



Best Practices Research to Understand how to Support Mental Health and Prevent Burnout in the Hybrid Workplace

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Executive Summary

This report seeks to identify best practices in supporting mental health and preventing burnout in the hybrid workplace. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many workplaces to adapt to different styles of work, whether working remotely or in hybrid settings, and as a result some workplaces have formally adopted these methods of work into their environments. The University of British Columbia (UBC) is one such institution that has formally adopted hybrid work; combined with the university's longstanding commitment to wellbeing, this report was conducted with the intent of better understanding the impacts of hybrid (and remote) work on employee wellbeing. After consultation with staff members of UBC's Central Human Resources team, a review of the existing literature on the topic, and an environmental scan of UBC's current practices related to employee wellbeing, ten key findings were identified. They are:

- Hybrid work arrangements need to consider equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- These arrangements require clear and transparent communication.
- Clear policies and plans for hybrid/remote work need to be developed.
- When designing remote and hybrid work, the needs of different people and organizations need to be considered.
- To effectively address burnout at work, it needs to be addressed beyond the individual level, to also include the systemic level.
- Remote and hybrid work necessitates building supportive work environments.
- In these work arrangements, it is crucial to ensure there exists work-life boundaries.
- It is important to recognize that leaders have unique responsibilities in supporting the wellbeing of staff.
- Organizations should draw from the experience of staff members.
- Organizations and employers should be open to feedback and evaluation regarding how to best implement remote/hybrid work arrangements.

Addressing each of these findings requires effort from everyone within the organization, which is why specific actions to tackle each of these findings were highlighted for employees, leaders, and organizations themselves. Ultimately, supporting mental health and preventing burnout requires a holistic approach and commitment from all levels within a workplace. It also requires a dedication to learning and adaptability, as the impact of hybrid work, in particular, on mental health is a relatively new field in which research continues to emerge.

Introduction

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on day-to-day life are still felt by many around the world, and while it is difficult to know right now the full extent of these impacts, one thing that has become increasingly clear is that the pandemic shifted how we do work. Hybrid and remote work have become increasingly common, as have stories of employees and employers experiencing burnout. The pandemic then has shown that it is important to understand the connection between burnout and remote/hybrid work and to discuss how to effectively support mental health in the ever-changing workplace. The need for this research comes at a time when many people are calling for more flexible work options, the majority of people who worked hybrid models during the pandemic want to continue doing so moving forward.¹ Furthermore, “more than two out of three employees who prefer hybrid models say they are likely to look for other opportunities if asked to return fully on-site”.² It is not surprising then that organizations have begun to formally implement hybrid work models in their workplaces. As is the case for the University of British Columbia (UBC), who in June 2022 made the decision “to formally adopt remote work through the UBC Hybrid Work Program”.³ Evidently, hybrid and remote work are not going anywhere, however despite growing support for such programs, their implementation and the experiences of employees have been met with mixed results.⁴ There is a need then to better understand the effects of the remote/hybrid workplace on employee mental health. This report seeks to provide this understanding. First, however, it is important to understand what exactly is entailed in remote/hybrid work as well as one of its biggest impacts on mental health: burnout.

Understanding Remote/Hybrid Work

Remote work, as its name suggests, is any work done outside of the office, this can include working at other locations or working from home.⁵ Hybrid work then consists of working both from the office and a remote location. That said, in this report, the two types of work will be discussed interchangeably. Within the context of remote work during the pandemic, it is important to note that there is a difference between having a remote/hybrid work arrangement imposed on someone due to circumstances outside of their control (e.g. as was often the case during the pandemic) and people actively choosing to use alternative work arrangements. In the

¹ Bonnie Dowling, Drew Goldstein, Michael Park & Holly Price, “Hybrid work: Making it fit with your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy,” McKinsey, April 20, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/hybrid-work-making-it-fit-with-your-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-strategy>.

² Ibid.

³ Marcia Buchholz, “UBC to formally adopt hybrid work,” UBC, June 28, 2022, <https://ubctoday.ubc.ca/news/june-06-2022/ubc-formally-adopt-hybrid-work>.

⁴ Bonnie Dowling, Drew Goldstein, Michael Park & Holly Price, “Hybrid work: Making it fit with your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy,” McKinsey, April 20, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/hybrid-work-making-it-fit-with-your-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-strategy>.

⁵ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, “Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 3.

latter arrangements, the outcomes are typically more successful.⁶ However, successes and challenges with remote and hybrid work can occur whether or not it is enforced.

Some of the benefits of remote and hybrid work include the flexibility of the work which often allows for a more relaxed work atmosphere and can give people more time for developing new skills and in some cases increase productivity.⁷ This in turn increases overall job satisfaction and employee engagement.⁸ Other advantages of this work for employees include: saving money, less work distractions from office work, and the increased possibility of avoiding office politics.⁹ Remote and hybrid work also creates advantages for employers, such as: “increased productivity and profitability, [it] reduces costs and absenteeism, [as well as] creates a more level playing field for organizations that wish to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion.”¹⁰ Evidently then there can be numerous benefits from implementing remote and/or hybrid work arrangements.

Of course, like most things, there also exists the potential for challenges within remote and hybrid work arrangements. For instance, there is some evidence that the increased reliance on technology in these kinds of work environments has caused ‘technostress’ (stress related to technology); in some cases, this increased reliance has also caused anxiety, depression, and reduced sleep quality.¹¹ It also has the potential to create less defined work-life boundaries as well as isolation.¹² For employers, remote and hybrid work can lead to more challenges with communicating with employees and scheduling meetings and cause a general increase in workload.¹³ Given the potential for such challenges, it is important that any transitions to remote and hybrid work are effectively managed and designed. If they are not, the risk of poor mental health and the potential for burnout increases. Mitigating burnout then becomes an important part of creating hybrid and remote workplaces.

⁶ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, “Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements,” The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact-paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.4.

⁷ Bassant Adel Mostafa, “The Effect of Remote Working on Employees Wellbeing and Work-Life Integration during Pandemic in Egypt,” *International Business Research* 14, no.3 (2021): 47.

⁸ Ibid, 43.

⁹ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, “Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements,” The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact-paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.4.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, “Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 3.

¹² Bassant Adel Mostafa, “The Effect of Remote Working on Employees Wellbeing and Work-Life Integration during Pandemic in Egypt,” *International Business Research* 14, no.3 (2021): 43.

¹³ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, “Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements,” The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact-paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.4.

Understanding Burnout

It is important to note that burnout is not a new phenomenon, however with the changes to work and the world brought on by the pandemic, the importance of understanding burnout has increased. Most people, when defining burnout, use the definition credited to the research of psychologist Christian Maslach. She identifies three main components of burnout: exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy.¹⁴ These three components are defined as follows:

- “Exhaustion is the central symptom of burnout. It comprises profound physical, cognitive, and emotional fatigue that undermines people’s ability to work effectively and feel positive about what they’re doing.”
- “Cynicism, also called depersonalization, represents an erosion of engagement. It is essentially a way of distancing yourself psychologically from your work.”
- “Inefficacy refers to feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity. People with this symptom of burnout feel their skills slipping and worry that they won’t be able to succeed in certain situations or accomplish certain task.”¹⁵

An important distinction is made here between three main symptoms, though for many the exhaustion brought on by burnout is most noteworthy. This is seen in a description of burnout by renowned author and psychologist Adam Grant who says: “The heart of burnout is emotional exhaustion – feeling so depleted and drained by your job that you have nothing left to give.”¹⁶ For some professions, burnout has been an issue for a long time, take for instance those working in law.¹⁷ In other cases, the increased pressures many people faced during the pandemic and resulting exhaustion led to burnout for many, including those working in higher education.¹⁸ Research also shows that there are different equity concerns related to burnout, as people of certain ages, gender, race, sexuality, ability, will be more at risk of experiencing burnout than others.¹⁹ Burnout then is an ongoing problem that needs to be understood from different perspectives and one that those choosing to implement hybrid and remote work arrangements will have to find tools to address.

¹⁴ Monique Valcour, “Beating Burnout,” Harvard Business Review, November 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/11/beating-burnout>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Adam Grant, “Burnout Isn’t Just in Your Head. It’s in Your Circumstances,” The New York Times, March 19, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/smarter-living/coronavirus-emotional-support.html>.

¹⁷ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.47.

¹⁸ Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli, “Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey,” *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 782.

¹⁹ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.169.

One of the most important tools for combatting burnout is building a psychologically safe and healthy workplace.²⁰ This is in part because burnout is not just an issue that needs to be addressed at the individual level, addressing burnout also requires addressing the demands of the job and providing the necessary support to deal with the them.²¹ Addressing these aspects of burnout then requires implementing structural and cultural change within workplaces.²² It means taking a look at how work is organized, what policies and procedures are in place, and how everyone in the organization works together to foster a healthy work environment. This kind of change takes work, it also requires understanding that building a psychologically safe and healthy workplace is not the same thing as cultivating an individual safe space.²³ Workplaces that create psychological safety within their culture should not be free from conflict, consequences, or accountability.²⁴ In fact, managing them effectively is an important part of building psychological safety, defined as: “the absence of harm and/or threat of harm to mental well-being that a worker might experience”.²⁵ Workplaces that are psychologically healthy and safe are ones that “promot[e] workers’ psychological well-being and actively wor[k] to prevent harm to worker psychological health”²⁶, thus organisations must also be proactive in addressing and ensuring psychological safety. Specific aspects that need to be addressed are identified in The National Standard of Canada on psychological health and safety in the workplace’s thirteen different factors that affect psychological health and safety.²⁷ These factors and their relevance to burnout within remote and hybrid workplaces will be further analyzed below.

