

TapNetwork - Navigating Mental Health and COVID-19

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KATHY: We can go ahead and started admitting if everybody is comfortable.

KATHY: Welcome to today's session. Wooer just admitting folks and the live closed captioning has been enabled. As we continue to admittedly folks I'm just very very happy to be providing a quick introduction here to our session today, navigating mental health and accessibility during COVID-19. For those of you that don't know, my name is Kathy Gibson. My pronouns are she her, and I was senior project manager and consultant for the tech and people network diversity inclusion Tap Project which we have recently concluded and are so thrilled to continue to offer learning opportunities alongside the diversity inclusion quit hub. So for myself I have over 15 years of experience working in this space and just thrilled to be here today.

We have an absolutely phenomenal panel lined up and, you, know the goal of these sessions is honesty just to enhance the diversity and inclusion journeys of the employers and really pleased to be hear today, and thank

you. I will continue to admittedly folks.

I want to respectfully acknowledge the land on which I live and work is the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish People, the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Just again continuing to admit folks as I'm doing the introductions so bear with me. I'm very happy to share in the chat a link to [nativelands.CA](http://nativelands.ca) and I hope that you might -- that you're encouraged certainly to share the land that you reside on, and encourage you to check out [nativeland.CA](http://nativeland.ca), and feel free to share the land that it you're joining from today if you like.

In case you weren't at our last DE&I special event last week I wanted to share as well that Tap Network has recently partnered with the Women in Leadership Foundation for their Indigenous Leadership Circle Project as part of our collaboration in that project Stephanie Collings, head the CEO of Tap Network, had a really beautiful conversation with Chief Leanne Joe.

This content will be put into a webinar and will be shared likely before Easter long weekend. If you're interested in learning more about that project again I will --I'm going to just pop a couple of links into the chat that you can definitely take a look at.

There will be an upcoming special report. I was recently gifted this beautiful book called *Embers*, by Richard ... and it just has the most stunning meditations and this book is a B.C. book prize winner and I'd love to share a brief passage in acknowledgment of the land that I'm on and the indigenous wisdom that has been -- been shared here.

So, without further ado, something that most people

do not understand about my people, when we stand up in acts of resistance it things that threaten our spirit, physical, emotional and intellectual well being it's not because we hate what's in front of us much it's because we love what's behind us much we lot of our homes, our families, our communities, our nations, our ceremonies, our teachings, our cultural ways, our histories and the land that those things spring from.

In fact, we are like anyone anywhere throughout the course of human history who has ever stood up to injustice. So this is just one beautiful passage from this fantastic book I highly recommend, some really just remarkable wisdom and that is being shared and I think it's a truly a form of reconciliation to just -- this knowledge being shared.

Fantastic. Next slide, please. To quickly before we jump into our fantastic panel and the session I'm happy to walk you through the agenda. Once we conclude our welcome components here I'll be touching on our wonderful sponsors as well. I also acknowledge that a lot of the content at this session can be quite triggering and I'm happy to have some resources that we will be sharing that might benefit you in this session, and or your staff.

We will also have guest speakers joining for this panel discussion from -- and we are going to sort of device the panel discussion around 3 major themes. Mental health and COVID-19 workplaces and accessibility and return to work and hybrid models. We're going to open it up for question and answers at the end of the session. Feel free to message in the chat if you do have a burning question, apologies, we will try to address it at the end of the dialogue or if you feel it's very fitting to what we are discussing feel free to put it in the chat and we will do

our best to answer those questions or to address them in the Q and A at the end of the session. You can also feel free to message me privately and I will do my best to juggle.

Next slide, please. In terms of special acknowledgements for today's session we pleased to have the generous sponsorship contributions of the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Presidents Group. Again, I'm going to share the links to both of these fantastic sponsors in our chat function to ensure this important content is accessible to as many individuals as possible we are also thrilled to have closed captioning and an American Sign Language available for this session and very very pleased to have Susan and Tanya on providing this service, and very appreciative of that as well today, so thank you very much.

Fantastic. So in the next slide, if we might, I'm just going to you know as I mentioned, we do definitely recognize that the nature of the content that we are talking about, these are sensitive topics and I want to ensure that everyone is aware that this content might be triggering because we are talking about COVID-19, we are talking about mental health, and the pandemic and various implications of the intertwining of what employees experiences might be or your own personal experience. I wanted to share a couple of resources here.

Appreciate your land acknowledgment in the chat as well. Fantastic. So if you are looking for someone to talk there is a call, 310-6789, nonjudgmental line. This has been shared in the chat as well. For additional support you can also visit wellness together Canada. And if you are feeling low, stressed or anxious Bounceback is a

free skill building program that can also help. And Bounceback B.C.CA shared in the chat. Appreciative for one panelist Denis over at KPMG here today with us who we are going to go into introductions very briefly, but we will have some additional resource that is we are very happy to share at the end of the session, that might be helpful and some tips along this line. So thank you very much.

