1. Creating psychologically healthy workplaces*

Ronald J. Burke

INTRODUCTION

The experience of work and working has been shown to have both positive and negative effects on individual and family well-being (Burke and Page, 2017; Kelloway and Day, 2005a). In addition, both individual and organizational setting factors influence the nature of these effects. A sample of positive effects includes emotions such as passion and flow, flourishing in work, family and careers, and work–family enrichment. A sample of negative outcomes would include burnout, work addiction, stress and strains, work–family conflict, workplace incivility, accidents, and sexual harassment (Burke and Cooper, 2013). The American Psychological Association 2015 Stress in America survey reported that three-quarters of American workers experienced levels of stress that increased chronic diseases such as heart disease, depression and diabetes (American Psychological Association, 2016). The experience of workplace stress has been found to be directly or indirectly related to seven of the ten leading causes of death in developed nations (Quick and Cooper, 2003). These seven – in order – are: (1) heart disease; (2) cancer; (3) stroke; (4) injuries; (6) suicide/homicide; (9) chronic liver disease; and (10) emphysema, chronic bronchitis.

There is also longitudinal evidence that the nature of professional and managerial work has changed over the past two decades (Worrall et al., 2016). Work now moves at a faster pace, managers and professionals work more hours in more intense jobs, feel less control over their jobs, and are more closely monitored (Kubicek and Korunka, 2017; Hewlett and Luce, 2006). Research in the public sector has indicated that work has both intensified and “extensified”, with more levels of management control and surveillance, and a shift of control from professionals to more senior managers with lower levels of trust. Managers and professionals face increased economic pressures and demands to cut costs. Ford Motor Company announced a 10 percent cut in their global workforce on 16 May 2017 (Naughton and Behrmann, 2017), mostly in North America and...
Asia, resulting in about 3000 job losses. Ford concluded it had to cut costs to be profitable. Nike announced a reduction of 1400 employees in June 2017 (Turner, 2017). The Hudson’s Bay Company, Canada’s oldest retailer, announced a 2000-person job cut on 8 June 2017 (Nguyen and Hodges, 2017). Pearson (2017, p.49) presents the following comments made by a manager in a global services organization:

Our company was acquired and our workforce cut by 70%. We’re each carrying about twice the workload now, with a fraction of the resources. Employees at all levels are frustrated, angry, and anxious about their futures, and not one of our new executives seems to care. Pride in the organization has dried up. People are too stressed to do anything but keep their heads down and pound out their work. Morale is at an all-time low. You can feel it when you come in the door. Yet our new leaders are stunned when they learn that someone else is quitting.

Another area of vast change over the past decade is increased access to information via social and micro-media (Hendricks and Shelton, 2016). Managers and professionals now have access to vast amounts of information via the internet and blogs to which they can also contribute.

The changing nature of work is also making more people increasingly vulnerable (Burke, 2018). Those working for a minimum wage, from contract to contract, working part-time, and potentially being terminated with no warning, experience more uncertainty, stress and poverty.

The external organizational environment is increasing the need for organizations to compete globally, to respond to increasing demands of more educated and more demanding customers and clients, to increase service and product quality, to respond more rapidly to internal and external events, and to become more cost conscious. There are also internal organizational changes that have been heightened such as the adoption of new technology and new organizational forms (Lawler, 2017). These changes have made the old ways of managing talent out of touch with present day realities.

Low levels of work engagement exist worldwide (Gallup, 2015). Only 30 percent of US employees and 13 percent of employees worldwide are engaged at work. Gallup research findings have shown that managerial behaviors and attitudes account for 70 percent of the variance in employee work engagement. Yet employees can “choose” to be more engaged at work; they have some responsibility for their own engagement levels. Employees can use their strengths to develop positive and consistent habits at work, they can make mundane tasks less boring, they can display less negative attitudes and they can plan ways to become more engaged. Gallup has shown that managers having higher levels of well-being (a sense of purpose, social relationships, financial security, physical health) are more likely to be engaged at work.
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces

The workforce is aging, with implications for individuals, families, organizations and societies (Gratton and Scott, 2017; Hedge and Borman, 2012; Field et al., 2013). These include potential labor shortages, retaining older employees while maintaining the skill levels of the total workforce, retaining older employees beyond their normal retirement age, and replacing skills, knowledge and relationships of those older workers who do leave. More people indicate that they expect to retire at the age of 70 or later. Employees are living longer, so more years of income will be needed, leading to everyone working more years. More than a quarter of retirees have worked for pay after retiring (Williams and Harrison, 2016). Results of a 2016 survey of Canadian citizens just released show that those over 65 now are more numerous than those aged 15 and under, with more Canadians now moving into retirement and fewer Canadians entering the workforce.

An aging workforce increases tensions for both individuals and organizations. Gratton and Scott (2017) suggest that individuals will need to develop and use important assets in dealing with a longer life and working life which includes both working beyond normal retirement age and addressing financial needs. They identify four critical assets: vitality (health, work–life balance, regenerative relationships); productive assets (skills and knowledge, professional reputation, professional networks); transformational assets (self-knowledge, diverse networks); and financial assets (salary and benefits, savings, pensions, home equity). Organizations will need to rethink their recruiting strategies to focus on mid-life and mid-career managers instead of new hires, address age-related stereotypes, and redesign retirement practices.

There will also be a more distinctive multi-generational workforce (Burke, Cooper & Antoniou, 2015; DelCampo et al., 2010). There have always been several generations of employees in organizations but today the generations are more distinct, including Millennials, Gen Xs, Gen Ys, Boomers and Veterans. Millennials now represent the largest generational group in the workforce. There are real differences between these employee generations as well as perceptions and stereotypes of them as well. These differences, real or imagined, raise potential areas of conflict across generations (Kadakia, 2017). There is a need for organizations to use real generational differences to improve performance, and to manage and develop employees in each generation. Millennials could comprise nearly three-quarters of the workforce by 2025. Organizations will therefore need to change their recruitment and management approaches. Millennials are willing to make career and employer changes for better advancement and pay opportunities, will leave if unhappy, will leave if growth opportunities are limited, and will leave if work–life balance is difficult to achieve.
Interestingly they have made workplaces better for themselves and lots of others. The generational make-up of organizations will change dramatically over the next decade. Organizations able to meet their needs will have a committed, productive, collaborative and developing workforce. In addition, the present organizational workforce is the most diverse workforce ever in terms of gender, race and ethnicity.

There will also be an increase in employees in the “sandwich generation”, those having responsibilities for aging parents and older children (Burke and Calvano, 2017; Neal and Hammer, 2007). More employees, particularly women, will serve as caregivers for aging parents, with an increasing number of these aging parents suffering from chronic illnesses, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s and dementia. Caregivers will inevitably experience higher demands, stress and strains outside of work in addition to fulfilling their job requirements.

There is another reason that undertaking efforts to create psychologically healthy workplaces is growing: more CEOs and organizations today are realizing the competitive advantages of a committed and energized workforce. Employee work experiences are becoming more important in this regard. Organizations are becoming more interested in creating a workplace that captures the hearts and minds of employees. The shortage of talent, coupled with the need to recruit, attract, hire, develop and retain employees makes this initiative all the more significant. The scarcest and most valuable resource for organizations is human capital reflected in talent, not financial capital.

WHAT CONSTITUTES HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?

