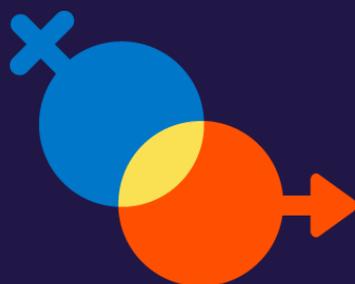


# Practical Gender Equality Actions to Improve Workplace Resilience to COVID-19 Impacts



The lights at the office are switched off. Essential workers scrub their hands and armor up for work with gloves and masks. As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic spreads across the globe, people are adjusting to new work conditions.

Outside, the streets have emptied out, transformed into a diminished version of a typical work week's bustling, jostling movement and routine.



Behind closed doors, your team member's laptop is balanced next to a growing mountain of unwashed dishes and kids' schoolwork. The television loudly broadcasts the most recent statistics on the pandemic's toll, while someone at home starts coughing.

Meeting Thursday's deadline never seemed more impossible.



# Discussion

Is gender equality an important issue at this time?

- A. Definitely critical at this time
- B. Important, but other things are more important now
- C. Not at all important right now



# Discussion

What are some ways that the current pandemic affects women and men differently at your company?

Think about:

- ❖ What responsibilities have increased/decreased at home and work?
- ❖ What types of jobs are most affected? Who is most likely to hold those jobs?



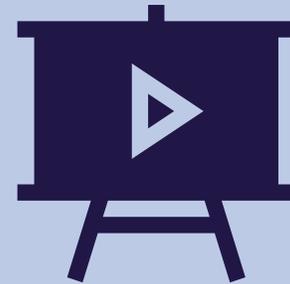
# Goals for Today



Gender &  
COVID  
connection  
in the  
workplace



Practical  
tips



Action-  
oriented  
resources



JHU work  
on  
wellbeing



# How do gender inequalities, exacerbated by COVID-19, impact you and your workplace?



- Increased child & family care responsibilities
- Increased household hygiene needs
- Increased stress
- Increased risk of domestic violence

**ALL OF THIS IMPACTS PRODUCTIVITY.**



# Effects of COVID-19 exercise



Employee #1

- Works in the IT department
- Married
- Has two children in school and one baby
- Moved away from family for work



Employee #2

- Works as an operator
- Recently married
- No children
- Lives with parents, sister, and great uncle



# Daily tasks before COVID-19



Employee #1

- Prepare & clean after breakfast & dinner
- Bring older children to school and baby to cousin's house
- Help children with homework
- Run errands for the house
- Tidy the house each night



Employee #2

- Run errands for the house



# Daily tasks during COVID-19



Employee #1

- Prepare & clean after breakfast, lunch, & dinner
- Homeschool older children
- Mind the baby
- Connect remotely to work
- Disinfect the house each time someone comes or goes



Employee #2

- Run errands for the house
- Maintain distance from coworkers
- Disinfect after returning home from work
- Maintain distance from great uncle



# Discussion

- ❖ What does the female IT specialist need that the workplace can support to address the new challenges constraining her ability to work?
- ❖ What does the male operator need that the workplace can support to address the new challenges constraining his ability to work?



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders & Employees

Collaboration between employers and workers can help mitigate the worst effects of a crisis that can both exacerbate gender inequalities and negatively impact productivity and business performance.

Work  
flexibility &  
care work

Mental  
wellbeing

Domestic  
violence

Workforce  
planning

Community  
engage-  
ment



# Gendered Dimensions of COVID-19

## Work flexibility and care work

Traditionally, women have often been expected to be glowing, smiling superwomen who can “do it all.” Impacts of COVID-19 have significantly increased care work globally, which disproportionately affects women.

Women handle  
**3x more**  
unpaid household  
and care work than  
men.