So, the next slide here I'm so, so grateful that we have this line up of incredible speakers here with us today. The session today will predominantly consist of the panel discussion involving our guest speakers and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to have these conversations and share the valuable perspectives of these 4 individuals. I'm going to ask each of our panelist to go ahead and to introduce themselves starting with Aaryn, Aaryn Secker if you would unmute and share a bit of your bio, thank you it would be fantastic.

AARYN: For sure. I'm Aaryn Secker, the director of education and training at the Canadian Mental Health Association, B.C. division. I'm coming to you today from Penticton B.C. and the unceded territories of the South Okanagan people. My job essentially consists of working with employers of all sorts of different sizes and sectors to help them to build mentally healthy cultures or psychologically healthy and safe workplaces looking at kind of our values.

Our environments, our systems as well as these individual and team strategies we can use. And just briefly also, my background is very much an adult education and increasingly in HR as well. So just to be clear to everyone on the call I'm not a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, counselor any one of those

wonderful professions. I try to stay in my lane and share and equip you with tools that I also will use in my own team and my own day-to-day basis in my job. So thanks again for hosting me.

KATHY: Excellent. Thank you so much. We are so happy to have you here today, Aaryn, thank you. I'd like to go ahead and welcome Yat as well. Grateful to be in touch as the Presidents Group has always been a keen supporter and partner on the diversity, equity, inclusion project we have been working on over the last 3 years. Yat, would you like to introduce yourself?

YAT: Absolutely. Thank you so much for the kind introduction, Kathy, and I'd like to reiterate I am on the home lands of the... and Squamish speaking peoples in the City of Burnaby, and I'm grateful to live, work and play here.

For descriptions I have black hair. Wearing a black shirt and I also have an assistive device here which connects to my hearing device. I'm deaf and hard of hearing. I'm also a senior accessibility consultant at the Presidents Group where I work closely with B.C. business leaders to champion inclusive and accessible workplaces, and over the past year we've been able to launch, with Micaela, my collective agreement who's also on the call significant resources including a free e-learning platform for B.C. businesses to learn, practical information will touch on later on in the panel with accommodations workplace barriers.

For background I'm south ... deaf and hard of hearing and have spear-headed multiple campaigns to increase communication accessibility.

KATHY: Thank you so much for joining here today, Yat.

Very appreciative.

And Devan, really happy to have you, Devan is with us from SAP and is going to offer an employer's perspective today. Happy to have you introduce yourself, Devan.

DEVAN: Yeah, so excited to be here today and able to join these wonderful panelist as well to share some perspectives. My name is Devan Vaughn. I lead diversity and inclusion for SAP Canada. And contribute to the larger DNI efforts across our North America region. I put in the chat as well but I am joining from the unceded territories of the Coast Salish people.

I myself am white woman in my 30's wearing a gray sweater, with my hair down, with darker blond hair. As far as what my focus areas is when I talk about diversity and inclusion, I'm really focussed on providing an inclusive career journey and a really inclusive experience where people connect to a sense of belonging and to each other where everybody has at that chance to share perspectives answer to have the perspectives be taken into the goals and achievements within the organization as to like where we are hoping to go and what we are hoping to achieve.

I started my career in HR in recruiting, and so having experienced both kind of sides of things as well as in career development, and then diversity and inclusion and so through my time have had the opportunity to work in a variety of different projects, such as autism at work. Disability inclusion, gender diversity cross generation at diversity. A focus on race and ethnicity and quit. I'm excited to share these with you today in regards to COVID-19 and mental health.

KATHY: Excellent. Thanks so much, Devan. Last but not least really happy to have Denis with us here today, the

chief mental health officer at KPMG Canada. I think the -- this is a first I think within Canada, and really happy to have you here today Denis. Please feel free to introduce yourself.

DENIS: Thank you, Kathy. I'd like to begin that acknowledge that the land on which I am on today is the unceded territory of Algonquin. Wendat and [inaudible] nations. I had to look that one up because I'm not at home today. I'm in beautiful Mount Trembent. I'm wearing a blue tiger wood Nike shirt. Blue eyes and wish I had more hair. My background is I'm an accountant so perhaps we can turn my piece into tax planning or something like that, an area I'm probably still more comfortable in, but I have the honor of being the chief mental health officer for KPMG Canada for 6 years now, a new role and it's bringing me across borders to our team of a quarter after million people around the world. So just a humbling role to play, listening nonjudgmental role to encourage our team members to access resources, and get care, and hopefully some day we can all be standing at the watercooler talking with mental health just like we do about any other medical condition, and that would make my role redundant.

KATHY: Amazing. Thank you again. Just so grateful to have all 4 of our wonderful panelists here. I would like to share again my pronouns are she her, and I am an early 40's white woman, I am wearing a white sweater with a blue top underneath and I have sort of long curly red hair. Excellent. All right. Well, I think we are going to go ahead and dive right in, so I'm going to just share briefly 3 overarching slides that are just going to frame our conversation today.

