

Health Views Webinar - Burnout Transcript

Announcer: Health views for business webinar series. Today's mental health webinar is called: From Hustle to Harmony, Work Culture Strategies for Battling Burnout. Your microphones are muted, but we encourage you to ask questions via the Q&A feature, ask a question in the platform located at the bottom of your screen. We will do our best to get to as many questions as possible. We will also have two polls during this webinar. We appreciate your participation and sincerely value your input. Finally, we will have a very brief survey for you to complete immediately following the conclusion of the program. And now here's our moderator, Dr. Deb Friesen.

Dr. Friesen: Hello and welcome back to our Health Views for Business webinar series. My name is Dr. Deb Friesen and I am your moderator. I am an internal medicine physician. I've been with Kaiser Permanente for about 17 years, the last three supporting national sales and account management in a role of physician advisor, really taking the story of our care delivery to the market. And it is my pleasure to be with you today. I also have a podcast Health Views with Deb Friesen MD that you can find on Apple, Spotify, wherever you find your podcast actually.

So today is the second of our quarterly webinars this year where we bring quality conversations with evidence backed insight that's both informative and compelling and really sheds light on industry best practices and opportunities while digging into the challenges that businesses face every day as it relates to employee health. Today we're tackling a topic that's not only extremely important, but one that is trending in healthcare across the nation and really across the globe. Mental health. Employees are stressed, experiencing anxiety, depression, having burnout at record levels. Employees are looking for solutions at work that enable them to balance work and life. More than ever they want safe and supportive work environments led by people who demonstrate their commitment to mental health in both behaviors and benefits. We're going to unpack all of this and so much more over the next hour together. But before we dive in, let me introduce our esteemed panel of experts.

So first up is Ruth Chang, MD MPH, also Society for Human Resource Management, certified Professional and Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians. She is the Chief People Officer and Vice President at Northwest Permanente. She's practiced family medicine there since 2005. She leads wellness and resilience, equity inclusion and diversity, and talent acquisition and development strategies for this physician-led, self-governed, multi-specialty group practice that takes care of more than 630,000 members in Oregon and southwest Washington.

Next is Janeen Haller Abernathy Licensed Clinical social worker. She is the director of the Colorado State Employee Assistance Program for the state of Colorado. She has worked as a counselor and advocate in both rural and urban settings with children, teens, adults, older adults. She has directed nonprofit domestic violence agencies, including provision of grant writing and budget management, staff supervision, community collaboration, programmatic policy development, and has provided EAP services in various settings to state higher education and federal employers and employees since 2012.

And last but certainly not least, is Dr. Tamara Brownlee, MD, Master of Public Health, Masters of Business Administration, and she is the Chief Health Officer at Accenture. She has over 20 years experience in practicing medicine and in leadership with a passion for creating and implementing strategies for people to thrive and live healthy and well. Tam has throughout her career served as a champion for providing high quality healthcare and advancing health equity that has impacted thousands of lives.

Just as a reminder, you have access to a chat function that lets you submit questions throughout the discussion today. So please enter your questions as we go. We're going to be checking those as we go through the panel conversation today. There's also a virtual booth with loads of resources for you to check out.

So to start things off, we're going to start with a poll question. On a scale of one to five, one being not comfortable at all and five is totally comfortable, what is your level of confidence in talking with employees about mental health? You know, as we think about having these conversations in the workplace, I want to share with you a study that actually came from the Harris Poll. This was 2022. We're recognizing of course, that anxiety and depression are rising. They rose through the pandemic. They're not going away. Despite actually addressing this more, as we've seen going on in businesses, we do see that mental health remains stigmatized. And according to that poll that was done, 58 of employees, not you people, although you're an employee as well, 58% of employees do not feel comfortable talking about their mental health at work.

So let's take a look at how comfortable you feel talking about this as well. All right. Actually, we have a nice, we have a statistical little curve and the lovely bell curve that we've got going there where, you know what, some people just a small number really aren't comfortable. Some are totally, but really most are right in the middle. So we'll see how you're feeling as we go. Why this matters, of course, is because it's going to continue to be an issue as we go forward.

So let's get started with the panel discussion. And Ruth, I'm going to start with you. The title of today's discussion is from Hustle to Harmony, work Culture Strategies for Battling Burnout. Now we have stress all around us. We've got work, home, family, finances, physical health. Today we're talking about mental health. So how is it that we have stress and burnout? Are they the same thing? Are we confusing the two terms? And what does that look like when we think about it from a clinical perspective?

Dr. Chang: Yeah, those are great questions and really to kick us off to think about what is burnout. And I think it is really a manifestation of that unmanaged stress that we experience at work, at home, or wherever we are in our lives, and really that it is something that can be measured. So I'm going to quote some research done by Christina Maslach, who is author of the Maslach Burnout Index. This survey, if you will, instrument has been studied for over 35 years and really looks at the three different characteristics that define burnout.