Methodology

The research for this report was conducted primarily using desk-research. An extensive literature review on the issue of burnout in remote/hybrid workplaces was conducted. The literature has been themed according to the 13 workplace factors affecting psychological health and safety as identified in the National Standard of Canada on the topic. An environmental scan of UBC’s current policies and programs regarding wellbeing and remote/hybrid work was conducted through an analysis of their website and other materials provided by UBC’s Central Human Resources Department. After a review of the literature and the environmental scan, key findings were identified. Based off the key findings, specific actionable items were put forth as

²⁰ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkineniemi, & Anne Mäkikangas, “‘I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche’ – Supervisors’ Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 4.

²¹ Adam Grant, “Burnout Isn’t Just in Your Head. It’s in Your Circumstances,” *The New York Times*, March 19, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/smarter-living/coronavirus-emotional-support.html>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Amy C. Edmondson “A Fly on the Wall in a Fearless Organization: What does psychological safety sound like?,” *Psychology Today*, June 10, 2019, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-fearless-organization/201906/fly-the-wall-in-fearless-organization>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.4.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 19.

recommendations for preventing burnout and supporting mental health in remote/hybrid work environments.

It should be noted that this research was limited to secondary research and engaged solely with literature on the topic. No interviews were conducted and so this report cannot speak to the direct experiences of UBC's staff with hybrid work arrangements. Furthermore, the issue of burnout in remote/hybrid workplaces is an emerging field of research, particularly within the post-pandemic context, and literature on the topic is limited.

Literature Review

As discussed in the introduction an important part of addressing burnout in the workplace consists of ensuring the workplace is psychologically healthy and safe. The National Standard of Canada was created to help guide workplaces in building psychological health and safety.²⁸ As such it provides a framework which organizations can use to not only create the structures needed for psychological safety, but also help create changes to the workplace culture.²⁹ Part of this framework includes the identification of thirteen workplace factors affecting psychological health and safety.³⁰ These factors include: organizational culture, psychological and social support, clear leadership and expectations, civility and respect, psychological demands, growth and development, recognition and reward, involvement and influence, workload management, engagement, balance, psychological protection, and protection of physical safety. While these factors were first identified before the prevalence of remote and hybrid work seen today, the research shows that they are also relevant to these work arrangements. Each of these thirteen factors will be detailed further below as well as their specific considerations for remote/hybrid workplaces.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is defined as “a mix of norms, values, beliefs, meanings, and expectations that group members hold in common and that they use as behavioural and problem-solving cues.”³¹ Good organizational culture, in particular, is characterized by accountability, community, trust, and respect.³² In remote work environments trust is an important foundational element.³³ Trust is needed at all levels, leaders must be able to trust their employees to work independently and get the work done, and employees need to trust that their leaders will support them when

²⁸ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.2.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, 19.

³¹ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.19.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkineniemi, & Anne Mäkikangas, “‘I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche’ – Supervisors’ Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 18.

needed.³⁴ Of course building and maintaining that trust can be more challenging in remote environments, given the lack of face-to-face interaction, thus open communication is also an important part of building trust in remote workplaces.³⁵ Open lines of communication are also important for building community within a workplace. One particular struggle with remote and hybrid work is the resulting loss of connection and comradery with colleagues that many people experience, when this is limited it can lead to increased stress and has the potential to lead to burnout.³⁶ Finding ways to maintain community within remote/hybrid work settings is thus also important to building more psychologically safe and healthy workplaces.

Psychological and Social Support

Psychological and social support consists of the different levels of existing support throughout the entirety of an organization, for instance supportive interactions between supervisors and co-workers.³⁷ Awareness of this support is also important, including any resources or services that employees may access when needed, as is understanding the importance of individual mental health within the organization.³⁸ This last point is particularly important, often there exists a disconnect between employees and leaders in organizations regarding the value placed on mental health and overall wellbeing.³⁹ Furthermore, a recent report written on mental health in the practice of law in Canada, has found that an important part of improving mental health and wellbeing consists of destigmatizing mental health issues in the law profession.⁴⁰ Psychological and social support cannot exist in any workplace if mental health issues continue to be stigmatized, thus working towards destigmatizing mental health and improving people's understanding of the issue is also important for remote/hybrid workplaces.

Supportive interactions in the workplace have also been shown to be particularly important within the context of remote and hybrid work. Given that interactions with co-workers and supervisors are generally reduced in these settings, it is particularly important to find ways of building supportive interactions into the workplace, otherwise overall wellbeing could suffer.⁴¹

³⁴ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkineniemi, & Anne Mäkikangas, "I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche' – Supervisors' Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 18.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli, "Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey," *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 788.

³⁷ "National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation," CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.20.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Erica Volini, Jeff Schwartz, Kraig Eaton, David Mallon, Yves Van Durme, Maren Hauptmann, Rob Scott, Shannon Poynton, "Deloitte Insights: The Social Enterprise in a World Disrupted: Leading the shift from survive to thrive – 2021 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends," Deloitte Development, 2021, p.15.

⁴⁰ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, "Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022)," Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.374.

⁴¹ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, "Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 14.

Furthermore, support from colleagues and leaders is imperative to managing daily burnout, and psychologically safe and healthy workplaces cannot exist without this support.⁴²

Clear Leadership and Expectations

Clear leadership and expectations require transparency and open communication within organizations; it “is present in an environment in which leadership is effective and provides sufficient support that helps workers know what they need to do, explains how their work contributes to the organization, and discusses the nature and expected outcomes of impending change.”⁴³ Effective support is particularly important, as studies have shown that leadership support impacts employees perceptions of psychological safety.⁴⁴ In remote and hybrid environments different levels of support are needed and changes may be needed to effectively support employees with their performance, conflict resolution, onboarding, and mental health.⁴⁵ For instance, conflict may look different in virtual settings and more attention will be needed to notice subtle clues (e.g. hostile tone in an email).⁴⁶

Leaders also have more responsibility than individual employees in addressing the overall psychological safety in a workplace, encouraging openness and vulnerability in conversations is part of this work.⁴⁷ Leadership coach and educator, Julie Diamond, identifies questions that leaders can ask themselves in evaluating their ability to create psychological safety in the workplace.⁴⁸ Among those questions are: “Do people feel comfortable owning up to mistakes? How quickly are you informed when problems occur?”⁴⁹ When employees have effective support from leadership they will be more open.

Another important consideration in remote/hybrid work environments related to leadership has to do with clarity of expectations. Given the suddenness with which remote and hybrid work was adopted by many organizations during the pandemic, many workplaces did not take the time to clearly define future plans for remote and hybrid work.⁵⁰ This can create uncertainty and have

⁴² Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli, “Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey,” *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 786.

⁴³ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.20.

⁴⁴ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkineniemi, & Anne Mäkikangas, “I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche’ – Supervisors’ Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 3.

⁴⁵ “Managers Toolkit: Leading in a Hybrid Work Environment,” Mental Health Commission, April 2022, <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Managers-Toolkit-%E2%80%93-Leading-in-a-Hybrid-Work-Environment-1.pdf>.

⁴⁶ “Managers Toolkit: Leading in a Hybrid Work Environment,” Mental Health Commission, April 2022, <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Managers-Toolkit-%E2%80%93-Leading-in-a-Hybrid-Work-Environment-1.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Julie Diamond, “Reflection Friday: Are You Creating a Psychologically Safe Space?,” Power2Leaderlab, July 29, 2022, <https://p2leaderlab.com/reflection-friday-psychologically-safe-space/>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “The Future of Work: Trend Report 2022,” Staples Professional, Angus Reid Group, Accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.staplesprofessional.ca/futureofworkreport/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=futureofwork&utm_content=professional_futureofwork&fbclid=PAAaOHxgAHvmRJ-yrpMtRoLU0bLOED4ko9NfU3e5-S2jlxgJ6K-dEvg7pk6U&external_browser_redirect=true#downloadreport.

create challenges for overall psychological safety in the workplace. Thus, moving forward, it is important to have identified clear expectations for remote and hybrid work.

Civility and Respect

Civility respect requires having care and consideration for everyone in the workplace.⁵¹ It is also characterized by fair treatment for all and effective strategies are in place for both managing conflict and addressing inappropriate behaviour.⁵² This factor is important for ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the workplace, as all are tied to respect. EDI considerations are important in building psychological safety in the workplace as people with different identities have different needs. For instance, levels of psychological distress and burnout are often higher in women than men.⁵³ They are also generally higher in Indigenous peoples, racialized people, people identifying as LGBTQ2S+, and people living with disabilities.⁵⁴ Thus, it is important to understand that different groups of people may be more at risk of experiencing burnout than others and will have different needs when it comes to effectively addressing burnout.

