

# **Assessing Employee Culture of Wellbeing: UCCS's Story**

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# Overview

- **UCCS's Campus-Wide Wellbeing Framework**
- **Assessing Culture of Wellbeing**
- **Theoretical Foundations**
- **Data Collection Process**
- **Emerging Themes**
- **Connection to Theoretical Foundations**
- **Recommendations and Future Plans**

# UCCS's Campus-Wide Wellbeing Framework



*Campus Culture Of Care & Wellbeing Initiative*

## **Rooted in Wellbeing**

***Be bold. Be gold. Be well.***

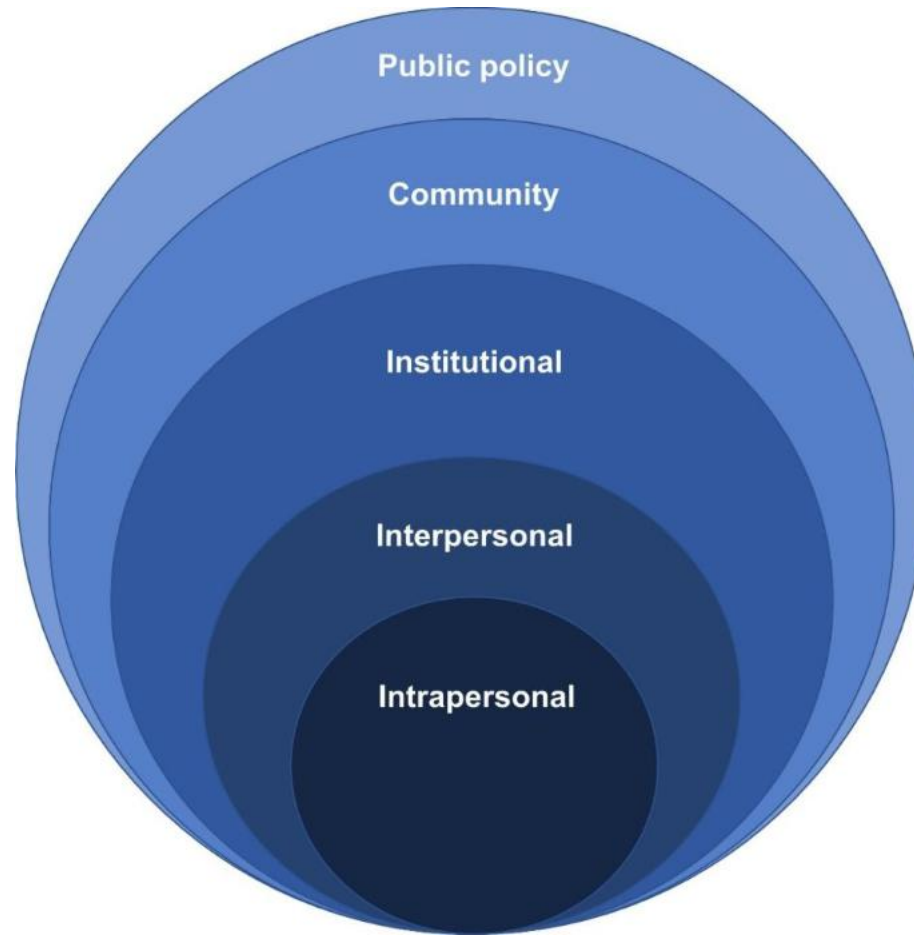
# Assessing Culture of Wellbeing: Review of the Literature

- U.S. full-time employees give ~10 hours, 5 days a week to work
- Leaving 6 hours or less for all other needs, tasks, leisure
- 46% of U.S. employees report struggling, 5% suffering while on job and only 22% report that their workplace cares about their wellbeing
- 51% of U.S. higher education employees report that their jobs have taken a negative toll on their life, 57% report burnout
- Burnout on campuses is related to scarce resources, higher workload, personal stressors, and more
- Younger faculty, those lacking strong peer relationships, and higher course loads were more prone to burnout
- University health promotion programs have been shown to be effective at increasing physical activity, and reducing stress, and anxiety

