



**MOVING FORWARD:
ACKNOWLEDGING OUR CHALLENGES &
EMBRACING OUR STRENGTHS**

Hilary N. Weaver, DSW
hweaver@buffalo.edu



Introduction

- Who I am & how I come to this content



Readiness

- What does this mean?
- How can we be “ready” in uncertain times?



Context: Coming out of a pandemic



- The world is changed for all of us
 - Our lives have been upended by COVID, now there is a push to get back to work
 - Important to acknowledge the transitions inherent in returning to work (for us & the customers we support)

Finding the strength to move forward

- This is not our first pandemic
- We will not let this stop us



[illegible]

- is just part of the process
process
and typical work but may be
be acknowledged
the process
- 1846 6



Reframing a meaningful work identity

- Is work menial or meaningful?
- I am a provider for my family
- I am the one who keeps the stories
- I am the one who passes on knowledge
- I am the one who makes sure the Elders are fed
- I am the one who makes sure the place where the children learn & play is clean & safe
- I am the one who will make sure that the road is smooth so that people can travel safely
- Frame work roles in terms of relationships, responsibilities & caring for others



Believing in what you do is important

- The pandemic has reminded us life can be uncertain; no day is promised
- This could feed reluctance to work, if work is not seen as meaningful
- This could fuel passion for meaningful work
- How do we frame/reframe work as meaningful?



The meaning of work

- In the US dominant culture, work is central to identity (What do you do? What is your major?)
- This is different in many Indigenous cultures (Where you are from? Who are your relatives?)
- How do we bridge this gap?



How do we move forward from the pandemic?

- If you know, please tell me
 - There's a disconnect if we are asking customers to do this when no one really has the answers
 - That doesn't mean we don't move forward
- Sometimes it's important to just put one foot in front of the other (later realizing you have made incremental progress)
- Some turn to traditional guidance & supports
 - Blackberries have thorns (difficulties, even major life-changing ones, are normal but they are not the whole picture)
- We will not allow challenges to define us; Resilience & perseverance



Conclusion

- We can't pretend that nothing has happened (customers & selves)
- Important to acknowledge our feelings, experiences, & fears during the pandemic; & reach for our hopes
- Draw on supports that are meaningful for us; culture, tradition, spirituality, other...
- Reframe how we think about work & how it fits in our lives & aligns with our identity
- Recognize & tend to our own needs, attend to the compass so we are headed in the right direction, keep putting one foot in front of the other, be aware of thorns & reach for the blackberries