Those three main areas are exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased efficacy, meaning feeling like work is not meaningful or that we're feeling less effective at work, whether that's at home or in the workplace. And I would say that, you know how that is different than stress is we, we can experience stress every day. It's more how we respond to it

that can manifest as burnout and burnout's also different from depression per se, because in depression that is a diagnosable condition, whereas burnout is not necessarily diagnosable or treated in the same way as depression. However, there are ways that we can really recognize it in the workplace.

So I think from the individual, the individual might experience burnout as fatigue, just feeling tired all the time. Maybe the individuals experiencing changes in eating or sleeping habits, getting tension headaches at the end of the day, feeling like they've lost their meaning and purpose in work, feeling lost, feeling anxious. Or sometimes people can turn to food, drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism. So that's kind of the experience from the individual. How they show up at work is that you might notice an employee who's kind of withdrawing from responsibilities. So they're not performing as well as they once did. They're isolating from other coworkers, they're procrastinating, missing deadlines, taking frustrations out on others, maybe blaming other people. Maybe they're missing work, calling out sick a lot more than in the past, arriving late or leaving early. And then there's also that phenomenon of presenteeism. They are showing up but they're just not contributing as much as they once did. And so I would, you know, definitely be worried if I had any colleagues that exhibited these symptoms because they very much could be signs of burnout.

Dr. Friesen: Love that. And just, this was an unintentional plug, but I actually interviewed Dr. Christina Maslach on my podcast. And one of the things that I was really struck with was her really trying to shift the blame for the individual who feels burned out and, and really addressing that this is a systems problem and that there's, more going on than the individual can really just respond to with, you know, making sure you sleep or do yoga or get your walks in. And the title is also something about from hustle to harmony. And I think that there's something in that where we have this hustle economy, we start, saw it start to happen in the early 2000s where people felt it was such a positive thing to have a side hustle that they were going to do a little bit more in order to be successful. And now it's almost turned into something that is toxic for people.

We see in a study that was done in 2020 that 44% of Americans have a side hustle amid inflation, which was up from, actually that was 2022, up 13% from 2020. 62% of Gen Zers have a side gig. Inflation is really forcing people to not only go to their job but go to a second or a third job. And when we ask them what it's all about, the primary purpose is to pay their bills. And 71% of those polls said they weren't sure they'd be able to pay all their bills if that side hustle disappeared. And so is this a positive thing, Ruth, would you comment on that and, and what do we think about how do we, how do we help move people back to work-life balance if they're working hard and then even working harder?

Dr. Chang: Yeah, absolutely. I think, you know, what you're citing is the economic reality of many people. I think over half Americans are living paycheck to paycheck and over half American families have less than \$500 in a rainy day fund. So I think that is the economic reality that people have. So when I talk with my patients and they're expressing burnout, you know, I, I do try to be very sensitive about the fact that they have an economic reality that they have to meet. And, but if we delve a little deeper, you know, there are some choices sometimes people can make that would allow them to

dial back that "always on" mentality. I would say with my physician group, you know, there's so much pressure in, in the healthcare industry or any of the high tech industries, kind of the sense of always have to be available, always right and always strong, right? That's how we show up and that's how we define professionalism in this country. And so I think that's part of it is cultural, part of it is the economic reality, but how do we really help shape that? So I think from a systems standpoint, definitely advocating for a living wage is important, especially for my patients who work in the minimum wage jobs that you literally have to work two or three jobs in order to just pay the bills.

Dr. Friesen: Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Chang: Yeah. But in the professions where money is less of an issue, it always becomes time, then people don't have enough time to meet all the expectations that are put upon them.

Dr. Friesen: Well, so there's a question in chat that I want to bring up 'cause it's timely. How different or similar is anxiety compared to stress and or burnout? And either the clinicians can jump in here, Tam, maybe you want to take that one?

Dr. Brownlee: Sure. I think anxiety is a distinct diagnosis and a condition all of its own, and all of us, I imagine can respond to this as well, but I, I think it is characterized by persistent either feeling or exhibition of behaviors that prevent people from being able to move forward because they're held back by pervasive thoughts of anxiety or fear in, in their lives that could be different from burnout where a person is, as Ruth described, maybe disinterested or disengaged from their, from their process versus the person that really wants to be able to but feels like their, their thoughts or their fears are holding them back. That said, I think that anxiety can be manifested in whatever spectrum a person may be either from experiencing high stress without recovery or full burnout. Anxiety may be pervasive, you know, in that continuum.

Dr. Friesen: Yeah, and I think that there's also that difference between I feel anxious and I have an anxiety disorder because we all feel anxious at times. It's part of the human condition. So being able to acknowledge that, but it is a spectrum and sometimes we need a little bit of help along the way. I just want to point out that the hustle mentality overworking is also detrimental to companies. Employees who work long hours tend to sleep less, which means they make more mistakes, they end up costing businesses more in health insurance and high turnover and sick days as well. There was a headline from Psychology Today that said "The Complete Guide to Quiet Quitting the Hustle Mentality."

