



PREVENTING AND MANAGING EMPLOYEE BURNOUT

SEPTEMBER 2020

These materials were prepared as part of the Rapid Response Network, a joint initiative between the **California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission** (MHSOAC) and **Social Finance, Inc.** to support jurisdictions in fast-paced research and decision making driven by COVID-19.

The network aims to **facilitate connections** among jurisdictions facing similar challenges, and to supplement that shared experience with **support from external experts**—in order to deliver fast, customized, digestible research and analysis that strengthens local capacity.

We recognize that the pace of these responses means that they are likely to be both incomplete and imperfect. If you have suggestions for improvement or questions about these materials, we would love to hear from you. Please email Jake Segal (jsegal@socialfinance.org) or Nic Miragliuolo (nmiragliuolo@socialfinance.org).

With gratitude for the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and invaluable in-kind support from GLG, which supports the RRN through access to their expert network.

▶ TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary *(slide 4)*

Preventing Burnout: An overview *(slides 5-10):*

- Defining burnout and the associated challenges
- Strategies to prevent burnout

Supporting employees with children *(slides 11-15):*

- Associated challenges for working parents
- Reducing burnout for employees with children

Adapting to new work arrangements *(slides 16-17)*

Next steps *(slides 18-20)*

More resources *(slide 21)*

Sources *(slide 22)*

Appendix *(slide 23)*

▶ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summarized from research literature and expert interviews

Preventing burnout

- **Use assessments and screenings** to understand the root causes
- **Address factors that increase work-related stress:** *workload, control, reward, community fairness, and values*
- **Prevention is cheaper** and more effective than treatment
- **A continuous improvement process**, not a one-time intervention

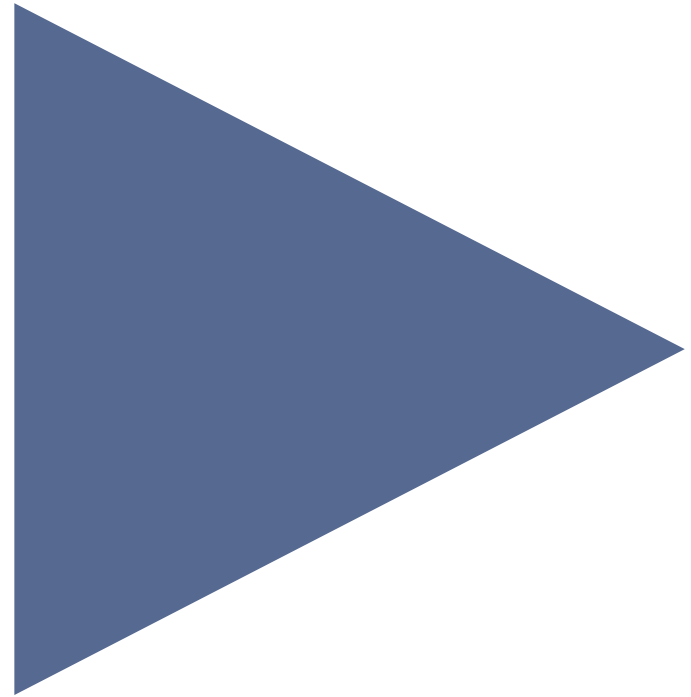
Added challenges for employees with school-aged children

- Employees with children face **increase in domestic work, difficulty in finding childcare, and increased mental load**
- Cost-effective strategies include **empathetic communication, support groups, flexible hours, and adjusted performance reviews**
- High-impact, higher-cost strategies include **childcare support and increasing PTO**

Adjusting to remote / flexible work arrangements

- Embracing a flexible work schedule requires **clear expectations** that explicitly address problems, communication hours, and principles
- Employers can provide **additional remote-work support** such as reimbursements for WFH expenses and organized social activities

▶ PREVENTING BURNOUT: AN OVERVIEW



▶ FACTORS THAT CAUSE JOB BURNOUT

“If you take a beautiful plant and put it in a lousy pot with no soil, no water, and no sun no matter how good that plant was to start it’s not going to thrive”

– Dr. Christine Maslach

Job-Person Fit¹

Effect of COVID on these Factors



Workload: Match between job demands and having the resources needed to meet those demands

Unsustainable Workload: Frontline workers must contend with the increased health risk, challenging in-person work environment, and increased vulnerability of their clientele



Control: How much autonomy a person has in their work to figure how to complete their work

Choice and Control: Workers may feel a loss of control as they must adjust to new schedules, new work environments, and other disruptions in their personal lives



Reward: Typically regarded as salary, benefits, and other perks. But research has shown that social rewards are just as valuable

Recognition and Reward: There may be a decrease in informal positive feedback due to remote work



Community: Does a person have good relationships at work with their colleagues, boss, and clients?

Supportive Work Community: Due to remote work, employees might feel isolated without regular daily contact with coworkers



Fairness: Are organizational policies and practices administered fairly or must employees navigate gender, racial, or other forms of inequity?