Furthermore, studies have shown that various groups of people, such as those living with disabilities, those who have taken extended mental health leaves, women, and other racialized groups have experienced discrimination at work.⁵⁵ Building work environments free of this kind of discrimination and that effectively address discrimination when it occurs is also needed to ensure psychological health and safety. This extends to alternative work environments such as those that are hybrid or remote. In these environments during the pandemic, there were mixed results for EDI issues, as hybrid and remote work can both support and hamper EDI.⁵⁶ When implementing hybrid and remote work environments in an organization asking questions like “How are remote management tactics used?” to ensure that certain groups of people are not monitored more than others is an important EDI consideration.⁵⁷

Psychological Demands

Psychological demands is an important factor for assessing what activities “might be a hazard to the worker’s health and wellbeing.”⁵⁸ Assessing activities related to “time stressors, breaks and rest periods, incentive systems, job monotony and the repetitive nature of some work, and hours of work” is important here.⁵⁹ As such, some important characteristics of an organization that has

⁵¹ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.20.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingués, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.185.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 201, 210, 219, 232.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 169.

⁵⁶ Alexander Samuel & Tara Robertson, “Don’t Let Hybrid Work Set Back your DEI Efforts,” Harvard Business Review, October 13, 2021, <https://hbr.org/2021/10/dont-let-hybrid-work-set-back-your-dei-efforts>.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.20.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 21.

effectively addressed its psychological demands are flexibility of work design and openness to input from workers.⁶⁰ Both characteristics are relevant to remote and hybrid workplaces. To best support and sustain remote and hybrid work, the work design has been identified as one of the most important considerations.⁶¹ Workers want flexibility in their remote and hybrid arrangements and part of the flexibility comes from adaptable work designs. Flexibility also requires understanding that different workers have different needs.⁶² Input then also becomes an important factor in designing remote and hybrid workplaces. In fact, input from individual workers is needed before even making the transition to remote or hybrid work, as not everyone will benefit from such a transition.⁶³ People have different stressors and different abilities to work independently, thus not all will respond positively to remote and hybrid work.⁶⁴ The benefits of hybrid and remote work need to also be considered within the context of location, as those living in rural areas with poor internet access may find it less beneficial than those in urban areas with long commutes.⁶⁵ Evidently then flexibility and worker input have important impacts on psychological demands in remote and hybrid workplaces.

Growth and Development

Growth and development in the workplace require “encouragement and support in the development of [workers’] interpersonal, emotional, and job skills.”⁶⁶ Organizations that effectively support growth and development will provide professional development opportunities for their employees.⁶⁷ While research supports the importance of growth and development in burnout prevention, particularly as it pertains to improving opportunities for professional development⁶⁸, there is not much additional research connecting this issue with remote and

⁶⁰ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.20.

⁶¹ Erica Volini, Jeff Schwartz, Kraig Eaton, David Mallon, Yves Van Durme, Maren Hauptmann, Rob Scott, Shannon Poynton, “Deloitte Insights: The Social Enterprise in a World Disrupted: Leading the shift from survive to thrive – 2021 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends,” Deloitte Development, 2021, p.14.

⁶² Bonnie Dowling, Drew Goldstein, Michael Park & Holly Price, “Hybrid work: Making it fit with your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy,” McKinsey, April 20, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/hybrid-work-making-it-fit-with-your-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-strategy>.

⁶³ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, “Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements,” The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact_paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.5.

⁶⁴ Amdt Büssing, Michaela Zupanic, Jan P. Ehlers & Angelika Taetz-Harrer, “Mental Stress in Medical Students during the Pandemic and Their Relation to Digital and Hybrid Semester – Cross-Sectional Data from Three Recruitment Waves in Germany,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.17 (2022): 2.

⁶⁵ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.124.

⁶⁶ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.21.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.366.

hybrid workplaces. This does not mean that this is not an important consideration for remote and hybrid workplaces, but perhaps does not need to be the first area of focus.

Recognition and Reward

Recognition and reward exist when “there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of workers’ efforts in a fair and timely manner.”⁶⁹ This includes fair pay for work and celebration of accomplishments.⁷⁰ Once again, though recognition has been identified as an important part of preventing burnout⁷¹, there is not much research that specifically addresses this issue within remote and hybrid workplaces. That said, the issue of fair pay and particularly ensuring everyone has a liveable wage has gained increased importance with the pandemic, thus, this is likely to be an important issue for all workplaces regardless of the work design.

Involvement and Influence

Involvement and influence as a factor has some overlap with psychological demands, particularly as it pertains to worker input, though here it is central to the factor and consists of “a work environment where workers are included in discussion about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.”⁷² This means that workers opinions regarding work are considered and welcomed and open communication with supervisors exists for such discussions.⁷³ Essentially, workers should be given some control over their work design as this has been shown to improve well-being at work.⁷⁴ Control over work design is especially important in remote and hybrid work environments where the nature of the work requires more autonomy from employees.⁷⁵ Therefore, the work could be ill-suited for those who do not want to work more autonomously. Furthermore, those who have previous remote and hybrid work experience know what works best for them in such settings, their experience could also be useful in designing remote and hybrid work models for the company as a whole and so gathering their input would ensure appropriate involvement.⁷⁶

Open communication between workers and supervisors is also important, as there are many aspects of work that supervisors would be unaware of if such communication did not exist.

⁶⁹ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.21.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Monique Valcour, “Beating Burnout,” Harvard Business Review, November 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/11/beating-burnout>.

⁷² National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.21.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Erica Volini, Jeff Schwartz, Kraig Eaton, David Mallon, Yves Van Durme, Maren Hauptmann, Rob Scott, Shannon Poynton, “Deloitte Insights: The Social Enterprise in a World Disrupted: Leading the shift from survive to thrive – 2021 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends,” Deloitte Development, 2021, p.20.

⁷⁵ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkiniemi, & Anne Mäkikangas, “‘I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche’ – Supervisors’ Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 3.

⁷⁶ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, “Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 15.

Ensuring employees have a certain level of involvement and influence over their work is then an important strategy to address well-being in the workplace, and this can be as simple as asking questions and getting their input.⁷⁷

Workload Management

Workload management is an important factor needed in the workplace to address stress as it allows for “assigned tasks and responsibilities [to] be accomplished successfully within the time available.”⁷⁸ This means that the amount of work expected of workers should be reasonable and it also requires that workers have the appropriate tools and resources needed to do their jobs.⁷⁹ Given that hybrid and remote work is more autonomous it is important to ensure that workloads remain manageable. A common factor inhibiting psychological safety in remote and hybrid work environments is related to unmanageable workloads or just general increase in work.⁸⁰ For supervisors, who may have increased demands placed upon them in remote work environments or need more time to maintain consistent connections with their employees, this can be a particular cause for concern.⁸¹ Extra workloads brought on by remote work, particularly during the pandemic, was also common for educators who felt that “they were taking on an additional role in supporting students who were struggling with adjusting to distance learning”.⁸²

In remote and hybrid work it is also important to ensure employees have access to the proper resources and equipment to accomplish their work. Findings show that some organizations will be better equipped to do this than others, with large companies generally having greater capabilities to provide employees with adequate resources.⁸³ Thus, in order to ensure psychological safety in remote or hybrid work environment organizations will have to ensure they are capable of providing employees with appropriate resources.

Engagement

Engagement at work is defined here as “a work environment where workers enjoy and feel connected to their work and where they feel motivated to do their job well.”⁸⁴ Workers who are engaged at work are committed to their work and proud of the work they do.⁸⁵ Often employees

⁷⁷ Jennifer Moss, “Burnout is About Your Workplace, Not Your People,” Harvard Business Review, December 11, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/12/burnout-is-about-your-workplace-not-your-people>.

⁷⁸ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.22.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkiniemi, & Anne Mäkikangas, “I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche’ – Supervisors’ Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 9.

⁸¹ Ibid, 10.

⁸² Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli,, “Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey,” *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 790.

⁸³ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, “Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 3.

⁸⁴ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.22.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

who are burnt out do not feel engaged with their work, thus engagement is an important factor to consider when building a psychologically healthy and safe workplace. To build engagement in the workplace it is important to cultivate purpose within employees, as employees who feel their work is centered on an authentic purpose are more likely to feel engaged.⁸⁶ In remote and hybrid workplace engagement in work is complicated by the fact that it often needs to come from within as there is less connection with coworkers reminding one why the work is important, here self-motivation is important and things like writing to-do lists and setting goals can help.⁸⁷ To further keep employees engaged in any remote work environment, it is important to allow them, when possible, to do the work that matters to them⁸⁸

Balance

Balance in a workplace requires “acceptance of the need for a sense of harmony between the demands of personal life, family, and work.”⁸⁹ Essentially it ensures that work-life balance exists and that employees take time to rest, whether that be through taking breaks or time off.⁹⁰ Research shows that a work-life balance is a growing priority for workers, younger generations in particular have expressed a desire for mental health days.⁹¹ These mental health days allow for rest and help to protect employees against burnout, some organizations support this idea by requiring their employees to take all their vacation time, others actively shut their operations for a predetermined amount of time to ensure everyone is taking a mental health break.⁹² Evidently then, time for rest is an important requirement for ensuring balance.

Another factor to help support balance in the workplace is flexibility. Flexibility of work allows workers to in some cases make their own hours, to work when needed but also have the choice to change work hours in order to participate in a non-work-related activity. This flexibility of work is also important in remote and hybrid work arrangements to support worker well-being.⁹³ If remote and hybrid work arrangements are not flexible this can create difficulties, particularly for those who have children at home and may not always be able to have appropriate boundaries

⁸⁶ “The heart of resilient leadership: Responding to Covid-19: A guide for senior executives,” Deloitte, March 16, 2020,

<https://www.deloitte.com/global/en/our-thinking/insights/topics/economy/covid-19/heart-of-resilient-leadership-responding-to-covid-19.html>.