So Tam, I'm going to bring it over to you just a little bit. I know that you've been doing work from moving from that hustle mentality to harmony, and I want to hear a little bit about that if you don't mind. And again, as we're talking about understanding that burnout isn't, isn't your people, it's your workplace. What's the work that you've been doing around educating for that?

Dr. Brownlee: Sure, I'm happy to. Well, for those who are not aware, Accenture is a global professional services company and we employ about 725,000 people worldwide. So my role is really to see about how we might be able to augment strategies for

elevating health and wellbeing for, for our people as well as their families and the communities where they serve, which is very diverse, but this topic of hustle to harmony is so resonant no matter where you are in the world.

About the hustle part, it is definitely one that is maybe part cultural. I will say in professional services firms, you know, if you think about people who are high achieving, high delivery type individuals, high performance, and that's part of their identity, we really work very hard in terms of rebalancing what that culture is like to remind people that you can't be your best and deliver the best performance if you are not well yourself. Certainly there was a lot that was illuminated during the course of the pandemic where work life balance, I don't know if it ever existed, but I don't think it exists anymore. Post pandemic. It's really about integration and then we're overcorrecting and making sure that people are able to prioritize themselves and wellbeing moving forward. One message that I send all the time is that hustle by itself is not an evil thing. You know, I think that there are seasons that we need to hustle, it's just not for a lifetime. And either by circumstance or I think by culture, we people, you know, adopt a hustle mentality and they don't know when they can let go where it can be a detriment for themselves.

So in our health and wellbeing strategy at Accenture, we've really worked to highlight what exactly has happened to these people. We talk very openly and plainly about stress, for example, that not all stress is bad, but if you have stress and don't have recovery attached to it, and recovery can be in a lot of forms. It could be sleep, it could be drinking water, it could be reminding yourself to eat, unplugging, you know, not having notifications that go on 24/7, those kind of things. Not even having a culture where people can feel like they can articulate the things that they need in order to be healthy and well, for example, it's not unusual that I would have a conversation with my superior and say, Hey, you know, I'm an early morning person, I'll do early morning calls, but after this time I need to unplug or I need one hour, you know, just to get on that treadmill, eat something just so I can feel like I can go on, you know, during the course of the day. And there's nothing wrong with that.

So we have worked towards enabling our people as well as leaders, which is really important about how do you foster that culture. I would say the harmony part really comes to life with our people serving as advocates for each other. Started a few years ago, we have a core of mental health allies in our organization, 12,000 and rising in number. And their purpose is that they want to know about the things that affect our people, that impact their mental health. Maybe they've had mental health challenges themselves or just really want to be advocates or a listening ear for their colleagues. And they're trained in mental health first aid. They're trained in suicide prevention and they can be a safe place, you know, to be able to get their colleagues preventive services, either acute services or even aftercare that's not threatening at all and allows them to be able to perform well. We're really proud of that program. We want everybody across, no matter what the organization, have allies who can be in your corner. When they just recognize maybe something's just not right, but they can have a conversation with you in a, in a caring and compassionate way.

Dr. Friesen: I love that, thank you. Some questions from the audience that are kind of related, so I'm going to feed them in here. Couple things to make a theme. We talk

about stress and anxiety and burnout through the pandemic and of course the pandemic brought us remote versus in-office work and does not being, not getting together actually increase burnout. I'll let any of the panelists jump in.

Janeen: I'm happy to jump in here. What I've noticed anecdotally, is that while remote work has offered and created a lot of convenience for folks and maybe has allowed folks to be in a more comfortable setting for work, it has in some ways dulled our ability to navigate difficult or challenging situations. And so that might lead to this buildup of anxiety about going into the office or interacting with folks that we might feel less comfortable to interact with. And so that can kind of lead to acute symptoms of anxiety or discomfort or just a spike in stress associated with being in the work environment. On the flip side of that, what I've seen is that despite the conveniences and I would say even the increased access to work environments that remote work has brought for us, it also absolutely has created isolation and that isolation hasn't done a lot of great things for our mental.

Dr. Friesen: Yep, absolutely. Hey Ruth, I'm going to throw this one to you. You talked about absenteeism, presenteeism. I think this question is kind of about resenteeism or resentment. Burnout sometimes manifests in health issues while still being productive and engaged. The cost is health and then silent withdrawal. How do you catch that in high performers?

Dr. Chang: Yes, I think it's really, again, you, it's about checking in with people, right? It's the one-on-one check-ins. And at Northwest Permanente we really encourage our leaders to go out and just round what we call rounding is going out, just talking people face to face if possible, if not at least one-on-one check-ins via video chat. And it's getting to know your people and really asking those questions. It's that relatedness and having those relationships and asking about family, asking how they're doing. 'Cause I think it, it is hard in a group setting for people to say, Hey, I'm struggling, but in one-on-one conversations, people really do come out and, and if there's a good existing relationship, you know, colleagues will tell you.

