Moderator: First of all, if you could each tell us about the work that you do at [U2] that would be awesome. We can just go around and take turns with that. I guess jump in whenever you want.

Participant: I'll jump in. My name is . I'm the Academic Advisor over in the [special education department]. With my role, it's a little bit unique. I serve about half of the students that are in our on-campus population, so I see a lot of face-to-face students, but half of my other role is also serving our online, distance education students. These are students still located within the state of Utah, but they're in an online program.

Participant: I can go next. My name is . I work at the College of Science Dean's office as a staff assistant. During COVID, however I was working for [U2] as a data entry specialist for the Gear Up grant and helping with data entry for them.

Moderator: Go ahead, . Go ahead.

Participant: I was thinking I would follow because I also work for a federal grant program, Trio, which is located on [U2] campus, and we have a couple of other programs in our statewide campus system, but I work with students who are low-income, first generation to graduate from college or who experience disability. My role on our team of five people is that I'm the Learning Specialist, and so I teach three courses each semester, and I also then work with our cohort. It's about 200 students in all of the years of the university.

In COVID, I was in the middle of teaching classes, and of course everything shut down and we went to remote. So, I finished the semester teaching over Zoom, but also we have a very high-touch program with our students' interaction, mentoring them and helping them overcome barriers to academic success and to graduation. It was a real focus to connect with them and help them through their various struggles that were happening immediately when we all went immediately to remote but also in the ensuing time until the pandemic was pretty much behind us in terms of operating the university.

Participant: I guess I'll go next. My name is . I am the Director of Student Services for the [business school]. I am over academic advising for the [business school] as well as the career coaches.

Participant: I'll jump in. I'm ; I manage the IT web team. During COVID, we were uniquely able to continue to do our work wherever we were, and so the challenges that came with managing a team of full-time staff and student staff was making sure that their emotional and physical needs were being

met in the work environment and making sure that we were connecting. There was a lot of, wow, we've never done this before. Okay, we're going to figure this out. What does that look like? What communication channels are we going to use? How are we going to be accountable to each other for getting things done? How are people going to reach out to us and actually be successful in getting ahold of us?

There was a lot of that and basically pivoting often. We left with two weeks to flatten the curve and didn't come back for nine months. That's where we were at.

Participant: I'll go next. I'm . I am the Systems Administrator for the admissions application at [U2], so I work with the admissions office and all sorts of other offices on campus. We saw a lot of different things that we had to pivot with admissions when we were working through COVID.

Participant: I'm . I am a programmer/analyst in the Registrar's office, and I support a lot of the people on this call with their data needs. I build recording dashboards so that they can pull the data that they need, and I supervise one student employee that helps me with this work.

Participant: I'm . I'm an Academic Advisor in Teacher Education and Leadership. During COVID, though I was a staff assistant in the History Department.

Researcher: [Moderator,] you're on mute.

Moderator: Sorry. I just noticed that. Thank you so much for sharing, everybody. Some of you touched on working remotely. If you could share with us more about that and any ways that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your work activities?

Participant: I'll take --

Participant: Go ahead.

Participant: Okay. Are you sure?

Participant: Yep. I'll go after you, .

Participant: Okay. Sounds great. It didn't change the nature of what we did. I mean we were providing support for websites, so the nature of what we did did not change, just the methods of communication that were being used. We had to learn how to use additional systems that we had not needed before; how to get the phones to forward, and what that looked like, and how to set

them up so they weren't ringing in the middle of the night if they decided to spam all the university numbers.

It was a lot of learning new systems and using them in different ways. Maybe they were already familiar, but we had to use them in different ways and then again kind of that human element of making sure that the team felt like, hey, we're in it together. It actually was, ended up being a net positive for our team because we really drew closer together. We do a lot of fun things on the team, so it became like sending crumble cookies because we would have had them in the office. It became playing jack box games after work hours just to kind of unwind. It became daily Zoom meetings that were 30-minute check-ins. How is everybody doing? We would normally do those kind of formal check-ins once a week because we saw each other all the time when we were in the same space.

It became, oh shoot, a student just left. We're going to hire a new one. How do you do that? Okay. We had to hire using Zoom, and then we had to train. We were only allowed to have so many people in the office space, so we had to do some Zoom and then we had to do in-office with masks. It was a whole lot of logistical stuff that we had never faced before, and a huge learning curve, but I was really impressed with the resilience of full- time and student staff in going, hey, we're just going to figure this out.