Fairness, Respect, & Social Justice: Employees may be feeling differential impacts of the COVID crisis on their lives, yet workplace policies may not have adjusted meet these employees' needs



Values: Does the work have meaning for the employee; often turns out to be one of the most important values

Clear Values and Meaningful Work: Will have significant variance based on job category. Some workers may find their work more meaningful during COVID, some less so

All footnotes herein refer to references listed within Slide 23, References

▶ THREE DIMENSIONS OF BURNOUT

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) measures burnout across three dimensions yielding different burnout profiles¹

“Burnout is a prolonged response to chronic stressors on the job” – Dr. Christine Maslach



Exhaustion

Individual stress brought on by overwork. Workers with high negative scores for exhaustion only are **overextended**



Cynicism

Negative response to work. Workers with high negative scores for cynicism only are **disengaged**



Professional Inefficacy

Negative self-evaluation. Workers with high negative scores for inefficacy only are **ineffective**

Workers with high negative scores on all three dimensions are identified as **experiencing burnout**

Employees who are experiencing burnout are²:

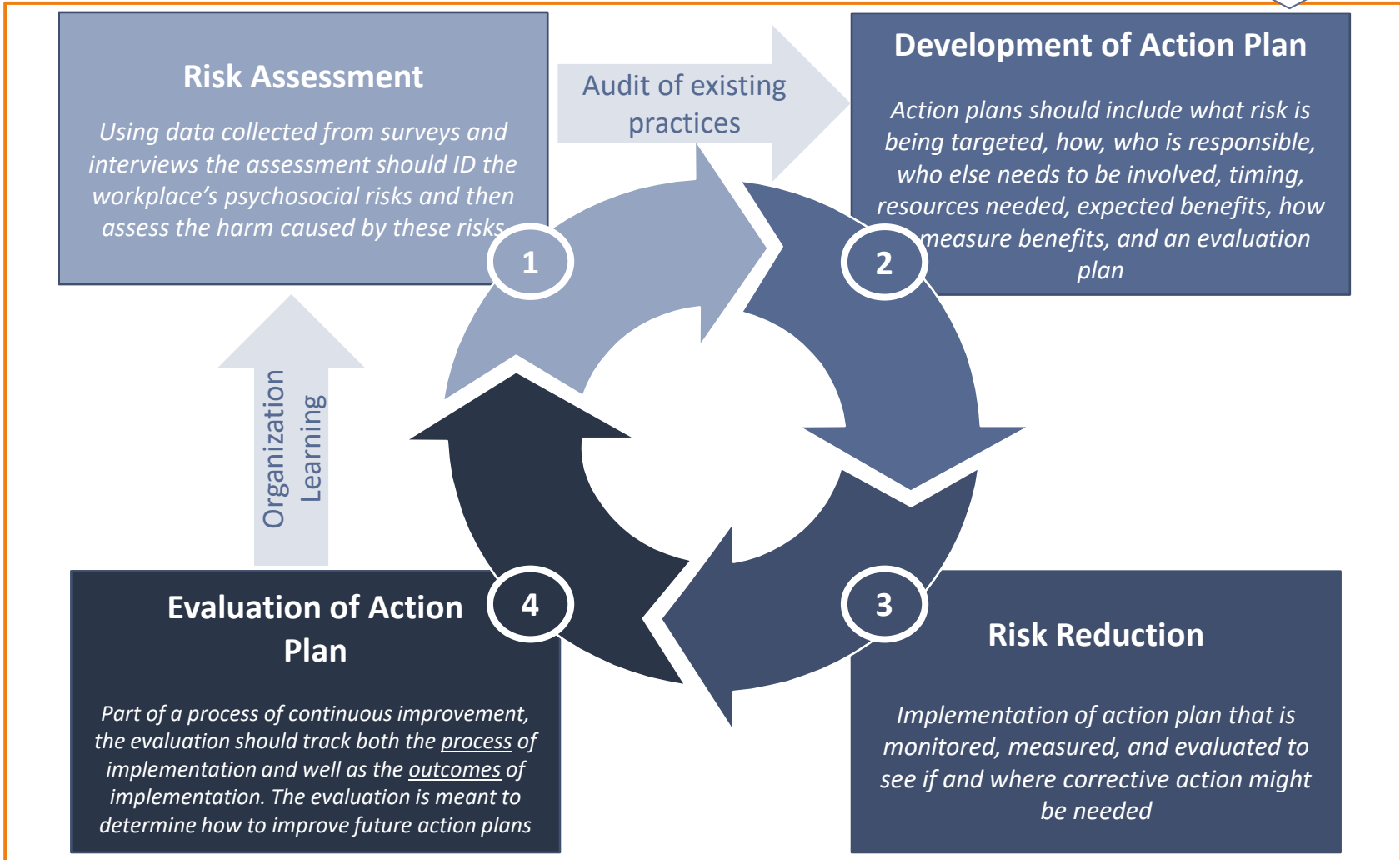
- **63%** more likely to take a sick day
- **23%** more likely to visit the emergency room
- **50% as likely** to discuss performance goals with their manager
- **2.6 times** more likely to leave current employer
- **13% less confident** in their performance

All footnotes herein refer to references listed within Slide 23, References

FRAMEWORK FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT

European model for psychosocial health risks in the workplace³

Co-creation: This framework requires the active participation of both management and employees