Dr. Friesen: Yeah absolutely. And this is a segue to my next question. We've talked about being comfortable, feeling safe, and there is a term that's out there, psychological safety. I believe it was coined by Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson, and she defined it as a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking, establishing a climate of psychological safety allows space for people to speak up and share their ideas. Just a quick tweet that I saw, company cultures don't start out toxic. They get that way when managers stop having the conversations that make people feel seen, heard, appreciated, and invested in. And that's from John Baird and Edward Sullivan who wrote a book, how to Protect Your Team from a Toxic Work Culture. So Janeen, this is all about what you do. So I'd like you to share with us a little bit about what does psychological safety look like? What are the characteristics that you would use to describe a culture that really has psychological safety?

Janeen: I think this is a great question and I love the element of the definition that indicates what we're looking for our leaders to do is engage their team in a manner that encourages risk taking. So psychological safety is not about avoiding risk taking or avoiding situations that make us feel uncomfortable. Psychological safety is feeling like

you've got a net in the event that you screw up or you say the wrong thing or that you maybe don't have the right words to say or you don't know what the questions are. And what we know from research in the area of emotional intelligence is that if I as a leader am willing to be vulnerable and share information about myself, I'm actually modeling vulnerability for my employees, for my team. And that can actually encourage more of an environment of risk taking. So I think it's important for employees to feel welcome in their work environment. We know that employees want to see that their work setting is reflective of them and we know that when we encourage connection, that can actually create an increased capacity for folks to take risks with each other.

Dr. Friesen: Thank you, I love that. and someone said, could we put that on the screen? And so I'm going to say it again, I don't know if we have the ability to do it on the fly. We're going to try maybe, but again, the quote is from Amy Edmondson, "A shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking." And I just love Janeen, how you brought up it doesn't mean that we feel good all the time, it's that we feel good enough to take a risk together and that we can actually go to that place. Tam, I'm going to pivot back to you around your, your mental health allies program a little bit more. Again, we've talked about working at home, social isolation, you know, maybe a little bit easier for those who are working, but there are some people who still can't get out. Even if we can, we don't. And so what does it look like from your standpoint when we think about social connections and how do we build that culture at work as well?

Dr. Brownlee: It's so incredibly important that people are connected for a reason. So it starts, I think, at the individual level as, as Ruth pointed out, to make sure that leaders, for example, are doing the check-ins. And if I could just put a word out there, if you lead anybody, even if it's just one person, be consistent with your check-ins. Don't cancel them, don't keep rescheduling them because it sends a message to your high performers or you know, whoever you manage that you don't matter as much. So just be consistent with those. But I think the, the importance of being able to be connected underscores, I think what you described that Amy Edmondson was describing in our organization, we've kind of studied this and, and we know that people want three things. They want to feel safe, they want to feel seen, and they want to be connected, on this post pandemic age, however, especially I'm so grateful for Gen Z, they're just like, yeah, I want to be connected, but let's be connected for a reason for me to come into an office that I'm sitting at a cubicle and staring in front of a computer screen for eight hours where I could do that at home, not exactly fruitful, but have leveraging the opportunity to bring people in for transparent updates. Our people value that so much. Or providing updates on what's going on with one another. It doesn't have to be big, you know, and even leveraging sometimes the virtual platform is, is pretty key in that. But talk about the power of people.

The leveraging that we have of our allies to be able to facilitate that is so incredible. Or even anything in health and wellbeing. Our strategy for health and wellbeing is really pulling on the levers of three of the dimensions of health. First is physical. Second is mental. And then the third, which has always been there, but we're amplifying that much more in the past couple of years, is financial health. So imagine the power of really being able to connect meaningfully with people you work with all the time on things that you really want to talk about or, you know, maybe have some social connection with as

well. It's been transformative, I think, but I think recognizing how people want to connect, what makes sense and that they're coming together for a purpose and a reason that uplifts them.

Dr. Friesen: Love that, there's a question in chat, and I think you've alluded to it already, Tam do you have any advice for creating harmony within a team or department when hustle is the culture and promoted from the top? It seems like we're continuing to live in crisis mode. One comment that I'll just put in there before I let you address that is that there is it again, from Amy Edmondson, and she said that establishing norms is critical. So what we do here is, is really critical and that speaking out is less important than how we react and respond to other team members, which when I read that, I really felt like it was saying, it's actually how we live, the words that we're speaking, right? It's not just, oh, here's the messaging, but it's actually living that message. What would you add to that, Tam?

Dr. Brownlee: I think Amy's brilliant of course, and it makes a lot of sense, but I think there are, there are two ways I would address it. First is the power of the leader. You know, there's no doubt that there are work environments, there are organizations where the pace and the hustle is just pathematic, right? For who they are. And that's okay. But I think the leader recognizing what people need in order to be most productive, to be their best selves is not only being able to hit those targets for hustle, but having the opportunity for recovery and harmony. And how do you promote that? Sometimes you can't do it in a workplace.

