

# Job Flexibility and Other Traits of Healthy Workplaces

Oregon Institute for Occupational Health Sciences &  
Oregon Healthy Workforce Center 2022 Spring  
Symposium

Cristina Banks, PhD

Interdisciplinary Center for Healthy Workplaces

# Microsoft 2021 Work Trends Index

- 30,000 respondents in 31 countries and analyses of trillions of productivity and labor signals across MS365 and LinkedIn
- *“Flexible work is here to stay, and the talent landscape has fundamentally shifted.”*
- Selected work trends:
  - Leaders are out of touch with employees and need a wake-up call
  - High productivity is masking an exhausted workforce
  - Gen Zs are at risk and will need to be re-energized
- Recommended way forward (among others):
  - Rethink employee experience to compete for the best and most diverse talent

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# Microsoft 2022 Work Trends Index

- 31,000 respondents in 31 countries (follow-up to 2021 survey)
- *“One thing is clear: We’re not the same people that went home to work in early 2020.”*
- Selected work trends:
  - Employees have a new “worth it” equation
  - Managers feel wedged between leadership and employee expectations
  - Flexible work doesn’t have to mean “always on.”
- Recommended way forward (among others):
  - Prioritizing health and well-being over work means giving people agency to do their best work
  - Empower managers to be the culture keepers and create new practices for sustainable flexible work

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# Consequences of the Pandemic

- A “thriving workforce” is a win–win for both workers and business
- Why people are leaving: *a better work experience*

*“There’s no erasing the lived experience and lasting impact of the past two years. Empowering managers to adapt to new employee expectations helps set businesses up for long-term success.”*

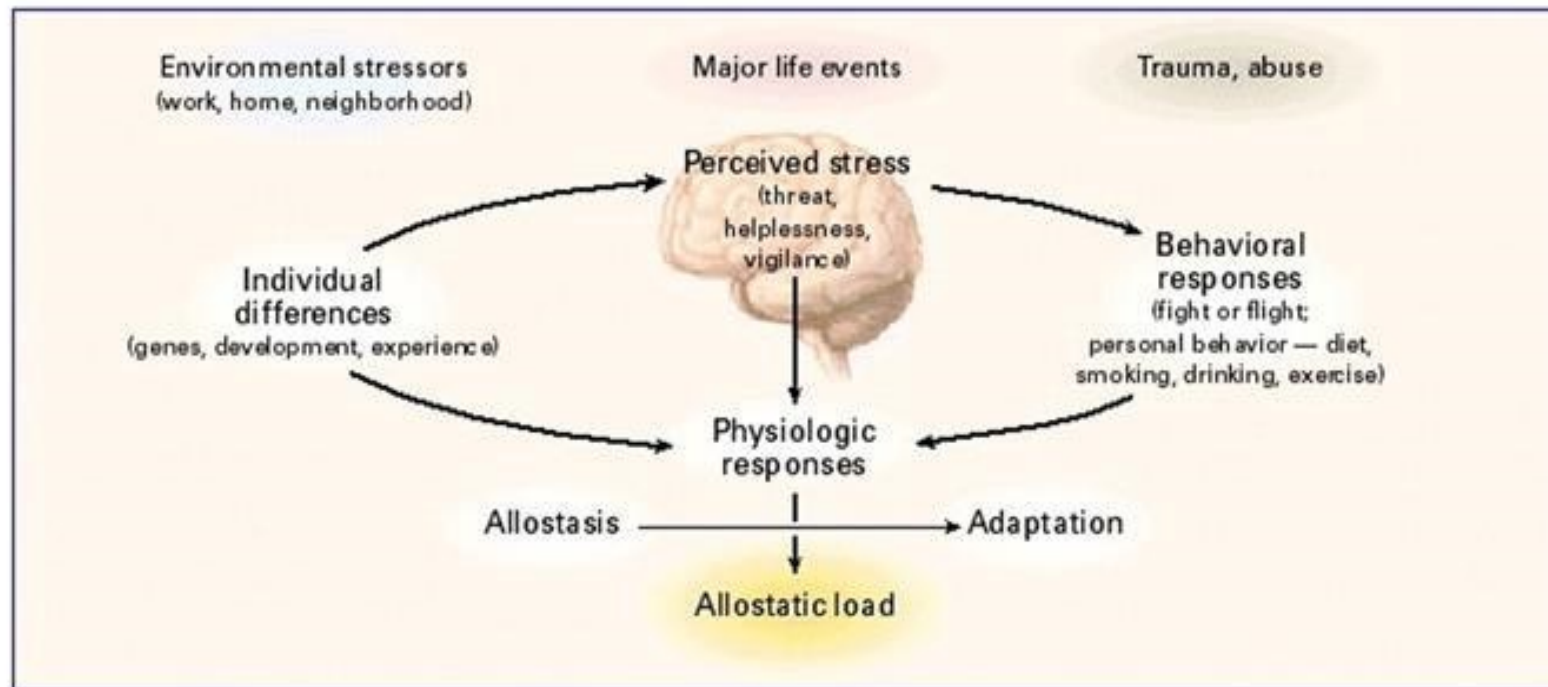
Jared Spataro, CVP, Modern Work, Microsoft

Work experience is inherently both physical and psychological in nature.