“Best practice in relation to psychosocial risk management essentially reflects best practice in terms of organizational management, learning and development, social responsibility and the promotion of quality of life”

▶ TRADITIONAL STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BURNOUT

Utilize the design principles of ergonomics: creating custom-designed solutions that match the relationship between individuals and their work environment

Types of Interventions³

Strategy examples

Root Cause

Primary Prevention:
Reducing work-related stress through changes in the way work is organized including

- **Workplace re-engineering:** assessing what the workplace is like for the workforce, and re-designing in to allow the workforce to be more efficient by reducing waste and removing barriers to success
- Implementing and improving **communications systems**

Impact Reduction

Secondary Prevention:
Development of individual skills in stress management through training

- **Wellness programs,** including trainings on relaxation and time-management
- **Knowledge building and trainings** on the causes and impacts of work-related stress⁴

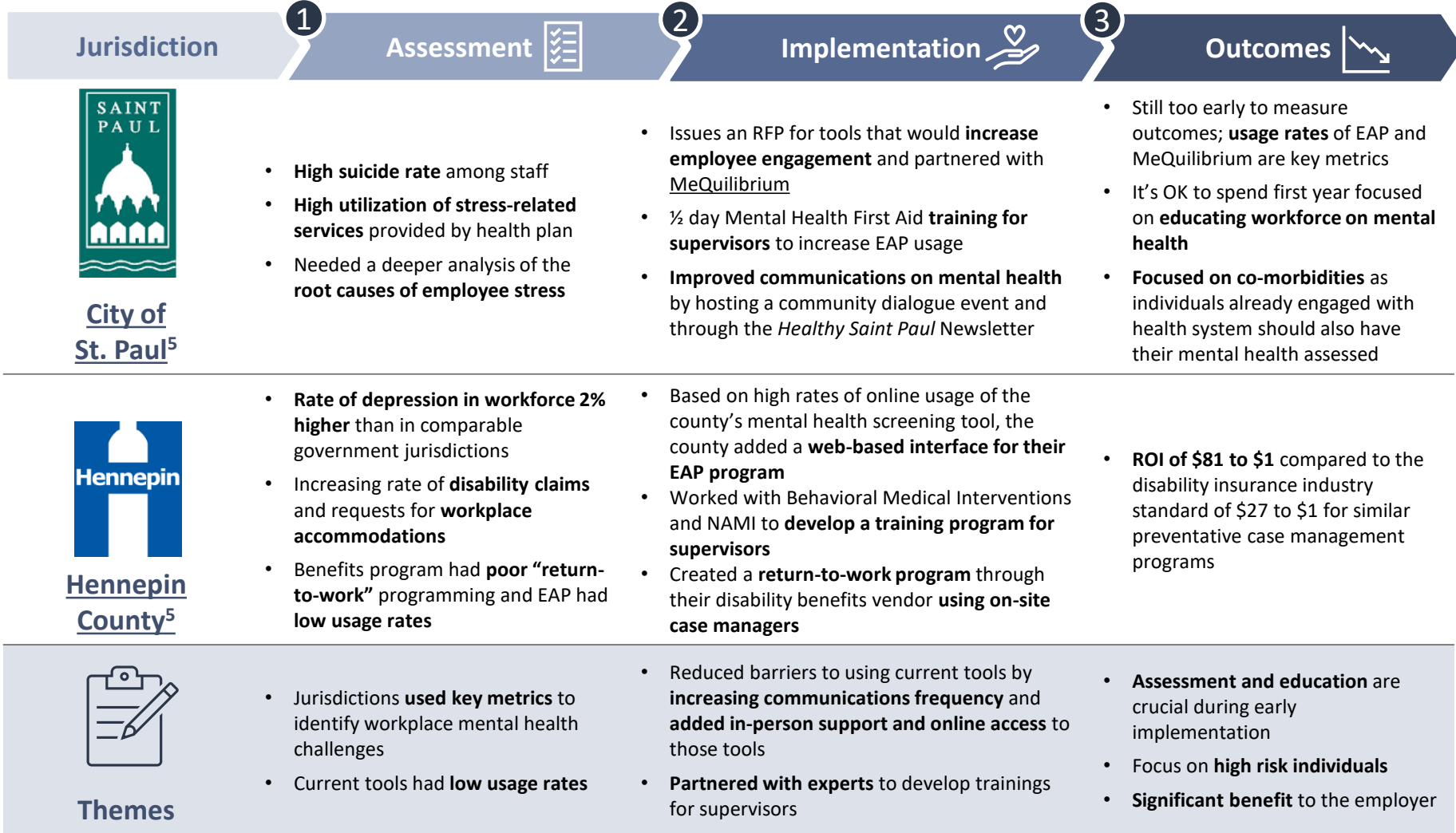
Impact Management

Tertiary Prevention:
development of rehabilitation and “return-to-work” systems

- **“Return-to-work”:** Programs designed to address the impact of work-related injury, including stress, and are designed the support the employee as they return to their job
- **Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs):** Third party work-based programs that offer screenings, short-term counseling, and follow-up services to assist emotional well-being challenges

