Employee Well-being: A Comprehensive Approach
Enhancing the Employee Experience and Business Outcomes
Definitions of Employee Well-being

- Employee well-being -- the area of total well-being affected by work and amenable to workplace initiatives.

- Includes all life area -- work, relationships, community environment, physical health, emotional/mental health, financial health, spiritual health.
Definitions of Employee Well-being

Five essential elements that transcend culture and location:

- Purpose
- Social
- Financial
- Community
- Physical

(Gallup-Healthways Well-Being 5)
Definitions of Employee Well-being

Work & Well-being Research
- Advancement, managerial and physical workplace considerations
- Physical/psychological health

Mercer Report
- Sleep
- Resilience
What Does the Research Tell Us? Organizational Culture/Climate

To build a healthy culture that promotes well-being:

- Determine and actualize core values
- Provide opportunities to refresh and recharge
- Create physical space where people can do their best work
- Encourage time off
- Promote professional development
What Does the Research Tell Us?
Organizational Culture/Climate

Critical for business leaders to take an active role in influencing employees’ well-being:

- Identify how individual and family well-being can positively impact the organization
- Demonstrate a total commitment to well-being
- Communicate a clear definition of what well-being means to the organization
- Become a role model for healthy behaviors
- Measure the impact on business outcomes
What Does the Research Tell Us?
Organizational Culture/Climate

ROI estimates are substantial for companies that invest in employee well-being:

- $6.00 in healthcare savings for every dollar invested (single employer cardiac intervention)
- $2.71 (Johnson & Johnson)
- $2.30 (PwC)
- $1.50 (Rand Wellness Programs Study)

Value on Investment (VOI) - includes both the financial gains plus abstract benefits
Components that Align with the Research: Org Culture/Climate

Climate of well-being where:

- Links between organizational success and well-being are articulated
- Well-being efforts aligned with organizational objectives, values, and priorities
- Long-term commitment to employee well-being
- Champions identified with well-being as sole focus
- Employees at all levels are engaged
- Barriers to well-being are acknowledged -- solutions designed to meet business and personal needs
Components that Align with the Research: Org Culture/Climate

Supportive Work Environment/Culture where employees have:

- Meaningful work that recognizes them as unique contributors
- Positive relationships with supervisors and colleagues
- Opportunities for career advancement and professional development/growth
- Job satisfaction and a sense of purpose
- A safe physical environment that enhances productivity
Components that Align with the Research: Org Culture/Climate

Supportive Supervisors responsible for:

- Promoting and supporting employee well-being
- Engaging in and being a role model with their own well-being behaviors
- Supporting employees in their work and personal lives
- Focusing on performance/outcomes rather than face time

Supervisors and senior leaders are rewarded for support of well-being
What Does the Research Tell Us?
Physical Health

- Health status affects productivity and health care costs
- Employer health promotion programs can mitigate risk factors
  - Lower health care expenditures
  - Improve business outcomes -- less absenteeism, greater engagement, higher retention, viewed as employer of choice
What Does the Research Tell Us?

Mental Health

- Mental health problems:
  - Reduce employee well-being
  - Quality of life
  - Productivity at work

- Promote mental health:
  - Job conditions modified to reduce work demands + work-to-family conflict

“Decision authority” increases job satisfaction + mental health, especially for older workers
Components that Align with the Research: Physical and Mental Health

- Coverage for mental and behavioral health assessments/treatment and mental health supports
- Health risk assessments/screenings/coaching and disease management programs
- Support groups, group fitness activities and opportunities to join with colleagues around well-being events
- Nutrition counseling including healthy foods at work
- Programs for substance abuse counseling, smoking cessation programs/monitoring and weight loss
Components that Align with the Research: Physical and Mental Health

- Employee Assistance/ Work-Life Programs offering resources and referrals
- Childcare referrals, on-site centers and back-up care
- Eldercare supports, resources and information
- Educational information/supports for children of all ages including college counseling
- Supports for parents advocating for children with special healthcare needs
What Does the Research Tell Us? Financial Health

- Money, work and the economy: most common sources of financial stress that impact employee well-being

- Research indicates that access to financial education programs:
  - Lowers financial stress
  - Reduces absenteeism
  - Increases productivity/loyalty
Components that Align with the Research: Financial Well-being

- Financial education seminars/counseling
- Adequate compensation and regular performance reviews
- Job security transparency
- Retirement and other saving plans (older workers)
- Assistance with student debt (younger workers)
What Does the Research Tell Us? Flexibility/Flexible Work Options

- Work, Family & Health Network (WFHN): examined how both supportive supervisors and employee control over their work impacts employee well-being.