The first -- so the first segment is really we are



going to focus around mental health and COVID-19, and have a bit of a conversation specifically around mental health considerations and what that looks like everything from benefits to what the human experience might be for your people.

The next slide, please? We are also going to talk about workplaces and accessibility, and sort of what some of the tactical considerations around work, workspaces but also you know what does this mean around other inclusive options, whether that's around you know the way that we are communicating or staff events or other ways that we can ensure inclusion.

And finally, we are going to also talk about -- the final slide please -- the sort of this notion now of course of return to work, and hybrid working models. So what does that look like? What are the considerations? What are some of the sort of models that can be successful but also what are some of the challenges and considerations and how can we create sort of an individualized approach where possible? So those are the 3 overarching topics that we are going to be diving into today. So you can go ahead back, and to our beautiful panelists here and I'm just going to kick this off as it's a general question to the entire panel.

You know, in terms of how has your organization or the organizations that you're seeing attempted to support employee mental health? So in sort of the wake of COVID-19, the sort of anxiety. The worry, the stress, resistance, like what are we seeing, and what does this sort of look like, and what are we doing to support our people?

AARYN: I can kick us off on some of the more obvious

things that took place early in the pan. Of course there were some workplaces where folks are working remotely and for others that wasn't the case of there's big poverty. We loved the word pivot for a while and a lot of us it had to learn to do work in different ways and places and connection and guild connection in different ways and a lot of our discussion today is some of the workplaces that are looking at recalling staff fully or partially back into those traditional office spaces, we are now looking at some of the different ways we can support our teams in those transitions if that's what we are doing.

Yeah, pivot was the word of 2020. It will be great whether that leaves our lexicon I think. And just some of the other things we are seeing and I'll just get us started on the very long list of course, of some folks looking bank at access to employee family assistance plans, maybe extended benefits, health spending accounts. Looking at access to free apps or removing barriers to apps around mindfulness, meditation.

Those are some of the strata why Is we are seeing. And then I think for others just having really good deep conversations about our workplace values, and our team answer how we support each other giving people the benefit of the doubt when we are going through tough times.

It just brought some themes to the forefront as well.  
KATHY: Thank you so much Aaryn. Appreciate you kicking us off. Devan, I'm curious from an employer as perspective specifically over at SAP you know what do you see as some of the impacts of this sudden change to remote work during the pandemic? Particularly on equity deserving groups that employers might need to be aware of, or know about.

DEVAN: Absolutely. I think we can probably all agree that

the pandemic really changed the way people work across the board, regardless of what community you're from, or what industry you work in. But we did see this some of the effects or the most harmful effects really were to those that are already underrepresented within SAP and across the workplaces in general. So one of those is around caregivers, and when I talk about caregivers although it's not gender specific we do find that a lot more women tend to be the primary caregivers either to elderly family members or to children, or to loved ones in general regardless of relation. And what we found with this is especially early on in the pandemic but even honestly during the most recent surge with Omicron is that the options and support for caregivers was really challenging.

Schools closed. Daycares were unreliable, you had to think through different exposures, I myself have a 14 month old son, and it really limited -- I felt like when I could reach out for help, and who could help because there was this balance between needing support but also trying to keep your family healthy and happy. And while balancing all that have during this pandemic, and kind of this virtual world where I think people felt like you could work all the hours of the day because your office was maybe one screen away. Really created these additional challenges where we've seen a lot of women and caregivers starting to exit the work force or feeling a sense of burnout and wanting to take a step back in their career.

And this really can kind of compound the effects that we've seen from a gender equity perspective over time. Women and caregivers are not the only community that have seen these negative effects. We've seen additional challenge was people with disabilities. So there is

obviously sometimes dependant on the disability, maybe potential higher risk factors that can come into play, and so thinking through daily life, or meeting up or going into the office, those decisions may be made at a really different way, and there may need to be some additional caution taken into account.

Also, early on in the pandemic when everyone was wearing masks, for those that may be hard of hearing or deaf that creates a real challenge when we think of lip reading, or even potential language with sign language, and expression within the face, and so this community I would say has been affected as well as we've seen a decrease -- or an increase in unemployment with people with disabilities, which is very typical when we see, I would say like economic downturns which the pandemic has definitely contributed to over the last 2 years.

And then one other community I wanted to highlight is also underrepresented and that's ethnicities. We've seen that many many individuals -- when we look at kind of our ---ing the workers that are kind of front line, and need to be in person, and don't necessarily have the flexibility to maybe work virtually, we tend to see a higher representation of people from underrepresented ethnicities or people of color. And so that creates this additional exposure, as well as when you think about the intersectionality amongst maybe these other communities or groups right, maybe it a mother with children who school has been canceled, and they are the primary people who take care of them, but yet, she has to go to work because there isn't a virtual option tan creates these I would say real hardships, of how to navigate and balance everything this your life when it can feel very over flowing and because of

that we've seen higher rates of unemployment across kind of this group as well as increases when we look at needs for mental wellness support because it can be so overwhelming and stressful.