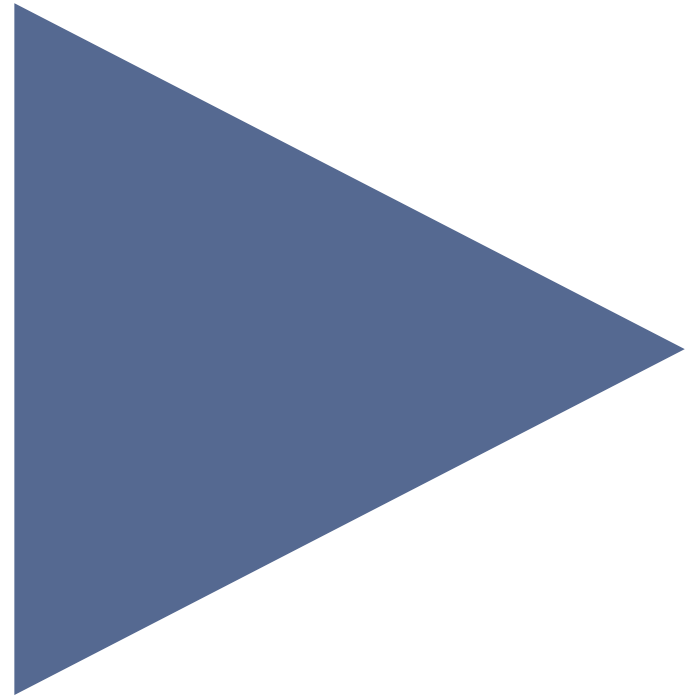
▶ PREVENTING BURNOUT: CASE STUDIES

Successful jurisdictions identified challenges, created customized action plans, and evaluated the impact of those plans



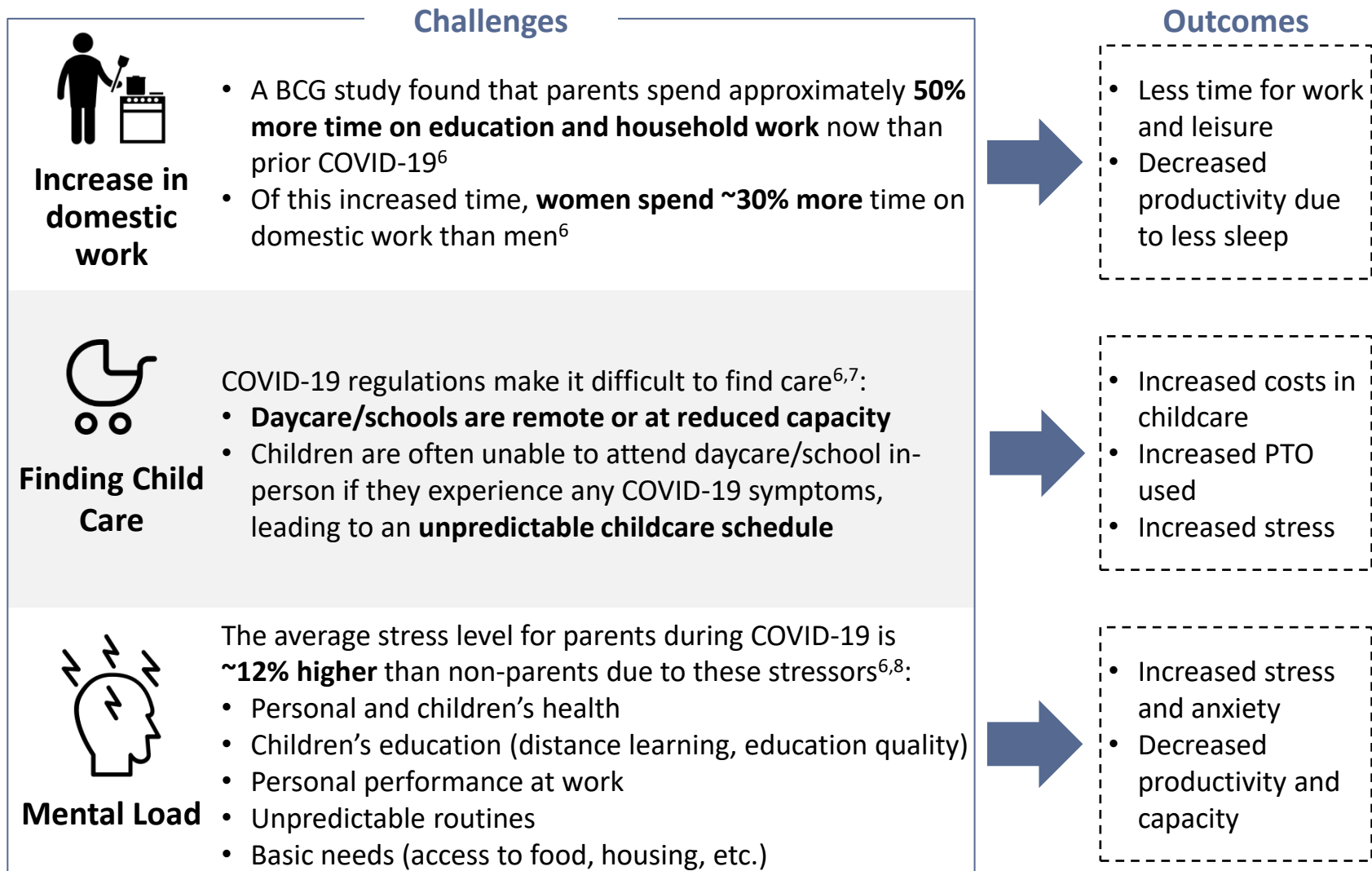
All footnotes herein refer to references listed within Slide 23, References