# Application of Theoretical Foundations

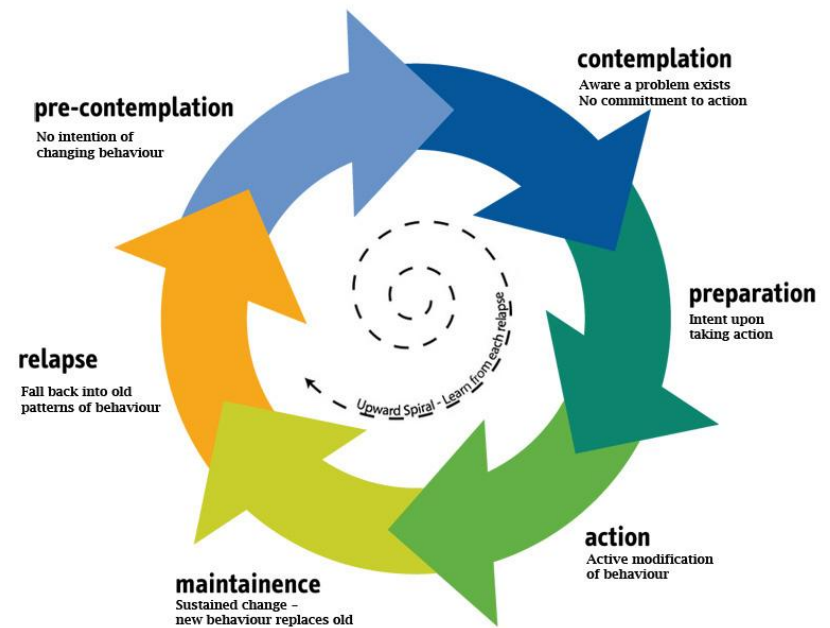
- Social Ecological Model (SEM) helps explain the levels of influence that act upon individuals' behavior
- Transtheoretical Model (TTM) helps explain the stages of human behavior change

# Social Ecological Model



# Transtheoretical Model

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance
- Relapse



**Transtheoretical Model of Change**  
Prochaska & DiClemente

# Data Collection Process

- **Research Questions**
  - What is the experience of UCCS faculty and staff with wellbeing at work?
  - What are the facilitators and barriers to promoting well-being at work for UCCS faculty and staff?
  - What campus social and ecological factors influence well-being promotion for UCCS faculty and staff?
- **5 1-hour focus groups**
  - 4 on Teams
  - 1 in person
- **Participant demographics**
  - 7 faculty
  - 13 staff

# Participants

- 13 Staff Members
  - 2 years-24 years
  - Average 7.62 years
  - Representing Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, and Administration and Finance Divisions
  - Position levels from entry to head of departments
- 7 Faculty Members
  - 3 months-24 years
  - Average 6.7 years
  - All Colleges represented except for Engineering and Applied Science

# Emerging Themes

## **RQ1: Experiences of Employee Wellbeing**

- Intrapersonal: Readiness for Wellbeing Engagement at Work
- Intrapersonal: Multi-Dimensional Wellbeing Foci
- Intrapersonal & Institutional: Incongruence between Personal Intention

## **RQ2 & RQ3: Campus Ecological Factors that Serve as Facilitators and Barriers to Wellbeing**

- Intrapersonal & Institutional: Time
- Interpersonal: Supervision: A Foundation to Wellbeing
- Interpersonal: Workplace Peer Wellbeing Support
- Institutional: Communication about Wellbeing Policies
- Institutional: Wellbeing Resources: Contributors and Detractors
- Community: Environmental Factors

# Intrapersonal: Readiness for Wellbeing Engagement at Work

- **Varied levels of readiness to focus on well-being at work**
  - *"I think it's a little difficult when I'm pretty much a team of one. If you include my boss, then it's a team of two. So, I think that kind of influences the ability to work on well-being when there isn't an accountability partner or somebody that can say, hey, let's go for a walk."*
  - *"But I've had times where I've sat at my desk, got here at 7:30 and realized by 1:00 I had not moved. So, I think it's really hard to focus on your health and well-being."*
  - *"I personally prioritize it a lot. I feel very fortunate. My department is very busy, but about a year ago we brought in a second staff member, which has alleviated a ton of pressure off of me because I was running the entire department. So I have found ways to make sure that I'm getting about 30 minutes of walk in almost every day when I'm here on campus and I walk with my coworkers a lot of the time. It is physical, but also. I would say also is partially mental as well because I just need to get out and just seeing something else and not staring at a screen is good for me mentally, but obviously physically as well."*

# Intrapersonal: Multi-Dimensional Well-Being Foci



PHYSICAL  
**Wellbeing**



SOCIAL  
**Wellbeing**



EMOTIONAL  
**Wellbeing**

*“It supports my well-being because we’re a campus where elevators never work. Staircases all over the building make us likely to take stairs, which as a little quick boost is a good way to get yourself going again.”*