⁸⁷ Alex Kollo & Mary Ann Baynton, “Working from Home,” Workplace Strategies for Mental Health, August 28, 2021,

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/working-from-home>.

⁸⁸ Erica Volini, Jeff Schwartz, Kraig Eaton, David Mallon, Yves Van Durme, Maren Hauptmann, Rob Scott, Shannon Poynton, “Deloitte Insights: The Social Enterprise in a World Disrupted: Leading the shift from survive to thrive – 2021 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends,” Deloitte Development, 2021, p.20.

⁸⁹ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.22.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Dana Brownlee, “82% of Employed Gen Zers Want Mental Health Days, Study Finds,” Forbes, May 9, 2022,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danabrownlee/2022/05/09/82-of-employed-gen-zers-want-mental-health-days-study-finds/?sh=60d871dd5290>.

⁹² Dana Brownlee, “82% of Employed Gen Zers Want Mental Health Days, Study Finds,” Forbes, May 9, 2022,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danabrownlee/2022/05/09/82-of-employed-gen-zers-want-mental-health-days-study-finds/?sh=60d871dd5290>.

⁹³ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.390.

from work when at home.⁹⁴ Furthermore, if appropriate boundaries between work and life are not maintained in remote work, the risk is it could cause more conflict between the needs of work and family.⁹⁵

Psychological Protection

Psychological protection requires ensuring psychological safety.⁹⁶ Ensuring psychological safety at work includes promoting workers emotional well-being and minimizing any potential threats to overall mental health.⁹⁷ An environment of care exists in the workplace and is felt by employees.⁹⁸ Minimizing threats to mental health in a remote or hybrid work environment requires an understanding of the potential harms that can arise in these workplaces. The most significant threat to mental health in these circumstances is often the isolation that such kinds of work can cause.⁹⁹ Isolation is the nature of the work but can also exist in virtual meetings, finding ways to build connection virtually (such as through online chat platforms) can help to address these concerns.¹⁰⁰

Protection of Physical Safety

Protection of physical safety requires that “a worker’s psychological, as well as physical safety, is protected from hazards and risk related to the workers’ physical environment.”¹⁰¹ As such, workers should not be forced to do any work they feel is unsafe and are properly trained and supported to conduct their work safely.¹⁰² In remote and hybrid work physical safety is important to build into each individual workspace. It is significant to note that “[o]ne quarter of remote/hybrid employees describe their workspace as simply adequate or poor, and this is group is significantly more likely to lack basic elements such as a dedicated desk, adjustable chair or even proper lighting”.¹⁰³ Ergonomic assessments are a simple tool to use to address these challenges and ensure adequate physical safety in remote and hybrid workplaces.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁴ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, “Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 4.

⁹⁵ Guang Xu, Xuequn Wang, Xiangyu Han, Songshan Huang, & Dou Huang. “The Dark Side of Remote Working During Pandemics: Examining Effects on Work-Family Conflict and Workplace Wellbeing,” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 79 (2022): 2.

⁹⁶ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.22.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, “Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 4.

¹⁰⁰ Amy C. Edmondson, & Gene Daley, “How to Foster Psychological Safety in Virtual Meetings,” *Harvard Business Review*, August 25, 2020, <https://hbr.org/2020/08/how-to-foster-psychological-safety-in-virtual-meetings>.

¹⁰¹ “National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation,” CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.23.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ “The Future of Work: Trend Report 2022,” Staples Professional, Angus Reid Group, Accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.staplesprofessional.ca/futureofworkreport/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=futureofwork&utm_content=professional_futureofwork&fbclid=PAAaa0HxgAHvmRJ-yrpMtRoLU0bL0ED4ko9NfU3e5-S2jlxgJ6K-dEvg7pk6U&external_browser_redirect=true#downloadreport., p.16.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

Environmental Scan

In order to better understand UBC's past and current work on supporting wellness and implementing hybrid/remote work, an environmental scan was conducted. The scan begins with an overview of UBC'S work in both these areas and then identifies both the strengths and gaps within their programming.

Overview

Over the last decade or so, UBC has invested a lot of time and resources into developing mental health and wellbeing programs to support their staff and students. From the formal adoption of the Okanagan Charter in 2016 to present day work of various departments, like the Office of Wellbeing Strategy, Central Human Resources, and the Equity and Inclusion Office, it is clear that mental health and overall wellbeing has become a central value of the university. Recent external recognition highlights the UBC's work is being noticed on the national stage. On November 7th, 2022, UBC received a Gold Certification in the category of Mental Health at Work from Excellence Canada, "an independent, not-for-profit corporation and a national authority on quality and healthy workplace practices, for their approach to mental health in the workplace."¹⁰⁵ This recognition highlights that UBC is making important strides when it comes to workplace wellbeing.

Of course, like all organizations who have lived through the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to experience its ongoing effects, adjustments have had to occur to continue ensuring the wellbeing of staff and faculty at work, as well as UBC's students. The pandemic brought new challenges with the move to first remote and then hybrid work. As a result, in June 2021, UBC launched a 'Remote Work Pilot Program'.¹⁰⁶ The program was in place for one year, and at its conclusion, after numerous consultations occurred, UBC decided in June 2022 "to formally adopt remote work through the UBC Hybrid Work Program".¹⁰⁷ With the adoption of this program, the challenges of supporting mental health and wellbeing of employees at work, now have the added dimension of supporting employees within the context of remote or hybrid work. Principles and guidelines have been developed to help support employees working remotely or in hybrid settings, though given that the program is still relatively new, it is important that ongoing work is done to ensure that the mental health and wellbeing of employees is supported in these work

¹⁰⁵ UBC Human Resources, "UBC receives Gold certification in Mental Health at Work from Excellence Canada," UBC, November 7, 2022, <https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/news/november-11-2022/ubc-receives-gold-certification-mental-health-work-excellence>.

¹⁰⁶ Marcia Buchholz, "UBC to formally adopt hybrid work," UBC, June 28, 2022, <https://ubctoday.ubc.ca/news/june-06-2022/ubc-formally-adopt-hybrid-work>.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

environments. To further understand the support that exists for employees of UBC the following programs and departments have been examined: Hybrid Work Program, Focus on People 2025, Central Human Resources' health and wellbeing related resources and services, the Wellbeing Strategic Framework, and the Equity and Inclusion Office. An overview of each program will first occur, followed by a summary of the strengths and gaps within each of these programs.

Hybrid Work Program

As mentioned above, UBC's Hybrid Work Program, was formally adopted and implemented in June 2022 as a response to the shift in work arrangements brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is defined by six specific objectives:

- Attract and retain staff by creating a more flexible workplace environment.
- Positively impact student experience and outcomes through flexibility and the use of technology.
- Optimize service levels, work quality, and productivity through flexibility and the use of technology.
- Reduce carbon emissions through lower levels of commuting and strain on campus facilities.
- Catalyze collaborations between UBC and its partners through normalizing remote interactions.
- Promote and enable connections and balance across UBC campuses.¹⁰⁸

In support of the program, UBC has also developed clear principles, guidelines and considerations to follow. Additionally, they have put together a list of resources and tips for both staff and leaders as it pertains to remote/hybrid work.

Focus on People 2025

UBC's Focus on People 2025 is a framework that supports UBC's strategic plan "and speaks to how the university intends to be a first-choice place for faculty and staff to meet their greatest potential".¹⁰⁹ The framework has identified four 'catalyst' areas. The four catalysts areas are:

- I am part of a diverse, inclusive, safe and vibrant workplace.
- I can grow my career.
- I am shaping the future of research, teaching and work.
- I am inspired by diverse leaders who live UBC's values.¹¹⁰

Each catalyst then "takes a look at why this effort matters, what the numbers say, what UBC will look like in the future, and the actions [needed] to get...there".¹¹¹ The framework helps to envision UBC's future goals.

Central Human Resources' health and wellbeing related resources and services

¹⁰⁸ UBC Human Resources, "Hybrid work guidelines," UBC, Accessed November 3, 2022, <https://hr.ubc.ca/hybrid-work-guidelines>.

¹⁰⁹ Focus on People, "UBC Focus on People 2025," UBC, Accessed November 4, 2022, <https://focusonpeople.ubc.ca/>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Focus on People, "What will inspire you to work at UBC in 2025?," UBC, Accessed November 4, 2022, <https://focusonpeople.ubc.ca/framework/>.

Supporting faculty, staff and workplace health and wellbeing is an ongoing commitment of UBC's Central Human Resources department. As such, they provide resources, services, and guidelines for faculty, staff, leaders and champions to support the wellbeing of employees and ensure healthy work environments.¹¹² The department has further identified ten key areas of focus for health and wellbeing: Occupational and Preventive Health, Ergonomics, Mental Health, Workplace Wellbeing Ambassador Program, Personal Safety on Campus, Physical Wellbeing, Healthy Workplace Initiatives Program, Information for New and Expecting Parents, Supports for those Experiencing Domestic Violence, as well as Working with an Injury, Illness or Disability.¹¹³ They also provide details on each of these key areas and specific resources targeted towards them, such as a link for requesting an ergonomic assessment¹¹⁴.