▶ SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES WITH CHILDREN



▶ SUPPORT NEEDS TO ADDRESS PARENT-EMPLOYEE CHALLENGES

Parents can face more stress and be less productive due to caregiving roles



All footnotes herein refer to references listed within Slide 23, References

▶ STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES WITH CHILDREN (1/2)

Low-resource solutions to prevent and manage burnout



Empathetic and transparent communication^{6,7,9}

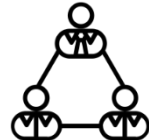
1

To reduce feeling of isolation and anxiety around employer support, job loss, and performance challenges

1. **Proactively reach out** to parent employees to understand and acknowledge the challenges
2. **Establish that this is a community responsibility**, not an individual's

*Cushman and Wakefield*⁹

- Weekly check-ins from supervisors
- Communication from leadership to connect and share solutions
- Impact: improved sense of community, reduced anxiety



Create Parent Affinity Groups^{5,10,11}

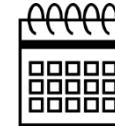
2

Parents can learn from and gain support from those facing similar challenges

1. **Formal support groups:** educational program, scheduled monthly, and facilitated externally
2. **Informal affinity groups:** instant messaging group to share resources and engage with each other's kids

*Clackamas County*⁵

- Monthly caregiver support groups
- 6-week program: *Tools for Caregivers*
- Educational offerings on how to cope, care for one's own needs, etc.
- Impact: Stronger caregiver skills, reduced absenteeism



Adjust working hours^{6,7,11}

3

With children at home, parents need to perform caretaker responsibilities during the traditional 9-5 workday

1. **Flexible hours:** employees can work when they need to fit their caretaking schedule
2. **Reduce hours/decrease workload** to compensate for increase in household work
3. **Offer company-wide breaks** (e.g. lunch, afternoon)

Skyscanner

- Instituted a company-wide 3-hour break in the afternoon
- Impact: allows employees to take care of their children without worrying about work performance

All footnotes herein refer to references listed within Slide 23, References

▶ STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES WITH CHILDREN (2/2)

High-impact, high-resource solutions to prevent and manage burnout



Support Child Care^{6,7,10,11}

4 Supporting childcare reduces stress, hours spent on domestic work, childcare expenses, and increases productivity

1. Provide **reimbursements/subsidies** for childcare expenses
2. **Organize study pods** with a group of employee children (\$10-15 per child per hour⁷)
3. Utilize vacant office space to **provide daycare/school** for employee's children



Change employee performance reviews⁶

5 Parents have less time for work and/or sleep, which may impact their performance at work

1. Establish a plan that **factors the impact of childcare** into talent evaluations and **track impact**
 - Notation of impact
 - Adjustment of annual goals
 - Longer term performance trends and future potential
 - Employee protection against retaliation



Increase PTO^{5,6,11}

6 Unexpected childcare responsibilities or the inability to find backup childcare increases the need for time off work

1. **Formal PTO programs:** fully paid, partially paid, or unpaid leave with benefits
2. **Unexpected childcare PTO** for when parents cannot find backup childcare
3. **Respite care:** encourage time off for self/family care and help employees find cost-effective solutions

United Health System¹⁰

- Onsite daycare facilities for employee children aged 0-12
- \$35-65 per child, per day
- Impact: reduced childcare hours for parents and essential employees could return to work in-person