We're going to make it work.

They were also very good to respond and let us know if they were struggling. Hey, I'm really having a hard time. I think this might help, and then we were able to pivot and address that. It ended up being a net positive for our team, but it was definitely a heavy lift and a high learning curve.

Participant: For my position with Gear Up, at the time we were working, we were getting paid by the university, but because of the nature of the grant, we were embedded with the school district. We had a team of advisors that were in each of the high schools in [redacted] School District. When everything shut down and went remote, then those individuals had to figure out how to do their job of supporting students and assisting them and encouraging them in a remote way.

For me, things didn't change as much as it did for those advisors because I was data entry, which meant I would get reports from them about time spent with students and methods of delivery. I was still inputting that, however I was no longer in the space, so my home became my office. That was a really interesting thing. It was timely for me because as a mom, my students were home from school. Luckily, I had high school students, so they were able to function on their own as far as getting their work and

doing things online, but we were all there together. And so, I was really grateful to be able to work remotely from home and support them if they had problems or questions because it was really a mental health challenge for all of us.

To be together with my family was really helpful as we were all in that. It was an interesting shift for me as far as the workload because for me, I get really focused on my work. Sometimes, having it at home made me work more or think about work more because I wasn't leaving it behind. I wasn't leaving the office and shutting the door and switching gears and going home to do something else. My home was my office, and it really was a little taxing on me because work was there and I could just enter one more sheet or I could flex some time. It was just a really interesting thing to go through mentally and figure out a way to adjust that.

The other effect that was more difficult was that communication that was talking about within our team. That was not a way that we really communicated. We would come together weekly, so in the meantime, during the middle of that year, my boss decided that since we were remote he could actually move and still keep his job. So, he moved out of state and still did remote work because essentially it didn't matter if he was here in [redacted] or in Colorado, so that happened. But when we started to transition back to in-office, he was still remote, and so that changed the dynamic of that. It actually created more work for the people that were in the office, and that was a challenge such that it actually made me change my jobs.

Participant: I'll jump in. I, as a Director had 10 staff members that I was trying to help transition. kind of mentioned this a little bit. I was trying to help them transition to remote work or limited people in the office. We didn't shut down completely, but we didn't work everybody here because we're in pretty close quarters. And so, it was trying to help people, help my people find that work/life balance that mentioned. I'm at home. I've got kids. It's really easy to just keep working, or it's not so easy because I tried to convert half of this child's bedroom into my office, and they still want to come and get their toys.

Those were some of the big challenges when we first were sitting home, was how do I support my staff with their life/work balance? How do we make this a doable thing for them? I was fortunate enough that it was just my husband and I. I had my own office. I didn't have to do any of that at my house. I could transition quite easily to my home, but we had some people where we set up a rotating schedule of who could be in the office because we couldn't have as many people in the office, so I think they would do better here.

The other thing that was going on when we went home was I had two positions open that we were in the middle of hiring for. So, we got to hire two full-time people and onboard them during the pandemic. That's a little bit tricky, and one of the individuals were coming from a completely different state. They weren't even that familiar with [U2], and so it wasn't like somebody we had brought in from a community who knew [U2], who knew about the community. It was somebody coming from a completely different state that we had to onboard, and that was very tricky.

We, in fact had several staff meetings in my back yard because we could social distance. By the time summer hit, we would social distance in my back yard and have staff meetings there so that the new folks who were being onboarded got to see us, got in something other than the "Brady Bunch" format. *The Brady Bunch* was a fun show when I was a kid, but it's not actually that fun to live. That was one thing.

The other thing was we had some student-based workshop-type things that we were doing, professional-type development for them, and we had to hold it with that. We had to figure out how to meet students' needs, and how do we broadcast, and what do we use? I will say that has actually been a huge benefit for us because we have found that through different programs we can broadcast that, and then the information is now housed on our YouTube channel, and students can go back and look at it.

In fact, just this summer we used to be doing them live and then just keep the recordings. We, this past year looked at it and said, we have at most 20 people who are watching it live, but by the end of the week, one week later we'll have over 100 who have watched it. Is there a benefit to doing it live? We'd decided no, so we're prerecording some of those things right now and then just broadcast it out when it happens. I would say my biggest challenge, though, as the director was caring for my staff and making sure that their needs were being met. Who needs a microphone?

