



Workplace Health and Performance Charter Healthy Responses to Pandemic Challenges

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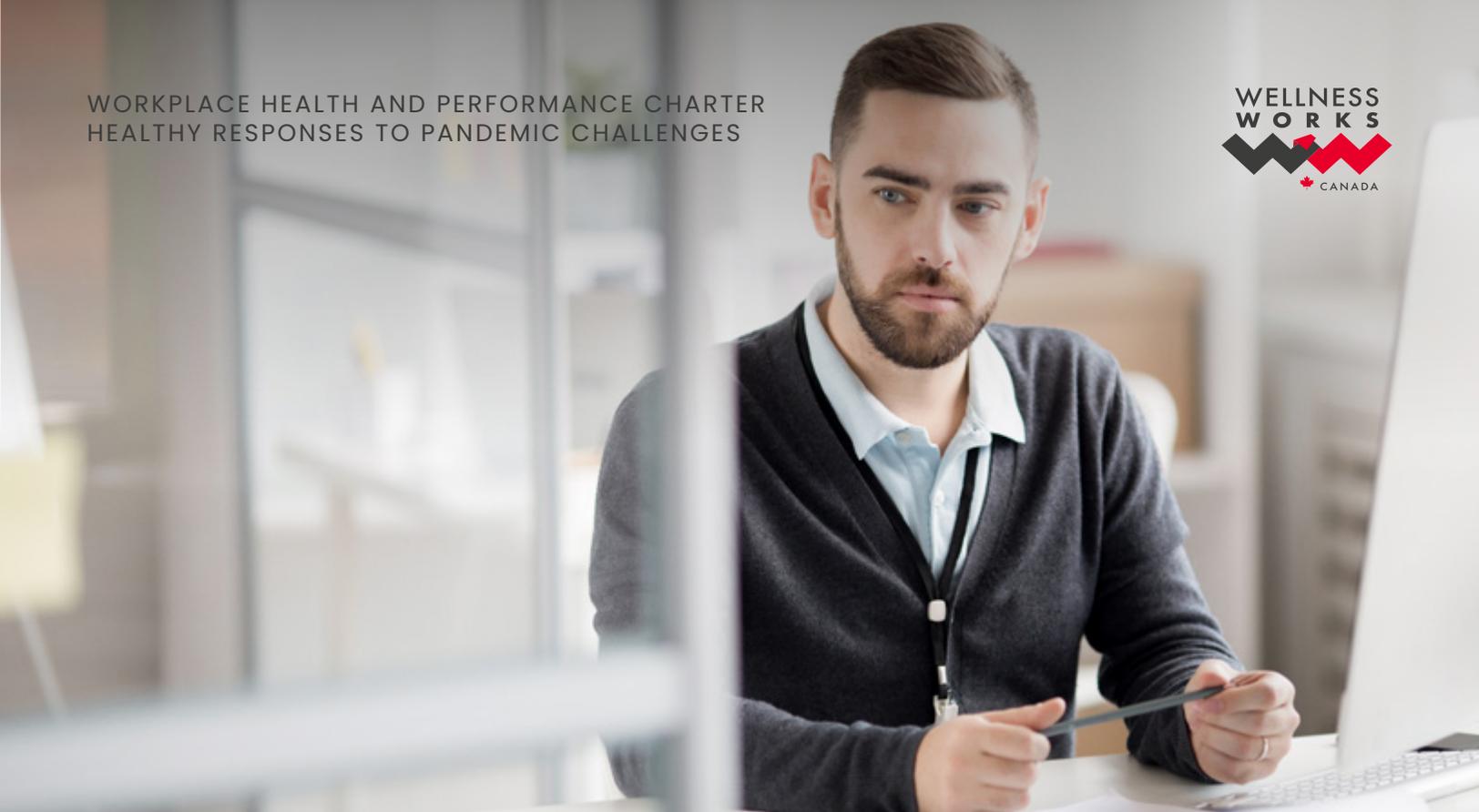
Introduction

The pandemic continues to inflict significant damage on the economies and societies of Canada and many other countries. It has disrupted the working lives of untold millions. Documented consequences include increased economic insecurity, job uncertainty, and psychological distress. And there are growing concerns that the pandemic's impact has accentuated existing inequities in the labour market and society, especially related to social class, race, gender and age.

