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## **Fuel for the Journey: Harmonizing Work and Wellbeing**

### **A reflection and conversation guide for Extension professionals**

#### **Session/Activity Description:**

In Extension, we often focus on getting the job done—moving from meeting to meeting, program to program, county to campus. But no matter how dedicated we are, we can't run on empty. Just like a car needs fuel to stay on the road, we need regular care—physical, mental, and emotional—to continue the meaningful work we do.

“Fuel for the Journey” invites us to pause and consider: What fills our tank? How do we balance the demands of our work with the need to care for ourselves? What are the warning lights we shouldn't ignore? This guide is designed to encourage individual reflection and team conversation around sustaining energy, setting boundaries, and creating practices that support long-term wellbeing.

#### **Discussion Guide**

##### **1. Check the Dashboard: What's Your Current Fuel Level?**

- On a scale from Empty to Full, how “fueled” do you feel right now?
- What are the signs you notice when your tank is running low—physically, emotionally, or mentally?

##### **2. Know What Fills You Up**

- What activities, people, or practices give you energy or restore you?
- How often do you intentionally make time for those things?
- What one small thing could you do this week to “fill your tank”?

### 3. Roadblocks and Detours

- What gets in the way of your self-care?
- Are there habits, expectations, or work patterns that you've accepted as normal—but might not be healthy?
- How do you respond when you feel stretched too thin?

### 4. Maintenance Matters

- Just like a car needs regular maintenance, what routines help you stay balanced?
- What boundaries do you have—or need—to protect your energy?
- How do you communicate those needs to others?

### 5. Traveling Together

- How can we better support each other's wellbeing as a team?
- What does a healthy work culture look like in our group?
- What's one thing we could do collectively to promote balance?

### **Action Steps**

- Individual: Choose one habit or boundary you'd like to reinforce this month. Write it down and revisit it weekly.
- Team: Set a shared "wellbeing checkpoint"—a short time each month to check in with one another, celebrate wins, and normalize rest.
- Leadership: Encourage open conversations about workload, burnout, and support—without judgment.

### **Closing Reflection**

"You can't serve from an empty cup, and you can't lead from an empty tank. Refueling isn't selfish—it's essential."

Take a deep breath. Look out the window. You're on a meaningful road. Let's make sure you've got what you need to keep going.