



Impact Evaluation of UC San Diego COVID Response Team Wellness and Job Satisfaction

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Background

Context

- UC San Diego COVID-19 response team established to perform case investigation and contact tracing for students and employees
- Also contracted to perform contact tracing for 18-29 year old San Diego County residents
- 76 contact tracers, case investigators, and outbreak investigators employed since July 2020
- COVID response teams may face high job stress due to large-volume and emotionally-taxing nature of their work
- Study undertaken to assess adequacy of available resources and supports

Study Objectives

1. What is the duration of employment and amount of turnover?
2. What are the current levels of stress and job satisfaction?
3. What do the employees think can be done to lower stress and improve their satisfaction?
4. How do retention rates differ between UC San Diego contact tracers, UC San Diego case investigators, and those investigating San Diego County contacts?

Methods

Qualitative Analysis

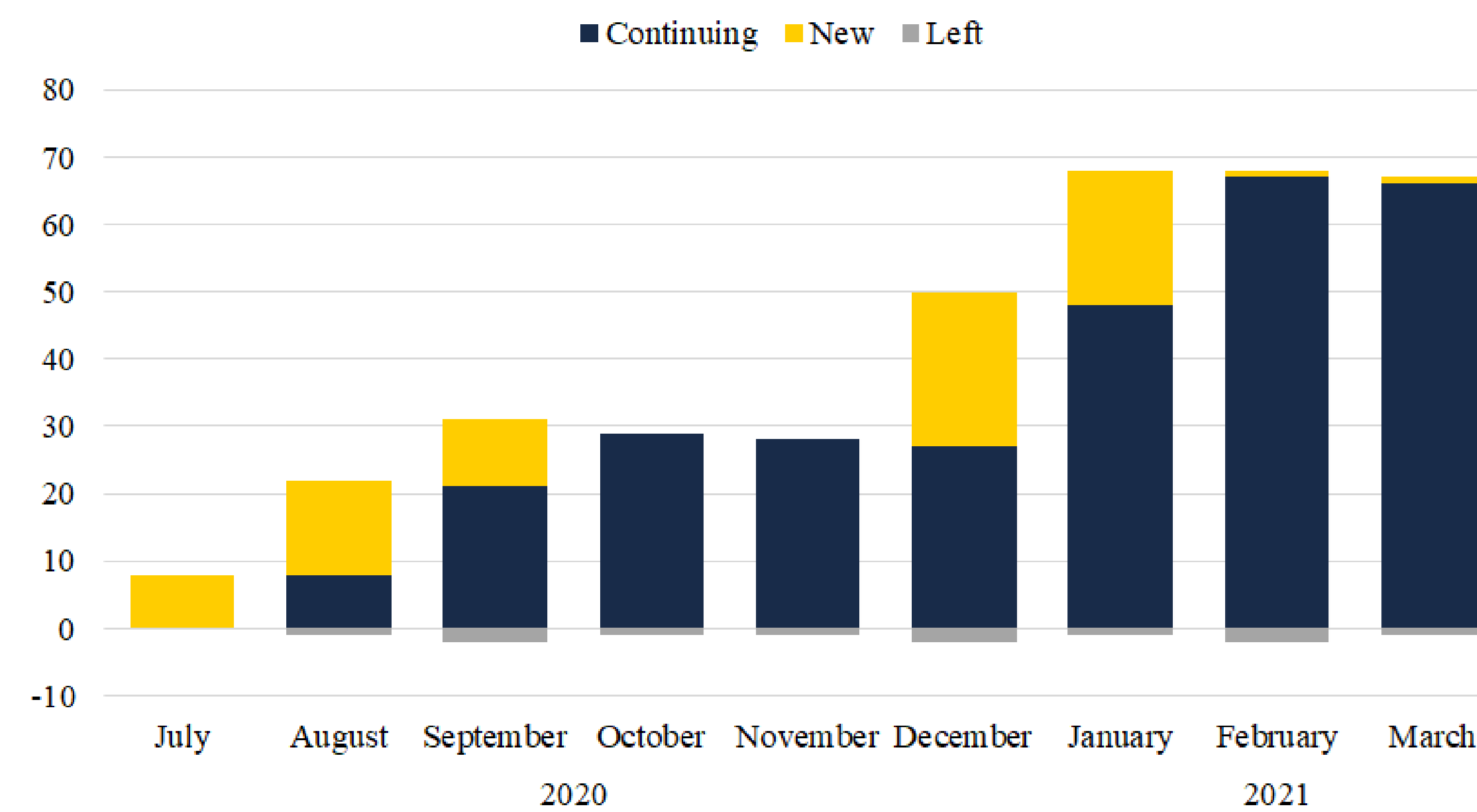
- Individual in-depth interviews with 11 of the 76 current and former COVID-19 response team members
- Interviews coded and common themes identified to inform survey creation

Quantitative Analysis

- Qualtrics survey emailed to 76 current and former team members
 - 51% response rate (n=39)
- Survey duration: April 16, 2021 - April 23, 2021
- Data analyzed using SPSS and OpenEpi
- Distribution of respondent roles
 - 80% contact tracer (n=31)
 - 15% case investigator (n=6)
 - 10% outbreak investigator (n=4)
 - Three employees held dual roles
 - One employee held three roles

