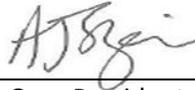


SUBJECT	MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES FOR FACULTY & STAFF
MEETING DATE	APRIL 2, 2019

Forwarded on the Recommendation of the President

**APPROVED FOR
SUBMISSION**



for Santa J. Ono, President and Vice-Chancellor

FOR INFORMATION

Report Date	March 13, 2019
--------------------	----------------

Presented By Barbara Meens Thistle, Vice-President Human Resources
Michelle Berner, Managing Director, Total Compensation and Wellbeing
Natasha Malloff, Director, Health & Wellbeing & Benefits

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

UBC recognizes the foundational importance of wellbeing to our success, and we support our people by making wellbeing a priority. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the People, Community & International Committee (“Committee”) with information on mental health and resilience programs and services provided to Faculty and Staff.

UBC’s strategic plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century*, outlines our aspiration to lead globally and locally in wellbeing across our campuses and communities. That commitment is evidenced by UBC’s adoption of the Okanagan Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges, which calls on us to embed wellbeing in everyday practices, policies, and procedures, and to share learning locally and globally. We are activating this commitment through UBC Wellbeing.

UBC Wellbeing articulates five priority areas: Physical Activity and Sedentary Behavior; Built and Natural Environments; Food and Nutrition; Social Connection; and, Mental Health and Resilience. The Vice-President, Human Resources (HR), Vice-President Students, and UBC Okanagan portfolios partner to activate all five priority areas.

In the realm of workplace mental health supports for faculty and staff and aligning with the UBC Wellbeing *Mental Health & Resilience* priority area, UBC HR is focusing on: (1) enhancing resources, (2) enabling leaders to take action, (3) evaluating programs, (4) enhancing mental health literacy, (5) recognizing excellence, and (6) innovating. These areas of focus are described below with an outline of priorities for the near future.

[1] Enhancing Resources

Programs, services, and resource offerings have been expanded, and access has been improved. Digital platforms are being leveraged wherever possible.

- Mindfulness Program.** The 30 Day Online *Mindfulness Challenge* was first made available to UBC’s staff and faculty in 2016, and in 2018 it began to be offered at no cost. Access is now enhanced even further with flexible start dates that allow participants to begin the program in any week, as opposed to the previous approach of a bi-annual intake. In 2018, participation in the mindfulness challenge increased over the previous year by 40% at the Vancouver campus, and by 20% at UBC-Okanagan.

- **Healthy Workplace Initiatives Program (HWIP).** Established in 2008 following the launch of UBC’s Focus on People, HWIP provides start-up funding to faculties, departments, and units that are interested in promoting workplace wellbeing locally. In 2018, 48 initiatives received funding, and seven of these were directly related to mental health. Eight of the initiatives were for work units in remote locations, such as the Alex Fraser Research Forest in Williams Lake.
- **Not Myself Today®.** Since 2015, UBC has participated in the *Not Myself Today®* workplace mental health campaign, incorporating it as part of our annual *Thrive Week* for mental health. This is an evidence-informed approach that utilizes practical resources, activities, and tools to help reduce stigma around mental health. The program creates opportunities for safe and supportive workplace dialogue, and raises awareness and understanding of mental health. In 2018, we saw a 33% increase in the number of departments participating in the campaign, with over 1,800 people participating across UBC’s campuses/sites.
- **Enhanced Benefit Coverage for Psychological Services.** In 2017 UBC significantly reduced challenges for staff/faculty accessing psychological services through targeted changes to the extended health benefit plan. One change made was to expand benefit coverage to include Registered Clinical Counsellors, where previously coverage was limited to Psychologists and Social Workers, which were sometimes difficult to access due to long waitlists. Another change is that benefit coverage for psychological services has been increased from \$1,200 to \$2,500 per year, and reimbursement has been increased from 80% to 100%. Finally, the previous requirement for a physician’s note in order to receive benefit plan coverage has been eliminated. Utilization of this benefit has increased significantly since these changes were made, indicating that much sought after psychological health services for faculty and staff and their dependents are being increasingly accessed.

[2] Enabling Leaders to Take Action

We are focusing on leaders’ awareness and involvement, as we recognize the important role of managers and people leaders in supporting wellbeing in the workplace. Leaders are uniquely positioned to potentially identify mental health concerns early, and to take supportive action.

- **The Working Mind Training.** This is an evidence-based, solution-focused workplace training program aimed at increasing mental health literacy for managers and people leaders; promoting mental health; and reducing stigma in a workplace setting. Developed and offered by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and its certified facilitators, it was introduced at UBC-Vancouver in 2018, and 47 managers and people leaders have been trained and certified. The training is available annually and on-demand.
- **Leaders Are Taking Action.** In the past year, 48 directors, deans, or heads supported *Healthy Workplace Initiative Program* applications from their units. Another 51 leaders requested on-demand workplace health promotion workshops or educational training programs for their staff/faculty.

[3] Evaluating Programs

We are developing a holistic and integrated approach to the evaluation of outcomes of our workplace health promotion and workplace wellbeing efforts. This will help us to determine the effectiveness of programming, identify opportunities for improvement, and enable UBC to be responsive to the needs of our faculty, staff and organization through evidence- and data-driven decision-making.

- **Evaluation Framework.** In 2018, we created a workplace health promotion evaluation framework and will regularly assess individual progress and organizational-level systems shifts. Program metrics are aligned with the workplace health promotion evaluation logic models in the evaluation framework.
- **Standardized Assessment Questions.** We designed and implemented a standard question set in all program surveys in order to assess participants' understanding of content, confidence in their own progress, and overall value of the programs from a participant point of view.