Home Depot⁹

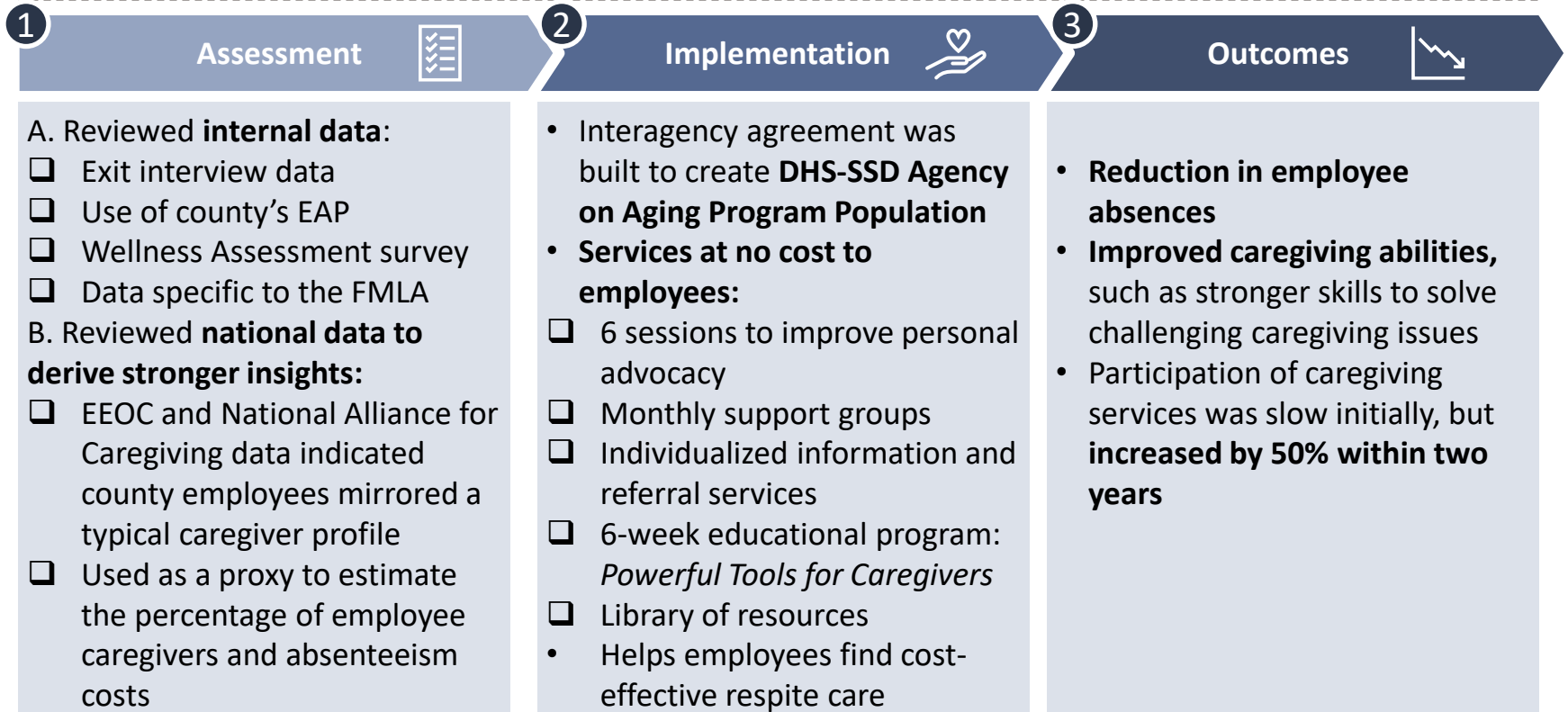
- 10 days subsidized backup care
- 2 weeks paid leave (COVID related, including for childcare)
- Impact: reduced mental load, increased time for rest, improved morale

▶ CASE STUDY: CAREGIVER PROGRAM IN CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR

County caregiver program supports employees balance work and caregiving



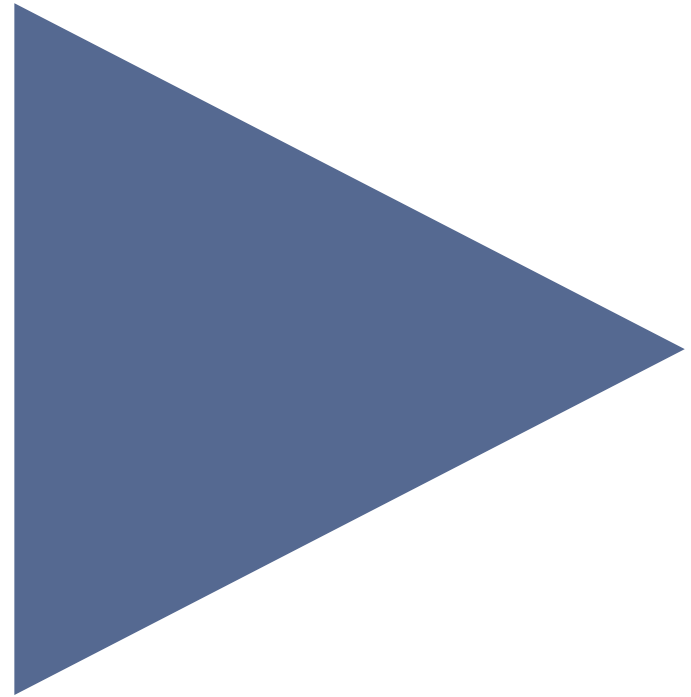
- **Employer:** Clackamas County, Oregon
- **Number of employees:** 2,100
- **Problem:** Increase in employees retiring early or reducing work hours to care for aging parents; county wanted to support employees balance work and caregiving⁵



Similar to working parents during COVID-19, caregivers experience high levels of burnout – they experience stress, anxiety, and depression from lack of self-care/downtime, limited awareness of resources, and feelings of isolation.⁵

Notes: (A) EAP: Employee Assistance Program (B) FMLA: Family and Medical Leave Act (C) EEOC: US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
All sources herein refer to references listed within Slide 23, References