- Organizational intervention (STAR) resulted in:
  - Reduced burnout, perceived stress, and psychological distress
  - Increased job satisfaction/likelihood to stay with employer over a three-year period
What Does the Research Tell Us? Flexibility/Flexible Work Options

- Participants in ROWE, a BestBuy intervention of team-level flexibility:
  - Increased the odds of quitting smoking, smoked less, reduced excessive drinking and had more time for healthy meals
  - Slept almost an extra hour each night, exercised more, visited the doctor when ill, stayed home when sick
Components that Align with the Research: Flexibility/Flexible Work Options

- Craft a work schedule that fits best with work style and job tasks
- Match job requirements/workload with lifestyle needs
- Have predictable schedules that can reduce stress
- Adjust working time to meet personal needs – self-care, medical/mental health appointments, and family care

Training on effectively working flexibly/managing flexible workers and teams
What Does the Research Tell Us? Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness

Stress: 75% of U.S. employers say it’s the top health and productivity concern

- 36% of employees are stressed, highly stressed or extremely stressed
- 39% reporting moderate stress
- More stress = poorer sleep quality, more fatigue, lower productivity
What Does the Research Tell Us?  
Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness

- Employees response to stress is key - determines whether stress enhances or detracts from performance and well-being
- Positive self-care, particularly physical exercise supports resilience and enhances coping skills
- Mindfulness mediation can mitigate employee stress -- reduce anxiety (5-10%), depression (10-20%) and pain
What Does the Research Tell Us? Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness

- Strategic renewal — daytime workouts, short afternoon naps, longer sleep hours, more time away from the office and longer, more frequent vacations:
  - Boosts productivity, job performance and health
- Recovery time is critical for successful personal and performance outcomes
  - Lack of recovery time costs companies $62 billion/year in lost productivity
What Does the Research Tell Us? 
Sleep

- Sleep quantity/quality critical for productivity, physical health, and psychological well-being
- 40% of Americans sleep less than the recommended 7-9 hours/night
- Workplace interventions can improve sleep
  - Employees with family-supportive supervisors + control over their work time = improved sleep quantity/quality
Components that Align with the Research:
Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness/Sleep

Training, seminars and workshops on:
- What the organization looks like when everyone lives the core values of well-being
- The importance of resilience and recovery time
- Healthy behaviors and stress management/mindfulness techniques

Worksite spaces that encourage connections and conversations

Time-off for recovery/stress-reduction/vacation/illness
What Does the Research Tell Us? Spiritual Well-being

Various perspectives on the meaning of spirituality in organizations:

- Treating colleagues with respect
- Being a responsible corporate citizen
- Integrating spiritual activities into the workplace
What Does the Research Tell Us?

Spiritual Well-being

- Spiritual well-being: Results in higher job satisfaction even in difficult and demanding situations:
  - Can cushion the impact of challenging workplace events

- Spirituality promotes mental well-being, reduces stress and exhaustion
Components that Align with the Research: Spiritual Well-being

Encourage opportunities to:

- Provide meaningful and purposeful work
- Feel connected with like others
- Share one’s spiritual side, when appropriate

Question: Is your organization including spiritual well-being as a component of their employee well-being efforts?
What Does the Research Tell Us?
Volunteering/Philanthropy

Research:
- Volunteers score much higher on emotional well-being/personal independence/overall life satisfaction
- Volunteering and days of service improve mental/physical health and well-being
What Does the Research Tell Us? Volunteering/Philanthropy

Survey says:

- >1,000 U.S. employees -- 61% said community service improves their sense of well-being and effectiveness at work
- >3,000 adults -- majority reported feeling mentally and physically healthier after a volunteer experience
Components that Align with the Research: Volunteering/Philanthropy

- Offer opportunities to volunteer in the community including employer-sponsored events/activities
What Does the Research Tell Us?

Technology

- Close to 1/3 of employees report that technology contributes to stress on the job
- More frequent use of technology is associated with:
  - Greater workload
  - Longer work hours
  - Increased pace of work demands
  - Interference in employees' personal lives
What Does the Research Tell Us?  
Technology

- Almost 70% of employees report that technology use allows them to be more productive
- Using technology to connect with family/friends helps employees to better manage stress at work
- Health-related apps and devices: 23% of full-time workers say that mobile technology supports their wellness efforts (apps for calorie counting, healthy recipes, and fitness tracking etc.)
- Question? Anyone use an app for wellness tracking?
Components that Align with the Research: Technology

- Provide clear guidelines on availability, workload and work goals with regular feedback
- Give employees explicit permission to disconnect during off hours
- Establish a protocol for urgent or emergency situations
- Encourage team-level communications on workload/work plans
- Determine how to best accomplish individual/team goals with an eye toward well-being
THANK YOU!

For additional information, please visit www.bc.edu/cwf or contact cwf@bc.edu