Who needs what set up in their home to make this work?

Participant: I would just say that there was a lot of fear through our country, through our state, through our communities, through the world. Having this focus group and thinking back about it, it was so uncertain. Nobody would ever have expected -- I don't know -- I think perhaps as a nation we felt a lot more vulnerable than we had. Many things, like the bird flu, so many diseases, Ebola, lots of devastating things that we certainly worried about and cared about the people in the other parts of the world that were experiencing them, but nothing like that had ever happened in our lifetimes coming here and making such a big impact.

I think those first days and weeks were just really so uncertain, and no one knew exactly what was going to happen for quite a long time. Trying to support students and trying to support staff and just deal with the transitions was really hard because no one knew how long or what would happen. I think for our team at [redacted], we did try to do some of that rotating. The university wanted someone, or a couple of people, supporting the physical offices for a while. Then, that kind of changed, but I live near my mother, who is 87 now but then was in her 80s. I also live near my mother-in-law, who is severely disabled, and so keeping them safe was a really big thing.

We were then totally responsible to get them groceries, to help them with every possible need because they could not go out at all. And so, my team just said, you are remote. Limit your exposure totally. I just really appreciated that we could help each other in different ways to still be able to reach our goals of taking care of our students. It was a very scary time for them. Some of them took leave of absences. A lot of them moved home. We had students in dorms that weren't sure if they would have to keep paying. There were just so many, so many unknown answers and lots of questions and problems.

I do think, like everyone else has shared, taking care of teams and each other was really important for them being able to be in a good place as an organization to take care of our students.

Moderator: I'm hearing a lot of ways in which COVID was really tough and also some ways in which it affected jobs negatively, some ways in which it affected jobs positively. I'm curious if you all can tell us more about your experience with flexibility. Was there a change in flexibility in your job now compared to pre-COVID work? That could be that your job is more flexible now, flexible in different ways. What changes have you seen with flexibility?

Participant: I can address that a little bit. The January before we were all sent home, I had had a conversation with one of my career coaches whose husband was scheduled to do an internship in Chicago. She had come in and said, is there any possible way I can continue to work and go to Chicago and we could do this remote? We looked at it in lot of different ways. The management team and the management school looked at it in a lot of different ways and came back with, no, it cannot be done. This is a face- to-face, student-facing, we need to be here for our students. We would really love to support you and your husband in this, but it can't be done.

And so, she decided she wasn't going to go to Chicago with him. She'd stay here work. If somebody, if that same situation happened to me next

January, I could say, we can work this out. This is something we can do. While it was really hard, it has opened up a lot of possibilities. At the university, pay is something that it's hard to get your people paid, to get them paid enough. It's hard to get everybody the raise that you feel deserves the raise, but I have been given the flexibility, and I am very grateful for this, to say, we can't really give you a raise, but we can give you some time to work remotely if that will help.

For some, that helps. For others, they're like, please don't send me home. I've got kids. I've got a wife. I can get so much more done here. Please don't send me home. But for some, having that flexibility is really nice. Learning new tools, I mean Zoom; how many of us had heard of Zoom before March of '20? Hardly anybody had, but it now has become a tool that we utilize regularly.

Was it bad? Yeah, there were some hard parts to it, but there were really, I think, some good things that came out of it, and it did change some opinions. Now, I wouldn't let everybody work from home all the time because we are a student-facing office, but I can now see a way that we could possibly say, "You need three months? Let's look at it."

Participant: Something that I really thought was a positive about working from home, and I'm going to say it's really specific to the types of jobs that you do -- student facing could never do this -- but as a data entry person, I absolutely loved being able to flex my time. At first, I felt quite guilty about it thinking it needed to be still the 8:00 to 3:00 job that I had, but especially with data entry it's very mind-numbing.

When you get bored of what you're doing, your brain can start to play and then you make mistakes. For me to be able to work for an hour and a half and then take a 45-minute break or go to lunch with my son, who was still at home, and be able to interact and not think about work and then get back to it -- and even if I didn't get done with my work day until 8:00 p.m. or maybe I did a whole bunch in the morning and then we did family things together in the afternoon and then I went back to work after dinner for several hours -- it was so much better. I felt like I was more efficient. I felt like I was doing higher-quality work. I wasn't making as many errors, and I was happier with the work load.