Although it has created many challenges and struggles, it has also created an opportunity for us to learn from each other to build a new better. The Workplace Health and Performance Charter, subsequent events and reports like this, provide an opportunity to learn and share healthy responses to pandemic challenges.

The Workplace Health and Performance Charter is an opportunity for leaders to be ambassadors for healthy, high-performing organizations. Signees help to inspire others, widely communicate the importance of this goal, share successful practices for achieving it, and encourage other decision-makers in all economic sectors to set their own health and performance goals. The vision is to support a healthy population and high performing economy through an investment in employee well-being. It is one key way we can work together to address challenges and trends that have evolved as a result of the pandemic.

Show *your* demonstrated commitment to employee well-being as a driver of organizational performance, a healthy population and high performing economy by signing the Charter at wellnessworkscanada.ca/charter



Workplace Trends

According to **Graham Lowe**, three trends stand out.

- First is the pandemic's impact on the mental health of workers.
- Second is captured in the often repeated mantra that “working from home (WFH) is here to stay.”
- Third are growing concerns expressed by many employers about labour shortages – the so-called ‘great resignation’ – coupled with stories of some workers fundamentally rethinking what they want out of a job.

These issues raise fundamental questions about what healthy, sustainable, and productive jobs look like, and what kinds of future work arrangements and employer practices will enable organizations to successfully move into post-pandemic recovery in 2022 and beyond.

As a first step in answering these questions, it is essential for us to learn from each other's experiences during the pandemic.

LEARN AND LEAD

Leading Insights

On November 8, 2021, Graham Lowe and Victoria Grainger presented at the Global Workplace Wellness Summit on the topic of healthy responses to pandemic challenges with three panelists representing very different organizations to help facilitate sharing and learning from each other. Each of the panelists have signed the national Workplace Health and Performance Charter. Congratulations to the dozens of organizations who have signed to date to create a movement of workplace health and performance where employers everywhere commit to employee well-being as a driver of organizational performance, a healthy population and a high performing economy.

All three organizations - Covenant Health, Beamdog and Nose Creek Sport Physiotherapy, have one thing in common, a people-centred approach to culture. Read on to learn their leading insights, followed by future challenges and opportunities.

[BEAMDOG]

Kara Brown, HR Director, Beamdog

Industry: Technology

Company Size: Small (>100 employees)

Practices to Keep Employees Healthy, Safe, and Productive During the Pandemic

Communication, Connection and Choice

- Polled people early and often to determine readiness to come back and gave flexibility with work hours to support unique individual needs
- Broke down communication silos
- Hosted Beamdog events, informal coffee chats and lunchtime workshops on resilience
- Engaged in daily stand-ups
- Offered coffee dates with CEO and CAA
- Offered more flexibility in benefits based on input from employees
- Each manager had a monthly one-on-one meeting with each of their employees to see how they were doing, provide feedback, and help with career planning

Culture and Growth

- Conducted a survey with Wellness Works Canada to determine current culture and find out WITH people what it should be and how to get there together
- Incorporated values into everything they do - from hiring to performance reviews, to recognition, to promotions and more
- Used the agile scrum methodology to allow people to choose their work, have autonomy, and feel that much more empowered with it

Top Tip

- Engage in proactive communication with employees. Listen to them early and often.



Blair Schachterle, President of Nose Creek Sport Physiotherapy

Industry: Health Care

Company Size: small (<20)

Practices to Keep Employees Healthy, Safe, and Productive During the Pandemic

Psychological Safety and Growth Mindset

- Engaged in continuous reflection, what have we learned, where are we going, and got staff involved in decisions
- Recognized staff publicly often
- Conducted an audit and employee survey with Wellness Works Canada to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results
- Conducted mental health check-ins regularly
- Focus on relentless support of customer experience AND employee experience as just as vital
- Helped employees fill professional and personal buckets

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Blair Schachterle

Connection, Communication, and Well-being

- Offered additional team meetings (and met daily with the team during major changes)
- Increased the number of one-on-ones
- Offered weekly communication and over communicated as much as possible. They also translated health information to make it easy to understand.
- Launched a slack channel to encourage people to post jokes provide comic relief
- Sent personal emails to everyone on the team weekly when temporarily closed
 - Asked how their week was, what wins they had, what they needed help with
- Posted online yoga and fitness sessions to help people with physical activity while working remotely

Top Tips

- Realize there is a solution to every problem
- Be vulnerable with your team
- Be open to audit and see how you are doing and identify opportunities
- Keep people a part of the change



Additional Practices to Keep Employees Healthy, Safe, and Productive During the Pandemic

We asked the audience about some of their healthy responses to pandemic challenges. Here are the highlights of the key themes.

