COURSE SYLLABUS

Protecting Your Mental Health in the Age of AI Course (Self-Paced)

Protect your well-being as AI reshapes government work. This self-paced course covers the early signs of cognitive overload and burnout, practical boundaries with AI tools, how to support a struggling colleague, and how to build a well-being plan you will keep using.

> Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://www.graduateschool.edu/courses/protecting-your-mental-health-in-the-age-of-ai-self-paced



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Course Outline

Module 1: Welcome & Why AI Change Feels Personal

- Establish a shared, plain-language foundation for how AI is changing government work and why those changes register as personal rather than purely technical
- Examine the specific features of AI-driven change — speed, uncertainty, role ambiguity, and constant re-learning — that make it a recognized workplace stressor
- Explore how AI-related job and role uncertainty functions as a workplace condition to be managed rather than a personal shortcoming
- Complete a confidential self-check on current workload, focus, sleep, and stress levels to establish a personal baseline for the session
- Clarify the scope of the course, including the difference between workplace wellbeing skills and clinical mental health care
- Normalize the full range of reactions to AI adoption — curiosity, fatigue, relief, loss, and fear — and establish ground rules for a psychologically safe discussion
- Reflect on how AI has already changed participants' own work in order to frame the skills built across the remaining modules

Module 2: How AI-Enabled Work Affects the Mind and Body

- Examine how AI changes the texture of daily work, shifting effort from producing output toward directing, reviewing, and verifying it
- Recognize verification fatigue and sustained-attention demands as genuine sources of cognitive load, and locate them in participants' own workflows
- Analyze the stress effects of accelerated expectations, compressed timelines, and always-available tooling in AI-enabled offices
- Identify how the loss of craft, mastery, and professional identity can drive disengagement even when measured workload goes down
- Explore the isolation risks of AI-mediated collaboration and reduced peer contact, with particular attention to remote and hybrid staff
- Distinguish ordinary stress responses from the behavioral, cognitive, and physical indicators of burnout
- Map personal stress triggers and early warning signs onto a simple private tracking tool participants can keep using after the course

Module 3: Building Your Wellbeing Toolkit

- Apply practical strategies for protecting attention, including focus blocks, notification limits, and deliberate single-tasking
- Set sustainable boundaries with AI tools and digital communication that preserve rest, recovery, and genuine off-duty time

- Practice reframing and uncertainty-tolerance techniques that reduce rumination about shifting roles and job security
- Use brief, evidence-informed regulation practices — paced breathing, movement breaks, and micro-recovery — that fit inside a federal workday
- Evaluate appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI chatbots for personal support, including privacy, accuracy, and government-device considerations
- Rebuild sources of meaning, mastery, and connection at work through mentoring, peer learning, and purposeful human collaboration
- Assemble a personalized toolkit of two or three practices participants will realistically sustain, and plan for the obstacles most likely to derail them

Module 4: Supporting Others & Your Path Forward

- Identify what supervisors and coworkers can do to build psychological safety during AI adoption and technology change
- Practice a structured, low-risk check-in conversation with a colleague who appears to be struggling
- Recognize the limits of a peer or supervisory role, including when and how to hand off to trained professional help
- Locate the support resources available to federal employees, including the Employee Assistance Program, Federal Occupational Health services, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and agency reasonable-accommodation processes
- Address the stigma and confidentiality concerns that keep government employees from seeking help
- Build a personal wellbeing plan with specific practices, checkpoints, and named sources of support
- Commit to one team-level action — a meeting norm, a workload practice, or a conversation with leadership — that improves collective wellbeing