

Covid-19 and the 'New' Norm: Adapting to Work and Life

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THIS SESSION

- Adapting to the 'New' Norm
 - Working from home
 - Work-life balance
 - Job security & uncertainty

LIFE, WORK AND CHANGE

➤ **Change is constant – can ease into it over time or have to respond at once**

- Transformational change: Organic to the organisation, gradual, but continuous
- Incremental change: Ongoing change organisations need to adapt to their environment
- Radical change: Assess all parts of an organisation to determine what needs to change

✓ **.....is a stressor**

Cao et al., 2000; Ely & Meyerson, 2000

I try to take just
one day at a time....



but lately several days
have attacked me at once.

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FEELING OVERWHELMED

- Cannot control what is happening in our life
- Challenges in balancing the work-life interface
- Unable to cope with different situations
- Feeling completely helpless
- Not seeing a way forward



WORKING FROM HOME

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BENEFITS

- Removes daily commute
- Assists with managing work-life balance
- Increases job satisfaction
- Increases employee satisfaction
- Encourages different ways of working
- Can increase productivity



Bloom et al. 2015

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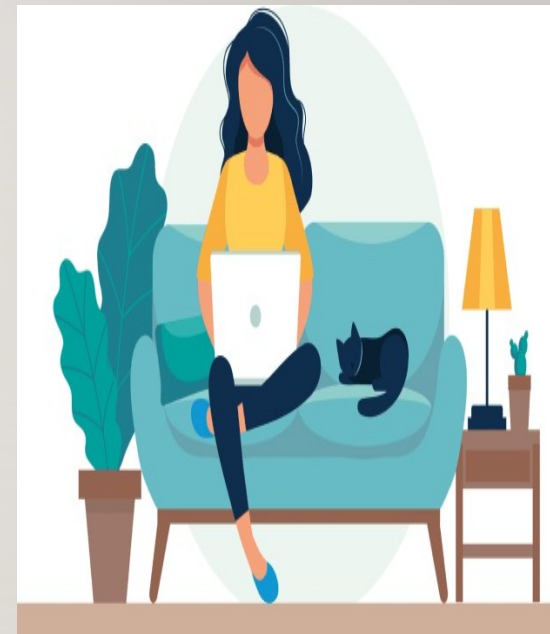


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CHALLENGES

- Can lead to presenteeism
- Work space may not be ideal - leading to MSDs
- Can reduce creativity and innovation
 - Fewer in person interactions
- Social isolation
 - Loneliness - can lead to mental ill health - anxiety, depression



Bloom, 2020; Gorlick, 2020; Kinman et al., 2020

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CHALLENGES

- Can reduce productivity
 - Covid-19 specific: children, space, privacy and choice
- Managing caring responsibilities
 - Disruption at work due to childcare
 - Fitting work around childcare obligations
- Staying motivated
- Working contracted hours



Bloom, 2020; Gorlick, 2020; ONS, 2020

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WORK-LIFE BALANCE (WLB)

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WHAT DO WE MEAN?

“Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. It is achieved when an individual’s right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society.”

The Work Foundation

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING WLB

- Employers do not adequately and transparently communicate about work-life balance
- Employers are pursuing inappropriate work-life balance arrangements
- High levels of unmet demand for some work-life balance options that go beyond the current 'family friendly' approach
- Managers act as barriers to workers achieving appropriate work-life balance
- Pressure on resources hinders people from getting a work-life balance

Visser & Williams, 2006

WHY IS BALANCING WORK WITH LIFE IMPORTANT?

- Important to separate work from life
- Has health implications
- Well-being is maintained and improved through health-related behaviours
 - Adequate levels of sleep and exercise
 - Ensuring more balance to life
- Subjective well-being benefits individuals
 - Better coping
 - Lower stress