*“If I’m in the office, I will take breaks and go visit a friend who’s on the hallway or go chat with somebody on the hallway occasionally. So, I do a little socialization breaks too.”*

*“[The VC] said that we could use our Wellness time if we’re doing a counseling appointment or something like that. So I’ve actually started prioritizing to do a weekly or bi-weekly counseling appointment and I use that time as my wellness time to be able to take care of myself that way.”*

# Intrapersonal & Institutional: Incongruence between Personal Intention and Institutional Culture

- **Personal desire to engage in wellness is present, but institutional factors challenge those intentions**
  - *"And one of the selling points is that [my department] cares about our people and supports some health and well-being. And there's so many opportunities on campus, but our department has grown so much and not been assigned more staff that it's difficult to take advantage of those opportunities because we're so busy trying to manage all of the needs of our students."*
- **Negotiation employee wellbeing with institutional needs and goals**
  - *"It sounds like this is an institutional level situation where leadership perhaps does not fully understand what you're facing on a day-to-day level or on a day-to-day basis and the band-aids that they're trying to put on it as far as oh well, take a 30-minute walk three times a week. It's just not cutting the mustard because they're not truly understanding or hearing what you need...So I guess in that sense then it would be more again on that institutional level of if the leaders and if leadership as a whole could truly sit down and have open and honest conversations and come to an understanding of what people actually face on a daily basis and hear from that place."*
- **Pursuing purpose as wellbeing in institutional environment**
  - *"I think that it absolutely the support is there. Sometimes I might think, sometimes I think it's a little misplaced though. Like, yes, we do have our Wellness breaks. Cool. We have new two new floating holidays this year, but a lot of times my well-being, my happiness comes from results and accomplishing things, and sometimes I feel like that's hard with where leadership is right now, a lot of the focus from leadership is on optics and our system is very political and sometimes that prevents a lot of us that are that do get that wellness from results in achievement. We don't. We aren't able to get that. So, leadership definitely does provide options for Wellness, but I don't think it's very holistic."*

# Interpersonal: Supervisors

- Facilitators
  - Supervisors as support
    - *“Supervisors are very, very a pivotal piece in this because if your supervisor is flexible and they trust you... then it’s easier to take a break and not feel bad or not feel that your supervisor is going to be scolding you or whatever. So I think that it’s very important the relationship that you have with your supervisor.”*
  - Supervisors’ focus on team wellbeing
    - *“I’ve created an environment where we can sit and chat—how was your weekend, how was your night? ... I encourage the well-being on the team.”*
    - *“No meetings on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons. My boss is a big proponent of it, so he actually puts it on our calendar to block our calendars.”*
  - Supervisors as role models
    - *“I happen to be working with two leaders currently who really also live that and encourage, like, you know what, turn off... you can’t get it all done. And so you still have to take care of yourself.”*
- Barriers
  - Supervisors not committed to their own wellbeing
    - *“I had one supervisor who did not model that in their own life, and so therefore as an employee it felt very uncomfortable to take our time off... If our supervisors are modeling the bad habit, then that’s what their employees are doing.”*

# Interpersonal: Peers

- Facilitators
  - Peer support of mental wellbeing
    - *“We don’t have to be here all the time, so I find that I prioritize my social well-being when I come into the office because otherwise I can’t see my colleagues... I guess my mental well-being goes along with my socialization here in the office.”*
    - *“I really only have one colleague that works with me full-time, and so I think we unload on each other a lot... just kind of leaning on each other when we’re stressed, which feels fairly constant.”*
  - Peers promote physical wellbeing
    - *“My colleagues go on walks, and whenever I’m not that busy and I can join them, I will do that... I know that there’s that option if I can go for a walk with them.”*
    - *“I started walking all the time by myself, and then I got one more friend coming with me, and then another... Now there’s like up to six of us walking at a time.”*
- Barriers
  - Peer support not universal
    - *“It might depend on what department you’re in or who you’re around. In health and wellness, there’s a lot more talk about it... but if you’re in [another college], I wouldn’t really say that the majority of folks are necessarily doing much for wellness.”*
  - Impact of non-supportive communities
    - *“These relationships are just completely formative in how we experience our well-being... when we haven’t had that, it’s been completely destructive and people are getting sick and being harmed.”*

# Institutional/ Organizational

- Facilitators

- C.R.E.A.T.E - Cultivating Resilience and Empowering Adaptation Through Expression