The Wellbeing Strategic Framework

The Wellbeing Strategic Framework was developed in part as a result of the recognition of the centrality of wellbeing to all involved with the university. It involves "a collaborative effort to make the University a better place to live, work and learn through a systems-wide approach to wellbeing across [the] campuses".¹¹⁵ The work is guided by the Okanagan Charter, and the Wellbeing Strategic Framework presents a "shared vision for UBC as a health-and wellbeing-promoting university where all people, places and communities can flourish".¹¹⁶ To support this goal, the framework has identified six priority areas:

- Collaborative Leadership
- Mental Health & Resilience
- Food & Nutrition
- Social Connection
- Built & Natural Environments
- Physical Activity.¹¹⁷

Equity and Inclusion Office

UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to strengthening and building the work of equity and inclusion on campuses. Their work is guided by the following vision:

- "The Equity & Inclusion Office envisions a community in which human rights are respected and equity is embedded in all areas of academic, work and campus life. Through its leadership, vision and collaborative action, the Equity and Inclusion Office will further UBC's commitment to excellence, equity and mutual respect."¹¹⁸

It is also guided by their mission:

¹¹² UBC Human Resources, "Health and wellbeing," UBC, Accessed November 7, 2022, <https://hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ UBC Human Resources, "Ergonomic Assessments," UBC, Accessed March 15, 2023, <https://hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing/ergonomics/ergonomic-assessments>.

¹¹⁵ UBC Wellbeing, "UBC Wellbeing," UBC, Accessed November 7, 2022, <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/>.

¹¹⁶ UBC Wellbeing, "Wellbeing Strategic Framework," UBC, Accessed November 7, 2022, <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/framework>.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Equity and Inclusion Office, "Equity & Inclusion Office," UBC, Accessed November 3, 2022, <https://equity.ubc.ca/about/>.

- “To advance equity and human rights at UBC by promoting diversity, eliminating discrimination, and engaging the community in dialogue and action.”¹¹⁹

The Equity and Inclusion Office supports students and staff with numerous informative resources related to equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI) as well as opportunities for knowledge and skill development through various programs. Some examples of resources include: tips for students and professors to build respectful online class environments¹²⁰ and tips for addressing equity needs in virtual interviews¹²¹. Overall, their work is extensive and covers a wide range of EDI issues.

Strengths

Summary of Strengths

After an examination of these five programs and department at UBC, the following strengths have been identified:

- A clear plan has been developed for hybrid work.
- Distinctions are made between the roles of leaders and faculty and staff in supporting wellbeing and mental health in the hybrid workplace.
- There is a holistic development of programs, targeted at different aspects of wellbeing.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration exists with regards to wellbeing.
- Evaluation tools are in place to assess impact of mental health programs for staff/faculty. Allows for transparency and accountability.
- Numerous resources have been identified to support wellbeing, as well as resources geared toward specific equity-seeking groups.

Below these overall strengths and more program-specific ones are discussed.

Hybrid Work Program

It is evident from the initial scan that a significant amount of effort has gone into developing UBC’s Hybrid Work Program. Clear objectives, principles, guidelines, and considerations have been formulated. The principles and guidelines, in particular, highlight the need for respecting equity, diversity, and inclusion, an important part of hybrid work arrangements given the variety of needs that exist among individuals. Furthermore, hybrid work arrangements cannot effectively support the wellbeing of employees without considering equity, diversity, and inclusion.¹²² The guidelines also highlight the fact that hybrid work is not applicable to every position at the university, simply put it is not suitable for all roles and work performed by the university’s staff and faculty.¹²³ In fact, the hybrid work program is not available to the university’s faculty, only

¹¹⁹ Equity and Inclusion Office, “Equity & Inclusion Office,” UBC, Accessed November 3, 2022, <https://equity.ubc.ca/about/>.

¹²⁰ Equity and Inclusion Office, “Building a Respectful Online Work Environment,” UBC. Accessed March 15, 2023, <https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/building-a-respectful-online-work-environment/>.

¹²¹ Equity and Inclusion Office, “Equity Considerations in Virtual Interviews,” UBC. Accessed March 15, 2023, <https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-considerations-in-virtual-interviews/>.

¹²² Alexander Samuel & Tara Robertson, “Don’t Let Hybrid Work Set Back your DEI Efforts,” Harvard Business Review, October 13, 2021, <https://hbr.org/2021/10/dont-let-hybrid-work-set-back-your-dei-efforts>.

¹²³ UBC Human Resources, “Hybrid work guidelines,” UBC, Accessed November 3, 2022, <https://hr.ubc.ca/hybrid-work-guidelines>.

staff members are able to make use of the program.¹²⁴ Given the size of the university campus and variability of roles within it, this distinction is an important one to make. Having this clearly articulated on the website allows for a degree of transparency needed regarding the limits of hybrid work in a university setting.

Another strength of UBC's Hybrid Work Program is the existence of separate hybrid work and mental health resources and tips for both staff and leaders. The needs and roles of staff and leaders as it pertains to hybrid work and supporting mental health will be different. For instance, leaders are not only responsible for taking care of their own mental health, but also managing the overall wellbeing of their teams and offering support (either direct or through resources) when appropriate.¹²⁵ It is thus, important to have this distinction on the website. Furthermore, understanding that supporting mental health is a systemic effort and requires contributions from all helps to take some of the onus off individual employees, allowing them to feel less isolated.¹²⁶ Community support within a workplace is also a key factor in preventing burnout, so having the responsibilities of different workers as it pertains to these issues clearly outlined is a good place to start.

Focus on People 2025

UBC'S Focus on People 2025 has developed four important catalyst areas that reflect the values of the community, this is reflected in particular in catalyst 1 and 4, both of which focus on issues of diversity and inclusivity.¹²⁷ As mentioned above, equity, diversity and inclusivity are important considerations for ensuring the wellbeing of staff in the workplace, so having them as part of a strategic framework is important.

UBC'S Focus on People 2025 not only puts forward a vision for the future of UBC, but it also has identified clear and concrete actions to achieve that vision. Thus, it is clear what steps need to be taken to achieve their goals. Here, achieving greater inclusion, equity, and diversity on campus is not just an ideal, but something that is actively being worked toward.

The impact of this framework is also being actively assessed. The progress made in each catalyst area is tracked in the Implementation Roadmap.¹²⁸ This Roadmap highlights which steps have been taken each year and which still need to be done. This kind of tracker shows accountability and transparency in the work to date.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ UBC Human Resources, "Mental Health Support for Hybrid Team Leaders," UBC Accessed March 15, 2023, <https://hr.ubc.ca/mental-health-support-hybrid-team-leaders>.

¹²⁶ Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli,, "Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey," *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 786.

¹²⁷ Focus on People, "What will inspire you to work at UBC in 2025?," UBC, Accessed November 4, 2022, <https://focusonpeople.ubc.ca/framework/>.

¹²⁸ Focus on People, "Focus on People 2025: Implementation Roadmap: Year 1," UBC, June 2022, <https://focusonpeople.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/09/Focus-on-People-2025-Implementation-Roadmap-Years-1-4-June-17-2022.pdf>.

The Workplace Experiences Survey is also an important tool used to obtain certain metrics relevant to the framework.¹²⁹ With the survey, UBC is able to determine that 69% of employees feel their diversity is valued in the workplace¹³⁰, an important indicator that the efforts being made to support diversity and inclusion are having an impact. Surveys such as these are important in terms of assessing actual experiences of staff and faculty and positive results show that the work described on the website is not just for show; it is also having a positive impact.

Central Human Resources' health and wellbeing related resources and services

As mentioned above, UBC's Central Human Resources' website covers a broad range of topics, taking a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. There are numerous resources and tips on the website to support staff and faculty with a wide variety of needs. It is this breadth of offerings and large scope of topics related to health and wellbeing that is a significant strength of the department. It is clear that substantial work and research has gone into developing programs to support all the needs of employees.

The Wellbeing Strategic Framework

The Wellbeing Strategic Framework was developed in consultation with the university community and with current research to identify six priority areas for wellbeing.¹³¹ Similarly to the Central Human Resources department, the framework's approach to health and wellbeing is a holistic one. The framework created also has clear targets and indicators to support wellbeing development at UBC. The work done has been significant and they are guided by the important foundational document: the Okanagan Charter. This charter emphasizes the need for a cross-sectoral approach to wellbeing, something that is crucial on a university campus given its numerous departments and large number of staff.¹³² Furthermore, strong efforts of collaboration creates strong support networks for staff, which has been shown to help prevent burnout and support the overall wellbeing of employees.¹³³

Equity and Inclusion Office

The Equity and Inclusion Office, like other departments and programs examined here, does a substantial amount of work in supporting the wellbeing of UBC's community. Equity and inclusion are foundational elements of wellbeing and creating work environments where those are the focus will help to support employees.¹³⁴ They have an extensive resource page with supports in place for a diverse range of individuals. They also have annual reports on the university's Inclusion

¹²⁹ Focus on People, "Implementing actions and measuring progress," UBC, Accessed November 4, 2022, <https://focusonpeople.ubc.ca/reporting/>.

¹³⁰ Focus on People, "2021 Workplace Experiences Survey: Overall Highlights," UBC, February 2022, <https://focusonpeople.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/02/2021-WES-Overall-results-infographic-Feb-2022.pdf>.

¹³¹ UBC Wellbeing, "UBC Wellbeing," UBC, Accessed November 7, 2022, <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/>.