I remember thinking at the time, I really wish I can flex my job after this is all over. I really wish I could decide, you know what? My brain is fried and my eyes are square, and I need to take a couple of hours and come back to this. That was really a good thing, but the reality is our work days don't line up that way, and it doesn't work for the job I have now, which is office-facing. I'm answering phones and I'm answering email, and things

need to be done with an open office, so I can't do that now, but I did really love that. I hope that in some roles that people have that flexibility because I think it actually turned out to be better work as far as the quality and the efficiency of it.

Participant: To echo what said, that flexibility was an added bonus primarily because I work the online group of students that I work with that are in my caseload. They are employed. They are either para educators in special education classrooms or they're teachers in special education classrooms, so most of the time when they needed to meet with me, it was either during lunchtime or out of office hours. That was very difficult to navigate, and having that flexibility of saying, okay, great. I'm going to work during core hours for my on-campus students, so from 10:00 to 3:00, and then be able to take a break and then be able to jump in much later in the evening for my online students once they had that availability.

Creating that flexibility helped out a lot, and it felt like I didn't have to be at the office from 10:00 to 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. I was able to be at the office for my on-campus students, then come home and have that flexibility of, okay, I'm going to open my schedule, and if students need me available at 6:00, 7:00, or 8:00 p.m., I'll be available at that time, but I can still be home. That was definitely an added bonus for my specific caseload.

Another bonus; the way I see it, before COVID I used to go all the distance campuses. I would do a two-week travel period and go to all of the statewide sites and visit my students there, but it was very limiting. I would tell them, okay, great. I'm in the lab on Thursday and Friday from these times, and if you're not available then I just have to move on. It was just very difficult to be able to see all of my caseload.

When COVID hit and everything jumped over to Zoom, everybody was forced to get to use Zoom and know how it worked. Just seeing the ease of it, that opened the door for my students to say, oh, hang on. I can meet via online. I don't have to wait until my advisor comes in person. I have a lot of non-traditional students who are very wary of technology. They just thought, aw, it's just too hard to navigate, but when they were forced to navigate it, they realized oh. Never mind. I can meet online, and we can set this up. So, that opened up the door for me not having to see them face- to-face and still having an equivalent meeting via Zoom.

The same thing, oddly enough for on-campus; I open my appointments, and the way that my appointments are set up is that they have three ways they can set up an appointment with me. They can either meet via face-to- face, Zoom, or phone. Surprisingly enough, for my on-campus students, they prefer to meet via Zoom even though my office is on campus. I think,

in a lot of ways it just opens the door to them to say, well, this is my comfortable space. I want to meet in a space where I'm comfortable when I'm having a hard conversation. Having that be an option, having that post- COVID scenario, it's been a great advantage.

Moderator: This is super-helpful. Thank you all so much for what you're sharing.

Also, I see people posting in the chat. That's awesome, too. I really, really appreciate that. Does anybody want to share anything else about flexibility before I ask the next question?

Participant: I would like to share. I started out as a staff assistant. I was actually only two months on the job when COVID hit, so I was trying to learn everything. I'm a people person, so it was extremely difficult for me to learn the job not being around people, and there was no training at all. They would tell me, oh, go ask this person who might know the answer, but I didn't know that person and I didn't even know their correct spelling of their name so I could email them. There was just, honestly training during COVID was the worst thing ever.

Also, I feel like we didn't know anything about Zoom, so we didn't have meetings for a month or two. So, I was just in the dark for a month. I was also pregnant during that time, and I had a baby in August of 2020, my first kid. It was just this whole fear of COVID with pregnancy and that kind of thing, too. Then, after the baby came there was no maternity leave because I hadn't been there long enough. I just had to work from home after the six weeks initial short-term disability. And then, I had to go in once a week anyway, but I did have the flexibility to stay home and watch my kid. The problem was my spouse was also working from home, and his job didn't allow him as much flexibility.