- *“I just took the peer supporter training and that was really neat. I’ve never been at any job that has that...the peer supporter program is kind of cool.”*

- Peer Supporter Class

- *“I just took the peer supporter training and that was really neat. I’ve never been at any job that has that...the peer supporter program is kind of cool.”*

- Health Care & Emp Benefits EAP

- *“I do utilize the university’s insurance... it was incredibly comprehensive. That contributes to my wellness...making sure that I can get the needs met that I have medically.”*

- Fear of losing due to poor engagement

- *“People just don’t come to these things...they don’t take advantage, and I think that it’s pretty sad.”*
    - *“...you know. Not that many people come, and for me it feels like... I really don’t want to come back to campus unless I’m here for work.”*
    - *“If there were some opportunities to take a two-hour workshop on a weekday...and not feel like I had to take PTO, I would be much more inclined to participate.”*

# Institutional/ Organizational

- Barriers
  - “Even if leadership understands...we need these opportunities to take care of ourselves... as long as there’s no budget, as long as we cannot hire more people to share the workload, how is that even going to happen? ...at the end of the day, we still need to finish the work.”
- Time
  - “Even if I try and block on my calendar, like I’m going to take a walk at lunch... that’s the first thing to get scheduled over always.”
  - “We have our wellness breaks...I put them on my schedule to go for a 30 min walk...by 10 in the morning that’s probably been scheduled over.”
- Parking
  - “I think parking is a nightmare... we’re kind of isolated...so it’s like a feat to try and go somewhere else.”
  - “I do want to be able to go somewhere else, not have to bring lunch once in a while...if you want to go out to eat, if you want to go off campus... you risk losing your parking spot. Parking is and has always been the biggest issue here at UCCS for as long as I have been here.”

# Institutional/ Organizational

## – Food desert

- *“The food options here I don’t find to be really good or helpful, which is why I end up brining my food.”*

## – Lack of Staff/Faculty Fitness area

- *“I was shocked that the gym membership on campus was so expensive, I feel like that’s something that’s really lacking.”*
- *“That is such a missed opportunity.”*

## – Communication fails to hit the mark

- *“Maybe there could be and HR component to kind of go over some of the other things we have...because you know, you don’t want people waiting until they’re in a mental health crisis to find out that we have EAP.”*
- *“They did the Wellness Break initiative... but it’s kind of falling out of favor...I’m not clear on what still exists and what doesn’t.”*

# Community: Culture and Geography

*"I know that we have the Wellness Breaks program where we take 30 minutes three times a week to do whatever, but I think most people don't take that opportunity... we're too busy...somebody needs us."*

- Facilitators
  - Strong Peer support & Faculty and Staff Programs
  - Walkability
    - "I think our walkability here is amazing, especially if you are looking for, you know, physical health benefits and burning calories and all of that."
- Barriers
  - Parking: Geographically limited
  - Food: Limited locations/options, parking makes it hard to leave for lunch.
  - Culture:
    - Accessible at all times; teams messaging, email, calls – urgency to reply
    - Urgency is modeled by leadership-at all levels
    - Meeting attendance pressure, back-to-back meetings
    - Higher level of autonomy - Self applied pressure, less priority for wellbeing – "I am needed so I can give up my lunch break"
    - Service to students is priority
    - Difficulty disengaging

*"I've had times where I've sat at my desk, got here at 7:30 and realized by 1:00 I had not moved."*