I think about a very busy ER or a trauma center where it's continuously hustle, fast paced. But when you do the huddle maybe at the beginning or the end of the shift, check in on everybody. Encourage people to take their time off, you know, find out what's important to them, find out what's meaningful for them, what's going on with them. So incredibly important.

And then the second is for the person who's a part of the team, I think to the point that Amy made, speaking out is so incredibly important to be able to say, do we need to do it like this all the time? Or are we actually promoting a, an organization or a culture that actually lends us to making more mistakes? That it's not a "just" culture which many of us who are in healthcare and health quality can, can resonate with that sometimes when it's so fast paced, more mistakes are made if we don't take the time to sit back, recover, you know, really reexamine what's going on in the environment. And if you want to have a safe and psychologically safe, I think team then taking that courage to be able to say something is the start.

Dr. Friesen: Jan, there's a question in chat I'm going to give to you actually, I'm sorry, I meant Janeen. So are there certain industries that are actually more prone to developing burnout? I think that we've heard a little bit about that already. And then a follow up question from someone different, who do I talk to when I'm burned out? Because this person, I tried to go to a counselor and I was told that burnout wasn't a diagnosis for counseling and I should see a coach. So give me your thoughts on part A and part B, Janeen.

Janeen: Yeah, sure. Great questions. Yeah, so I'll start with part B and then you'll probably have to refresh me on part A. So of course I direct an EAP program. We provide both coaching and counseling and our services provided as a free benefit to the employees that work for the state of Colorado. So what we find as clinicians, all of our coaches, our licensed clinicians as well, what we find is that sometimes folks actually come in requesting coaching and then if we're, if we've got our clinical lens on, which typically it's hard to turn that off, we might suggest that they either push the pause on coaching and pursue counseling or engage in coaching and counseling concurrently, as long as they can create a good definitive line between what they're working on in both venues. You know, it depends on the provider that you reach out to. But typically if you reach out to a mental health counselor and you're experiencing stress about some element of your life, and for many of us it's multiple elements of our lives, then the mental health provider should be able to address your concerns. And I would absolutely put signs and symptoms of burnout in the category of mental health care. What we know is that burnout can be kind of a long slow creep and sometimes we can get to the place of actually experiencing acute symptoms of anxiety or depression essentially in response to that burnout, I would say a coach that is trained to also provide and license to provide mental health support should be able to pick up on either burnout or symptoms of mental health concern. But at the end of the day, I think you have to find a provider that makes the best sense.

Dr. Friesen: And it is such a spectrum. I can, I mean, even as we are talking, there's so much overlap. And so imagine if you're that person who is at times stressed, maybe burned out, has anxiety, it's, it's really hard sometimes to tease it all out and, and again, a lot of times self-care is not the answer. So being able to actually do a little bit more in the workplace or individually.

So let's, let's pivot to strategies that actually are working. It's always nice to have some bright spots. The Heath brothers wrote a book about that switch and they talked about, you know what, in some places things are actually working. So look for where those are. So Ruth, tell us where there are some bright spots. How are strategies working back in the northwest for you and your colleagues?

Dr. Chang: Yeah, thanks so much. Well, I'd say three things that I've been really actively promoting. Number one is take vacation, right? So I noticed I was watching our metrics and looking at vacation usage and once the pandemic hit, we had up to 7% of our clinicians taking zero vacation days in a calendar year. And I rang the alarm bell when I saw that like, this is a big problem. And so I've been really actively promoting, taking vacation, talking to all of our leaders. You know, please take vacation yourself and when you're gone set you're out of office message because checking emails, responding emails, calling into meetings, that's called work. That's not called vacation. And your team, they're going to follow and do what you do. So our leaders are, you know, really getting good about setting their out of office message and delegating their work while they're gone so they can come back and feel refreshed. You know, as Tam had mentioned earlier, this is about high performance and rest is for high performers.

So that's number one is about taking vacation. Number two, talk about mistakes. We have mistakes, Mondays, right? If we can actively talk about mistakes big and small in a

no blame culture, that's when people can really feel comfortable coming forward. And it's not just necessarily in the patient care space, but it could be in the space. But the more we can learn from each other the better.

And then lastly, talk about mental health. And it's not just about when people are in crisis struggling or trying to survive, but it's also when people are thriving and excelling. We all have mental health all the time, right? And sometimes we can go through all those five stages in the same day and it just depends on what's happening.

So a couple weeks ago at our employee town hall, I told my own personal story about accessing the employee assistance program and seeking counseling for myself and my family and today, this morning I actually got an email from our employee assistance program coordinator and she said two employees have since reached out and started counseling after hearing my story. And they said that that hearing my story and hearing a leader talk about accessing mental health is what helped them overcome their own internal barrier to seeking care. So we normalize this, right? Just like if your colleague who sat next to you broke their leg, you would expect them to go see the doctor and do something about their broken leg. But if your colleague has a broken heart, you would also want them to go see a counselor and really talk about that grief or whatever big life transition that they're going through. So we need to treat mental health just like we would our physical health.