Healthy Responses

- Offered education and training on topics related to mental health and overall well-being (some of the topics that emerged included resilience, mental health, and social connection)
- Offered online events to foster connection
- Offered mindfulness coaching for employees
- Offered frequent communication both virtually and in-person via multiple platforms
- Created community and support for each other by communicating and listening to employees daily
- Gave flexibility and choice in remote work for those who could work remotely

Audience Challenges and Opportunities

Looking into the future, the audience identified potential challenges moving into the future. We've helped to provide opportunities to help address those challenges.

Challenges

Opportunities

Engaging people in online meetings

- Start each meeting with a success, win, or round of gratitude.
- End meetings with an AAR (after action review to ask if everyone was heard, what went well and what could be done better)

Employee burnout

- Offer training to give leaders and employees the skills needed to support overall well-being for self and others.
- Read this article on tips to prevent, recognize and mitigate burnout resources.wellnessworkscanada.ca/post/transform-your-team-from-burnt-out-to-tuned-in

Meaningful connection

- For the remote world – leverage technology and create online channels no work connection
- Start a peer-to-peer recognition program (an example could be Thank You Thursday's)

Digital fatigue

- Provide opportunities for focussed work and breaks (ex's: Focussed Friday's, No Meeting Mondays, Right to Disconnect policy, scheduled slots for email).

Supporting work/life balance and breaks

- Offer a Right to Disconnect policy
- Offer flexibility and choice in hours and create accountability and positive reinforcement for sticking to breaks (leaders can do this at check-ins)

Developing/implementing hybrid work policies

- Check out considerations and a template at resources.wellnessworkscanada.ca/post/telecommuting-and-hybrid-policy-considerations

Challenges

Opportunities

Promoting and prioritizing self-care

- Develop team guidelines for behaviour that include self-care
- Recognize and commend good self-care

Getting leadership alignment in initiatives

- Find out what's important for leaders and show them how you can address *their* priorities by supporting employee well-being

Promoting and prioritizing self-care

- Develop team guidelines for behaviour that include self-care
- Recognize and commend good self-care

Declining mental well-being

- Offer Mental Health First Aid or other training to support resilience and mental well-being. Options can be found here: resources.wellnessworkscanada.ca/workshops
- Offer explicit, frequent, timely communication of support in team meetings, intranet, posters, ID badges, and peer or leader check-ins.
- Create a buddy check-in system
- Put Mental Health First Aid Kits up in highly visible areas. They can be found here: shop.wellnessworkscanada.ca/

Employee resistance of wanting to return to office

- Follow Beamdog's advice and poll employees on when they are ready to return early and often vs tell them when to return.
- Communicate safety and offer choice and flexibility where possible.

Recruitment and Retention

- See all of the points above for retention
- For recruitment, get recognized as an employer choice and promote everything you do to support employee well-being. Read more on employer accreditation here: wellnessworkscanada.ca/certifications/employer-certifications/

For more support to address these challenges, connect with a member of Wellness Works Canada for an audit and/or employee survey to help provide you with some actionable insights to build a healthy, high performing work culture.



Summary

It is essential to continue to learn and share each other's healthy responses to pandemic challenges to build a new better. We can continue to do that by implementing what is feasible and continuing to share our successful practices. The top strategies identified here include the following.

- Give frequent, authentic, two-way communication to keep people informed
- Allow employees to contribute feedback often
- Offer support for mental well-being (resources, phone numbers, check-ins by colleagues and supervisors)
- Foster meaningful connection
- Offer flexibility and choice wherever possible
- Offer training to help people manage change and uncertainty and support mental well-being
- Implement daily practices and random acts of kindness (during meetings, through recognition, or other creative ways)
- Keep innovating – audit and survey to identify what's working, what people need, and then develop a plan to reach the shared aspiration, together

Join the movement and sign the Workplace Health and Performance Charter today to continue to learn and share leading workplace practices at

wellnessworkscanada.ca/charter



Building a healthier, higher performing Canadian population and economy. One organization at a time.
Together.

WellnessWorksCanada.ca