KATHY: Yeah, thanks, Devan. No, I appreciate you sharing. It's just so important that we are thinking about the marginalized communities and populations that we might be working with that have additional considerations and additional stresses and worries beyond their job functions and what we can be thinking about.

Denis, I'm fascinated. So as chief mental health officer for KPMG, and in corporate Canada, so I imagine you've been incredibly busy during COVID-19, can you kind of explain about your role and what you're seeing?

DENIS: You know, in the days when we were still flying Kathy I don't remember that -- what that feels like but when people would go wow that's a cool title. What do you do, and I would simply describe my role is to open boardroom doors so team members can bring them wholeselves to work including mental health.

Now, when I start I'm going to say I think there's wedge under the boardroom door and the mental health space and the doors are not closing and they're wide open and many of our team members in corporate Canada are trying to figure it out.

It has been really busy. But more from, I think it's hard to gauge, is that COVID? Or is that we were highly invested in this space beforehand? I stepped into the role in 2017, but our ID and E council starting in 2014, we had kind of made it a pillar of our strategy that we really had to enhance our mental health focus, so when COVID hit, often people asked me how did your strategy change? It

really didn't. We just carried it forward you know perhaps maybe a few extra webinars on anxiety and stress and so on, but one thing that I saw during COVID Kathy that's interesting is you know, you host days, a webinar on meditation or mindfulness pre-COVID we're 10000 employees. We would get maybe 100 sign up and 50 would show up.

During COVID, 1000 people sign up and 1200 show up and you blow up the software so that's an indicator that individually COVID has awakened perhaps our wanting to equip our mental health toolboxes because we've been in the same storm but not all in the same boats right. Some of us have -- I like the ad in Quebec that says you are there when your aging parents were moved to a home and there was a COVID outbreak. You were there when your partners role got furlough. There there for home schooling and so and so I think COVID for many people it's been a watershed perhaps of looking at things differently.

I have seen the positive side of COVID of people taking a white sheet of paper and reprioritizing financial needs in life. Parents saying things like when this opens up again to my kids need to be in 2 competitive sports. Perhaps one is enough.

I've seen both sides of COVID and it's been super humbling to be drawn into the circle of care of team members because my role is I practice the -- ask them how they're doing. CMHA has been an amazing job surveying people during COVID and 71% say I'm fine. And you say really Kathy help me out. How are you drawing the boundaries everybody the L is listen non-judgmentally when we are in the care of children as an example. Parents depending what relationship we're not too good at that, right. The E is encourage them to access resources. And

the C is just to check in with them again. So there is a little tip for our listeners as to what your role is in the mental health space.

KATHY: Thank you. We will share resources in the after care and hopefully reiterate some of this as well. Thank you Denis. I appreciate that.

I'm curious and I'll post this to our all of our panelist the but I'm wondering if we are seeing any sort of particularly like great best practices around health and wellness benefits. Something anything that's been particularly successful in terms of implementation, that's been very supportive of employee wellness around mental health in particular, curious if just tactically like what, how have your benefits packages perhaps evolved or what might, what might be considered?

DENIS: I'd be glad to.

KATHY: Yeah, I appreciate that. I know Denis you have a unique perspective because you see so many -- you know we've got the listeners today on today's session we've got sort of a variety of access to budget or resources or like how do we prioritize what's the most important thing or what's going to be most impactful for our people so I appreciate your thoughts and this.

DENIS: Well, maybe let's get the accountant out and talk. [Inaudible] I think this is one of the few areas in the organization where the return on investment is greater than the dollar right away. You can Google Deloitte's mental health ROI report. They do an amazing job in that space. And it says year one I think their return is greater than \$1. At KPMG we are about 7 years in I use 3 to 1 and Bell Canada uses 4 to 1 and there's all kinds of statistics to justify that, IE Kathy if I lose you from my team, we...

1.5 times salary walking ought the door because of all the great knowledge you have.

So it's not a cost thing and I grew up in a family business. I wish I knew of the resources that I know of today that I didn't know then. There's so many of them. And they're free and COVID -- that's one thing [inaudible] that many of these resources have come out of the woodwork. So you know. A starting thing for some organizations is just getting to know some of these resources and I know we will share many of them today and just sharing them with their team. The trend that I had been seeing is more flexibility benefits, to this day corporate Canada even if you have the best of plans, perhaps you're getting \$400 for counselling in the space.

I've seen that rates as high as \$300 an hour in Vancouver now so it's not adequate, plus unless the person has 48 degrees don't qualify. The trend I've been seeing is flexibility, I've seen a range from \$2,000 to as high as \$10,000 where employees have a specific mental health counselling benefit, and it's a broad. It includes psychologists, family therapists. All the way to --  
KATHY: All the different acronyms, all of the different -- yeah.