Dr. Friesen: Janeen, what have you seen in the workplace as far as implementing strategies that really are trying to create that culture of, of good mental health, of reducing the stigma and creating psychological safety?

Janeen: Yeah, so one thing that we're doing through RAP, which is EAP, which is related to part A of the last question, is we are focusing on those positions that we call high contact, high impact roles. So folks that have direct one-on-one contact in situations that can create higher risk, higher risk of secondary trauma, higher risk around safety, higher risk of burnout. So think healthcare professionals, law enforcement, communications officers, folks that are in social services roles. So one thing that we are really pushing is for folks to really try out the idea of mental health counseling. Through our program you have access to free counseling. So set yourself up for an annual mental health check-in, just check in with a mental health therapist. The way that we'll structure that is really trying to establish rapport and connection with folks so that when they do need us in the future, they will reach out in the event that they have a work-related situation that really does bring on those signs or symptoms of secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, burnout, even anxiety of course, or depression.

So I think just destigmatizing this idea of working with a therapist or seeking out support related to mental health or mental wellbeing is really important. And finding creative ways to do that I think is also really important. I love the idea of mental health allies in state government. We essentially see this as peer support. So getting folks connected with peers that they can have a comfortable conversation with. If they're not at the place where they think they need mental health counseling or maybe they're just not quite ready to reach out to a therapist yet.

Dr. Friesen: And there's a question in chat about that Janeen, question about the peer support or mental health allies. Is this their job at work or is it a training certification that they receive that allows them to help others in the workplace? This sounds amazing, so Janeen and Tam comment on that.

Janeen: Yeah, I think different environments manage it differently. In our world of peer supporters, we provide training so that folks can provide lay support. So essentially making a connection with folks, understanding what the resources are so that once that connection is made, they're engaging in listening. So they are absolutely serving in that peer support role. It's less of a friend role, it's absolutely not a clinician role, it's really a supportive other or supportive peer that understands the situation. Maybe they understand the environment that you work in and they also understand the resources that are available to that employee and can refer them on accordingly.

Dr. Friesen: Anything to add Tam?

Dr. Brownlee: It's similar in our organization as well, we call them plus ones where people are able to spend more time to train into the area that they have passion and they want to serve as a resource for their fellow employee. So it's quite similar where they or have access to that training. They have a special badge designation that they could have. But it really is all volunteer raising hands for our, our allies.

Dr. Friesen: And to follow up yet again, Ruth, someone wants more information about mistake Mondays, is that something I can incorporate into a staff meeting?

Dr. Chang: Yes, absolutely. So with one of my teams that I huddle on with every Monday, we do designate a Monday in the month that we call it mistakes Monday. And people are just welcome to bring lessons learned and we talk about it, you know, so we just build it as part of the standing agenda item and, and people really, one is they appreciate having a place safe place to debrief. And it could be minor things or sometimes it can be something pretty major, but really the agreement is it's confidential. We're going to hold the space for each other. There's no judgment, no blame, but what can we learn from each other and what do we want to share so that other people don't have to make the same mistake?

Dr. Friesen: I love that. I think I want to do it around the dinner table with my family. Another place where I think that sometimes we don't talk about our mistakes enough is, is with our kids and being able to, to have leadership at home as well. So we've still got questions in chat. We're going to hopefully get to, give me some reflections if you will. And I'm going to start Tam with you, Janeen, and then Ruth, as we think about that culture of wellbeing, what actions would you have the recipients today think about? You know, it's, it's one thing to say leadership needs to lead, which is absolutely true, but sometimes it also has to happen from the bottom up. What are things that maybe you spend money on don't cost a dime. Things that maybe they could start tomorrow or think about, you know, budgeting and preparing for in the future wide spectrum. But what I'm wanting people to leave with is a feeling that, yeah, you know what, I am tired, I've been anxious, I've been depressed, maybe even burned out, but I have something that I think I can start doing. So let's get started there.

Dr. Brownlee: Absolutely happy to start this, this conversation, first I would say that everybody matters and we spent, I learned this in a conference about three weeks ago where the president of Gallup was speaking as in the, the Gallup polling and does a lot of work on pulsing employees for engagement that on average, you know, the average person globally spends about 85,000 hours of their life at work. That's second only to sleeping. For these high performers that are probably on this call, it's probably closer to 111,000 hours. If we don't introduce from the bigger strategies to the small meaningful programs that foster wellbeing and health, then we are missing out on a great opportunity to make ourselves better and subsequently our families better and our communities better. It can be big, for example, where our organization has made quite a bit of investment on having someone like me where I wake up, you know, every day thinking about how are our people around the globe? What are the things that they need most acutely aftercare, but most importantly, from a prevention standpoint, thinking about our investments with Calm, for example, Calm as an app was probably the most used widely popular app during pandemic. And afterwards because of, you know, three minutes of meditation, 60 seconds of meditation, sleep stories with your kids, you know, where the whole family was able to take apart. And we offer that to our people and their families or a partnership with Thrive Global, which offers so many things, but the resets, if you're not familiar, check it out, 60 seconds. You can create one yourself or use one of the pre-programmed ones and you put in pictures, music sounds, and it just reminds you to breathe really low bar everybody can do a reset and here's a freebie, do it in the beginning of a meeting before you go into, okay, let's talk about the productions and the milestones and those KPIs. Let's just check in, let's just do a reset. Let's set our mind towards a productive, safe, embracing culture or work, you know, meeting that we're about to have and do that, and they're really small things that can be done and works really well. I believe a lot in prevention, it's barter being a family doc, I guess, you know.