Health and well-being includes optimal individual functioning as well as the absence of illness, thus it has potential positive and negative aspects (Wright et al., 2017). Grant et al. (2007) proposed three components of well-being: psychological well-being, which includes one’s subjective well-being (for example, happiness); physical well-being, which includes objective physiological measures and one’s subjective assessment of bodily health (for example, health conditions); and social well-being, which includes the quality of one’s relationships with others (for example, friendships, emotional connections). Ryff (1989) proposed six dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy and personal mastery. Rath and Harter (2010) proposed five essential elements in success. These were: career well-being – having a purpose, what you do at work every day; social well-being – strong relationships and love in your life; financial well-being – a satisfying
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces

economic life; physical well-being – good habits and having enough energy to get things done on a daily basis; and community well-being – connected to and involved in the area in which you live.

THE COSTS OF SUCCESS

“Nobody on their deathbed has ever said ‘I wish I had spent more time at the office’” (attributed to US Senator Paul Tsongas).

An increasing number of managers and professionals, as they reach middle age, are questioning whether whatever success they have achieved was worth it (Bartolome and Evans, 1981). Costs of success have included personal and social alienation, termed “career success and personal failure” by Korman and Korman (1980), the long work hours culture (Hewlett and Luce, 2006), work addiction (Killinger, 2004), and the development of the “head” and not the “heart” as careers progress (Maccoby, 1976). These particularly affect men in the work–family arena and their roles as fathers. Not surprisingly, studies of children have shown that they would rather spend more time with their families than have more “things” (Galinsky, 1999).

WHY THIS COLLECTION?

There is an increasing body of evidence that both individual factors and workplace experiences are linked with individual and family well-being and organizational health (Burke, 2017a). This spills over into the wider society in terms of emotional, physical and financial tolls. Goh et al. (2015), using meta-analysis, considered the combined effects of ten stressors on individual mortality and health care costs. They reported that about 120,000 deaths and about 5 to 8 percent of annual health care costs were associated directly with these stressors and indirectly to the ways that organizations manage their employees. Thus organizations today are grappling with the increasing prevalence and costs of stress-related injuries and illnesses. We know a lot about the “causes” of these negative outcomes. We are also learning more about interventions that address these outcomes and bring benefits to individuals and organizations. Isaac and Ratzan (2013) review the cost savings Johnson & Johnson gained by investing in a corporate wellness program, and also identify characteristics of their initiative associated with its success. Hence there is a need to chronicle and spread information on successful interventions.
There is an increasing body of research evidence and research-based interventions showing that healthy people lead to healthy workplaces (Wright and Huang, 2012). Healthy employees are more productive, take less time off work, use the health care system less, and reduce health care costs (Quinn, 2015; Rath and Harter, 2010; Day et al., 2014); the increase in corporate wellness programs reflects this understanding (Burke and Richardsen, 2014).

Well-being research is increasingly being used to inform decisions and budget allocations made by various levels of government (Bache and Reardon, 2016). Quality of life, both at work and outside of work, has important health and well-being implications as well as psychological and financial costs. Capitalism is constantly being questioned as a force for improving people's quality of life, as the gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen (Bergh et al., 2017). In addition, research evidence shows that ethnic and racial minorities often encounter higher rates of workplace hazards, precarious employment and discriminatory practices, leading to higher incidences of disease, injury, psychological distress and death than non-minorities (Leong et al., 2017). Georgescu (2017) documents increasing income inequality in the US, with increasing debt loads for many. Choe (2017) cites a study that showed that CEOs of major US companies earned 347 times more than the average worker.

COUNTRY LEGISLATION

An increasing number of countries (for example, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) have introduced legislation mandating the audit of workplaces for risks to employee health and well-being (Leka et al., 2011, writing about the European Union stance here including the UK; Kortum, 2014; World Health Organization, 2010a; 2010b). This legislation emphasizes risk prevention and health promotion. These audits typically lead to interventions tackling negative outcomes and increasing positive outcomes, and then to an evaluation of interventions designed to improve their success rate. More effort must be made to monitor and enforce compliance with such legislation, however. Dimoff and Kelloway (2013) suggest that more research on employee mental health in Canadian workplaces is needed to support both understanding and interventions to address increasing mental health concerns and escalating costs associated with increasing numbers of employees reporting mental health difficulties.
SOME EXAMPLES OF PSYCHOLOGICALLY UNHEALTHY WORKPLACES

Sexual Harassment at Fox News

Sexual harassment continues to exist in organizations (Geller, 2017). Recent examples citing incidents include Roger Ailes and Bill O’Reilly at Fox News, managers at Kay and Jared jewelers, Uber and the US Marine Corp. Sexual harassment became acceptable in these organizational cultures and persisted because managers failed to act, instead tolerating it. Fox News host Bill O’Reilly or his employer, 21st Century Fox, have paid US$13 million to five women since 2003 to settle accusations of sexual harassment and other inappropriate behaviors in exchange for their not undertaking legal action (Arbel, 2017a). Initially almost two dozen advertisers have withdrawn from O’Reilly’s Fox program following these accusations (Arbel, 2017b). Later over 50 advertisers informed Fox News that they would no longer advertise with O’Reilly’s show. Fox News fired O’Reilly on 19 April 2017. Terms of his termination were not disclosed but apparently O’Reilly will be paid millions as part of his severance. Ironically O’Reilly will be paid more than all his victims combined. Roger Ailes, former head of Fox News, was also accused of sexual harassment, again settled by cash payments to the victims. Ailes also lost his job as a result.

Fox News paid off O’Reilly’s sexual harassment victims without addressing harassment issues, failed to examine their workplace culture and to take steps to change it. Thus we should not be surprised that about a dozen employees of color filed a lawsuit against Fox on 25 April 2017, citing allegations of racial bias. Fox had earlier fired two senior-level women for racial bias. If harassment occurs at senior organizational levels, it is likely to exist at lower levels as well. Instead Fox needed to articulate and communicate new policies, new management practices, and training in the early signs that harassment might be taking place. Managers should also be aware of situations that may increase harassment such as staff get-togethers and overnight business trips. In addition, employees should be able to report harassment to someone other than their own manager. Fox needed to immediately undertake a full investigation following the first complaints. When a case is identified, immediate action must be taken, including termination. And these rules must apply to every employee.
The Royal Canadian Mounted Police – An Organization in Chaos Resisting Change

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is a large government organization of 29,000 employees including uniformed officers, civilians, and public service workers in administrative support jobs. Over several years, perhaps decades, it has tried to address issues of harassment and bullying, sexual harassment and intimidation. The Canadian government has allocated $100 million to settle these claims. A recently released report prepared by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission (2017) of harassment in the RCMP noted the similarity of the situation today with that of years past. Hundreds of women have filed sexual harassment charges against others but upon internal investigation most were seen as lacking merit. Women who were harassed could receive up to $220,000, with as many as 20,000 RCMP employees being potentially eligible for compensation (Perkel, 2017). Things do not seem to have improved; a dysfunctional culture continues.

The RCMP has also recently been criticized for failing to address mental health issues among its members (MacCharles, 2017), and for not providing a safe and healthy workplace. An audit showed that 20 percent of mounties who sought mental health support either quit or were terminated. Others waited for up to two years to get access to services for treatment, 16 percent seeking help could not get timely access to needed resources, and in 27 percent of the cases, the RCMP had no records at all. RCMP efforts here were ad hoc, and lacked financial and staff resources. The current RCMP commissioner will be leaving the top job in June 2017.

Recommendations to address these concerns have included having more civilians in leadership roles including in the topmost position, improving training of RCMP employees, supervisors and harassment investigators, hiring civilian harassment investigators, developing a broader definition of harassment, and a more thorough investigation of harassment complaints. Not surprisingly, the retiring head of the RCMP came out against civilian leadership.