DENIS: At the end of the day it's getting your smile back right. It's not who you're using. The test is simple. If you're feeling well and you're getting your smile back you know you're in the right direction so availability of dollars. And for smaller organizations, I remember in the Okanagan I saw a few owner-managed business that is created a pool for your team members so instead of giving X thousand to each employee. They created a pool where employees could tap into through their HR team.



KATHY: Beautiful. People that are really needing it might have that availability. That's fantastic.

DEVAN: I can chime in one, it's very specific but because I talk add little bit about caregivers being one of the areas that have been most effective we've been really intentional I would say around different communities, and how they're effected and then what supports can we put if place and ensuring there are a lot of different options so that people can really get what they need, and so particularly around caregiving.

We actually formed a brand new affinity group for SAP called caregivers and it's caregiver connection, which actually puts you connected with other people that are maybe going through similar caregiving journeys to have really the safe place to maybe brainstorm solutions, or events or like share the heart ships so that even though you're working maybe in isolation in your home, away from colleagues that you still have an opportunity to connect on things that are really impactful within your life.

And then we've also rolled out in Canada where the founding partner of the first ever full maternity program for Canada called MATERN and it follows women through their entire journey of expecting a child, whether they were carrying the child themselves or someone else is, but it really supports them through these different stages. Giving them tools, resourcing coaching support, a built-in community to really enable them throughout that process through their maternity leave and I think really importantly the transition back to work during such a pivotal time in their career. And how to really set them up for success so that they don't feel like they need to take that step back or press pause because it's so

overwhelming. That they really have the tools and support to continue. Utilizing their skills for their development. KATHY: Amazing. Thank for sharing. I know that is -- those are tremendous sort of additional benefits, and I love the fact that you know an employer can take a lens around specific groups of individuals that can benefit in different ways and sort of try to customize responses to being more supportive in that way. I really appreciate that.

I'm -- I mean, I'm so fascinated certainly in terms of just the evolution and I'm certainly hearing and the ground with various players they are looking at benefits plans or using for flex save approaches around you know knowing that there's more designations and more whether it's you know a registered clinical counselor or a psychiatrist or a psychologist or making sure that whoever it is that they are connecting with is going to be covered under their benefits plan, and then just having that flexibility of being able to you know bucket more time and energy into counselling or therapies as might be needed so that's beautiful.

I wanted to move the conversation on a little bit in terms of workplace accessibility, and workspaces in particular, and I know, Yat, when it comes to workplace accessibility, certainly I mean, I'd love to get the Presidents Group -- the Presidents Group's perspective here given sort of the very specific focus around you know how employers can be more inclusive on this -- in this regard YAT: Absolutely, and thank you for asking. And accessible employment is very important at Presidents Group. Since we started back in 2013 Presidents Group is represented really by business leaders who are champions for more accessible

inclusive workplaces. And our mission is to make accessibility the hallmark of how British Columbians does business, so if that means we offer resources like e-learning about job accommodations. Legal requirements to developing tools or measuring tools excuse me, to measure the norm of employees who self-identify as having a disability on our annual pledge to pressure initiative.

We have found and this is echoing on what Denis mentioned earlier about the ROI is that diverse and inclusive workplaces have better business outcomes. We find that there are 2 times more likely to meet or exceed financial targets. They are 6 times more likely to be innovative and they are 6 times more likely to effective -- or to effectively anticipate change so there's a lot of great business cases to support an employer to become more diverse, more inclusive.

KATHY: Fantastic. I think there's so much here. I mean so in the wake of COVID, when everyone's like okay, kind of a lot of the employers that I talk to are like okay, we went from you know basically not necessarily having home set ups and the security of the space, particularly working in tech making sure a lot of the work would being done from a studio or from an office of some kind that was secure for example. What steps can an employer be taking to ensure that sort of the work from home stations are actually accessible or that they're -- and what sort of -- how are work stations different? Like how can they be sort of adapted?

YAT: 100%. I think it's important to ask and listen to your staff about what makes them comfortable in their work station? We know that over 614 working -- 614000 working age British Columbians between the age of 15 to 64, which

is 20% of our population in British Columbia, have a disability so the chances are that you can also play an important role, and really, empowering your team's success through the creation of a more accessibility workplace or workplace schedule. So that means a myriad of options for a team when it comes to implementing hybrid or remote workplace set ups to ensure accessibility.

That means creating or providing job accommodations which we found throughout the pandemic in our research that 58% of accommodations cost nothing at all. And the 37% only require one time expense of \$500. As simple as problems adjusting ergonomics or providing ergonomics to your keyboard or mouse or perhaps even like myself, an assistive tech to allow me to be able to join and participate equitably in this conversation.