One's physiologic response to physical and psychological factors creates the perceived quality of work experience.

## Allostasis



NEJM 238: 171, 1998

# What's going on inside the body?

Outcome	Regulatory Factors	Target
Sleep	Light hitting receptors on the retina, releasing glutamate in the brain	Melatonin
Sensorimotor & cognitive processing	Stimulation of sensorimotor and cognitive areas of the cortex	Acetylcholine
Pleasure, desire, social engagement	Experience of positive valence factors which stimulate rewarding and reinforcing behaviors	Dopamine
Memory, judgment, decision-making	Stimulation of the hippocampus, amygdala, neocortex, and prefrontal cortex	Acetylcholine, Glutamate, Epinephrine, Opioid peptides
Affiliation, attachment, & communication	Stimulation of the hypothalamus which increases eye contact, trust, social support, and interpretation of facial expressions	Oxytocin
<i>Fear, anxiety, frustration, &amp; loss</i>	<i>Experience of negative valence factors which trigger sympathetic nervous system resulting in stress responses, mood disorders, immune dysfunction, dementia risk</i>	<i>Cortisol Epinephrine</i>



# Implications

- Build workplaces that introduce health-promoting qualities to stimulate “good” physiologic responses
- Avoid building workplaces or remove qualities that introduce threats to workplace “healthiness”
- When we do, we get more releases of desired biochemicals and physiologic adaptation toward greater health and well-being



# 7 Basic Human Needs Active in the Workplace



Autonomy  
Belonging  
Competence/Mastery  
Fairness  
Meaningful Work  
Safety  
Positive Emotions

Adobe Stock | #113728431

*What set of workplace design qualities create the opportunity for need satisfaction?*

## 7 Workplace Design Qualities

- Connection
- Comfort
- Equity
- Flexibility
- Predictability
- Security
- Privacy

# Design Qualities Defined

Design Quality	Definition
Connection	An emotional bond with others in the workplace and a feeling of belonging in the organization.
Comfort	Feeling physically and psychologically at ease and have a sense of control over the environment to meet personal needs
Equity	Has access to resources and spaces in a manner that generates a feeling of respect and fair treatment
Flexibility	Can make choices with respect to how, what, where, when, and with whom one works, and space allows for a wide range of work arrangements to match personal requirements
Predictability	Has reliable and consistent access to resources, equipment, spaces, and people as needed
Security	Feeling physically and psychologically free from threats, hazards, harassment, and other forms of harm
Privacy	Can perform confidential, private and personal activities in a space without observation, and has control over unwanted interruptions or distractions

*If you want more **Autonomy**, build more **Flexibility** and **Predictability** into the workplace.*

- More predictable work schedule
- Self-managed sharing of work schedules
- Choice of work days in/out of worksite
- Choice of work/non-work hours
- Choice of work location
- Knowing where and when events or meetings will be held in advance & for how long
- Knowing one can obtain the resources and equipment when needed

# *If you want more **Belonging**, build more **Connection** and **Equity** into the workplace.*

- Neighborhoods in the office
- More time and space for socializing
- Curating who comes to the worksite and when
- Insurance coverage and benefits to all employees
- Visual displays of organizational values and culture
- Equitable ownership of space
- Open access to resources, benefits, and amenities
- Inclusion in company communications and meetings
- More time and space for professional networking and relationship-building

# *If you want more **Competence**, build more **Flexibility**, **Predictability**, and **Connection** into the workplace.*

- Access to leadership and management as needed
- Reliable WIFI and electronic tools
- Organized mentoring, coaching, training, and informal learning opportunities
- Access to work spaces and resources as needed
- Access to assistance as needed
- Access to experts outside of professional network
- Freedom from distractions, excessive noise, uncomfortable indoor quality, and low-value tasks
- Provided equipment and tools as needed.