So I think as much as possible where you can integrate those prevention types of strategies is really important. And then I think I want to go back to something you, we said in the very beginning, you know, worse comes to towards it's us as employers, you know, that create these environments that people have eventually the stress. So I wouldn't want to put it on the people, you know, in full. Certainly we've got to show up, we've got to be able to have the opportunity to raise our hand and say, I'm not okay. And I think the responsibility as employers is to say, it's okay that you're not okay, how can I help? You know, and then offer the tools prevention in acute crisis and afterwards and people not feel like it's going to affect their ability to keep their job, be promoted, thrive, and contribute personally and professionally in an organization. I'll hand it off to my colleague, she said, Janeen, is going next?

Dr. Friesen: Yeah, that's right, thank you.

Janeen: Yeah, thank you. You know, there are systemic issues that absolutely need to be addressed and I think organizationally at the highest level of leadership there's a lot of work to be done. I have to say though, as a clinician, one place that I can start is helping the person understand their span of control. So yes, this job is really stressful. Yes, this job is really overwhelming or even, yes, you're working three jobs to make ends meet. What in this scenario is within your span of control? What are some small

steps you can take in order to improve your wellness or improve your wellbeing? And I would say that counts for us as leaders too.

There's a study out there that indicates that leaders are actually experienced an increase in emotional intelligence and they're actually taking care of their physical bodies. So if leaders are doing things like taking care of their own wellbeing, exercising for example, getting the sleep that they need, they're going to show up better for their employees and that's going to pay it forward and encourage their employees, take care of themselves. So I do think it's important to focus on our span of control and what we can do despite the hustle to take care of our own wellbeing.

Dr. Friesen: Ruth, what reflections can you share?

Dr. Chang: Well, I'll go back to number one, take your vacation and if you don't have one blocked, go ahead and get some dates on the books. So yeah, you've got to take care of yourselves before you can take care of other people. That's that put your own oxygen mask on first. And then number two is help your teams prioritize the work, right? Not everything can happen all at once. So we really got, as leaders, we really have to think about what is, how do we sequence, how do we prioritize? And then number three, you know, through the pandemic years we made two incredible investments. They were setting up a peer coaching program. And then number two, sending a few of our physicians to become certified coaches so they can be peer coaches and those have just paid off incredibly well. So if you have a little bit of money and some people who are willing invest in the peer coaching, peer support, incredible asset to the whole organization.

Dr. Friesen: I love that. and part of me is just a little surprised, right? That we actually have to train even physicians to be good peer coaches. It is a different skillset, is what I really want to call out with that comment. It's not that it comes easily or naturally and it is something that can be learned and that we can all do better at as well.

Couple questions before I wrap up. And this one really I think is reflecting maybe someone who recognizes that people who kind of had to work and go in through the pandemic didn't really feel appreciated. Are there any studies on those employees who never stopped working through the pandemic to being burned out because they faced the danger and seemed to be unappreciated by those who worked from home or didn't work at all? There was no break for manufacturing workers. And I think one of the reflections that I'll give before I wrap up is I think appreciation and gratitude are just also so important in the workplace in creating that psychological safety appreciation says, I see you, I see what you contributed, and, and don't we all want to be seen and to feel that when we go to work. What would you add to that comment? Or how would you answer that question?

Dr. Brownlee: I haven't seen the studies

Oh, I'm sorry Ruth. Go ahead, please.

Dr. Chang: Yeah, I say I was going to jump in. I haven't seen any specific studies. We did do a systematic, what we call the COVID debrief. And every team took somewhere between 20 minutes to a full hour to answer three questions. And the first question was,

what was the hardest thing about working through COVID? Number two, what did you lose? And then number three is what did you learn? And teams would have incredibly deep conversations around these three questions. And every team across the whole medical group took time to do this. And the feedback was overwhelmingly positive that we just needed that space to reflect and to connect with each other.

Dr. Friesen: Love that. And one last question. Is there any strategy for less hustle guilt to remind ourselves it's okay to not always have to hustle at work, help us enjoy the non-hustle time. We've kind of heard about that, but to your points that you've all made high performers sometimes have anxiety when they're not working. And so again, a learned skill to take some time off, I think, and to be able to let go a little bit and enjoy the fruits of their labors as well. What would you add to that, Tam?

