



HEALTHY PROFESSIONAL  
WORKER PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2018

ACADEMIC PARTNERS



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# NEWSLETTER 2018

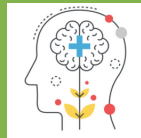
## HEALTHY PROFESSIONAL WORKER PARTNERSHIP



### WELCOME TO THE HPW PARTNERSHIP!

The Healthy Professional Worker (HPW) Partnership is the first comprehensive, comparative, multidisciplinary and collaborative research initiative on

- mental health (MH),



- leave of absence (LoA) &



- return to work (RTW) issues



for professional workers and their impact on the

- workers themselves,



- their families,



- their co-workers, employees, employers and



- clients/patients/students.



that takes an explicit intersectional gender perspective.

### INTRODUCING OUR NEW LOGO!



We are pleased to introduce the new logo for our Healthy Professional Worker Partners, designed by one of our trainees, Ms. Nabeelah Ahmed.

Nabeelah also designed the case study icons below.





## PROFESSIONAL WORKER CASE STUDIES & PILOT STUDY FINDINGS

- Reflecting an explicit gender perspective, we examine the barriers, facilitators and experience of mental health, leaves of absence and return to work among professions in the health sector and beyond.
- Our case studies include academia, accounting, dentistry, medicine, midwifery, nursing and teaching professions which differ by gender composition, orientation of their work, and their work context which may impact their experiences.



### ACADEMIA

- MH issues among professors are mainly attributed to poor work circumstances. Professional anxiety is heightened due to lack of funding and other factors. Rather than leaving work, professors use academic “flexibility” to remain at work, despite facing significant mental health challenges.
- Some of issues related to RTW of the professors that are seen as problematic are transitioning back at less than full capacity given demands to return to full teaching loads and their willingness and readiness to return to research but not teaching.
- Women academics seem to struggle with work life balance more than male counterparts.



### ACCOUNTING

- Work stress is a greater source of mental health concerns than personal or family situations. Many accountants appear to leave public accounting and seek less stressful employment, rather than taking formal leaves of absence for MH reasons.
- There seems to be a general lack of supports and awareness of supports that are available to facilitate accountants' 'RTW after a leave of absence.
- Women experience greater difficulties, especially related to work family integration, negotiating leaves of absence and RTW process.



### DENTISTRY

- The contextual features of dental work combined with challenging working conditions may have negative MH consequences; still, dentists who experience MH issues have few opportunities to take LoAs due to the structure of their work.
- There is also a general lack of supports and awareness of supports that are available (e.g., Wellness Program initiated by College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia) to facilitate the return to work after a leave.
- Female dentists experience unique challenges in terms of the balancing of work and family demands.





## PROFESSIONAL WORKER CASE STUDIES & PILOT STUDY FINDINGS



### MEDICINE

- Work circumstances contribute to MH issues among physicians; still, very few physicians decide to take LoAs due to stigma, feeling of failure, financial concerns, etc.
- Gradual RTW is common: shorter shifts, lower acuity at first with escalating responsibilities, no night shifts.
- Female physicians are more likely to disclose MH issues and seek help.



### MIDWIFERY

- Midwives experience difficult working conditions which often lead to MH challenges and LoAs.
- Available supports target changing worker's behavior vs. addressing work conditions & MH issues.
- Gender & class differences noted related to balancing work life demands (e.g., being on call particularly stressful for women with children as it leads to personal and familial role conflict).



### NURSING

- Challenging work environment conditions may result in negative MH consequences among this group of workers; still, many nurses continue to work despite experiencing MH issues, mostly due to the associated stigma.
- RTW programs are seen as important, however they are not often available.
- Gender roles may have an impact on how nurses cope with occupational stress.



### TEACHING

- Work circumstances (e.g., toxic work culture, etc.) may lead to MH issues and LoAs among elementary and secondary teachers.
- Some of the factors that have been seen as helping teachers in their RTW: support from administration, Employee Assistance Program, OITP (Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan advocate), and gradual RTW programs.
- Females take on the majority of the household work and parenting, to the detriment of their teaching career.



### LEADERSHIP

- Having a dominant supervisor and or being criticized, treated unfairly or unrespectfully by supervisor often leads to stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression among dentists, nurses and accountants.
- While supervisors are willing to support their workers in the process of return to work, they often lack resources and knowledge to deal with mental health issues. Training for managers on how to help employees who experience MH issue(s) with their re-integration into workplace after the leave, which is available in some workplaces, is very helpful.

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## FIRST TEAM MEETING



December 2018

At our first Partnership meeting, we brought together all of our case study teams, their respective partners as well as partners with cut across the case studies. Each team lead presented the key findings from the pilot study data and literature review. This helps to orient all participants to the methods and tools to be used in the full Partnership. Working groups walked through the survey and interview guides to add, remove or modify questions for considering within and across the case studies.

## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

### COMPARATIVE



- Bourgeault, I. 2018. **SGBA Webinar - Application of Sex and Gender Lens in Support of Psychologically Healthy Workplaces**, Health Canada, October 24.
- Bourgeault, I. 2018. **Overview to the Healthy Professional Knowledge Worker Initiative**. Canadian Health Leadership Network Partner Roundtable, May 24.
- Bourgeault, I.L., (2018) **Healthy Professional Knowledge Workers: Examining the Gendered Nature of Mental Health Issues, Leaves of Absence and Return to Work Experiences from a Comparative Perspective**. International Sociology Association Congress, Toronto, July.
- Bourgeault, I.L. (2018) **Disclosure of Mental Health Challenges among Health Professionals: Regulatory Context and Implications**. Professional Standards Authority Meeting, Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park, UK, March
- Bourgeault, I.L., Adams, T., Arnold, K., Atanackovic, J., Benoit, C., Brondani, M., Covell, C., Demers, C. de Montigny, F., Ferguson, K., Hedden, L., Himick, D., Kelloway, K., Klassen, R., Lapierre, L., Lavoie-Tremblay, M., Mantler, J., Mashall, E., Neiterman, E., Power, N., Price, S., Quinonez, C., Sandall, J., Searle, R., Simkin, S., Sprigg, C., Thiessen, K. (2018) **Healthy Professional Knowledge Workers: Examining the Gendered Nature of Mental Health Issues, Leaves of Absence and Return to Work Experiences from a Comparative Perspective**. Canadian Health Workforce Conference, Gatineau, October 3-5.



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THE VIDEO OF THE MEETING  
IS ON OUR YOUTUBE PAGE:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvbCz6atiT9Qo-cEdwUeWIA?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvbCz6atiT9Qo-cEdwUeWIA?view_as=subscriber)



## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

### ACADEMIA



- Bourgeault, I. 2018. **Psychological Health & Safety of Academic Work: Examining the gendered nature of academic work and its implications**, CAUT Forum for Senior Grievance Officers, December 8.
- Bourgeault, I. 2018. **What counts is what can be counted: Reflections on the academic mode of production from a gender lens**, CAUT Council, November 24.
- Bourgeault, I. 2018. **What counts is what can be counted: Reflections on the academic mode of production from a gender lens** Council of Ontario University Research Planning Analysts, Ottawa, June 19.
- Mantler, J., Atanackovic, J., James, Y., Ahmed, N., Demers, C., & Bourgeault, I. L. (2018, October). **Taking a mental health leave of absence: A pilot study examining occupation and gender differences**. Paper presented at the 10th conference of the Canadian Association for Research on Work and Health, Vancouver, BC.

### MIDWIFERY



- Atanackovic, J., Benoit, C., Demers, C., Neiterman, E., Thiessen, K., & Bourgeault, I.L. (2018). **Mental Health Experiences and Leaves of Absence among Canadian Midwives**. Ontario Midwifery Conference, Muskoka, May 7-9.

### MEDICINE



- Ahmed, N., Simkin, S., Demers, C., Hedden, L., Neiterman, E., & Bourgeault, I.L. **Mental Health Issues, Leaves of Absence and Return to Work of Physicians: A Mixed Methods Case Study**. Canadian Association of Health Services and Policy Research Conference, Montreal, May 28-31, 2018.
- Simkin S, Ahmed N, Hedden L, Neiterman E, and Bourgeault IL. **"Mental Health Issues, Leaves of Absence, and Return to Work of Canadian Physicians: A Case Study from the Healthy Professional/Knowledge Worker Research Initiative."** Poster presentation at the International Conference on Physician Health, Toronto, ON, October 9, 2018.
- Ahmed N, Simkin S, Hedden L, Neiterman E, and Bourgeault IL. **"Mental Health Issues, Leaves of Absence, and Return to Work: A Case Study of Physicians."** Oral presentation at the Canadian Association for Research on Work and Health, Vancouver, BC, October 23, 2018.
- Mihailescu M, Neiterman E. **"A Scoping Review of the Literature on the Current Mental Health Status of Physicians and Physicians-in-Training in North America."** Oral Presentation at the Canadian Health Workforce Conference, Gatineau, QC, October 4, 2018.
- Mihailescu M, Neiterman E. **"A Scoping Review of the Literature on the Current Mental Health Status of Physicians and Physicians-in-Training in North America."** Poster Presentation at the Canadian Health Workforce Conference, Gatineau, QC, October 4, 2018.

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## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

### NURSING



- Atanackovic, J., Demers, C., Covell, C., Lavoie-Tremblay, M., Price, S., & Bourgeault, I.L. (2018) **Mental Health, Leaves of Absence and Return to Work Experiences of Nurses: A Mixed Methods Study**. Canadian Association of Health Services and Policy Research Conference, Montreal, May 28-31.

### TEACHING



- Ferguson K. (2018, December 4). **Mental Health of Professionals: Partnering with Workers**. Keynote speaker at the North Bay and District Labour Council Health and Safety Awards Dinner, North Bay, ON.
- Ferguson K. (2018, November 23). **Teacher Mental Health and Stress**. Invited speaker at Professional Development Day, Widdifield Secondary School, Near North District School Board, North Bay, ON.

## IN THE NEWS COMPARATIVE



- CAUT Bulletin on academic anxiety  
May 2018

link:

<https://www.caut.ca/bulletin/2018/05/academic-anxiety>

### TEACHING



- “Nipissing University professor part of landmark study on mental health”  
Northbaynipissing.com,  
October 10, 2018

link:

<https://www.northbaynipissing.com/community-story/8956652-nipissing-university-professor-part-of-landmark-study-on-workplace-mental-health/>

- “Dr. Ferguson part of large landmark study on mental health in the workplace” The NU News, October 10, 2018

link:

<https://www.nipissingu.ca/about-us/newsroom/Pages/Dr.-Ferguson-part-of-large-landmark-study-on-mental-health-in-the-workplace.aspx>

## CONTACT US!



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