Lyubomirsky et al., 2005



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WORK AND LIFE

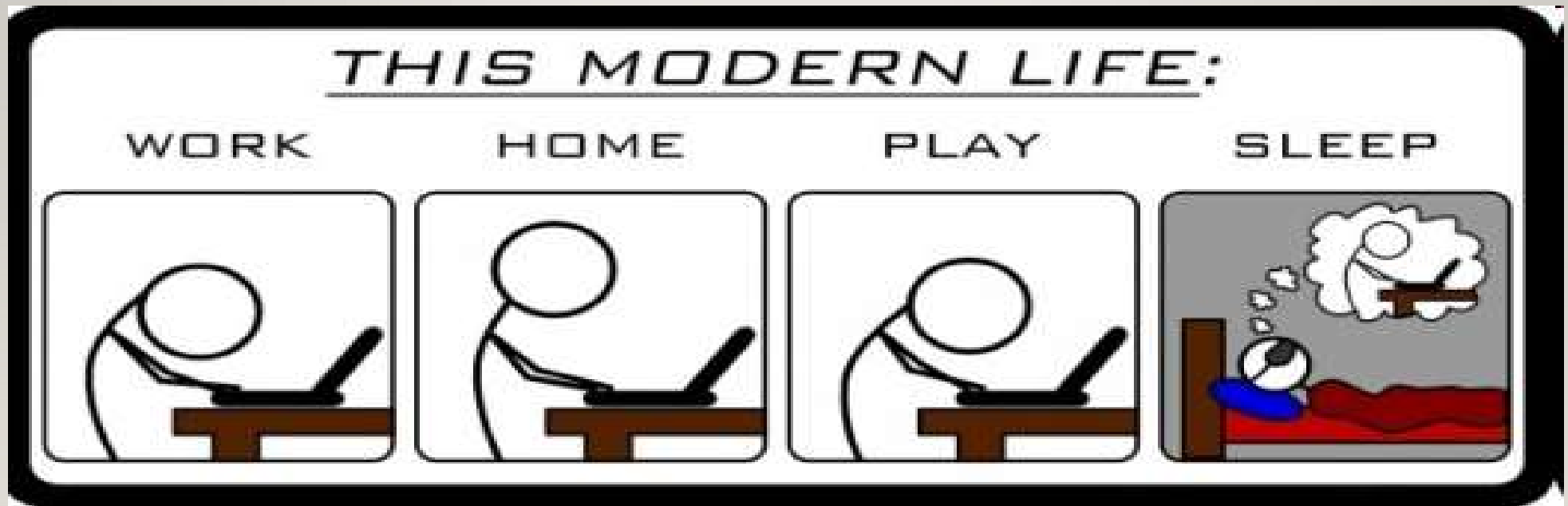


- Balancing work and family tasks can put additional stress on women
- Women continue to have primary responsibility for childcare and eldercare
- Work-life imbalance - family and work demands collide ➡ lead to stress ➡ physical health problems
 - Poor appetite
 - Lack of sleep
 - Increase in blood pressure
 - Fatigue
 - Increased susceptibility to infection
 - Mental health problems such as burnout and depression

Niosh, 2013

LIFE-WORK INTEGRATION, OR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work and Life combined – so seek to integrate not balance



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JOB SECURITY & UNCERTAINTY

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COVID-19 AND THE ECONOMY

- Uncertainty of labour market
- Businesses managing day-to-day – future planning tentative or on hold
- Workers unsure of having a job, if or how role will change
- Policymakers unable to plan with certainty on support required for organisations and workers
- Global recession expected – some economies have started to decline
- Structural inequalities among certain groups – more likely to be adversely affected: ethnic groups; persons with disabilities and health conditions; women; carers, single parents; low income/or have low socio-economic status; migrants including asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented immigrants

Florisson et al., 2020

INSECURE WORK

- Unstable hours including zero hour contracts
- Part-time work
- Short-term contracts
- Low wages
- Insufficient time off
- Limited training opportunities
- No union engagement or collective bargaining
- High risk of redundancy

Florisson et al., 2020

PSYCHOSOCIAL AND HEALTH EFFECTS

- Increase in blood pressure levels
- Increase in cholesterol conditions
- Increase mental ill health (long-lasting)
- Increase depression
- Decrease well-being

Bernhard-Oettel et al., 2011; Ferrie et al., 1998; Forbes & Krueger, 2019; Meltzer et al., 2010

ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORM

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DEFINING WELL-BEING AT WORK

‘Workplace wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organisation. The aim of measures for workplace well-being is to complement OSH measures to make sure workers are safe, healthy, satisfied and engaged at work. Workers’ well-being is a key factor in determining an organisation’s long-term effectiveness. Many studies show a direct link between productivity levels and the general health and well-being of the workforce’

ILO, 2009

WELL-BEING AND WORK

- Work is good for people
- Good work is even better for people
- Work improves health and coping mechanisms
- Individuals enjoy their work
- Work satisfaction could positively influence life satisfaction
- Well-being contributes to better mental and physical health

Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Rice, Near & Hunt, 1980; Waddell & Burton, 2006

WELL-BEING AND WORK

- Work is important in maintaining well-being
- Workers need support
- Workers enjoy what they do
- Job satisfaction could lead to improved productivity and performance
- When workers are healthy and maintain their well-being, regardless of age, both individuals and organisations benefit.

Diener & Seligman, 2004; Gervais & Millea, 2013

THE PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE



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MANAGING THE 'NEW' NORM

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CONSERVING RESOURCES

- ✓ Everyone needs a sufficient supply of resources to perform responsibilities at work and home
- Resource loss impacts significantly more than resource gain (adversely – much greater effect)
 - Object resources (e.g., car, tools for work), condition resources (e.g., employment, tenure, seniority), personal resources (e.g., key skills and personal traits such as self-efficacy and optimism), and energy resources (e.g., credit, knowledge, money)
- Individuals must invest resources to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources
 - Using savings to pay for lost income; increasingly prepare for a tough business environment, i.e. skills and confidence resources
- Gaining more resource becomes increasingly more important when loss of resource occurs
 - Those with few resources benefit greatly when gain more resources
- Individuals with stretched or no resources become defensive to preserve the self - aggressive, irrational

Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018

CAN CRAFT JOB

- Take control of certain features of job to avoid negative consequences, e.g., alienation from work
- Obtain a more positive sense of self that others can support
- Connect with others
 - ✓ to experience enhanced meaning of work and a positive work identity
- Restore psychological well-being
- Work healthily and enhance motivation
- Match challenging demands and job resources to individual need

Demerouti, 2014; Mattarelli & Tagliaventi, 2012; Petrou et al., 2012; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001

CRAFTING YOUR JOB

- ✓ Are there any aspects of your job that is not adding value to what you do and to your organisation?
- ✓ Have you devised ways to improve how you do a task, but are hesitant to implement it?
- ✓ Are there any historic relationships that do not provide you with the required level of support to effectively do your job?

INVEST IN SELF CARE

- Adequate and quality sleep
- Physical activity
- Healthy nutrition
- Relaxation (Ruminating)
- Socialising
- Raise awareness of and practice self-compassion



THANK YOU!

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