looks different for everyone and that every person's experiences matter. The platform encourages students to explore their own interests, identify their strengths, and consider how they might contribute to healthier, more supportive communities.

At Work2BeWell, we know that stories have the power to create change. Whether through a conversation with a friend, a student-led club, a podcast episode, or a documentary, sharing experiences helps build empathy and reminds us that none of us are alone.

This July, create space to listen to someone else's story—and perhaps discover a new chapter in your own.

For more information and to explore the Wellbeing For All platform, visit:
Wellbeing For All by Roadtrip Nation
<https://roadtripnation.com/community/wellbeing-mental-health/>



[Photo Source Link](#)

Creating Space for Every Story: Inside the 2026 W2BW Team Leaders Retreat



Before the school year begins and the National Student Advisory Council gathers for its first meeting, Work2BeWell's student and adult leaders come together for several days of learning, planning, and connection. This June, team leaders from across the United States and Puerto Rico traveled to New Hampshire to participate in the 2026 Work2BeWell Team Leaders Retreat.

Over six days, student leaders, staff, and advisors focused on preparing for the upcoming school year while strengthening the relationships that make Work2BeWell such a unique community. The retreat began with opportunities to reconnect, build relationships, and welcome new team leaders. Through activities designed to encourage conversation and bonding, students quickly moved from introductions to meaningful connections, creating the supportive environment that serves as the foundation of the organization.

A major focus of the retreat was professional development. Led by Curriculum Development Director Heather Ransom, team leaders participated in the full Train-the-Trainer experience, learning how to facilitate conversations, present educational content, engage student audiences, and create safe spaces where teens feel seen, heard, and valued. These skills will help leaders support their teams, facilitate meetings, and present Work2BeWell resources throughout the year.

Students also spent significant time creating content for the upcoming school year. Working alongside Tina Schaub, Communications and Marketing Manager, team leaders developed social media content, recorded materials, took professional headshots, and explored ways to share mental health resources with teens across the country.

Future planning was another important focus. Guided by co-founders Dr. Robin Henderson and Sara Freau, leaders reviewed Work2BeWell's mission and strategic goals for 2026-2027, centered on creating supportive environments where teens feel seen, heard, and valued. Individual teams developed goals, clarified responsibilities, and created action plans for the coming year. With Finn Jacobson, the NSAC Advisor, student leaders also began planning the first National Student Advisory Council meetings, team engagement activities, and opportunities to strengthen connections among members.

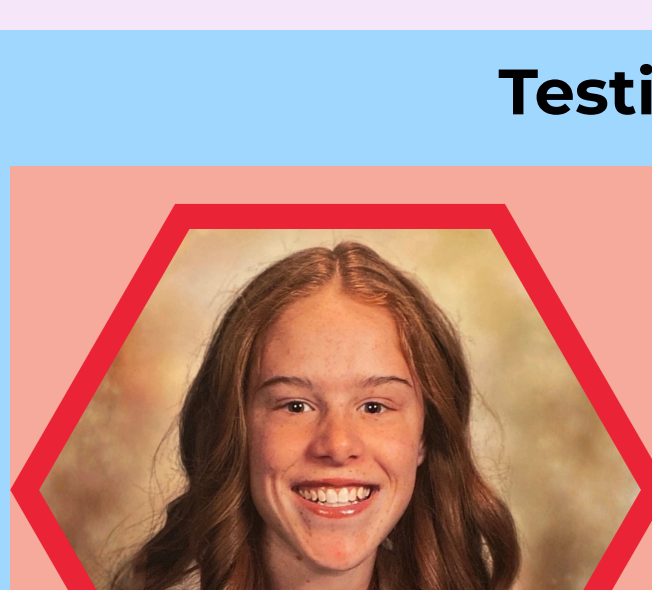
The retreat also provided opportunities for creativity and collaboration, including podcast recording sessions, team planning time, and content development that will continue throughout the year. Evening activities encouraged students to build relationships, reflect on their experiences, and support one another outside of formal sessions.

Following the retreat, the team jumped into the VISION Conference at Pinkerton Academy, where leaders had the opportunity to network with student leaders from around the country, present resources, staff exhibit booths, and represent Work2BeWell on a national stage.

By the end of the week, leaders returned home with new skills, stronger relationships, clear goals, and renewed energy for the year ahead. While the schedules were full and the days were long, the retreat served as an important reminder that meaningful work begins with connection, preparation, and a shared commitment to helping teens feel seen, heard, and valued.

The 2026-2027 school year is quickly approaching, and this incredible group of student and adult leaders is ready to help make it one of Work2BeWell's strongest years yet.

Testimonials



Bree Pollard

"During my freshman year, I had the opportunity to attend the Texas Association of Student Councils state convention. While there one of my friends and I chose to attend a work to be well workshop that was being directed by Anjali Verma. During this workshop they used the Work2BeWell First Aid Kit lesson which is one of the many resources guides available. Anjali shared a lot of valuable information about how the subject of stigma in mental health has changed so much and what we can do to lessen this by providing the resources that people may need."