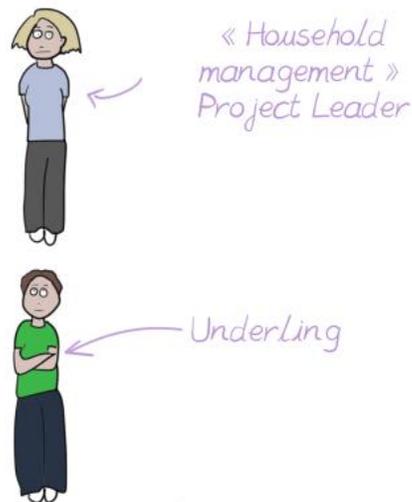
Workplace flexibility has been linked to **greater productivity** & **reduced stress** even before COVID-19



# Strategies for Individuals

## Care work

When a man expects his partner to *ask him to do things*, he's viewing her as the **manager** of household chores.



So it's up to her to know what needs to be done and when.

Women - make space for men. Men - step up. Many men work in management and leadership positions; we know you can apply these great management skills at home, too!

- ✓ Set a schedule with your partner to trade duties.
- ✓ Take breaks and check in with your partner to take breaks.



# Strategies for Individuals

## Care work

- ✓ Become a [#HeforShe](#) partner and father!
  - Share the load
  - Be involved with the kids
  - Create a safe and respectful home environment
  - Don't be a passive by-stander—check in with women you know
  - Develop clear communication and don't forget to play!

**85%** of new fathers say they'd be "willing to do anything" to be involved in caring for their new child



# Discussion

What household and care activities are you doing more or that are new for you?



# Strategies for Individuals

## Care work resources



[8 Tips for Working From Home With Kids During COVID-19](#) (Yale Medicine)



[You should've asked](#) (Emma)



[Working from home with kids feels unsustainable. Here's how to ease the burden](#) (Vox)



[How men can help shift gender norms during COVID-19 crisis - #HeForShe](#) (UN Women)



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Work flexibility

- ✓ Implement flexible & non-standard work hours
- ✓ Share resources that encourage an equitable distribution of care responsibilities
- ✓ Foster a caring culture that recognizes your team's responsibilities at home
- ✓ Support virtual training and upskilling of staff
- ✓ Review and update HR policies on flex-time, leave, and childcare



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Work flexibility resources



[Toolkit for creating a positive workplace culture \(Skills for Care\)](#)



[How to create a positive workplace culture \(Forbes\)](#)



[Childcare in the COVID-19 era: A guide for employers \(IFC\)](#)



[Family-friendly policies and other good workplace practices in the context of COVID-19: Key steps employers can take \(UNICEF, ILO, & UN Women\)](#)



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Training resources



[Gender 101](#) (University of Hong Kong)



[Inclusive leadership training: Becoming a successful leader](#) (edX)



[Sexual harassment training](#) (Grovo)



[Diversity and inclusion in the workplace](#) (Coursera)



# Discussion

What changes have you made, or will you make related to flex-time, family leave, and other policies that support improved work-life balance that will carry over in the longer term?



# Gendered Dimensions of COVID-19

## Mental wellbeing



Health and wellbeing, especially mental health, make employees:

- More productive
- More motivated
- Have a positive effect on coworkers



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Mental wellbeing

- ✓ Share self-care resources and tips among your team on a range of topics
- ✓ Begin team calls & meetings with a personal check-in

**20%** of global remote workers identify loneliness as the biggest struggle of remote working

- ✓ Encourage teams to brainstorm creative approaches to connecting personally



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Mental wellbeing resources



[A blueprint for remote working: Lessons from China \(McKinsey & Company\)](#)



[Ergonomic tips when teleworking \(ILO\)](#)



[How to manage the loneliness and isolation of remote workers \(Gallup\)](#)



[Briefing note on addressing mental health and psychosocial aspects of COVID-19 outbreak \(IASC\)](#)



# Strategies for Individuals

## Mental wellbeing



- ✓ Stay connected with friends and family
- ✓ Stay physically active
- ✓ Get enough sleep and maintain a regular schedule
- ✓ Stay mentally active
- ✓ Be patient with yourself