Sexual Harassment and Gender Bias Involving Physicians

A survey of 1066 male and female physicians, all award-winning physician scientists, conducted by Jagsi et al. (2016) found that 30 percent of women and 4 percent of men had experienced sexual harassment in their careers. In addition, 70 percent of women compared to 22 percent of men perceived gender bias, and 66 percent of women compared to 10 percent of men had experienced gender bias.
Racist and Islamophobic Incidents

The York Region District School board, just outside Toronto, is the third largest school board in Ontario, educating about 15,000 students. The elected school board trustees and the director and senior staff at this board of education have been investigated over the past few months, precipitated in part by a number of racist and Islamophobic incidents. An elderly female trustee referred to a black parent using a racial slur. A report commissioned by the province of Ontario, conducted by two outside individuals, was released on 11 April 2017. The report documented questionable travel expenses by trustees and administrators, a lack of accountability, a culture of fear among administrative staff, parental distrust of the board, low morale among administrative staff, a climate of fear reported by administrative staff, and elected school trustees not knowing their roles and responsibilities to their community (Rushowy and Javed, 2017a; 2017b; Javed and Rushowy, 2017a). Trustees took no action in cases of racial and Islamic slurs. For reasons difficult to understand, the Director, J. Philip Parappally, had earlier been given a 10-year contract. It is too soon to tell if the province will heed calls for his termination.

But there may be some good news to this story after all. One day after this report, the trustees met and then told the director he had to leave. The board chair, Loralea Carruthers, apologized to the community and board staff as well (Javed and Rushowy, 2017b). Parappally was terminated on 19 April (Javed and Rushowy, 2017b). Details of his departure and possible severance were not disclosed. The York board of trustees will receive equity training as well as assistance with the development of a plan to rebuild community trust (Javed and Rushowy, 2017c).

Continuing Crime and Corruption in Financial Services and Elsewhere

Media coverage of several organizations over the past 15 years has noted countless examples of greed, corruption and theft. These include Enron, Arthur Andersen, Bernie Madoff, the Wall Street banking scandal, Lehman Brothers, Volkswagen, Wells Fargo, and the list goes on. Brannan (2016) documents the use of lying in the financial services sector to sell products in order to meet performance goals, and how workplace cultures support such practices and bend the rules. Enrich (2017) chronicles the way that a small group of bankers, brokers and traders working for major institutions could set the London Inter Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR) in ways that netted them hundreds of millions of dollars, few of the guilty ever serving jail time.

A recent study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers reported that
CEOs in North America were increasingly fired for “unethical lapses” (Canadian Press, 2017). The study used data from the world’s 2500 largest companies. But US and Canadian companies had the lowest rates of such firings. Worldwide, the figures were 3.9 percent in 2007 through 2011 and increasing to 5.3 percent from 2012 through 2016. Ethical lapses included fraud, bribery, insider trading, environmental disasters and sexual indiscretions.

Sales Success by Lying

Wells Fargo CEO Carrie Tolstedt minimized problems caused by unrealistic performance targets and aggressive selling tactics by staff (Keller, 2017). Tolstedt created an aggressive sales culture, increasing sales targets over time that supervisors said were not attainable. She initiated measures of how well targets were being reached, these data having huge effects on employees’ careers. Her managers also adopted a hands-off management approach which allowed the scandal to increase over time. Concerns were raised a few years earlier that Tolstedt downplayed. Several thousand staff had been terminated a few years previously for engaging in increasing sales abuse, often opening accounts without customers’ permission. Wells Fargo agreed earlier to pay $185 million in fines following this national scandal, Tolstedt eventually losing her job. The sales practices scandal at Wells Fargo resulted in flat quarterly earnings due to increased staffing costs, increased legal fees, and lower mortgage rates. The two senior executives associated with the scandal also had their salaries reduced.

Fly the “Unfriendly” Skies of United?

David Dao, a 69-year-old doctor, was randomly selected by a computer to “give up” his United Airlines seat to accommodate four United crew members. He refused. Four airport police officers boarded the plane and physically removed him, in the process breaking his nose, knocking out two teeth, and causing concussion – all watched by the remaining passengers, many of whom were filming the incident, now watched by millions. Dao will almost certainly require surgery. United CEO Cesar Munoz quickly supported the actions of the police officers. The next day, due to increasing negative reactions by those viewing the incident, he apologized and said this would never ever again happen on a United flight. United immediately lost millions in falling stock prices. Experts on crisis management rated United’s response to this incident poorly, some speculating that Munoz will probably soon lose his job. Dao also plans to file a lawsuit against United (Babwin and Burnett, 2017). Dao is Vietnamese and issues of race,
policing, and the ways airlines treat passengers were all relevant, airlines seen as having a culture of disrespect for passengers (Smith, 2017). It appears that Munoz will not lose his job but he will not become Chairman of United’s Board of Directors as earlier anticipated. United did settle the lawsuit brought against them by Dao on 27 April but no details were released. United will no longer allow employees to take the place of passengers who have already boarded an over-booked flight. They have also raised the level of money offered to boarded passengers to give up their seats to almost $10,000 (Bromwich, 2017).

**Encouraging Employees to Use their Own Judgment**

Taylor (2017), using the United Airlines debacle, states that United’s rewriting their rules misses the point. Instead of rules, train and trust your employees, he argues. He notes that at Nordstrom, a very successful high end clothing and accessory store, their employee handbook, a single 5 × 8 inch card, lists one rule, “Here is Rule #1: Use your best judgment in all situations. There will be no additional rules”. The credo of the Ritz-Carlton hotel chain is simply “We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen.”

**Police Discrimination Against Minority Officers**

A South Asian police officer, Baljiwan Sandhu, a 28-year police veteran who had received several special commendations for his performance, did not receive a promotion because senior leadership of the Peel Regional Police did not see his service in the South Asian community as important. He noted discrimination against him from the day he first joined the force (Grewal and Rankin, 2017). For example: when he first entered the police gym, an officer said, “Hey, no one called a cab”, and other officers present laughed. Senior officers referred to him as Gandhi and Gunga Din as well as using other racially insulting words. A senior officer said that communications were currently being undertaken by Peel police officers but soon you will see that women and Pakis will be managing these duties. The Chairman of the Police Services Board said he found these allegations disturbing, and they have hired an outside firm to examine their practices as the force needs to better represent its policing community. The community of Peel is highly diverse, 57 percent of its residents being people of color.