So we've been able to find that obviously now working remote, working from home is one of the most common accommodation requests, and we know it's very practical for many jobs. So it is key to have on going dialogue with the team members about the work arrangement. So again, since we are sitting on a chair for 6 or 7 hours a day, and when we go to an office we are usually presented with a decent ergonomic chair. For someone at home they may not and that means working together to look at those practices, and ensuring that equipment is outside the home are well equipped and including regular check-ins because employers can no longer see your body language or have regular

KATHY: Whether you're comfortable or in pain or --

YAT: Yeah. Creates an opportunity for more hybrid meetings and check-ins.

KATHY: Beautiful. Thank you for that. I think this conversation around accessibility, it's so important to the

tactical actual like workplace set-ups but also you know what are some of the tools and I'll pose this to across the panel -- but in terms of how we are communicating in meetings, and you know what it sort of looks like in terms of being as inclusive as possible especially now that some -- many organizations are beginning to return to work and there's you know, more staff events or things like that are starting to pick up stream again how do we include the assist IT of people that may not be able to attend or may not be comfortable for whatever reason, curious to get folks take on other considerations around inclusive set ups, and thoughts?

DEVAN: You make a good point, building on what Yat said around not all accommodations cost money. Most are totally free and it's just a matter of taking the time and attention to do the action. And to have it become kind of your typical way of moving through the world.

A big piece that have is around communication right. So I think it can be having that open dialogue that you both already discussed but maybe having questions around okay, within this meeting how are the different ways that people can contribute, how do people want to contribute right? Maybe it's not in person. It's virtual but then maybe someone doesn't feel comfortable coming off of mute and sharing their perspective so is there opportunity to be in the chat? Is there opportunity to actually share some points of view following the meeting because some people from processing time -- it might take them a little longer to get to their great idea or piece of feedback. Does it need to end right when the meeting ends or can it be like -- an extended period of you know following the meeting, some hours let us know the feedback and then we will go

from there?

It can also be as simple as writing notes, right it's comes backs to the very basics of like an agenda, and then action items, and kind of recapping the meeting but that's actually very inclusive, and actually a common accommodation we see. Just wanting people to know right what are those clear expectations, who is taking on what, and in the beauty of inclusion right, although it may have been an accommodation for someone, it's truly inclusive for everyone right? Like I myself would benefit from knowing here is what we are going to be discussing, this is the direction we are taking, here is how I can communicate and participate in the conversation, oh and this is what I need to take away from the meeting in order to contribute to the project by date.

So I think sometimes although it sounds so simple they are often the things that we tend to maybe like ignore or do to like really high work load and we push to the side it's important to how do we bring those pack to the forefront of our working conversations and our environment and just make it the way that we participate in the workplace

KATHY: Yeah, there's just so much here. It's like the pandemic has so significantly impacted sort of workplace accessibility in so many different ways shapes and forms and I think there's -- it's raised a really really important point in terms of also just navigating the space from a you know how do you -- how having an organization really be transparent and like over communicate wherever possible to ensure that the folks are feeling included at every step along the way as well. So thank you. Thanks for that. Appreciate the dialogue.

I wanted to sort of -- I'm -- and this is more just a curiosity. But you know, how -- and I'll pose it to everyone but how do we maintain the sense of culture within our respective organizations remotely? Like how is there -- how do we do that? Are there any sort of tips or tricks or best practices on how we can ensure that we are being inclusive but that the culture of the organization is that AARYN: There's couple of thoughts on that which comes back to taking stock of what our implicit culture is in our workplace. Things we take for granted or we all have the way we do things here and I think just making sure we are bringing those to the front as well so we are you know it goes back it the clear leadership and expectation. Clear communication. And also noticing and staying out of judgment as well.

So just thinking back to the example of caregivers at work and now social events that are coming back, and you know I think especially in the leadership positions being very conscious of biases that you have and the assumptions that you make, so you know sadly I've seen in a lot of workplaces where somebody is unable to participate or doesn't want to participate in social vents or off hours events. Doesn't want to go for the drink on a Friday for whatever reason.

There's an assumption that can be made around, well are they a team player? Or are they really invested in their work? Do they really care about this team? Are they part of the workplace culture? So I think that to be mindful of those assumptions and biases we have and to try and question those or be critical of those as well. And even just back to the idea of information sharing right. It's important information being shared at those supposedly

optional events, and then not followed through on our day-to-day, so the being mindful of those things, and engaging with employees to find out how they want to build culture in the workplace instead of it being called a top-down approach? So what is this they appreciated and value in the strengths that we currently have in the workplace and how do we bolster those in making sure we are not imposing identifies of what a good workplace culture looks like.

KATHY: Thank you that's such an important sort of analogy as well. It's like there's so much -- we've been having sort of these gender based conversations around how you know, okay well I can't make that after work meeting or drink because I've got to pick up my kids or what that might look like but now it's like okay, well how are ensuring if there's meetings happening at work or and line that we are also making sure that every employee is being parts of that conversation and feeling included, and comfortable able to contribute and I love the dialogue around well what are the other mechanisms to be able to put in place, to support that and ensure that whether it's true you know more one on one follow-ups or there's you know, being able to pop in comments or -- and that expectation setting.