So, I had to do all the child care on top of all my job, and it was extremely stressful. It was really hard to find somebody to watch my kid during COVID because no wanted to get sick. The day cares were all backed up or closed down. Yeah, that was extremely stressful, and then I got a different job. I got this job in August of 2022. I think if I had gotten it as an advisor with all of these appointments and everything before COVID, I wouldn't have nearly as much flexibility when my kids get sick, but now when they're sick I can just do any of the Zoom appointments from home and then I can ask the students who are coming in in person if they still want to do Zoom or if they want to be taken by another advisor.

Luckily, I have three other advisors in my department that could take an appointment, so I have a really good situation now because of COVID just with that. My old job was an 8:00 to 5:00, you're there, you're the office person keeping it open, and this job is a lot more flexible and allows me to

work from home if I need to, which I don't think was as much of a thing before. Working from home wasn't really an option, so I really appreciate that now.

Moderator: That's a super-helpful perspective. Thank you. I also would like to ask about if there was a change in communication levels in your job compared pre-COVID. Were communication levels healthier pre-pandemic? What about during the pandemic? How are communication levels in your job now?

Participant: I'll pipe in and just say it's different. We were very much in-person. If you ever stop by my office, and maybe you have, or you've tried to call pre- pandemic, you would probably hear some hum of just people chatting in the background. We really like the fact that we are connected. There's the side conversations that lead to the friendships that lead to the trust that lead to better collaboration. That didn't happen organically with only remote-type tools available, so we had to build that in.

That was something where we can't lose this. This is important to our culture. It's important to collaboration. We need to have these relationships, so it had to be deliberate. Because of that, though, because we started really heavily using some of these tools, we now do even more, not just in person when we're talking to each other, but we also use those tools. That has been a good gain, but it was a bit stressful for a while because we're like, I feel like I haven't talked to you in a couple of days. Are you okay?

That just wouldn't even happen today because it would be really easy to send a quick Slack message, "Hey, just want to send you an update on my vacation," or, "Hey, I just want you to know that we're thinking of going to the food truck this afternoon. Anyway want to come?" It becomes more of, hey, put it out there in case someone is at a meeting. It's improved in short. It was stressful to adjust, but it's improved the overall communication landscape.

Participant: I guess I want to chime in that for my job there's two different aspects of it. Pre-pandemic, I was physically located in the Registrar's office, but a lot of the work that I was doing was for outside of the Registrar's office. For the outside-the-Registrar's office, I feel like it helped. It made it better because everybody was forced to learn Zoom as we've been talking about, and the screensharing feature of Zoom is my favorite. Previously, I would be on the phone with them and trying to walk them through it, but now we screen-share and it's way better. For that aspect, I think that kind of communication -- having the screensharing feature and everybody being up-to-speed and knowing the same technology -- has been helpful.

As far as in the office, or inside of the Registrar's office, there are a few individuals that I work with more than others. We've had a lot of turnover, so I feel like for me getting to know everyone -- and they're all in the office besides me; I'm the only remote one -- and so getting to know some of those other team members that maybe I would learned more about being in the office because my office is right by the microwave. So, they all came and walked by and said hi. I feel like I learned more about them, but now that it's in the remote setting I feel that I don't build as many of those connections with those who are in the same physical space just because I'm not working with all of them in my role within the Registrar's office.

Participant: I would say our communication methods have improved, and we have more that we utilize. One thing I noticed when we all came back; people were used to a very different setting at work. Coming back was hard because there was noise around those of us who didn't have noise. Others were so excited to be getting so much done because they didn't have the distractions from little bitties around them that they were enjoying the quiet.

We've had to work a little bit to get our doors opened back up and to have the inter-office, face-to-face conversations or culture that we had before because while we're communicating a lot, a lot of it is by Slack. We still have some people who work from home some days, and so we do Zoom in our meetings, so it has changed our communication. I think it's good, but it is different.

Participant: I can speak a little to an extrovert situation because I need people. For me, the communication for work stayed the same during COVID and we were all remote. I still got the same number of emails and the reports still got sent to me, and I got the same amount of texts and things like that that I expected. What I missed was the water cooler stuff, and what I missed was the interpersonal. That was not happening, and thank goodness I had family there or I would have been in really big trouble.

One of the reasons; in addition to the supervisor situation that made me change jobs was because I realized I need a job that has people around it. And so, I came up on campus and I came to an office, a dean's office that was going to have an advisor there with lots of students and lots of traffic. I picked a job where I could be customer service and phones, and I have communication.