"Upon our arrival home from the convention we knew right away that we wanted to start a club in our own high school. In August of 2025, we filled out the application. Throughout the past year we have really focused on learning what we can to become better-suited to serve our community."

"We even prepared a trifold display and used one of the online resources to present at our district student council conference."

"Personally, Work2BeWell has offered me an amazing opportunity for leadership, and I am beyond grateful for the supportive community of leaders and advisors. As a club chairman at my school, I have attended some of the W2BW Club Meet-Up zoom meetings and it was so amazing to experience the commitment and love for this topic that so many young adults have. I believe as youth of today and leaders of tomorrow it is our job to support those around us. Work2BeWell is one organization that I trust to always be welcoming, encouraging, and candid. From the people I have communicated with online to the ones I have had the opportunity to meet with in-person, each one has offered respect and friendliness."

"I would encourage everyone to become a part of this wonderful organization or at least take some time to read through the many free resources offered on their website."

Bree Pollard will graduate in 2028 and is the eldest of four siblings. She is highly involved in her community, participating in numerous organizations and activities, including Student Council, Cross Country, Distance Track, the Suburban community service group, 4-H, and St. Anthony's Youth Group. She credits Work2BeWell with helping her develop the organizational and mental wellness skills needed to successfully balance her many commitments. Though what she has learned, she recognizes the importance of using her free time to relax, recharge, and maintain a healthy balance in her life.

At Work2BeWell, we believe every story matters. This month's theme is a reminder that when people share their experiences, insights, and perspectives, they help create stronger, more supportive communities for everyone.

If you've explored a Work2BeWell module, we'd love to hear your story. What resonated with you? What helped you think differently, start a conversation, or support your own mental health? Your feedback helps us continue creating resources that reflect the real experiences and needs of students and educators.

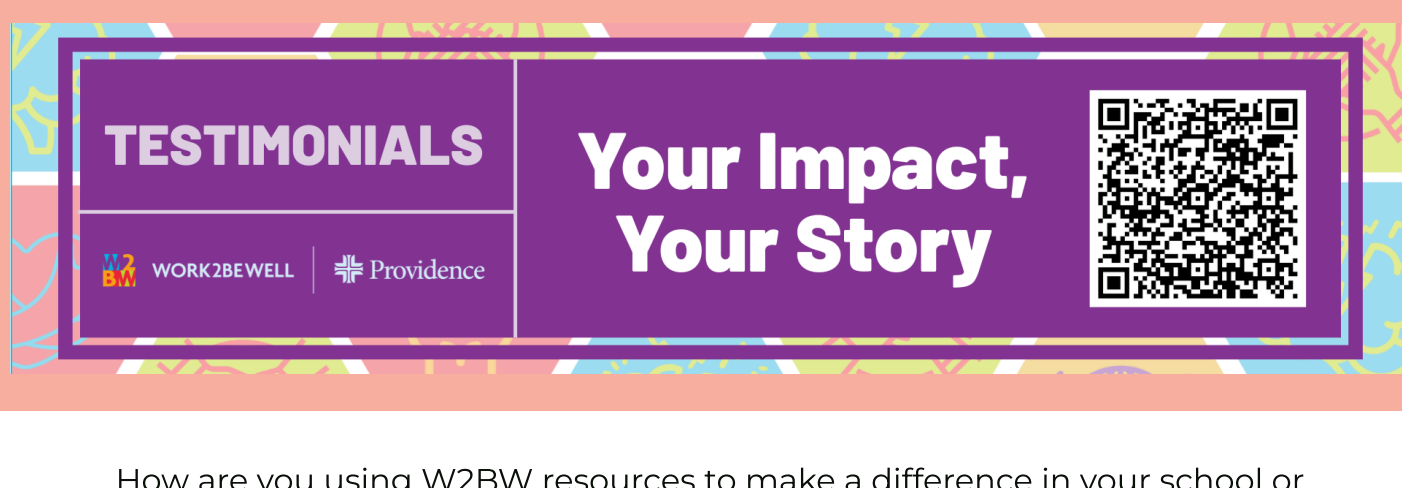
Our survey only takes a few minutes, but your voice helps shape future content and ensures more stories are represented. (Be sure to select the correct module title when responding.) Thank you for helping us create a community where every voice is valued, every experience matters, and every story has a place.

Every Story Helps Shape the Next One



WHERE TO FIND US THIS MONTH

Dates / Location	Event
July 14, 2026 Monmouth, OR	Oregon Association of Student Councils - Leadership Camp



How are you using W2BW resources to make a difference in your school or community? Have they helped you start conversations, plan events, or bring people together around mental health? We'd love to hear how you're making an impact!

[Share your story with us](#) and be featured in an upcoming newsletter or on social media!



WORK2BEWELL



4400 NE Highway 51 • Portland, OR 97218 • United States • [Click here to email us](mailto:info@work2bewell.com)