Dr. Brownlee: I think about it as what information high performing athletes take in, in order to optimize their, their performance. I don't know about you all, but I'm, I'm not a high performance athlete by any stretch of the imagination, but I love data and I wear Oura ring as, as an example because I love to know like, how did I sleep last night? You know, how's my heart rate variability? How's my stress? And it provides me input, you know, so I can know I can go hard today, you know, and, and really get maximum benefit, or I should probably not do that run because my sleep was poor or I've got other issues. And I think it's, it's in that, that I feel like I'm not guilty, you know, for taking the time to be able to recover.

Now, we may not have smart wearables that be able to tell us that, but our bodies will tell us, you know, do a check-in with regard to your mood. How does your body feel? How are you interacting with people who you care about? You know, and are you having joy? We don't talk about joy a lot, you know, in the course of work, but I think it's incredibly important, you know, for us to think about joy. Yeah, and purpose. You know, if you're working towards purpose, then you'll find joy in the hustle and you'll also find joy in the period of recovery and harmony. And we allow, we need that, in order to be our best selves.

Dr. Friesen: One of my favorite quotes is by a philosopher named Stevenson, and he says, "to miss the joy is to miss all." And I think that that's really true. So I'm going to wrap up, but before I do, I want to have another poll question out there. We really want to understand how this resonates with all of you.

So just a quick poll before we close and we'll put it up for you. And where are you on the burnout spectrum? So you have five choices to make. Every day is a bad day. I'm exhausted all the time. The majority of my day is spent on task, are either mind-numbingly, dull or overwhelming. It feels like nothing I do makes a difference or is appreciated or I'm doing great, I feel supported in my workplace and I am thriving.

So while you are answering that poll question, I just want to say thank you and I hope that you have found this conversation valuable. Please do know that a culture of well-being that supports psychological safety is an effective business strategy that improves the health of your business. Implementing simple strategies like the ones that you've heard about today, can reduce the harmful effects of stress and burnout in the workplace and build a happier, more engaged workforce.

So some of the things that I heard that I will take from you today, one is that whole concept of recovery that we heard from Tam and translated into take vacations from Ruth. I really love that, and of course we think about that, right? You can't just continually sprint. A marathon isn't a continual sprint, it's actually a pacing and people actually even rest during races or rest between races. And I think that we need to see ourselves kind of as less of a machine and as a human beings we are and that we need recovery.

Janeen, I love what you said about try it out with an annual mental health check-in. What a fantastic idea. You know what, we go in, we get our annual physicals, we get our vital signs taken. Sometimes we're even asked about our mental health during those, but how fabulous to actually just check in and see where we are and maybe what we want to work on together as we go forward. Prioritizing the work to be done. We can't do everything all at once, that's why we have time so that we can, we can pace it all out, but choosing what we do, and you know what, sometimes it's okay to let things fall away and then appreciation and gratitude.

So the results of the poll, let's take a look together. We've got some work to do even on ourselves. And I think as leaders, we need to think about how we're showing up. I'm exhausted all the time. Is second only to my tasks are mind-numbingly dull or overwhelming. These are addressable. And I think part of it goes back to Janeen's advice, to think about our own locus of control and, and thinking about how we're exhausted and maybe what is it that we can do within there, those mind numbingly dull or overwhelming problems. I would just say again, ask for help. That has also been a theme that we've heard through this. If you are overwhelmed, ask for help. It's amazing how even if nothing changes, the act of asking in and of itself just gives such a sense of relief. Sometimes it's nothing that I do makes a difference or is appreciated. And almost 40% of you though, who answered 4 out of 10 are doing great. And so help others if you're in that spot. I think that we have an obligation not only to ourselves, to our loved ones and to others that we work with as well when it comes to figuring this out a little bit and bringing that culture of harmony to the workplace.

So thank you to the esteemed panel for joining me in today's discussion. And really thanks to all of you listening. Please join us again next semester. It's going to be later this summer. We are thrilled to be discussing women's health and some of the surprising and unique barriers women face to prioritizing their own health, which was only exacerbated during the pandemic and its aftermath. And while this is not only an employer's problem to solve, there are tangible, tactical solutions employers can adapt today to help address health disparities and allow their entire female workforce to thrive. You're not going to want to miss this discussion. And as we talked about earlier, please visit the Health Views for Business page to register for this series. We're going to keep you updated on the dates and the details, and we also have that virtual booth for you.

So there should be a link to the right of your screen, click that it's going to take you to a wealth of additional mental health resources. And then finally, we'd appreciate if you take a minute to complete our very short three-question survey that's going to appear on your screen as soon as I sign off. We read every comment and we use your feedback to

help inform our future selection of topics and to make it better. So thank you again for attending today and we hope that you'll join us again next time.

End of: Health Views Webinar - Burnout
Video Duration: 0:59:13