# Strategies for Individuals

## Mental wellbeing resources



[Social distancing? Here's how to prioritize self-care](#)  
(Johns Hopkins)



[Webinar series: Coping with coronavirus - Dealing with daily stress, anxiety, and a range of other emotions](#) (Harvard Health)



[Virtual brown bag lunch: How do virtual teams create the 'water cooler' chat?](#) (Deloitte)



[The science of well-being](#) (Yale)



# Discussion

What challenges are you facing currently due to the global pandemic? E.g.:

- ❖ Managing negative thoughts & frustration
- ❖ Managing stress & anxiety
- ❖ Managing physical health (sleep, exercise, nutrition)
- ❖ Managing new/different responsibilities at work
- ❖ Managing new/different responsibilities at home
- ❖ Dealing with uncertainty
- ❖ Communicating effectively at work
- ❖ Communicating effectively at home
- ❖ Maintaining professional motivation



# Discussion

Which of the following challenges do you want to help your company address for your employees? E.g.:

- ❖ Managing negative thoughts & frustration
- ❖ Managing stress & anxiety
- ❖ Managing physical health (sleep, exercise, nutrition)
- ❖ Managing new/different responsibilities at work
- ❖ Managing new/different responsibilities at home
- ❖ Dealing with uncertainty
- ❖ Communicating effectively at work/home
- ❖ Maintaining professional motivation



# Gendered Dimensions of COVID-19

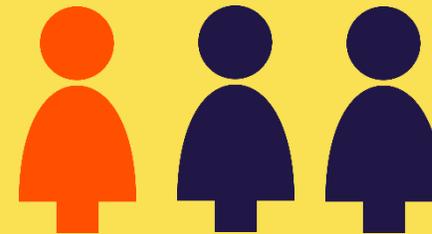
## Domestic violence

Quarantine measures and economic stress due to COVID-19 increase the risk of domestic violence.

Violence against  
women costs  
the world

**\$1.5 trillion**

in direct costs and  
lost productivity



1 in 3 women  
has experienced  
violence from a  
partner



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Domestic violence: Recognize & respond

- ✓ Recognize signs of violence and respond appropriately
  - Physical marks (bruises, cuts, etc.)
  - Uncharacteristic work habits
  - Sudden change or inconsistent work performance
  - Emotional distress
  - Change in behavior (more quiet, sullen)
- ✓ Ask questions, don't jump to conclusions
- ✓ Offer help but let the survivor make decisions on actions



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Domestic violence: How can I help someone experiencing it?

- ✓ Keep in regular touch to check if they are safe
- ✓ Be discrete in communications to decrease risk of additional harm
- ✓ Identify services for survivors of violence and make information available discretely
- ✓ Be prepared to call emergency services if urgent help is required



# Strategies for Individuals

## Domestic violence: I'm experiencing it



- ✓ Look up local hotlines and digital services for survivors of domestic violence.
- ✓ Maintain contact with or reach out to people in your life you trust and who support you.
- ✓ Talk to a trusted person at work. They may be able to adjust work responsibilities to help.



# Strategies for Individuals

## Domestic violence: I'm experiencing it

- ✓ Make a safety plan
  - Identify a neighbor, friend, relative, colleague, or shelter to go to in case you need to leave the house immediately for safety.
  - Have a plan for how you will exit the house safely and how you will reach your destination (e.g. transport).
  - Keep a few essential items (e.g. identification documents, phone, money, medicines, and clothes) available, and a list of telephone numbers in case of an emergency.
  - If possible, develop a code with a trusted neighbor so they can come to your aid in case of an emergency.



# Strategies for Individuals

## Domestic violence resources

Digital resources:

- ✓ [MyPlan App](#)
- ✓ [Pod worksheet](#) (BATJC)

Country-specific [fact sheets](#) with national helpline numbers

Gender Equality in the Time of COVID-19 / Country domestic violence context

### Albania

**Rate: 47%**

In 2018, 47% of women 18-74 had experienced physical, psychological, or sexual violence committed by a partner.