These examples also highlight the costs of having a bad reputation. These costs include loss of revenue, difficulty in recruiting new employees, low satisfaction among current employees, and loss of overall trust in these organizations held by outsiders.
ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH PSYCHOLOGICALLY UNHEALTHY WORKPLACES

Toxic Leadership

This division has about 350 employees, more working full-time than part-time. This leader has been in place a long time, and has considered and/or applied for higher-level jobs which he never got, the former explained by many of the factors identified by Shapiro and Von Glinow (2007). He has created a culture of punishing those that disagree with him and rewarding “yes men” and “yes women” who agree with him. People prefer not to work for him, so they, when asked, only do so for extra money. He makes almost every major decision in his division by himself. His staff meetings consist of him doing almost all the talking, staff members saying very little, and feeling that these meetings are just a waste of time. They race out of these meetings as if they had just visited a proctologist. An employee with human resources, organization design and business strategy expertise described the organizational structure as a wheel with the leader at the center. He likes to control everything, going so far as to have a professional staff member whose job is to organize events, show him the seating arrangements at his events so that the right people are sitting next to each other. He is prone to criticize his staff for slip-ups that are often beyond their control (for example, when a parcel express service fails to deliver something on time). The leader acts as if he knows more about everything than anyone else and he has all the answers. The leader is interested in image, and his division has no problems or shortcomings. He used to hold an annual retreat where all levels of management, supervision and professional staff attended. Attendees began asking him some “hard questions” so he has stopped holding these day-long retreats. He publicizes any initiative that involves his division or himself in the weekly company electronic newsletter. Division morale is low, performance is minimally acceptable and investment in new initiatives by staff are few. He had facilities created to build himself a suite of offices to accommodate extra staff he hired to advance his own goals. He has a good relationship with the company president, who has less organizational tenure, coming from the outside. His salary is the highest of all direct reports to the president. His staff, when traveling on business, according to company policy, can only fly coach or economy; he, however, flies first or business class. Long-serving employees, mostly at lower levels in support, clerical and secretarial positions, are counting the days until they can retire. He does not know the names of some long-serving clerical and support staff. Most long-serving employees
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces

at all levels say that working here is much less fun than previously. This example highlights leader hubris, narcissism, control, micromanaging, the need for image, and how personal vulnerabilities can influence ensuing attitudes and behaviors.

Bullying

Einarsen et al. (2003, p. 15) define bullying as follows: “Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone, negatively affecting someone’s work tasks.” In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity or process it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over a period of time (e.g., about six months). Approximately between 5 to 30 percent of the European workforce has experienced bullying (Zapf et al., 2003). Bullied employees are more likely to quit their jobs as a result. Bullying also reduces the emotional and psychosomatic health of employees (Glao et al., 2010). Juvonen (2017), an expert on bullying, sees US President Donald Trump’s behavior as fitting this label.

Organizational Politics

The experience of politics in the workplace is widespread. Every employee has seen or participated in organizational politics. Politics has been defined as “social influence attempts directed at those who can provide rewards that help promote or protect the interests of the actor” (Croppanzano et al., 1995, p. 1). Political behavior in the workplace is generally seen as manipulative and self-serving. Bedi and Schat (2013) undertook a meta-analysis of the relationship of perceptions of organizational politics (POP) and employee attitudes, psychological health and job behaviors using data from 111 individual samples involving 44,560 respondents. POP was significantly related with lower levels of organizational trust, interactional and procedural justice, organizational support, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, work control, continuance commitment and distributive justice. Considering health measures, POP was associated with higher levels of both stress and burnout. Finally considering job behaviors, POP was negatively related to both self-rated and supervisor-rated job performance organizational citizenship behaviors, and positively related to turnover intentions, counter-productive behaviors and absenteeism.

POP then has implications for individual, work team and organizational functioning and performance, as well as for financial outcomes. Organizations therefore need to give more attention to the prevention and
reduction of political behavior; a daunting task, however. Prevention could include reducing uncertainty, confusion and ambiguity so that policies and practices are clearly communicated and explained fairly. Managers need to watch employee behaviors and act when unhelpful and toxic political behaviors are observed. Finally, increasing employee interpersonal skill levels through training could help employees behave more effectively through greater understanding and control (less POP) and better react to POP in general in more constructive ways.

Workplace Incivility

Porath and Pearson (2013), based on extensive research findings, conclude that workplace incivility has increased over the past decade or more. The vast majority of employees, 98 percent, reported experiencing uncivil behavior while at work. Workplace incivility can take many forms, including bullying, belittling employee efforts, blaming employees for things they could not control, ignoring employee comments or suggestions, interrupting employees who are engaged in a task, being screamed at, and managers sending or receiving emails during a meeting. Their surveys showed that there are significant costs to workplace incivility; 48 percent of those bullied decreased their work efforts, 47 percent decreased their time spent at work, 38 percent decreased the quality of their contributions, 78 percent said their organizational commitment declined, 66 percent said their performance declined and 12 percent quit because of incivility. Victims try to get back at the offenders by direct or indirect aggression, lower contributions, absenteeism and exit. Managers also have to spend time dealing with some incidents as they escalate and become public, sometimes incurring legal and consulting costs (Pearson and Porath, 2009).

Racial Discrimination

It has been shown that job applicants having black African American, Chinese, Indian and Hispanic names are less likely to receive invitations for job interviews. Milkman et al. (2016) collected data from over 6500 professors at 259 major US universities working in 89 different disciplines in which future prospective students wrote to discuss research possibilities before applying to their doctoral programs. Names indicated gender and race (White, Black, Hispanic, Indian, Chinese) but letters were otherwise identical. First, white males received more responses from faculty than white women and members of other racial groups. Second, faculty were more responsive to white males than all other students, particularly in higher-paying disciplines and private universities. White men were still
preferred in spite of the representation of women and minorities at these institutions. Thus having more women and minority students did not reduce discrimination in favor of white males. Interestingly, discrimination in favor of white men was higher in business programs than in the social and natural sciences.

Toronto police officers engage in street checks called carding in which officers stop women and men on the street. Blacks comprise 8.4 percent of the residents of Toronto but were carded three times more often than others (Rosenthal, 2017). There is a contentious and heated debate currently going on at the Toronto Police Services Board about doing away with carding, but no decision has yet been made.

Gender Discrimination

Although modest gains have been made in the numbers of women at senior professional and managerial levels and in the numbers of women serving on corporate boards of directors (Burke and Richardsen, 2017), women are still underrepresented in both. Benefits of having more women represented in both areas have been noted by Schwartz (1992), Tarr-Whelan (2009) and McKinsey (2016). Organizations are now in a “war for talent” so it makes sense to attract, select, support and develop the most qualified individuals. McKinsey (2015) indicated that having more women in the worldwide workforce at managerial and professional levels would add billions to the global economy. If countries narrowed their gender gap to equal the historical rate of the fastest improving country in its regional peer group, this would create a $12 trillion increase in annual GDP by 2015, an 11 percent increase.

Miller (2017) reports results of two US studies showing that women and men generally are paid about the same amount upon graduation and on entering the workforce, but the wage gap begins to increase when women get married and increase even more when women have children. Women who marry end up doing more of the household chores, are less willing to work long hours, are less willing to relocate, and less willing to take a promotion because of the extra work involved. When women have children they make similar choices. The pay gap increased for college educated women since college educated men were more likely to occupy senior management jobs. To reduce this pay gap, organizations need to reduce job demands and working hours, give married women and married women with children access to higher level jobs, and encourage organizations and governments to offer longer parental leaves and subsidized child care.

We know a lot about the barriers that women face in workplaces. These include negative views of women, the “Think manager, Think male”
phenomenon, the old boys’ network, gender stereotypes, the long hours work culture, sexual harassment, maternity breaks, difficulty finding mentors and sponsors, limited succession planning, low priority to supporting women’s advancement though listed as an objective, women more likely to end up in staff jobs with no bottom line accountabilities, and a “damned if you do and damned if you don’t” double bind with assertive women seen as aggressive and unassertive women seen as weak. In addition, women and men see barriers women face differently; women see them as existing in the organizational environment while men see them as the result of women’s “shortcomings”.