# *If you want more **Fairness**, build more **Equity** and **Connection** into the workplace.*

- Equal access to meetings, events, and opportunities as appropriate
- Equal access to resources, services, amenities afforded all employees
- Creation of common-interest groups and neighborhoods
- Ownership of space to establish one's identity and personalization
- Equal representation in economic decisions related to work
- Objective, non-biased and evidence-based decision-making for hiring, promotions, pay, performance evaluation, training, and benefits
- Enforcement of anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies

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- Reasonable workloads
- Reasonable staffing



*If you want more **Meaningfulness**, build more **Equity** and **Connection** into the workplace.*

- Work redesign, job crafting
- Participation in decision-making of important matters
- Employee involvement in company-sponsored initiatives
- Tying employee performance goals and job duties to business strategic goals
- Equal access to information regarding company mission, vision, and impact
- Given tasks of significance
- Rewarding and recognizing employee contributions frequently and without competition
- Visibility to others in the company as a contributor

# *If you want more **Safety**, build more **Comfort, Privacy, and Security** into the workplace.*

- Clear and enforced policies supporting employee health and safety
- Clear communication and enforcement of employment and OSH legal protections
- Zero retaliation by management for employee reports of safety and health deficiencies
- A culture of psychological safety and care for employee health and well-being
- Fair wages and compensation practices consistent with all wage & hour laws
- Job security
- IEQ designed to eliminate spread of infectious disease and to promote immunity from illness and disease

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*If you want more **Positive Emotions**, build more **Comfort, Connection, and Equity** into the workplace.*

- Fair and sufficient rest breaks, meal breaks, relaxation for cognitive and physical recovery, consistently provided
- Physical movement and postural variation within the workday
- Ergonomic furniture and equipment
- Access to nature and biophilia
- Space and time for socializing and forming social bonds
- Freedom from all threats and hazards
- Work in environments that promote positive emotions

# Addressing the challenges of Burnout

- **KEY:** The degree of match between an individual employee and job conditions
- “Fit” conditions:
  - Sustainable workload
  - Choice and control
  - Recognition and reward
  - Supportive work community
  - Fairness, respect, and social justice
  - Clear values and meaningful work

# THE

Managing People's  
Relationships with Their Jobs

# BURNOUT

Christina Maslach  
and Michael P. Leiter

# CHALLENGE

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# Building Competitive Advantage through Healthy Workplaces

- Introducing workplace elements that create a great work experience pays off in important individual and organizational outcomes.
- The more healthy elements introduced and coordinated, the more attractive the organization.
- Healthy workplace elements make it easier for employees to do their work in the time scheduled and to do it to their desired level of performance.
- A holistic approach to healthy workplace ensures continuous support for employee health and well-being.
- Intangible benefit that is difficult to copy by competitors.

# We can thrive.

*"The state of **positive mental, physical, and social functioning** in which workers' experiences of their work and working conditions **enable them to thrive in their overall lives**, contributing to their **ability to achieve their full potential in their work, home, and community.**"*

Peters, S.E., Sorensen, G., Katz, J.N., Gundersen, D.A., & Wagner, G.R. (2021). Thriving from work: Conceptualization and measurement. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18, 7196.  
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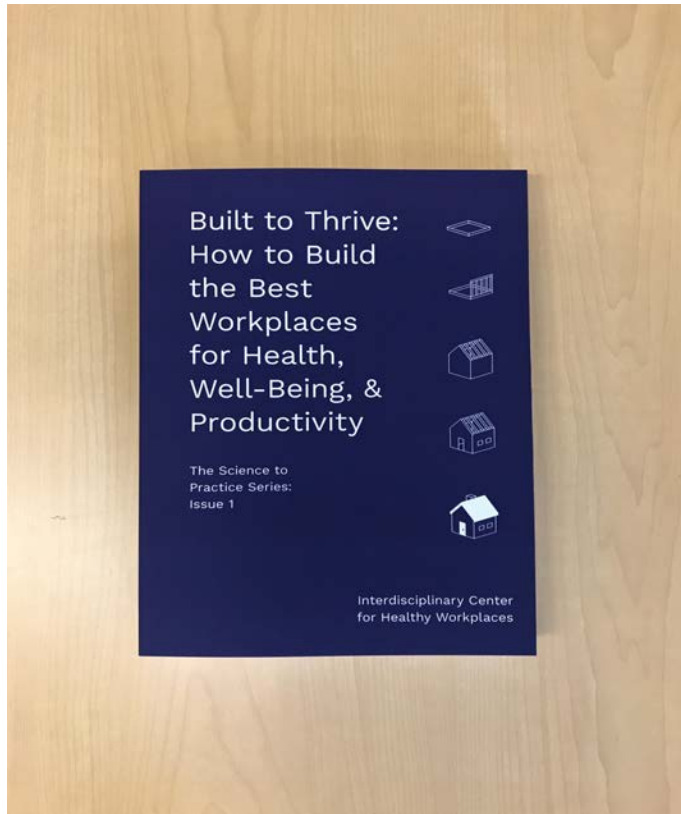
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# THANK YOU

[cbanks@berkeley.edu](mailto:cbanks@berkeley.edu)

[www.healthyworkplaces.berkeley.edu](http://www.healthyworkplaces.berkeley.edu)



***Built to Thrive: How to Build the Best Workplaces for Health, Well-Being, and Productivity. ICHW, September 2019.***

<https://berkeleycoeh.catalog.instructure.com/browse/ichw/courses/built-to-thrive-book-and-community>

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