▶ ADAPTING TO NEW WORK ARRANGEMENTS



► SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES TO ADJUST

Embrace flexibility, but define clear guidelines around work expectations

Communications Guidelines

Explicitly address the problems^{10,12}

- Acknowledge the issues of a remote/flexible arrangement
- Emphasize importance of downtime & developing routines

Potential actions:

- Host regular “town halls”
- Institute regular check-ins between supervisors and employees about WFH arrangements, mental health, capacity

Set clear communication hours¹²

- Flexible hours can create an “always on” culture
- The *expectation* of being available “after hours” causes stress and anxiety¹¹

Potential actions:

- Define communication hours (e.g. 8am -5pm)
- Leadership must follow the policies (don’t reward communication outside hours)

Establish principles for communication channels¹²

- Unclear expectations can prevent employee’s managing attention, decreasing productivity¹⁰

Potential actions:

- Email*: Routine requests, information sharing
- Instant messaging*: Day-to-day notes, socializing
- Phone, video calls*: Sensitive/complex topics
- Texts*: Urgent only

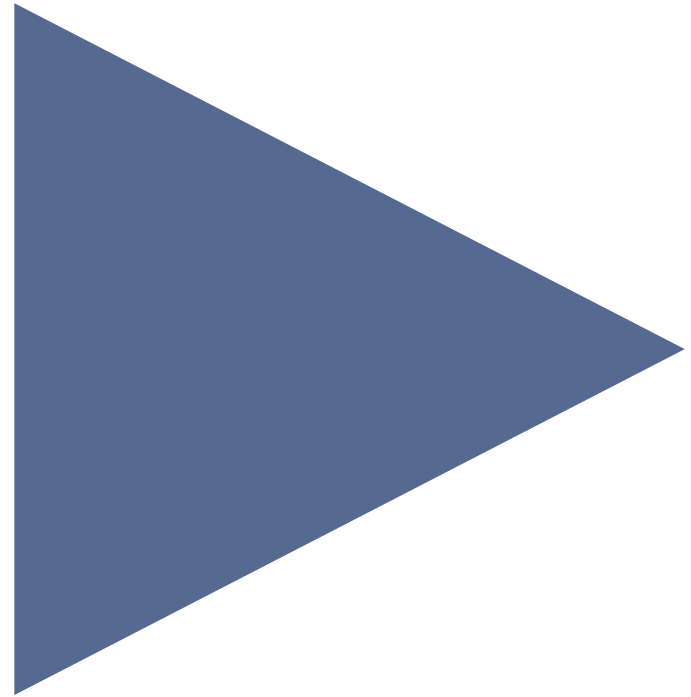
Remote work tools and supports

Improve the work-from-home environment^{9,10}

- Offer **reimbursements** for work-from-home expenses (e.g. internet, headphones, etc.)
- Organize **social activities** to build an engaged workforce (e.g. trivia game, water cooler chats, happy hours, etc.)

All footnotes herein refer to references listed within Slide 23, References

▶ NEXT STEPS AND RESOURCES



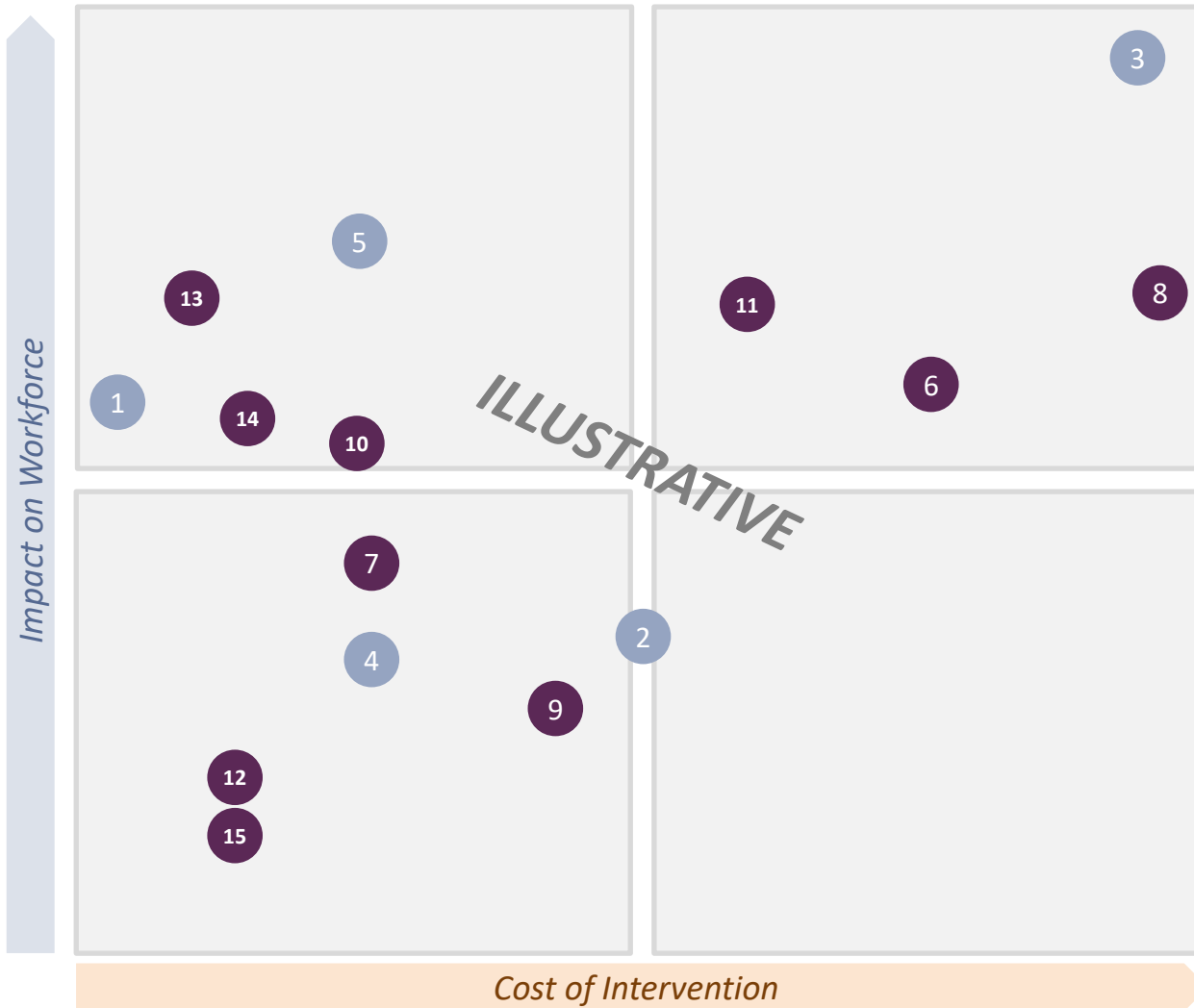
▶ POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS TO PREVENT AND MANAGE BURNOUT

