

# Rolling with Advantage

## Dungeons and Dragons for Self-Care and Community-Building Among Staff

### Introduction



CSL D&D Club character art from their Wild Beyond the Witchlight campaign.

### Summary

There's no such thing as "all work, no play." Play is essential for work-life balance and self-care. When you bring your colleagues in, play can unlock the power of community, reducing isolation and increasing emotional support. This poster presentation describes how the Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) Club provides a place where California State Library staff can play and build connections. Not only do they get the opportunity to explore and develop creative and professional skills, but the Club also provides them with a sense of community and belonging.

Learn how you can bring your own tabletop role-playing (TTRPG) club to your library staff!

### Background

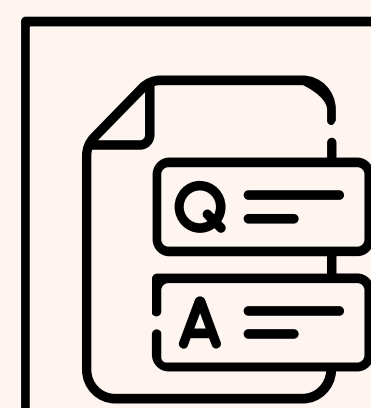
In February of 2022, the Dungeons and Dragons Club was created by and for staff as a way to connect outside of work. This past summer the club name was changed to the CSL Adventurers Club to encompass other tabletop role-play games that the group wanted to try out, not just D&D. So far the Club has 18 members, which is 10% of all staff!

The Club offers a biweekly campaign that has been running since Spring of 2022 as well as bimonthly one-session adventures. Sessions occur outside of work hours and usually are done virtually unless members can meet up for an in-person session. Quarterly updates are included in the internal staff newsletter as a way to recruit new members!

### Findings

#### Methodology

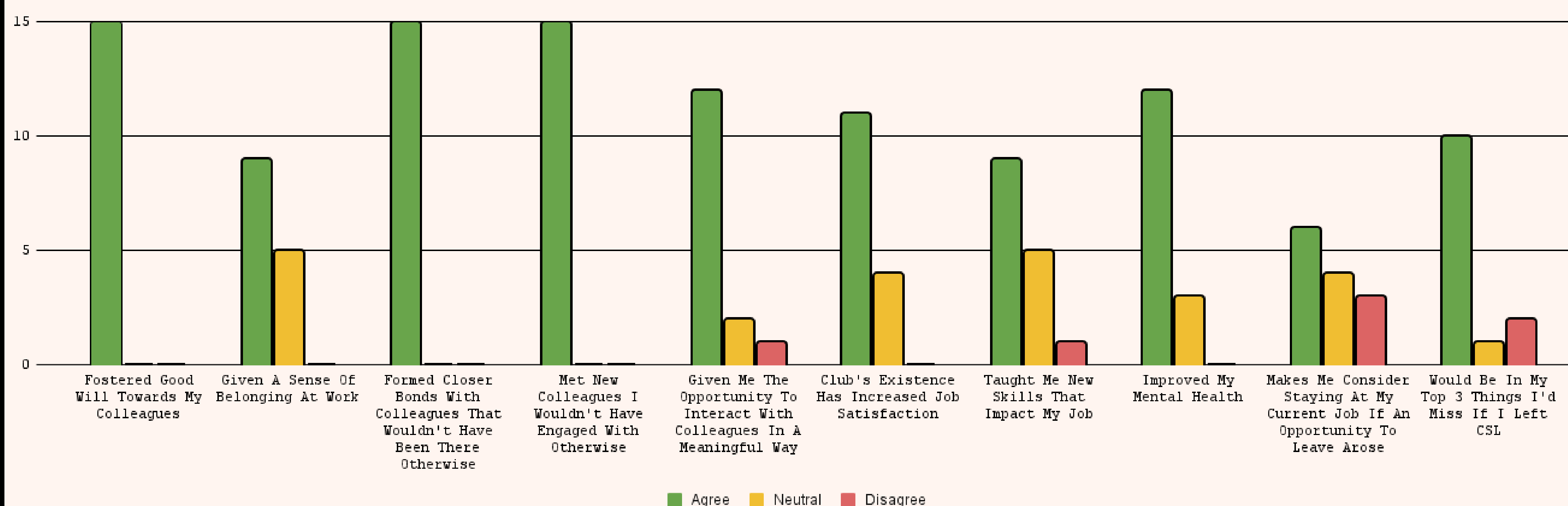
Over the summer, a survey was sent out to Club members to solicit feedback and gauge the impact of the Club. There was an 83% response rate with 15 responses.



A 7-question anonymous survey mostly open-ended responses with one Likert scale and one yes/no question.

#### Results

- *Question 1: "Why did you join the Club?"* - The responses revealed two main reasons: 1) they like to play or wanted to try TTRPGs; 2) they wanted a way to socialize and get to know other people. Some people even said both reasons in their answers!
- *Question 2: "Have you participated in at least one game?"* - All respondents answered yes.
- *Question 3: "How has the Club impacted your work life?"* - This question had 10 sub-questions and was answered via a Likert scale. See graph below for more details on the results.



- *Questions 4 thru 7* - Asked about members' experiences and the Club's impact on self-care.

Here are some of their responses:

"I don't think that the club exists *at* my place of work, but *through* my place of work. It doesn't take meaningful work resources [...] I think one thing it means though is that **my workplace encourages a collegial relationship** among staff members."

"Adventuring **helps me take a mental break** and allows me to switch over to my right brain which is a relief. The creativity involved is excellent for disappearing into my own world where anything is possible and **that is good self-care.**"

"It allowed me to **humanize my coworkers** and get to know them better [...] I enjoy the social aspect, but in work **knowing folks from the club makes me feel less anxious** about reaching out to them and asking for help on work-related matters."

"I enjoy being able to **play with people** from other sections that I would otherwise **never have interacted with.**"

"I enjoy the camaraderie of the club as **it helps me see the different side of colleagues** that they may not be able or want to display at their jobs. I feel like **it is a safe place** to actively listen, communicate and overcome obstacles in."

"I think it provides **a great space for us all to be human.** The fact that is part of the library makes the work as a whole **more relaxed and something to look forward to.**"

### Conclusion

Even though the Club takes place outside of work, it still positively impacts staff from relieving stress and providing a safe place for connection with colleagues to learning new skills and increasing confidence at work.

#### How To Start A Club

1. Ask around your place of work to gauge interest in a TTRPG club.
2. With admin approval, use staff meetings and internal newsletters to spread the word.
3. Gauge member experience levels and figure out who will be the Game Master (GM).
4. Determine which TTRPG, session length, maximum number of players etc.
5. Pick a day and time that works best!

#### Considerations

- If no one can GM, check out your local game store for events and GMs!
- Reduce GM burnout by having rotating GMs.
- Scheduling can be hard. Just do your best!
- Focus on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Create guidelines to maintain player safety.
- Be patient with new players!

#### Acknowledgements

Gina Iwata, co-founder and active member of the Club; Josh Selesnick, Master of Game Masters; the Club's rotating Game Masters; and all members. Lastly, thank you to CSL leadership for giving space for this Club.

#### Bio & Contact Info

Dvorah Lewis is the Club's co-founder and main coordinator/organizer. She also co-gms the Club's *Witchlight* campaign. Outside of this, she co-hosts a D&D podcast with her fiancé called *Critical Role Models*.

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