¹³² UBC Wellbeing, "The Okanagan Charter," UBC, Accessed November 7, 2022, <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/okanagan-charter>

¹³³ Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli, "Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey," *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 786.

¹³⁴ "National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation," CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.20.

Action Plan, where the progress for the year is clearly outlined. These reports are important for transparency and accountability within the office and university at large.

Gaps

Summary of Gaps

The following gaps have also been identified in UBC's programming:

- It is not clear how all aspects of programs are decided-upon (specifically for the Hybrid Work Program). Can lead to issues of transparency.
- The impact of the Hybrid Work program on staff is not clear from examining the website.
- Unclear how all information related to hybrid and remote is communicated.
- Navigating the website is not always accessible, could create a risk of information overload.
- Not all areas relevant to health and wellbeing, as well as equity, diversity and inclusion have resources specifically dedicated to supporting folks working remotely or in hybrid arrangements.

Below these overall gaps and more program-specific ones are discussed.

Hybrid Work Program

While consultation processes took place in the decision to formalize the Hybrid Work Program, it is not clear how the objectives, principles, and guidelines for the program were developed. Given the importance of transparency and communication in supporting hybrid workers, having at least some brief description of how these parts of the program were developed on the website may be useful.¹³⁵

Some of the principles identified regarding hybrid work arrangements, such as: "prioritize the physical and mental health of students, faculty, and staff; [as well as] respect and reflect the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion"¹³⁶, clearly reflect the need to support individual needs as it pertains to hybrid work. However, this is not reflected in the considerations (questions used to determine the suitability of hybrid work). While the specific criteria of the role in question do need to be considered to determine the suitability of hybrid work, so too do the needs of the individual.¹³⁷ For consistency, having that reflected in the considerations as well as the principles would be beneficial.

The work done by UBC to date to develop its Hybrid Work Program has been substantial, though one thing that seems to be missing is input from staff. A survey on remote work was conducted in May of 2022, however the results from that survey are not available to the public, thus it is

¹³⁵ "National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Stages Implementation," CSA Group & BNQ, January 2013, p.19.

¹³⁶ UBC Human Resources, "Hybrid work guidelines," UBC, Accessed November 3, 2022, <https://hr.ubc.ca/hybrid-work-guidelines>.

¹³⁷ Amdt Büssing, Michaela Zupanic, Jan P. Ehlers & Angelika Taetz-Harrer, "Mental Stress in Medical Students during the Pandemic and Their Relation to Digital and Hybrid Semester – Cross-Sectional Data from Three Recruitment Waves in Germany," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.17 (2022): 2.

difficult to assess the impact of employee input.¹³⁸ Furthermore, it is not clear from an analysis of the website alone, to what extent employees are aware of the Hybrid Work Program and the impact it has on their work or what options they have available to them regarding hybrid work. While the program is clearly described on the website, it is not clear how easy it is to navigate the website and find this information and whether or not hybrid work guidelines are communicated to staff in other forms. Communication here is crucial, and moving forward it will be important to regularly check in with staff and receive their input on how to best approach hybrid work arrangements.¹³⁹ Additionally, it would be useful to have input from leaders of teams navigating hybrid work arrangements. While it is good to have responsibilities clearly outlined for leaders regarding hybrid work and supporting employee's mental health, there is a lot of responsibility put on them to navigate mental health programs. Understanding their capacity to do so, is thus also important.

Focus on People 2025

Overall, there are no significant gaps in UBC's Focus on People 2025 framework. Continued input from staff will be important, and having a higher respondent rate to the Workplace Experiences Survey (was below 50% for faculty, tenure-stream faculty, and staff)¹⁴⁰ might give a more accurate picture of the actual impact of the framework, though may prove challenging to actually accomplish. It will also be important to ensure that the results of the survey are analyzed within the context of work arrangement. Including a demographic question about individual work arrangements could help with this analysis.

Central Human Resources' health and wellbeing related resources and services

While the website does offer a substantial amount of resources to support the health and wellbeing of employees, there is the risk of having too many resources. Navigating the website at times may feel daunting as there are numerous different links not only for and within each of the ten areas of health and wellbeing addressed, but there are also many external links on the website. Having a central hub from which employees can access all resources is important, but ensuring it is easy to navigate and accessible to all is also important. Furthermore, it is not clear to what extent employees are aware of the programs offered by the Central Human Resources' department as it pertains to health and wellbeing, therefore this may also be something worth further investigating.

¹³⁸ UBC Human Resources, "Complete the Remote Work Survey by May 10," UBC, May 6, 2022, <https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/news/may-05-2022/complete-remote-work-survey-may-10>.

¹³⁹ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, "Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 15.

¹⁴⁰ Focus on People, "2021 Workplace Experiences Survey: Overall Highlights," UBC, February 2022, <https://focusonpeople.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/02/2021-WES-Overall-results-infographic-Feb-2022.pdf>.

Another gap, as it pertains to the website, is that none of the ten areas of health and wellbeing discuss how they may be uniquely impacted by remote and hybrid work. It should be noted, that mental health considerations are discussed within the Hybrid Work Program, but other areas like: Supports for those Experiencing Domestic Violence, Ergonomics, Personal Safety on Campus, Physical Wellbeing, Healthy Workplace Initiatives Program, as well as Working with an Injury, Illness or Disability, have important implications for hybrid work that also need to be considered. For instance, studies have shown that during the pandemic with the increase of remote/hybrid work more people were experiencing domestic violence than before.¹⁴¹ It will be important then, for Central Human Resources to consider the impacts of hybrid/remote work on wellbeing beyond mental health.

The Wellbeing Strategic Framework

There are no significant gaps within The Wellbeing Strategic framework. Though when the framework is revisited in the future, it may be worth adding caveats about the impacts of remote/hybrid work on wellbeing, and what different considerations may be needed in each six priority areas as a result.

Equity and Inclusion Office

One gap within the work of the Equity and Inclusion Office is apparent in its Inclusion and Action Plan report for 2021-2022. The report highlights numerous ongoing areas of improvement for equity and inclusion within the university, and while it does briefly highlight the impact of the pandemic on equity and inclusion, there is no specific indication of how remote and hybrid work may impact issues of equity and inclusion.¹⁴² The connection between equity, diversity, and inclusion and healthy remote/hybrid working environments is an important consideration moving forward.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Best Practices for Preventing Burnout and Ensuring Psychological Health and Safety in the Remote/Hybrid Workplace

Key Findings

Following a review of the literature and scan of UBC'S current wellbeing practices, ten key findings were identified. Each of these findings will be outlined further below and connected to relevant factor(s) from the National Standard.

¹⁴¹ Human Resources & Equity. "Best Practices for Leading & Managing Remotely." University of Toronto. April 28, 2020.

<https://people.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/05/Best-Practices-for-Leading-and-Managing-Remotely-Version-1-Final.pdf>, p.18.

¹⁴² Equity and Inclusion Office, "Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2022," UBC, August 2022,

https://equity3.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/08/UBC_IAP_AR_2021.pdf.

Need to consider equity, diversity, and inclusion

Since the height of the pandemic coincided with events of racial hate and discrimination that also had a global impact, equity, diversity, and inclusion have become growing points of interest for numerous organizations. There is research supporting investing in these areas at work, as employees are increasingly valuing more inclusive work environments.¹⁴³ Therefore, it is not surprising that the need to consider equity, diversity, and inclusion extends from the standard workplace to one that is remote or hybrid. In addition, given that people with marginalized identities are more likely to suffer from burnout than others, it is important to consider EDI when designing remote/hybrid work. Furthermore, key factors in ensuring a psychologically safe and healthy work environment, such as organizational culture, civility and respect, and psychological protection, will not be present in the workplace without equity, diversity, and inclusion. Further necessary considerations relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion are outlined in the table below.

TABLE 1: EDI CONSIDERATIONS FOR REMOTE/HYBRID WORK	
EDI factor	Considerations
Gender	Responsibility for childcare often falls on women, if children are at home can be difficult to navigate both working and caring for children. ¹⁴⁴ At the same time, it can allow for more flexibility in caring for children. Women are also generally the ones responsible for all forms of caregiving (including eldercare). This has the same impacts as childcare. Risks to career advancement for women as a result of proximity bias. ¹⁴⁵
Sexuality	In remote environments there is less pressure to disclose sexuality. ¹⁴⁶
Accessibility	Remote/hybrid work can both support those with accessibility needs and hinder them. (e.g. Those with physical disabilities will not need to navigate inaccessible transportation or buildings, while those who may have difficulties working independently may find work more challenging.)

¹⁴³ Bonnie Dowling, Drew Goldstein, Michael Park & Holly Price, "Hybrid work: Making it fit with your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy," McKinsey, April 20, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/hybrid-work-making-it-fit-with-your-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-strategy>.

¹⁴⁴ Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, "Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 4.

¹⁴⁵ Lisa Agona, "Is Remote Work A Diversity and Inclusion Issue?," Forbes, October 13, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2021/10/13/is-remote-work-a-diversity-and-inclusion-issue/?sh=757743c4626c>.

¹⁴⁶ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, "Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022)," Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.169.