I just think this is really really important dialogue and conversation, I want to move to the last portion of our chat today around sort of this return to work, and so our RTW, and also hybrid models. So you know, a number of employers are having a variety of challenges in supporting their people in if returning to work.

Some you know, some employees -- like it's -- I get to I get to talk with a lot of different employers, and



it's interesting to hear their respective experiences both from an employee perspective, and from an employer perspective, and I'm a little bit fascinated, and I'm curious you know, maybe we could start by just sort of defining you know, and I know that there's a lot of -- there's whole spectrum of ways we can look at you know hybrid models and this return to work fluidity if you will, and I'm curious if we could chat through what does this hybrid model look like or what could it look like and what kinds of schedules might be offered and Yat, I'd love your perspective on this in terms of some of the risks associated with it as well in defining this?

YAT: Yeah, I think what we are seeing right now is there's some arbitrary definitions, and definitions kind of range with different employer to employer and that we're seeing some employers suggest that there's arbitrari... how to job must look like. It could be 3 days in the office, maybe one at home, or 4 at home and one in the office, and it creates an opportunity for of course, a culture building in and out of the office. But I must have to suggest that you know, hybrid workplaces must be handled with abundance of caution.

Organizations, I think need to understand that hybrid accessibility is not just creating a couple of days in the office and 3 at home. It's about taking the time to identify which talent would prefer to work 100% remote and which talent prefer to work in a shared work space? And the reason I suggest that is we don't want to eliminate the freedom of any talent who is high risk or immunocompromised folks from being able to either participate in a function, or to apply for work because we capital make -- we don't want to make it worse than before the pandemic because we

know many roles now, as I mentioned earlier, can be done remotely. So we need to listen like Denis and many others have said today -- but also work very closely with the talent to identify their preferred, and most comfortable work schedule.

KATHY: Thank you, Yat. I mean we're -- I think every employer will acknowledge we are sort of faced with a labor market right now where unemployment is at an all time, an all time low historically, and there's you know significant retention issues that are also a lot of employers are being faced with right now in the wake of COVID on the re-prioritization of individuals and their lives, and so I'm fascinated you know, when we talk about you know, these particular challenges, and around hybrid models and some of the concerns, and like what we need to be thinking about, you know, what, what what can we do to continue to be there for each other, during while we're building out whatever the model is that our respective organization is leaning towards. How do we bring the individuals to the conversation and ensure that we are meeting everyone's needs?

DENIS: I think Kathy, this one calls for maybe a bit of education or training in the sense that maybe not all of us have that skill set of how to manage a remote team right. I mean personally I love the 5 golden rules of Jack Dodd ORG. They teach you how to they can in. The first one is say what you see. The organizations need to look at that. We are good managing our audited teams but when people are remote how do you check in with people to you know, like many of our speakers said today, not the same thing works for everyone, right, into the creativity as well too. I mean I have a he been seeing a lot of if anything during

COVID. We have been creative.

Like now I see this -- I have one coming up after this call. A snack [inaudible] where I was matched with somebody that I doesn't know, and you know we're going to grab a virtual, and the first thing you know, I might make a new friend. Somebody that has a common sport right. Because we on board about 600 new teams members a year, they've been recruited during COVID, they've been recruited remotely, and they've -- they're just coming back into the office right?

As the labor shortage I think works really to our advantage that our listeners, if you can make it work for your team, you know you get engagement and all those benefits that we know of. But I think equipping the team with the right tools to be able to check in, what to say, whatnot to say, not -- it boils down to culture I think if you can create a culture where people are not afraid to ask for help, sharing stories that we have a kick-off after group coming back, just on Friday, and it was interesting to see you know senior senior individuals saying, personally I am choosing to be in the office X days a week but that's not what I expect of you. Do what works for you right, because I -- we're not out of this storm, and I think the more recognize that we are in different boats. Like, many of us have lost our caregivers, or you know a family member to COVID illness or something that we have to be cognizant of that.

It's -- we're not all out of this yet, and the ones who may be are more out of this than others our support mechanisms have changed a lot

KATHY: Yeah, no, thanks for sharing that. I think that's really -- it's this really delicate balance. I think that

we're -- everybody is trying to navigate because you definitely will hear from employers that are feeling like okay, well, there's -- the magic of people coming together, and being in if person and there's like these elements of how that works, and it's like how do we ensure the safety, and you know, the inclusion of everyone in whatever model we're doing, and the truly the really listening, I think the employers that I've seen that are doing it right is they're really just talking to their people and they're listening like really with an open heart around like, okay, you have a unique set of circumstances, and you've got you know whether you're immunocompromised or you have specific caregiving issues or there's other -- whatever that looks like let's figure out what those accommodations look like, and so to your point, Yat. I love the stat of how inexpensive often sometimes accommodations really are because they're just really these pieces of flexibility.