TOLSTOY WAS ON TO SOMETHING

In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy wrote “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”. I had a recent discussion with a couple, probably 40 to 45 years of age, both of whom had worked in human resources. They had worked in three or four organizations over the past 15 years. These ranged from large to small, private and non-profit sectors, international to US based, Korean based, Canadian based. They discussed each in ways that captured an unhealthy but differently unhealthy workplace. The woman had just quit an unhealthy workplace. I came away concluding that unfortunately unhealthy workplaces are more common than healthy workplaces, and they supported Tolstoy’s views.

WHY IS CREATING PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT?

Spreitzer and Sutcliffe (2007) present two contrasting images of people at work. One, Slow death, has employees expressing feelings of meaninglessness, hopelessness and powerlessness. The second, Thriving at work, has employees excited, energized, feeling valued and contributing to something important. Thriving is associated with important individual and organizational outcomes such as self-development, good health, high levels of individual and organizational performance, positive relationships with others, and positive spillover from work to home and family. Three factors are related to thriving at work: an organizational factor includes decision-making discretion, information sharing and a climate of trust and respect; an individual factor includes attitudes and behaviors such as being focused on one’s task, exploration and curiosity, and positive relationships with co-workers; and the third factor includes resources created from the first
two factors such as knowledge, positive feelings, constructive meanings and helpful relationships with others. These lead to the two components of thriving, vitality and learning, which in turn lead to continuing growth and development at work and high levels of psychological and physical health.

Cameron et al. (2003) juxtapose two kinds of organizations. In one organization are selfish, greedy, exploitative individuals with the goal of creating high levels of wealth. Employees here are afraid, burned out, feel abused, anxious and dissatisfied. A second type of organization exhibits cooperation, meaning, vitality, virtues at work while increasing societal value and well-being. Employees here are wise, resilient, engaged, loyal, honest and respectful.

Both of these types of organization exist. In fact, most organizational research has been undertaken in the first type, emphasizing dissatisfaction, intent to quit, conflict, toxic leadership, dysfunction and low levels of innovation, performance and productivity. The second type of organization is just beginning to be acknowledged and researched, and is seen as being possible, with successful change efforts being reported. It reflects the application of positive psychological concepts in the workplace. This volume argues for the value of creating psychologically healthy organizations, championing the second type of organization.

We know that unhealthy workplaces have individual, organizational and societal costs (Burke and Page, 2017; Grawitch and Ballard, 2016). We know that job and organizational environments also play a role here. It is thus important for both organizations and the countries in which they operate to prioritize work and well-being. This volume builds on the recent work of Arla Day, Kevin Kelloway, Matt Grawitch and David Ballard, whose pioneering efforts put the creation of psychologically healthy workplaces on the map. It also relies heavily on the earlier emphasis on positive organizational concepts and scholarship (Quinn, 2015; Cameron et al., 2003).

A healthy workplace needs to consider psychological, physical/physiological, and behavioral health indicators (Kelloway and Day, 2005a; 2005b). They identify six antecedents of healthy workplaces: the safety of the work environment; presence of work–life balance; a culture of support, respect and fairness; employee involvement and development; positive work content and characteristics; and interpersonal relationships at work. They also include individual, organizational and societal outcomes of healthy workplaces. Individual outcomes include psychological, physical/physiological, and behavioral/performance at work and outside of work. Organizational outcomes include job performance, organizational reputation, employee turnover, customer/client satisfaction, and “bottom line” financial performance indicators. Societal outcomes include contribution
to national health care costs and the creation of government programs that give priority and emphasis to, support, and monitor efforts to address employee health concerns through changes in workplace cultures.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Advances in positive psychology have played a key role in interest and intervention in creating psychologically healthy workplaces (Snyder and Lopez, 2009). What is positive psychology? Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2003, p. 5) define it as “a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities”. Positive psychology brings a “positive lens” to issues and obstacles, focuses on highly positive, outstanding results and successes, unleashing individual talents and resources, and the highest potential of people and organizations (Cameron and Spreitzer, 2012; Spreitzer and Cameron, 2012). Positive psychology attempts to fill the needs of people for satisfaction and higher levels of individual health and well-being (for example, purpose, achievement, fulfillment). Positive psychology considers both the positive features and functions of human behavior as well as the negative features of human behavior and functions. Positive psychology emphasizes the best of human experience (thriving, generosity, growth) rather than pathologies (mental illness, heart disease). Luthans (2002) found over 375,000 articles or studies of “negatives” (for example, anxiety, depression, job dissatisfaction, intent to quit) and about 1000 on positive concepts (flourishing, gratitude, flow).

Positive organizational scholarship emphasizes positive characteristics of individuals, organizations, practices and outcomes. There is now an increasing number of studies of the effects of positive practices on individual and workplace outcomes (Wright, 2003). Positive work practices increase levels of positive employee affect (more satisfaction, higher levels of well-being), which in turn increases positive workplace behaviors (for example, engagement, helpfulness, retention) leading to higher levels of organizational effectiveness (for example, retention, work quality, productivity, financial success). Positive practices strengthen the relationship between individual skills and work performance outcomes. Positive practices also buffer the effects of negative organizational experiences on outcome, a source of resilience.

Positive psychological concepts and positive organizational scholarship are relevant for all aspects of human resource management and organizational behavior (for example, leadership, equality and diversity, job
design and job crafting, employee recruitment and selection for positive characteristics, employee onboarding, employee training and development, employee motivation and engagement, health and safety cultures).

**POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS IN TEACHING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

A limited review of some current MBA-level human resource management and introduction to organizational behavior course outlines and textbooks seemed to be a reflection of the ways this content was addressed several years ago. A number of courses in positive applications in organizations are taught at the Center for Positive Organizations at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, however. The Center for Positive Organizations has taken their emphasis on positive organization behavior and developed almost two dozen courses reflecting this focus. These courses address, for example, Positive Business Communications, Foundations in Positive Organizational Scholarship, Managing Change, Leading with Values, Leadership in Organizations, Positively Leading People and Organizations, Positive Organizational Scholarship and Positive Psychology: New Foundations in the Study of Human Flourishing, Becoming a Transformational Leader: A Practicum, and Flourishing: A Positive Organizational Scholarship Approach to Understanding Happiness and Well-Being at Work. It is possible to obtain course syllabi and for some courses, teaching notes from the Center for Positive Organizations.

**EXAMPLES OF PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES**

**Benefits of Positive Practices**

Cameron et al. (2011) describe two studies they undertook on the potential benefits of positive practices on organizational performance. Their research model indicates the following connections between positive practices and organizational performance. Positive practices at work increase levels of positive affect of employees (more satisfaction, higher well-being), which in turn increases positive employee behaviors (for example, more engagement, lower levels of quit intentions), which in turn increases organizational performance (financial results, quality of performance, levels of productivity).
One study was carried out in 40 business units in the financial services industry. Positive practices were assessed in 2005 by the Positive Practices Survey, having six dimensions: Caring; Compassionate Support; Forgiveness; Inspiration; Meaning; and Respect, Integrity and Gratitude. Organizational performance measures included employee turnover obtained from company records, organizational climate consisting of nine dimensions (for example, managerial effectiveness, work–life balance, work environment), financial performance using firm data, and senior executive rankings of the unit’s effectiveness. Measures of positive practices were used to predict work outcomes in 2006. Positive practices were significantly predictive of employee intent to quit, financial performance, senior executive rankings of unit performance, and three of the nine dimensions of organizational climate. Positive practices were positively related to more favorable ratings on the other six climate dimensions but these failed to reach statistical significance.