Race and Ethnicity	Racialized individuals working from home risk getting further left behind in promotions (proximity bias). ¹⁴⁷ Less need for racialized individuals to deal with tokenism and microaggressions present in office. ¹⁴⁸
Age	Comfort levels with technology can vary depending on age. Older employees are generally less comfortable with technology.
Socioeconomic status	Low-income earners experience more challenges than high-income earners, particularly when it comes to having suitable working space in remote environments. For instance, they are less likely to have a dedicated work-from-home space. They are also less likely to have access to reliable internet or equipment needed for remote/hybrid work. ¹⁴⁹ Less cost required for commute. ¹⁵⁰

Clear and transparent communication is crucial

Of the thirteen factors discussed in the National Standard that support psychological health and wellbeing in the workplace most of them required some form of open communication between workers or workers and leaders. In particular, organizational culture, clear leadership and expectations, psychological demands, as well as influence and involvement, could not exist effectively in organizations without open communication. Given that hybrid and remote work are affected by reduced face-to-face interactions, effective communication is essential in these environments.¹⁵¹

Develop clear plans/policies for remote/hybrid work arrangements

Related to clear and transparent communication is the need to develop clear plans and policies for remote and hybrid work arrangements. Policy development is crucial for managing these alternative work arrangements and ensuring workers have clear expectations regarding their work.¹⁵² Without such policies in place there is the risk for confusion and uncertainty in the workplace, and this could pose challenges for the clear leadership and expectations required for a psychologically healthy and safe environment.

¹⁴⁷ Theresa Agovina, "Will Remote Work Undermine Diversity Efforts?," SHRM, June 7, 2022, <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/summer2022/pages/remote-work-may-undermine-diversity-efforts-.aspx>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, "Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements," The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact-paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.4.

¹⁵⁰ Lisa Agona, "Is Remote Work A Diversity and Inclusion Issue?," Forbes, October 13, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2021/10/13/is-remote-work-a-diversity-and-inclusion-issue/?sh=757743c4626c>.

¹⁵¹ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, "Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements," The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact-paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.26.

¹⁵² Ibid, 25.

Different people and organizations have different needs, they should be considered in designing remote and hybrid work.

Connected to concerns of EDI is the fact that in the end each organization has different needs and they employ people with even more variable ranges of needs. People have different skills, different coping mechanisms, different personalities, and ultimately not everyone will thrive in a remote or hybrid work environment.¹⁵³ Furthermore, not all work can be done remotely or in hybrid settings. This is an important consideration for universities who have a wide variety of staff and faculty taking on numerous different roles. While some instruction is now done remotely, it is important to consider the impacts this has on both instructors and students.¹⁵⁴ Ultimately, another important factor to consider is the effects remote and hybrid learning can have on student life.¹⁵⁵ All in all, mitigating the challenges of remote and hybrid work requires understanding not just who is best suited for the work but what work can be done effectively in these circumstances. Considering organizational and individual differences is also crucial for ensuring psychological health and safety in the following factors: civility and respect, psychological demands, growth and development, recognition and reward, as well as engagement.

Burnout is not just an individual problem, needs to be addressed at the systemic level as well

While individual needs vary, the fact remains that burnout cannot just be addressed as an individual problem. This is highlighted in many of the factors identified in the National Standard that discuss how the organization as a whole is responsible for building psychological health and safety in the workplace. It is particularly important for the following factors: organizational culture, psychological and social support, workload management, engagement. This means that what is needed in organizations is not just more access to resources, though that can be beneficial, but rather addressing the root causes of burnout, such as “work overload or exposure to excessive emotional demands”.¹⁵⁶ These issues need to be addressed at the systemic level.

Building supportive work environments is necessary

Connected to virtually every factor identified in the National Standard, (organizational culture, psychological and social support, psychological demands, workload management, engagement, balance, psychological protection, protection of physical safety), building supportive work environments is essential in preventing burnout. Everyone plays a role in supporting wellbeing at

¹⁵³ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, “Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements,” The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact-paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.26.

¹⁵⁴ Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli, “Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey,” *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 782.

¹⁵⁵ Amdt Büssing, Michaela Zupanec, Jan P. Ehlers & Angelika Taetz-Harrer, “Mental Stress in Medical Students during the Pandemic and Their Relation to Digital and Hybrid Semester – Cross-Sectional Data from Three Recruitment Waves in Germany,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.17 (2022): 13.

¹⁵⁶ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.75

work, whether managing individual care needs or supporting colleagues' needs, as such, burnout cannot be effectively addressed without support from coworkers and leaders.¹⁵⁷ In remote and hybrid work this support should extend outside of the physical office to any online environments. Support can come in different forms, but an important consideration should be on reducing mental health stigmatization in the workplace, and understanding how mental health stigmatization affects different groups of people, such as those living with a disability, from the LGBTQ2S+ community, or ethnicized groups.¹⁵⁸

Ensure there exists work/life boundaries

As seen in discussions related to psychological demands, workload management, and balance, ensuring boundaries between work and life is of growing importance in the workplace. Given that these boundaries can become blurred in remote and hybrid environments where life and work occur in the same place, it is particularly important to ensure effective boundaries exist in these arrangements. Allowing for more flexibility in work can significantly help diminish conflicts that can arise from lack of work life boundaries, and help support overall wellbeing.¹⁵⁹

Leaders have unique responsibilities in supporting wellbeing of staff

Leaders in the workplace have more responsibilities than the average worker, as such they also have more responsibility in supporting the wellbeing of their staff.¹⁶⁰ Whether this means setting limits on workloads, ensuring employees are taking their breaks, or allowing for workers to have more control over their work, leaders are uniquely situated to support staff.¹⁶¹ This support has important impacts on most all factors identified in the National Standard, thus without effective leadership psychological safety and health is likely to suffer in any workplace.

Draw from experience within organizations

There exists a wealth of knowledge within organizations and leaders and decision-makers should not be afraid to draw on it. Those who have done remote or hybrid work arrangements for years know what works and their expertise should be utilized.¹⁶² Consulting with these workers, documenting their experiences, and creating spaces in which they can share their expertise, is

¹⁵⁷ Michelle C. Arnett, Vidya Ramaswamy, Michael D. Evans, & Danielle Rulli,, "Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Hygiene Educators: A National Survey," *Journal of Dental Education* 86, no.7 (2022): 786.

¹⁵⁸ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, "Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022)," Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.283.

¹⁵⁹ Guang Xu, Xuequn Wang, Xiangyu Han, Songshan Huang, & Dou Huang. "The Dark Side of Remote Working During Pandemics: Examining Effects on Work-Family Conflict and Workplace Wellbeing," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 79 (2022): 2.

¹⁶⁰ Julie Diamond, "Reflection Friday: Are You Creating a Psychologically Safe Space?," Power2Leaderlab, July 29, 2022, <https://p2leaderlab.com/reflection-friday-psychologically-safe-space/>.

¹⁶¹ Monique Valcour, "Beating Burnout," Harvard Business Review, November 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/11/beating-burnout>.

¹⁶² Simone Donati, Gianluca Viola, Ferdinando Toscano, & Salvatore Zappalà, "Not All Remote Workers Are Similar: Technology Acceptance, Remote Work Beliefs, and Wellbeing of Remote Workers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no.22 (2021): 15.

thus important. Furthermore, drawing from individual expertise in the workplace is also an effective way of addressing the following factors: growth and development, recognition and reward, as well as involvement and influence.

Organizations and employers should be open to feedback and evaluation regarding best practices for remote/hybrid work arrangements

Connected to communication, it is also important to ensure that there exist opportunities for feedback and evaluation in the workplace when designing remote and hybrid work arrangements. Without this feedback factors such as psychological demands, growth and development, as well as involvement and influence cannot be effectively addressed.

Recommendations

Following a review of the literature and the identification of the ten key findings above, it is clear that addressing burnout requires work at multiple levels. Employees, leaders, and organizations all have a role to play in ensuring their workplaces are psychologically healthy and safe. Thus, the table below identifies specific actions that should be taken on by employees, leaders, and organizations to address burnout in remote and hybrid work environments. These actions have been identified based on the ten key findings of this report and double as recommendations for best practices in mitigating burnout in remote and hybrid work. It should be noted that some of these actions have already been implemented by UBC, they are listed here for emphasis.

TABLE 2: A LIST OF ACTIONABLE ITEMS FOR EMPLOYEES, LEADERS, AND ORGANIZATIONS TO ADDRESS BURNOUT AND ENSURE WELLBEING IN THE REMOTE/HYBRID WORK			
Key Finding	Actions for Employees	Actions for Leaders	Actions for Organizations
Need to consider EDI		Ensure employees have access to all	Implement specific EDI plan and policies for hybrid/remote work. Policies should include plans for measuring and monitoring the impact of hybrid/remote work on the workplace experience of systemically and historically oppressed and marginalized populations. Include stipends for appropriate work from

		<p>technology and tools needed for remote/hybrid work and are properly trained in using them. This includes proper desk and chair for remote work.¹⁶³</p> <p>Make provisions to guard against proximity bias. Regularly review promotion practices.</p>	<p>home equipment in budget. Provide access to ergonomic assessments of workspaces.</p> <p>Require bias and other EDI training.</p>
<p>Need clear and transparent communication</p>	<p>Communicate with leadership if unclear about expectations regarding remote/hybrid work.</p> <p>Reach out to leaders with concerns regarding remote/hybrid work.</p>	<p>Regularly share any information about remote/hybrid work arrangements.</p> <p>Regularly discuss with employees their experiences with their work arrangements.</p> <p>Keep regular contact with employees regarding their work. Set daily or weekly meetings as needed.</p>	<p>Make all information regarding remote/hybrid work accessible to employees.</p> <p>Job expectations for leaders should account for additional time needed to dedicate to ensuring effective communication.¹⁶⁵</p>

¹⁶³ “The Future of Work: Trend Report 2022,” Staples Professional, Angus Reid Group, Accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.staplesprofessional.ca/futureofworkreport/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=futureofwork&utm_content=professional_futureofwork&fbclid=PAAa0HxgAHvmRJ-yrpMtRoLU0bL0ED4ko9NfU3e5-S2jlxgJ6K-dEvg7pk6U&external_browser_redirect=true#downloadreport.