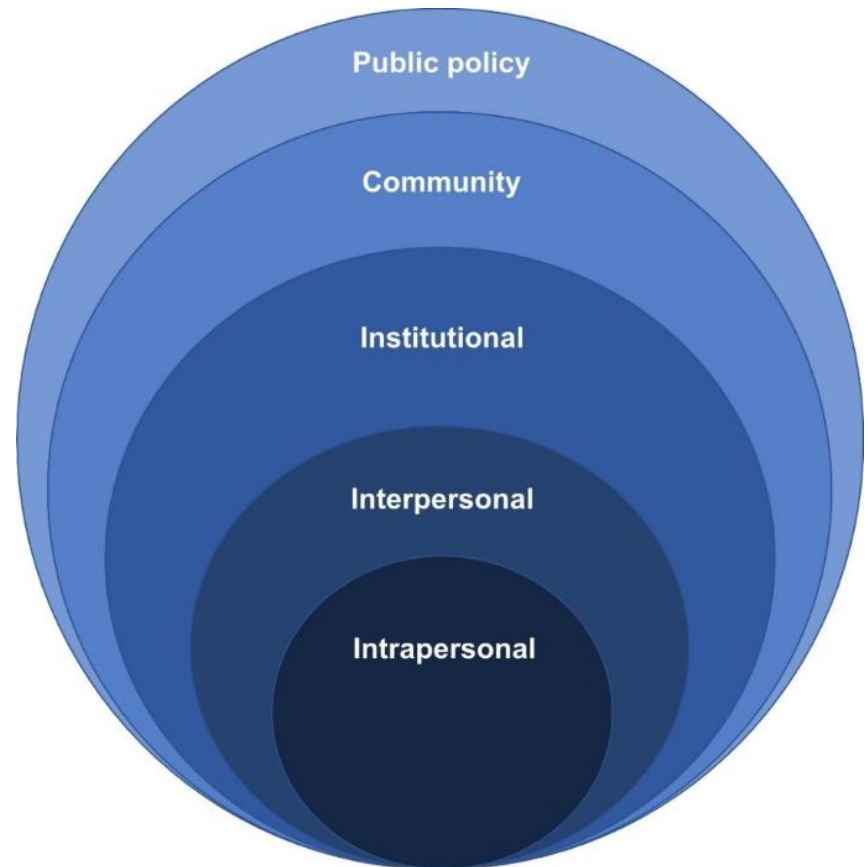
# Connection to the Social Ecological Model

## RQ1: Experiences of Employee Wellbeing

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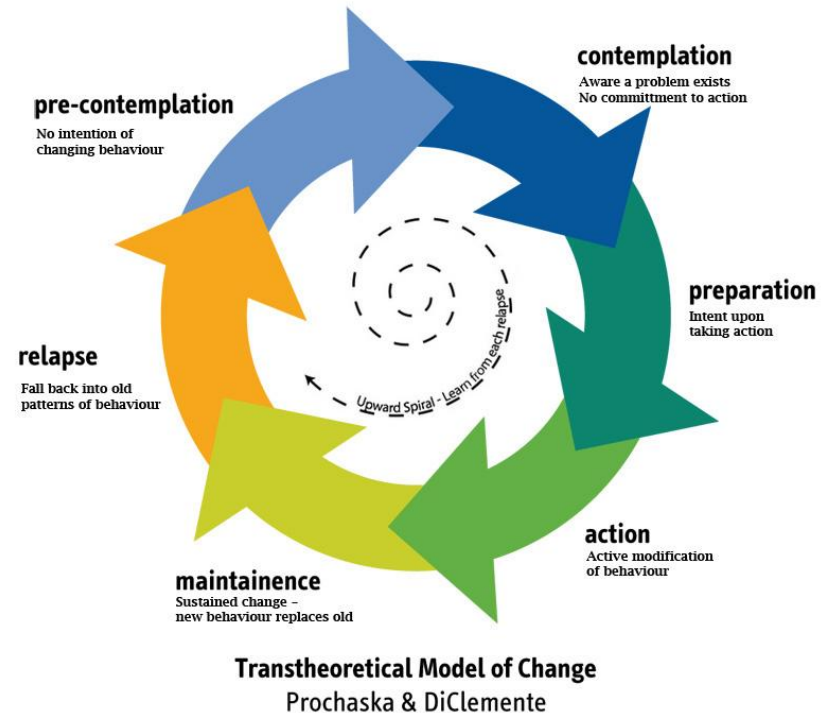
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# Connection to Transtheoretical Model

- **Individually:**
  - Faculty and staff are in various stages from precontemplation to action
- **Organizationally:**
  - Contemplation/Preparation stages
- **Interpersonal aspects of the SEM were seen as the largest contributor to wellbeing**
  - Use this knowledge to build the foundation to move beyond preparation and into action and maintenance



# Recommendations

- Employee onboarding: Include discussion of the culture of wellbeing and share resources for wellbeing engagement
- Train supervisors about the benefits of supporting employee wellbeing and the resources to do so
- Focus on building social relationships among employee peer groups
  - This can be the foundation to support the other aspects of the Social Ecological Model.
- Organizational leadership should focus on creating structural systems that allow for engagement in wellbeing resources
- Organizational leadership should consider the balance between urgency of meeting student needs with the importance of promoting employee wellbeing
- Common website needed for wellbeing resources for employees to remain abreast of opportunities and supports

# Plan to Disseminate Findings

- Presentation to the Campus Well-Being Committee
- Presentation to the Executive Leadership Team
- Publication of Findings in Peer-Reviewed Journal
  - *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*



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