**National helpline: 116 117**

The [Women and Girls Counseling Line](#) was established in 1996. The central headquarters can be reached at (04) 22 33 408 or [info@hotlinealbania.org](mailto:info@hotlinealbania.org).

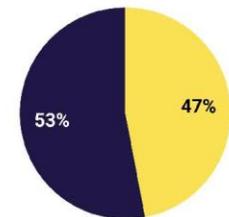
**Legal framework: Weak**



[Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations \(2006\)](#) This law aims to prevent and reduce domestic violence in all its forms, and protect members of the family who are subject to domestic violence, paying particular attention to needs of children, the elderly and the disabled.



[Criminal Code \(1995\)](#) A 2013 amendment criminalized all sexual violence, including within a marriage.



WHO Violence Against Women During COVID-19 [Q&A](#)



# Strategies for Individuals

## Domestic violence: I'm worried I'm hurting people I love

- ✓ If you feel yourself getting angry or annoyed, step away - into another room or outside.
- ✓ Count to ten and breathe in and out until you feel calmer or do anything else that may help you stay calm.
- ✓ Talk to a trusted friend, relative, or religious leader, and if necessary, seek help from local health services or specialized services if available.
- ✓ Recognize that everyone in your family is experiencing stress during this time.
- ✓ Demonstrate kindness and patience in your words and actions.
- ✓ Eliminate or reduce your alcohol consumption as much as possible.



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Domestic violence: Increase awareness

- ✓ Upskill your HR staff on taking a survivor-centered approach to handling disclosure of violence
- ✓ Share local & digital resources with your team
- ✓ Continue paying all workers so they have the economic resources to get out if necessary
- ✓ Consider training male and female employees about domestic violence



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Domestic violence resources



Resources for employers (Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence)



Virtual training exercise: A supervisor responds to an employee's experience of domestic violence (Workplaces Respond)



Handbook: Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work (UN Women)



Ending violence is our business: Workplace responses to intimate partner violence in Asia and the Pacific (UN Women)



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Workforce planning

- ✓ Consult with employees about availability to continue working.
- ✓ If feasible, provide paid leave to those unable to work due to impacts of COVID-19.
- ✓ Search for special COVID-19 government-sponsored or private loans to ease the financial burden of paid leave.
- ✓ If you must furlough staff, ask if there are any initial volunteers.



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Workforce planning resources



[Country policy responses to COVID-19 \(ILO\)](#)



[COVID-19 capital relief for entrepreneurs, non-profits, and businesses globally \(Duke Fuqua School of Business\)](#)



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Community engagement

- ✓ Workers interacting with home-bound customers in person or over the phone can refer women to domestic violence resources.
- ✓ Use your platforms to combat harmful misinformation and disinformation in your communities.
- ✓ Partner with local food banks to provide food relief for vulnerable customers.
- ✓ If financially possible, allow for customers to postpone payments to ease financial strain and support remote working.



# Strategies for Workplace Leaders

## Community engagement resources



Handbook: Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work (UN Women)



Social stigma associated with the coronavirus disease (UNICEF, WHO, & IFRC)



Energy access takes center stage in fighting COVID-19 and powering recovery in Africa (World Bank)



# Conclusion



What you can do:

- ✓ Treat employees and self with empathy and understand current emotional, mental challenges they face
- ✓ Adapt workplace policies and practices in the near and long-term to be flexible to remove stress and improve wellbeing
- ✓ Share information and knowledge & upskill staff



# Conclusion

## Action plan and resources

Downloadable PDF containing the action points from this webinar and all resources here:

<https://www.equilo.org/resource-hub>

Downloadable PDFs with country-specific domestic violence resource one-pagers are available here:

<https://www.equilo.org/gender-based-violence-and-covid-19>



# Discussion

What changes will you make for yourself, your employees, or your company to improve wellbeing and resilience?