For consideration based on the research

- 1 Assessment:** Using both qualitative (focus groups) and quantitative (surveys) methods, determine what aspects of the work environment are causing employee burnout
- 2 Develop Action Plan:** Using the assessment develop a strategy to address employee burnout. This strategy should include resources needed; employee segment being targeted (i.e. working parents); and primary, secondary, and tertiary tactics.
- 3 Implement and Iterate:** Roll-out action plan, and use employee and supervisor feedback to iterate and adjust the action plan.
- 4 Evaluate and re-assess:** Measure outcomes and use evaluation of action plan as an opportunity for organizational learning and growth

▶ CONSIDER PRIORITIZING BURNOUT PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Place potential strategies in consultation with management team



Strategy Key	
1	Manager-employee check-ins
2	Employee Assistance Programs
3	Workplace re-engineering
4	Wellness Programs
5	Supervisor trainings on employee mental health
6	Childcare reimbursement or subsidies
7	Study pods
8	On-site day care
9	Childcare focused PTO programs
10	Flexible Hours
11	Changes to workload
12	Company wide-breaks
13	Improved communication
14	Affinity Groups
15	Adjust Performance Review System

▶ HIGH-VALUE RESOURCES ON EMPLOYEE BURNOUT

Type	Resource Link
Assessment	<u>Maslach Burnout Inventory</u>
Framework (video)	<u>Understanding Job Burnout - Dr. Christina Maslach</u>
Employee health and the workplace (book)	<u>Jeffery Pfeffer: Dying for a Paycheck</u>
Employer Resources	<u>Center for Workplace Mental Health</u>
Tools	<u>Mindwise</u>
Tools	<u>Berkeley Interdisciplinary Center for Health Workplaces</u>

▶ REFERENCES

Below resources are referenced in preceding slides by footnotes

#	SOURCE	LINK
1	World Psychiatry (Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter)	Understanding the burnout experience: recent research and its implications for psychiatry
2	Gallup	Employee Burnout, Part 1: The 5 Main Causes
3	World Health Organization	PRIMA-EF: Guidance on the European Framework for Psychosocial Risk Management
4	World Health Organization	Best Practice in Work-related Stress Management Interventions
5	American Psychiatric Association	Center for Workplace Mental Health: Case Studies
6	Boston Consulting Group (BCG)	Easing the COVID-19 Burden on Working Parents
7	SHRM	Accommodating Working Parents During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Exhausted Parents Get Help from Employers
8	American Psychological Association	Stress in the Time of COVID-19
9	Miriam Brilleman , Senior Director of Human Resources at Cushman & Wakefield	N/A
10	Corey Heller , Head of HR Business Partners and Shared Services at United Health System	N/A
11	The New York Times	Private Tutors, Pop-Up Schools or Nothing at All: How Employers Are Helping Parents
12	Harvard Business Review (Maura Thomas)	The Downside of Flex Time, Protecting Company Culture Means Having Rules for Email
13	Virginia Tech	Killing Me Softly: Electronic Communication Monitoring and Employee and Spouse Well-Being

▶ ADDITIONAL EXPERTS CONSULTED

- **Miriam Brilleman**, Senior Director of Human Resources at Cushman & Wakefield, Inc.
- **Juana Scholes**, Director of Human Resources at Aldridge Pite Llp
- **Corey Heller**, Head of HR Business Partners and Shared Services at United Health System Inc.