The second study was conducted in 29 nursing units of a large comprehensive health care system. The study was longitudinal, lasting three years. Unit leaders were first trained in positive organization concepts, then had consultants work with them in introducing these concepts and related attitudes and behaviors into their nursing units. Other nursing units did not receive this intervention. Positive practices increased in the units receiving the training but did not change or deteriorated slightly in the units not receiving the training intervention. Unit performance was only examined in the nursing units receiving the training intervention.

Performance indicators included overall satisfaction obtained from hospital records, patient satisfaction with pain management obtained from hospital records, willingness to recommend the hospital obtained from ongoing nurse evaluations, employee turnover obtained from hospital records, overall unit climate, participation in hospital affairs, foundations for quality care, manager’s support of nurses, resource adequacy, and nurse–physician relations (the last six based on data administered by an independent external organization).

The results showed that units implementing positive practices improved on outcome results whereas the units not implementing positive practices did not improve. Units that improved the most in positive practices over the three years also increased the most on the performance indicators.

**A Compassionate Workplace**

Lilius et al. (2011) studied a work unit of senior executives said to be ranked “extreme” on compassion within the Midwest Billing organization. This unit had 30 female members who worked in teams that handled
reimbursements for specific physicians or services. Data were collected using interviews (n = 26). Everyday employee behaviors created two conditions leading to compassion, high quality connections between employees and consisting of high levels of positive regard, mutuality and flexibility and a dynamic boundary permeability that allowed a spillover of work and non-work experiences and events. Everyday behaviors and practices that supported these two relationship conditions included recognizing and appreciating individual contributions to the unit, dealing with problems that arose immediately, taking part in fun activities such as jokes and recreational breaks, celebrating important milestones in employees’ lives, using participative decision making, observing the needs of employees, offering help as needed and socializing newcomers to the unit, and appreciating the workplace environment and culture they had created.

**Compassion and Organizational Downsizing**

In a study of organizational downsizing, downsizing almost always increases negative outcomes for employees and their organizations. Bright et al. (2006) examined the benefits of tonic virtues (for example, kindness, generosity, integrity, humility) and phasic virtues (for example, forgiveness, compassion, courage) with 12 negative attributes related to their downsizing experience, finding that organizations having higher levels of compassion and forgiveness exhibited fewer of these 12 attributes.

**Having Your Work Needs Met**

Schwartz and Porath (2014), in a study of over 19,000 individuals at all organizational levels, a range of industries, and in several countries, found that individuals performed better when four types of needs were met at work: renewal (physical); being valued (emotional); having focus (mental); and meaning (spiritual). Using a measure of how many of these needs were being met at work (0, 1, 2, 3 or 4), they found that compared to employees having no needs met at work, respondents scoring higher on the number of needs met were more work engaged, more focused, had more positive energy at work, and indicated more life satisfaction and lower levels of stress.

**Feeling Respected at Work**

Porath (2014), in a study of almost 20,000 employees worldwide, found that employees feeling respected by their managers were more work engaged, reported greater empowerment and job satisfaction, more meaning and
support, more trust and safety, and better health and well-being. But 54 percent of employees indicated that they did not regularly get respect from their managers.

Porath (2015) has highlighted the importance of respect by leaders towards their staff, part of increasing workplace civility. Being treated with respect was more important to employees in her research than a number of other leader behaviors (for example, recognition and appreciation, useful feedback, opportunities for development). She offers the following guidelines to managers wanting to show more staff respect. These include: asking for feedback on their best behaviors (helping to identify their more respectful self); discovering your shortcomings from candid feedback from colleagues and friends leading to finding things you can improve; working with a coach to identify other possible weaknesses and how specifically you can improve; using your work team to help you change specific behaviors – holding yourself accountable; and spending more time reflecting on when you are performing at your best and when you are being uncivil.

**Benefits of Employee Thriving**

Spreitzer et al. (2012) offer “thriving” as a key factor in long-term individual and organizational performance. Thriving employees, in their research, were better in terms of overall performance as assessed by their managers, were less burned out, had more organizational commitment and job satisfaction, were absent less often, and made significantly fewer doctor’s visits. They identify two components to thriving: vitality, a sense of being alive, passionate, engaged and excited; and learning, growth and development that results from acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Organizations and their managers can contribute to higher levels of employee thriving by providing decision-making discretion, sharing information on how their work supports organizational strategies and goals, reducing levels of workplace incivility, and providing feedback on their job progress (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Individuals can increase their own thriving by taking short breaks to remain energized, making their jobs more meaningful through crafting, seeking out opportunities to be innovative and to learn, spending time with people that energize you, and letting your thriving at work spill over to your life outside of the workplace.

**Virtuousness and Organizational Performance**

Cameron et al. (2004) considered the association of virtuousness, including compassion, with both subjective and objective indicators of performance
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces

(for example, turnover rates, customer retention, productivity, profitability), innovation, quality and morale. They found that overall organizational virtuousness was significantly associated with both types of performance indicator.

Positive Employees and Organizational Change

Not surprisingly, positive employees are more open to and supportive of organizational change. Avey et al. (2008), in a study of 132 employees from a range of organizations, found that levels of individual psychological capital were associated with positive attitudes (for example, work engagement) and behaviors (for example, organizational citizenship), which were related to acceptance of organizational change.

Positive Leadership Benefits under Difficult Circumstances

Cameron and Plews (2012) describe the use of POS concepts by Jim Mallozzi, CEO of Prudential Real Estate and Relocation, to illustrate positive leadership. Mallozzi had been introduced to POS concepts a bit earlier, and had embraced them. One example involved the merger of Prudential Retirement and a large division of Cigna in early 2004. Merging two strong cultures into one is not an easy task. He undertook processes to build respect of employees for others, and the setting of some difficult organizational goals. In 2009, he was appointed CEO of Prudential Real Estate and Relocation, following the 2008 global economic recession. Working with his senior team, he encouraged them to highlight the benefits of starting with the positive, having employees tell others what things they valued about them, their positive strengths. This activity identified a major problem they were facing and staff were asked to contribute positively. Lastly at their large annual convention involving 2500 real estate agents, he asked them to identify ways they could make their organization better, generating 900 unique ideas, many of which were implemented during the next year. Mallozzi was visible and actively engaged during these times. Financial gains followed, along with increases in employee satisfaction. They celebrated these gains with a large barbecue in their company parking lot.

In addition, rather than focus on the lowly rated areas in client services, they emphasized focusing their energies and attention on maintaining their performance in the most highly rated areas of service and improving these. POS concepts were then moved into their organizational culture more broadly, with Mallozzi estimating that about 50 percent of employees embraced them.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT USING POS

Spreitzer (2006) describes leadership development from a POS perspective. She argues that the first step is to identify an individual’s strengths and competencies rather than their weaknesses, thus rather than creating concerns about shortcomings, individuals are encouraged by being offered challenges, positive opportunities involving growth, appreciation and positive emotions by realizing their strengths and contributions, connections with others, providing feedback and feelings of increased confidence and self-efficacy. Finally, leaders are more likely to develop when they receive organizational support such as training and mentoring – the resources of shared knowledge, positive meaning, positive emotions and positive connections.

Individuals must see themselves as leaders and be seen by others as leaders as well. Thus they need to be productive in their own development. They need to develop a learning mindset involving having learning goals, engaging in learning behaviors, getting feedback on one’s new behaviors, and reflecting on their progress and journey.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT USING POS

Roberts et al. (2005) show how the composing of one’s reflected best self-portrait can lead to increasing levels of contribution at work from realizing one’s potential. The Reflected Best Self is a self-portrait based on people’s perceptions of how others view them, providing feedback about who they are. This best captures the emphasis on strengths, talents and contributions they have made in a variety of arenas. Individuals can also solicit information from others who know them well. Creating this best self-portrait, a strength-based picture, and then acting on it, has been shown to increase one’s performance. One benefit of creating this portrait is to get a clearer sense of one’s positive identity, and the state of being at one’s best.