AARYN: On that note for those workplace that is tried work from home during the pandemic, and that was new for them, you tried an experiment, in a pandemic, right. You tried something different in an environment. In a situation that was very novel and difficult for people and so sometimes when I hear employers or leaders say that productivity went down or culture was challenged, and we only say it's because of work from home, we need to remember that correlation does not equal causation right. So how much of this had was work from if home challenges and how much of it was the pandemic? Right? So we want to make sure we are not always conflating the two as well.

KATHY: Yes, no, I think that's a really valuable and important point. There's a lot of variables that are wrapped up with the pandemic in and of itself. So thank

you for that. No, I really appreciate that.

Devan, I'm curious, so from SAP's perspective WA does the future of work look like in terms of being able to retain staff, and what this might look like moving forward

DEVAN: Yeah, it comes down to like in had the media and everybody is talking about the great reevaluation with employees, but I also think it's giving employers the chance to have that great reevaluation. Like how are we becoming an employer of choice? How are we meeting our employees where they are at so we don't see the being IT of talent. With that SAP we've been going on a journey and we are at the beginning so by no means can I say it's -- this is where we are going to land but we've been doing a lot of work around what are flexible work options? Are there options to do more part-time work? Is there options to do more like gig work or project based work. Are there opportunities to have more virtual or non-location specific work? And I think in exploring all of these options, it's been like we've tucked about flexibility, like meeting individuals where they are at regardless of maybe the individual is nearing retirement and looking for a different type of work option or a caregiver or -- a disability like there's so many needs I can't even list them all but I think the biggest wooser finding is you need to adopt your own work style and your own offering for employees and through that you become the employer of choice and in the great reevaluation you're the employer that's winning that's attracting the amazing talent and retaining the capable and intelligent individuals that you're already employing.

KATHY: Thank you so much. And then I'm just -- I know we have a close things off shortly here but Denis I'm curious

in terms of the future of mental health, and the context of these evolving workplace models what are you envisioning.

SPEAKER: What does the future look like?

DENIS: I really think that as employers, and we the demand is on us to be more involved in the overall wellness of our team members. Last year U of T the number of questions asked by potential hires was around our wellness practices as a fact. You know comparing why our benefit is compared to a competitor. I too am relieved the psychological safety in the workplace act will become law. I find it personally disgusting it's not already law, so I think adapting to that organizations I think will really need to become more proactive than reactive. There's EAS, employee assistance number Kathy that doesn't buy it anymore, right. The ask of team members I think is give us tools to plan for resilience, it's free, you know. It's developed by amazing organizations such as CMHA so having tools so that team members can populate their own mental health toolbox. Imagine onboarding Kathy, I hired you and we talk about mental health for 2 hours on your first day. I think that would really resonate because that's an employer -- [inaudible] team members and break that stigma a lot of it being self imposed, right.

KATHY: Thank you. I just -- I want to acknowledge as well in the chat there's been some beautiful shares and comments that have come in, and you know, I think you know, as Susan I appreciate you sharing around your son, you know that's very close to my heart as well. And I definitely really -- there's some focus and orbital learning have been supporters of the project in the past and have some wonderful job fast I will tiers and coaches for individuals and the autism spectrum. I encourage you to look in as an

employer if any employers that are on the line today that there's some wonderful opportunities there as well, and certainly the -- you know, the CMHA and the Presidents Group. Fantastic, sets ever resources on both of their respective sites and thank you for some shares here in the chat.

I want to you know just quickly open it up if there are any specific questions from participants here today, feel free to message and maybe Rachel if we can we will do an acknowledgment of our sustainability sponsors of the diversity equity and inclusion projects. Really happy to have had this support the innovative B.C. Northeastern University, Tableau, Bananatag, Sierra wireless, VIATEC and Phophos. If you are interested in possible seeing a specific session and or the sustainability of both the hub and the resources that we are offering, and the engagement with the community don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Personally, I'm really happy to have that conversation. And just thank you very much. I very much appreciate everyone's engagement, and I think there's a lot of wonderful additional resources that have been shared, and we will definitely be sharing out everyone's profiles and things like this in the after care e-mail to those who participated today. Thank you so much. With that I'm going to close it off. Thank you again. Appreciate appreciate it. Have a wonderful day. Thank you so much to our panelists. We are tremendously grateful. Thank you Devan, Aaryn, Denis, Yat.

DENIS: Have a great day everyone.

KATHY: Fantastic, and thank you so much to Kirsten and Susan, our ASL interpreter. Thank you very much.

Appreciated the sponsorship of the Presidents Group in

being able to do that, and the support from the Canadian Mental Health Association of British Columbia as well.

Thank you so much Aaryn. Awesome. Have a wonderful day everyone. Take care.

YAT: Thank you take care. Bye-bye.