[4] Enhancing Mental Health Literacy (MHL)

We are moving beyond awareness building, toward increasing mental health literacy by addressing its components: understanding how to obtain and maintain positive mental health, knowledge of mental disorders and their treatments; decreasing stigma, and enhancing help-seeking efficacies. ¹ Examples of the work being done in MHL include:

- **Focusing Thrive Week on Mental Health Literacy.** In 2018, we aligned *Thrive* week's program principles with mental health literacy. Evidence-based strategies to foster and maintain mental health were incorporated into *Thrive* messaging and activities through the "*Thrive 5*" components: 1) moving regularly; 2) sleeping soundly; 3) eating to feel nourished; 4) helping others, and 5) connecting socially.
- **Mental Health First Aid Training.** Introduced at UBC in 2006 through the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), offered annually and on-demand, this evidence-based workshop aims to improve mental health literacy by providing the skills and knowledge to help better manage potential or developing mental health problems in the self, a family member, a friend, or a colleague. Participants learn to recognize the signs of mental health problems, provide initial support, and guide a person toward professional help.
- **Promotion of UBC's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).** We regularly feature case-based stories in the *Benefits FYI* and *Healthy UBC* newsletters to highlight how to effectively utilize EFAP program elements. In 2018, EFAP utilization increased from 12% to 14%, and 77% of EFAP users reported that the program has enhanced their ability to be well. This is a positive indication that faculty, staff and their dependents understand how to access support through EFAP, and are taking action to support their mental health.
- **Evaluation.** We are evaluating the impact of the *Mental Health First Aid* program and the *Working Mind* program to assess the mental health literacy of participants in these programs.
- **Suicide Prevention.** We continue to focus on the awareness and prevention of suicide. The health and wellbeing teams from the VP HR, VP Students, and UBC-Okanagan portfolios are partnering to develop and implement strategies for the prevention of suicide. The Suicide Awareness Working Group offers a *Reach Out Campaign* and *QPR Training* (e.g., Question, Persuade, Refer). In addition, the campuses have collaborated to update print and online guides for taking first steps to support faculty, staff, and students who may be in distress.

[5] Recognizing Excellence

UBC's workplace wellbeing efforts are being recognized and acknowledged both internally and externally.

- **UBC's President's Staff Awards.** A "wellbeing" category was added to the President's Staff Awards at UBC-Vancouver, and the first award in this category was made in 2018. Individuals or groups are nominated and recognized for excellence in workplace wellbeing.

¹ Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., & Coniglio, C. (2016). Mental health literacy: Past, present, and future. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 61(3), 154-158. doi:10.1177/0706743715616609

- **External Recognition.** UBC was awarded the “Canadian Cancer Society’s Platinum Extra Mile Award” for commitment to workplace wellbeing and leadership in health promotion. Additionally, the Healthy Workplace Initiatives Program was a contributing factor to UBC’s recognition as one of BC’s Top Employers for 2019.

[6] Innovating

We are continuously implementing new approaches and services that provide deeper support for faculty and staff.

- **Complex Mental Health Challenges and Chronic Pain.** Using a wellbeing-focused approach to intervention, this pilot program initiated in December 2017, is designed to help staff and faculty with complex mental health challenges and/or chronic pain to return to work or remain at work. The provider, CBI Group (formerly Orion Health), utilizes a multidisciplinary team of clinical and support specialists (e.g., nurses, psychologists, social workers, cognitive therapists), and customizes their clinical approach (e.g., psychology services, occupational therapy, pain management) based on the unique circumstances and needs of the individual. In 2018, 32 faculty and staff have participated in the pilot.
- **Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA).** The aim of this tool is to minimize the health and equity impacts of workplace practices, processes, and policies. We conducted a HEIA on the recently released guidelines for faculty, staff and managers on “Supporting Transgender and Gender-Diverse Faculty and Staff at UBC”. The aim was to promote wellbeing and improve health and equity related outcomes among those who will be using the guidelines.

Ongoing Priorities

With respect to mental health & resilience, the year ahead involves planning for the following:

- Continue to enhance mental health literacy among faculty, staff and leaders, to cultivate supportive workplace environments.
- Activating the UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework for staff and faculty through an approach that reflects the diversity of their experiences and encourages collaborative leadership.
- Embedding wellbeing in workplace learning programs, such as leadership development programs and orientations.
- Shifting from the current approach of sharing information with select “healthy contacts” in faculties/departments to a co-created “health ambassador” program that leverages champions in the workplace who are committed to taking action, and being part of a community of practice that shares knowledge, expertise, and learning.

Focus on People. We will align the wellbeing “catalyst” in the upcoming revised Focus on People strategic framework with the UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework, and ensure that it reflects the emerging priorities.

Shaping UBC’s Next Century. We will ensure that future wellbeing programs and initiatives support the People and Places core area of the UBC strategic plan.

Conclusion

Current planning, programming, evaluating, and innovating, combined with our focus on ongoing priorities; serve to support the mental health and resilience of UBC’s staff and faculty and work units. We are continuing to build wellbeing capacity, and to embed wellbeing in UBC’s workplace environments, advocating and acting on the University’s strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC CORE AREAS SUPPORTED

- People and Places** **Research Excellence** **Transformative Learning** **Local / Global Engagement**