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO

Interventions need to be at different levels – individual, work team, and total organization. Interventions also have, of necessity, different targets: workplace incivility, work–family integration, reducing toxic leadership, supporting mental and physical health, and reducing barriers to job satisfaction and increasing work engagement. Organizational culture is important in affecting the motivation and morale of one’s workforce.
Employees who value and feel connected to an organization’s culture are more likely to be work engaged, perform at a high level, enjoy their work experiences and convey these feelings to outsiders.

Creating safe and psychologically healthy workplaces involves two complementary emphases: reducing violence and abuse in and around organizations and increasing conditions and experiences that promote psychological and physical health and well-being (Biron et al., 2014). The first involves, for example, reducing levels of violence and abuse, destructive leadership, bullying, sexual harassment, bias and discrimination, incivility, stress, and workplace accidents and injuries. The second involves, for example, increasing levels of meaning and engagement, work–life balance, civility, empowering and transformative leadership, supporting workforce diversity, increasing workplace safety cultures, and improving working conditions of those mired in sweatshops, human slavery and child labor.

**Developing Positive Leadership**

Most writing on leadership has assumed and emphasized characteristics of supposedly effective leaders. Yet many leaders, estimated to be almost half, fall short of meeting their organizational goals (Hogan, 1994; Hogan and Hogan, 2001). All of us have seen poor leaders. Fortunately, more attention is now being paid to understanding failed and destructive leaders (Kaiser and Bartholomew, 2014; Burke, 2017b). Types of destructive leaders have included toxic, tyrannical, derailed, psychopathic, narcissistic, Machiavellian and intolerable. Destructive leaders can be found at all organizational levels, in all functions, and in all private and public sectors, and in every country. Unfortunately, destructive leaders have negative effects on their subordinates, work units and organizations. The quality of organizational leadership is an important factor in the psychological health of employees (Kelloway and Dimoff, 2017; Kelloway and Barling, 2010).

Burke (2017b) reviews various interventions to reduce the prevalence and effects of destructive leadership including selecting, hiring and promotion processes, rewarding leaders for developing leadership skills of their subordinates, using performance reviews and succession planning processes in staff reward such as pay and promotion, terminating destructive leaders, and both mentoring and coaching exercises, including 360-degree feedback elements.

**Supporting Women’s Advancement**

There are examples of successful initiatives in support of the career development and advancement of qualified women. Prime et al. (2014) describe
how Rockwell Automation encouraged and involved male employees in efforts to reduce the gender gap. Rockwell Automation, a US-based global engineering firm, started by determining the number of women in its North American sales unit, historically a male-dominated unit, and investigating why more women were not employed in it. They first offered training programs for men to deal with three barriers in support of women’s advancement: men’s apathy, fear, and lack of awareness and understanding. These training efforts were successful in bringing about desired changes. This training was then extended to increasing numbers of men. Formal and informal groups at all organizational levels were then formed, which brought about more widespread changes supporting their women.

A number of women’s advocacy and research units have identified best practices in creating organizational cultures more supportive of women’s advancement. These include Catalyst (2016; 1998), Madsen (2017), and Wittenberg-Cox (2013; 2014; 2016). Running through these best practices is the importance of having men leading and actively on board with the initiative.

Goldberg (2017) describes the experiences and challenges of LGBTQ workers in Canada and what leading companies are undertaking to support and retain these employees.

Governments can do a lot to improve women’s lives (Gooch, 2017). The Government of Ontario, in 2015, began “It’s never OK: An action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment”. It provided $41 million over three years to provide services for victims of sexual assault, campaigns and programs to prevent sexual assault and harassment in workplaces and universities, and programs to help victims deal with these painful experiences. The Government also created safe zones around abortion clinics, limiting the harassment of women seeking these services. The Government also increased support for women seeking in vitro fertilization.

**Job Crafting**

Organizations have always designed jobs – until now. Job design includes tasks and relationships expected of an individual. Job design influences employee satisfaction and motivation, so organizations have tried to design jobs to make them more satisfying, to offer a better person–job fit, and to develop skills. Job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001) refers to changes that employees make to their tasks and relationships to create more significance, meaning, engagement, job satisfaction, resilience and thriving. Job crafting has been found to increase positive outcomes such as satisfaction, motivation and meaning, sometimes also reducing source of work overload and stress. Berg et al. (2013) review job crafting.
interventions in various organizations, including two examples of the use of employee ratings of their jobs to start the process.

Increasing Flow Experiences

Demerouti and Fullagar (2013) review five organizational interventions to increase levels of flow. These are: increasing challenge in one’s work tasks and increasing employee skills in addressing these tasks, increasing employee job resources such as autonomy, feedback, variety, task identity and task significance.

Increasing Fairness in the Workplace

Bohnet (2016), based on an intensive review of the research on bias and discrimination, offers practical suggestions on reducing them by de-biasing organizational practices and organizations themselves. She maintains that reducing bias and discrimination of individuals has not made much difference, hence her alternative approach. Taking a page from Bohnet, the Government of Canada has launched a pilot project to reduce hiring biases using “name blind” applications (Keung, 2017). Six government departments will take part in this pilot project. In the UK, the government requires name-blind applications for university admissions.

Increasing Employee Engagement

Gallup has shown links between levels of employee engagement and key performance indicators such as productivity, profitability, lower turnover and absenteeism, less employee theft, fewer safety incidents, greater quality, and higher ratings by clients and customers. Only 10 percent of employees have the talent to manage staff effectively. Gallup data show that almost 20 percent of the US workforce is “actively disengaged” and 50 percent are “not engaged”. Actively disengaged employees actually hurt business and do not help businesses. Gallup suggests that disengagement costs the US about $500 billion annually.

But employee engagement is also personal; individuals are responsible for their own levels of engagement. Employees can “choose” their levels of work engagement. This involves employees assessing their current levels of engagement (areas of strong engagement and areas of weak engagement), using their strengths to develop positive engagement habits (for example, making boring tasks more interesting), building an action plan to increase engagement (using one’s strengths to reach goals), and holding themselves accountable for achieving these engagement goals.
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces

Offering Perks

In order to attract and retain employees in the technology sector, besides offering high salaries, stock options and lengthy vacations, companies have also included free breakfasts, lunches and dinners, and onsite yoga rooms and gyms. Some have also now added opportunities for staff to volunteer in non-profit organizations to give back to their communities while also having fun (Lien, 2017).

Increasing Civility

Leiter (2014) and Osatuke et al. (2014) evaluated longitudinal interventions in hospital settings in the US and Canada under the heading of CREW (Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace). They describe the CREW intervention process (for example, participate, systematic, cooperation between management and employees, employees seen as experts, management being responsible for the initiative, ongoing monitoring). Both these contributions found that CREW interventions increased workplace civility and work engagement compared to control nursing units.

Managers can act in ways that reduce levels of incivility (Porath, 2016). These include setting the tone by becoming aware of their own behavior, demonstrating desired behaviors, seeking feedback from others on how they are coming across, and continuing to monitor their own progress here. Organizations can also be proactive in reducing levels of incivility. Possible initiatives include hiring people that have performed civilly in the past and are likely to do so now, teaching civility and its importance in training sessions, rewarding managers exhibiting high levels of civility, punishing managers who engage in incivility behaviors, and examining incivility in interviews with employees who quit.