¹⁶⁵ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkiniemi, & Anne Mäkikangas, “‘I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche’ – Supervisors’ Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 18.

	Periodically check different communication platforms to keep informed.	Use multiple forms of communication to stay in touch with teams. Clearly acknowledge and communicate when the organization and its employees are going through a difficult time ¹⁶⁴ (e.g. periods of high demand, global events like COVID-19, or a cybersecurity incident).	Provide access to different communication platforms.
Need clear plans and policies in place	Ask about existing plans and policies about remote/hybrid work before starting to work in these environments.	Ensure employees are aware of plans and policies for remote/hybrid work.	Ensure plans and policies exist for remote/hybrid work. Regularly revisit existing plans and policies and request input from employees.
Consider individual needs	Request accommodations when needed. Be aware of and access resources provided through employer.	Ask employees about their accommodation needs when starting hybrid/remote work. Continue to check-in periodically.	Ensure policies are in place to appropriately accommodate individual needs of employees.

¹⁶⁴ “The heart of resilient leadership: Responding to Covid-19: A guide for senior executives,” Deloitte, March 16, 2020, <https://www.deloitte.com/global/en/our-thinking/insights/topics/economy/covid-19/heart-of-resilient-leadership-responding-to-covid-19.html>.

	Be honest about personal needs and skills/ability to work remotely.	Discuss with employees their work preferences and their ability to work effectively remotely or in a hybrid environment. ¹⁶⁶	Allow for flexibility in work arrangements when possible. (i.e. avoid requiring that everyone works in the same arrangement)
Consider systemic issues			<p>Identify organizational responsibilities for supporting well-being in remote/hybrid work.</p> <p>HR department should identify impacts of remote/hybrid work on all aspects of wellbeing (e.g. domestic violence) and these should be made clear to employees (e.g. posted on website).</p> <p>HR department should also work with the Equity and Inclusion office to ensure impacts of remote/hybrid work on systemically and historically marginalized and oppressed populations of the workforce are being measure and monitored.</p>
Build supportive work environments	Be respectful of colleagues and leadership.	Directly address incidents of disrespect and discrimination.	Implement policies related to respect and to address discrimination in the workplace, particularly as it pertains

¹⁶⁶ Linda Duxbury & Michael Halinski, "Remote, Office, or Hybrid? Employee Preferences for Post-Pandemic Work Arrangements," The Conference Board of Canada, December 13, 2021, https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/2deeabaa-d21f-463f-8a6a-fe88d6028738/11398_impact-paper_remote-office-or-hybrid.pdf, p.17.

	<p>Take time to check-in with colleagues. Offer support if a colleague is struggling.</p> <p>Trust coworkers to get their work done.</p>	<p>Have weekly check-ins with employees.</p> <p>Find ways to build-in informal interactions into the remote work environment. (e.g. make use of different online platforms like Slack, WhatsApp, that can have both spaces for work and socializing.)¹⁶⁷ While also making purpose of these platforms clear and not requiring participation in informal interactions, to avoid technology burnout.</p> <p>Trust your employees. Avoid requiring that trust be earned.¹⁶⁸</p>	<p>to virtual meetings (e.g. disrespect in chats or emails).¹⁷⁰</p>
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¹⁶⁷ Kirsi Sjöblom, Jaana-Piia Mäkinen, & Anne Mäkikangas, “‘I was Given Three Marks and Told to Buy a Porsche’ – Supervisors’ Experiences of Leading Psychosocial Safety Climate and Team Psychological Safety in a Remote Setting,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 no.12016 (2022): 18.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ “Managers Toolkit: Leading in a Hybrid Work Environment,” Mental Health Commission, April 2022, <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Managers-Toolkit-%E2%80%93-Leading-in-a-Hybrid-Work-Environment-1.pdf>.

	Ask for help when needed and seek leadership support when a mistake is made or an issue persists. ¹⁶⁹	Encourage honest conversations and sharing of mistakes, be transparent with employees about own mistakes. ¹⁶⁹	Avoid any kind of policies punishing employees for mistakes made at work (within reason).
Ensure there are work-life boundaries	Develop a work routine that fits into your life. ¹⁷¹ Set personal boundaries around when you will conduct your work. ¹⁷² Create a separate work space in home for remote work.	Let employees set their own schedules as is appropriate. Avoid requiring work from employees outside of working hours.	Allow flexibility in work hours for remote/hybrid work. ¹⁷³ Adopt email signatures at the organizational level with the caveat: that the email is being sent because it is convenient for the sender and recipient is not expected to reply immediately.
Consider role of leaders	Discuss expectations related to well-being support with leaders.	Set meetings with employees to discuss their expectations of leadership.	Formalize responsibilities of leaders in supporting employee well-being. Consider the varying roles of leaders within different departments of university (i.e. not everyone will have the

¹⁶⁹ Michelle McQuaid, “The Surprising Truths About Hybrid Work and Burnout: Three things every leader needs to know,” Psychology Today, October 20, 2022, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/functioning-flourishing/202210/the-surprising-truths-about-hybrid-work-and-burnout>.

¹⁷¹ Alex Kollo & Mary Ann Baynton, “Working from Home,” Workplace Strategies for Mental Health, August 28, 2021, <https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/working-from-home>.

¹⁷² Erica Volini, Jeff Schwartz, Kraig Eaton, David Mallon, Yves Van Durme, Maren Hauptmann, Rob Scott, Shannon Poynton, “Deloitte Insights: The Social Enterprise in a World Disrupted: Leading the shift from survive to thrive – 2021 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends,” Deloitte Development, 2021, p.1.

¹⁷³ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.390.

		<p>Check-in with employees regularly to ensure they are taking their breaks and making use of time off.</p> <p>Set limits on workloads. This includes setting reasonable deadlines and managing unreasonable external pressures (e.g. client demands).¹⁷⁴</p> <p>Avoid scheduling back-to-back meetings (particularly virtually to avoid zoom fatigue).</p> <p>Support employees when they need to disconnect from technology.¹⁷⁵</p> <p>Take time to care for own wellbeing.</p>	<p>same leadership responsibilities).</p> <p>Recognize that leaders have more responsibilities in supporting workplace wellbeing and as such</p>
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¹⁷⁴ Monique Valcour, “Beating Burnout,” Harvard Business Review, November 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/11/beating-burnout>.

¹⁷⁵ Nathalie Cadieux, Jean Cadieux, Marie-Michelle Gouin, Pierre-Luc Fournier, Olivier Caya, Martine Gingues, Marie-Louise Pomerleau, Eveline Morin, Audree Bethsa Camille & Josbert Gahunzire, “Research report (preliminary version): Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada. National Study on the Psychological Health Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada, Phase I (2020-2022),” Université de Sherbrooke, Business School, 2022, p.389.

			may need extra supports for their personal wellbeing.
Draw from knowledge within organization	Share experiences and knowledge of remote/hybrid work with colleagues and leaders.	Seek out knowledge from employees experienced with remote/hybrid work.	Design consultation processes with employees into creation of plans and policies for remote/hybrid work. Ensure that entire process is transparent. This includes the findings from consultations, as well as subsequent actions that are implemented.
Be open to feedback and evaluation	Discuss any feedback regarding remote/hybrid work with leaders. Ask to see what change has been implemented in response to feedback.	Schedule regular meetings to discuss feedback with employees. Set time aside in work week to address feedback from employees.	Implement regular feedback as part of policy on remote/hybrid work. Allow policies on remote/hybrid work to be amended based off of feedback.

Next Steps

Preventing burnout and supporting mental health in the workplace is a large task and as the recommendations above show, it requires effort and commitment from all levels of an organization. To date, UBC has done considerable work to support the wellbeing of its employees, the task now is to ensure that the work occurs at all levels and that connections continue to be made between wellbeing and remote/hybrid work. As such next steps should include:

- Reviewing existing policies on remote/hybrid work
- Consulting with employees regarding their experiences with remote/hybrid work, see if there are any areas to improve current structure
- Engaging with EDI office to work on addressing EDI concerns related to remote/hybrid work
- Continuing to keep informed, as research in this area is still developing.

Conclusion

Remote and hybrid work are not going anywhere, three years since the start of the pandemic, this has become clear. What is also clear is that burnout is not a new phenomenon. The pandemic may have increased burnout and our awareness of the issue, but it existed long before the world had heard of COVID-19. Thus, working to address burnout requires understanding issues that existed in the workplace before the pandemic as well as those that have emerged as a result. It requires patience and care. Research is still emerging on how best to manage remote and hybrid work as well mitigate burnout in these environments, however this does not prevent workplaces from beginning the work to address this issue. One thing is clear and has always been clear: change does not happen overnight. That said, with small steps and a willingness to commit to addressing burnout, its impact can certainly be reduced.

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