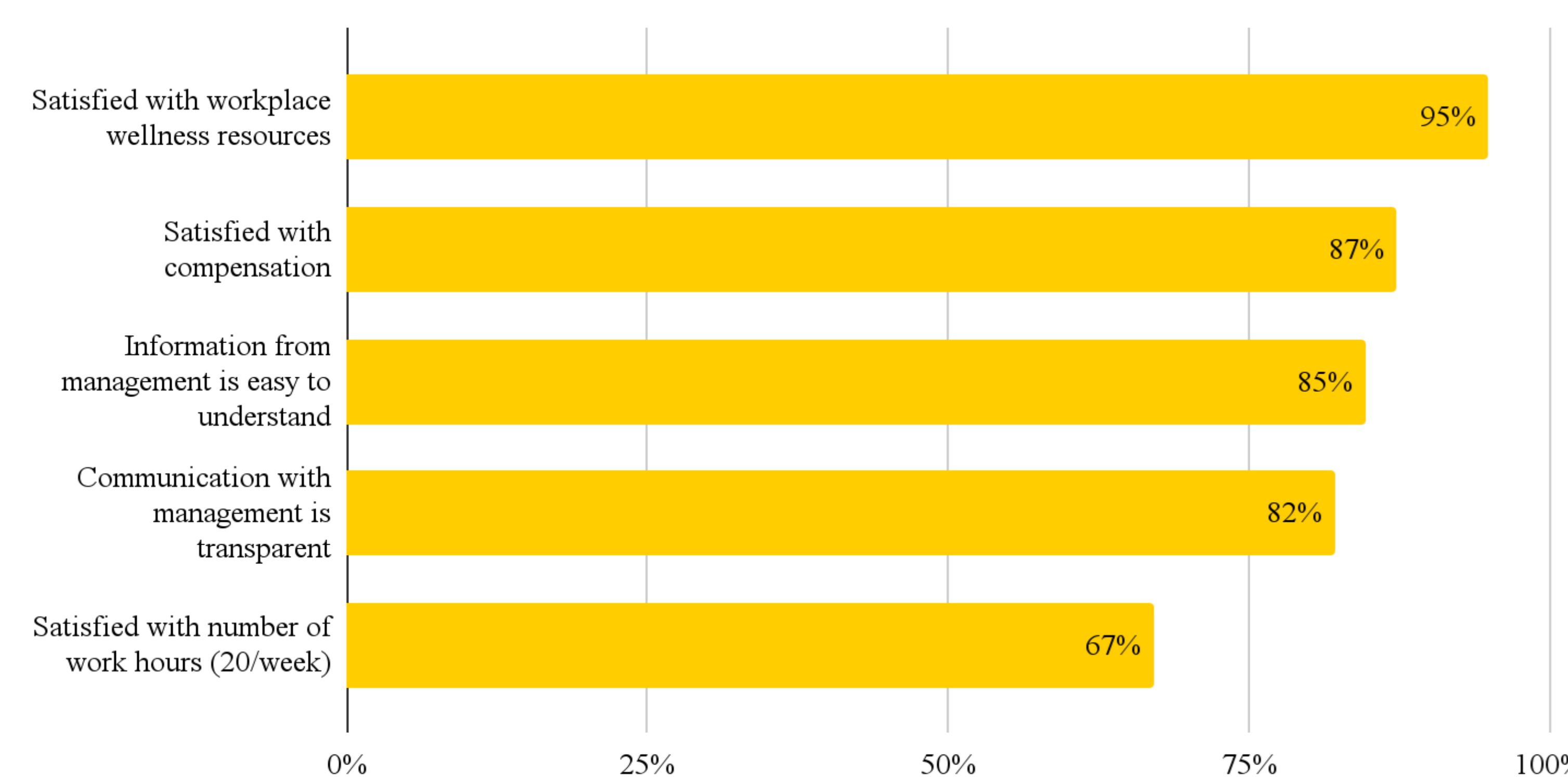
Results

Staffing by Month



- Rapid hiring during December and January surge
- 2/3 employed < 3 months
- 14% of the 76 total employees have left as of March 2021

Satisfaction with job elements (n=39)



- Overall satisfaction with job elements is high

Attrition Rates by Roles

- 29% (7/24) San Diego County contact tracers left
- 19% (3/16) UCSD-exclusive contact tracers left
- No UCSD case investigators have left

Stress Levels and Wellness

- 79% experienced stress during surges
- 67% experienced stress in March, the month prior to survey
- 92% engaged in wellness activities (e.g. yoga, meditation, exercise)

Key Themes in Qualitative Data

Sources of stress and job dissatisfaction:

- Increased work volume during surge periods (inadequate staffing)
- Confrontational contacts
- Difficulty balancing work-life activities
- Lack of transparency in communication

Contributing factors for job satisfaction and wellness:

- Support systems
 - Sense of community with co-workers and lead
 - Workplace collaboration and communication
 - Network of peers with similar educational and professional goals
- Personal growth & opportunities
 - Adequate resources to advance beyond temporary position
- Community building activities (e.g. game nights)
 - Reduced isolation
 - Alleviation of burnout
 - Increased motivation

"I would probably have to thank my co-workers because I get along with them and can talk about the troubles that we all share so it's comforting to know that I have fellow contact tracers that experience the same things as me."

Conclusions

- Almost all surveyed employees satisfied with their job
- Factors that may contribute to satisfaction:
 - Sense of community
 - Employer-provided wellness resources
 - Personal wellness activities

Limitations

- Results may not be representative of former employees due to low response rate (3 of 11 former employees; 27%)

Policy Recommendations

Improve workplace support systems through:

- Transparency of policies and procedures
- Adequate staffing to handle increased caseload
- Social and professional development activities