Increasing Happiness and Job Satisfaction at Work

Bryson et al. (2017), in a large study involving over 21 000 workers in the UK, reported that employees reporting higher levels of subjective well-being (nine aspects of job satisfaction) also performed their jobs at higher levels. Fisher (2010, p. 398), noting a number of happiness-related concepts (e.g., flow, job satisfaction, flourishing), offered ten ways of increasing happiness:

- create a healthy, respectful and supportive organizational culture;
- supply competent leadership at all levels;
- provide fair treatment, security and recognition;
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces

- design jobs to be interesting, challenging, autonomous and rich in feedback;
- facilitate skill development to improve competence and allow growth;
- select for person–organization and person–job fit;
- enhance fit through the use of realistic job previews and socialization practices;
- reduce minor hassles and increase daily uplifts;
- persuade employees to reframe a current less-than-ideal work environment as acceptable;
- adopt high-performance work practices.

Causes of happiness included both personal factors (personality, positive affect) and environmental factors (for example, uplifts and hassle). Happiness was related to a number of positive outcomes such as organizational commitment, work engagement and job satisfaction.

Increasing Psychological Capital

Luthans et al. (2004) view psychological capital as a positive state, like the psychological capabilities including confidence, self-efficacy, optimism and positive views on present and future success and resilience when meeting obstacles. They created a measure of psychological capital consisting of four elements: hope, resilience, optimism and efficacy, and reported that it predicted job satisfaction and job performance. It also has been found to lower levels of stress, increase emotional well-being, and build positive work attitudes and behaviors.

Several ways of building psychological capital have been suggested, including increasing one’s level of confidence and mastery by watching others being successful, convincing employees that they have the required skills and attitudes to be successful, and increasing hope, optimism and joy experienced by employees.

More recently Youssef-Morgan and Luthans (2015) and Luthans et al. (2013) extended their work on PsyCap by developing a measure of Health PsyCap. Youssef-Morgan and Luthans (2015) present a model in which Health PsyCap leads to improvements in health satisfaction and objective health indicators, which in turn increase overall well-being. Luthans et al. (2013) tested this model in a longitudinal study in a cross-section of 523 employees. Health PsyCap was positively related to health satisfaction and future health perceptions and negatively related to Body Mass Index and cholesterol levels, with health satisfaction being positively related to respondents’ overall well-being.
Increasing Individual Resilience

In a study of over 2000 employees, Shatte et al. (2017) found, as predicted, that high strain work environments (for example, high demands, low influence, low support at work) were associated with adverse work and well-being outcomes (stress, burnout, absenteeism, intentions to quit, lowered productivity). Resilience, measured by four scales (problem-solving efficacy, optimism, self-efficacy, emotion control), however, had a preventative effect on all work and well-being outcomes. Resilience was significantly correlated with levels of Psychological Capital (Luthans et al., 2007). Resilience is a competence or skill, not a trait, and can be developed through training.

Other ways to enhance well-being are to increase support at work, encourage employees to view change as positive, increase worker control and autonomy, and help employees deal more effectively with high levels of job demands.

Introducing Corporate Wellness Programs

Organizations are facing new and significant challenges such as globalization, change, adopting new technologies, attracting, hiring and retaining the most talented employees, cutting costs, and meeting the needs of more educated and more demanding clients and customers. Human resource management policies and practices have been shown to increase employee health and well-being, employee engagement and organizational performance (Sirota et al., 2005; Sisodia et al., 2007; Lawler, 2003). As a result, more workplaces are becoming interested in improving employee health and well-being (Berry et al., 2012), with more embarking on corporate wellness programs (Lencioni, 2012). Workplaces having employee assistance programs that give time off and/or financial support to employees during a personal crisis are seen by these employees as more supportive and caring workplaces. Increasing the number of organizations offering wellness programs would have positive impacts on employee health. However, organizations having wellness programs still face challenges in having their employees take part in them.

Berry et al. (2011) describe some corporate wellness programs and their success. Six factors were common in these initiatives. These were: leaders were engaged and committed; corporate wellness efforts were linked with organizational goals; programs were readily and easily accessible; programs were fun, of high quality and fitted the organization; programs were cost free; and programs collaborated with both internal and external partners (for example, heart associations).
WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

The Province of Ontario announced increases to the minimum wage, currently $11.40 an hour, to $14 in 2018 and $15 in 2019, benefiting millions of precarious workers, about 10 percent earning the minimum wage and another 30 percent less than $15 an hour (Mojtehedzadeh and Benzie, 2017). Almost half of Toronto workers are in low-wage temporary jobs. Small business owners responded immediately, stating paying these incomes would result in other job losses. In addition, part-time workers doing the same jobs as full-time workers would now receive the same pay. Workers having five years or more of job tenure would now receive three weeks’ paid vacation instead of the current two weeks. Workers would now also be able to take off 10 days of personal emergency each year, two being paid. Employees would also be paid a small amount if their shift changes were made within a given time period. Finally, more workplace inspectors would be hired to monitor and enforce the new rules.

Precarious workers are second class citizens in their organizations. Their jobs are unstable, unpredictable, unprotected and not permanent. They often have to come in to work despite being sick. The changes being introduced by the Ontario government will create more psychologically healthy workplaces. These changes should lead to the following: increased work engagement; more employees feeling valued by their employing organizations; a healthier workplace, since sick part-timers can now recover at home rather than come into work; higher levels of employee satisfaction since they now have more income; and a stronger economy as more income can now be used to increase consumer spending.

On a different front, the Canadian government announced in early June 2017 that 95 percent of development support to other countries will focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women (Oved, 2017).

THE ORGANIZATIONAL BOTTOM LINE

Grawitch and his colleagues (Grawitch and Ballard, 2016; Grawitch et al., 2006) referred earlier to the possibility of a win–win situation for organizations and their employees. Based on emerging interest and research evidence, this scenario seems increasingly likely. Creating psychologically healthy workplaces is important, not so that organizations and shareholders can make more money, but because they contribute to a more satisfying and healthier work experience and work environment. Performance gains are a by-product of these gains. Psychologically healthy workplaces are likely to attract and retain higher levels of talent, offer training and
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces

...development opportunities, care about the welfare of employees and their families, be more productive and more innovative, and contribute to organizational survival over the long term.

It was easier to come up with real world examples of psychologically unhealthy workplaces and the costs they inflict on employees, their families and societies, than psychologically healthy workplaces since the former are more dramatic and more common. But although changing organizational cultures is a daunting and time-consuming process, psychologically healthy workplaces are on the rise (for example, Ballard and Grawitch, 2017; Cameron et al., 2011; Dik et al., 2013; Quick et al., 2010). Leadership training initiatives, as well as MBA courses in management, human resources and organizational change need to emphasize positive concepts.

The American Psychological Association (Ballard and Grawitch, 2016) has been in the forefront in advocating the creation of psychologically healthy workplaces. It has published important work here, in addition to creating six annual awards for organizations undertaking significant initiatives, and hosting work and health research and practice conferences over the past decade.

NOTE

* Preparation of this chapter was supported in part by York University.

REFERENCES


Burke, R.J. and Richardson, A.M. (2014). Corporate Wellness Programs: Linking
Creating psychologically healthy workplaces


Creating psychologically healthy workplaces


Creating psychologically healthy workplaces


World Health Organization (2010a). WHO healthy workplace framework and