The interesting thing, though is that the dean's office people have told me that compared to before COVID and now, the dean's office is cricket-quiet

because students actually choose to not meet in person with their advisor to do it on Zoom. I totally understand that. It's so much easier for them as far as time cost to meet with their advisor wherever they're at on their phone as opposed to coming on campus and finding a place to park and getting to the dean's office and coming in, meeting face-to-face. It makes sense, but that traffic that we had before is no longer there.

People here in this office are able to flex their remote schedule a little bit more. Some of them are working remote more often, and so there's not as many bodies in the office. People that have been here before have told me that it's different now, and there's not as much inter-communication as far as friendliness. I mean they're friendly, but there's not as much friendships being developed because people are just less together. The people that are here have been wonderful, and I've loved it, but it wasn't what I anticipated as far as a really hopping, busy, noisy environment. I still crave that, so my friends have to fill in the gaps when I get home.

Moderator: , oh, sorry . Go ahead.

Participant: Our office has had something similar. We have more, certainly a lot more than before, but in those first months after returning it was really slow. We still do meet with students quite often over Zoom. We have some traffic, but it is not as much as it used to be. I don't think that's necessarily bad.

We can find different ways to support them and help them feel really valued and make those connections and give them those tools, but it is like you said. It's a lot of times a lot more efficient for them to hop onto Zoom.

Participant: I did want to say one more thing. I was talking about the difficulties that the supervisor, being in another state, provided once we did start to transition back into the office. What we found was that our workload, meaning myself and the other lady in the office, was heavier because our boss wasn't there. He would still communicate with us and have meetings with us, but we did not realize how much work and collaboration was happening at the spur of the moment and in conversations just across the cubicles and how much work and inspiration. Hey, that's a great idea.

Those conversations don't happen in email because it's not spontaneous. You're not feeding off of each other in an idea session.

That was really something that was missing in the program at the time. In addition to that, the lady and I that were in the office; we kind of picked that back up and then we were carrying that burden. It wasn't a role that really was ours. It was the supervisor's, so we were doing that behind the scenes and then it was happening, and he felt like, well, it's running a good ship by itself, but he didn't realize how much we were paddling under the

surface to keep that level of quality. It just burned me out, and that's why I decided to change jobs because I couldn't do his and mine.

That was a communication issue because he couldn't do that synergistic thing from behind a computer screen and only on a time schedule. It was something that had to happen in the office organically, and that was really missing.

Participant: I was just going to chime in onto what was saying as far as the -- oh gosh, I lost my train of thought -- but the amount of students that would go into our main offices, so much that we even considered restructuring our main office area. We have our department head's office, a nice student space room for students to come in and chat and sit down and collaborate with faculty members and a conference room, but we're trying to restructure it just to make our conference room bigger because students don't come to that main office anymore.

It's really interesting to see that dynamic. During COVID, we hired three faculty members in our department. Keep in mind that our department is also very small. There are about 30 of us, and that hiring process was relatively painful because getting to know someone via Zoom that were also not locals made a big impact throughout COVID. We hired them at the beginning of COVID, and throughout that timeline we got to know each other really well even though it was via Zoom or it was over the phone. We were able to collaborate because we were forced to collaborate through student issues, but it was really nice.

It was nice to be able to know that we could still connect and still build the community at a distance. I don't know if it's just because we were pushing harder to maintain our department's strength, but it worked really well for our department as far as fast-forwarding to now. When you go to our department, it's relatively half-empty because most of us are very comfortable with having that flex job. That flex job stayed, and it's been nice. We use Slack. We use Zoom. We have our monthly faculty department meetings, and I feel like we are still able to maintain that relationship even though many of us are at a distance.

Moderator: Awesome. This is super-super helpful. Thank you all so much. I'm cognizant of the time, so I want to go ahead and move on to the next question, which is about; based on your experiences during the pandemic, what differences did you see between men and women and their experiences at work? Were the changes different for men and women, and if so how?

Participant: I can chime in to this as far as I am a mom, and I felt like the load of daycare and trying to figure that out; it fell mostly on me. Not because my husband didn't want to support me, but my husband's employer was not as flexible as my employer was with me. I don't know if it was just kind of one specific circumstance and it was just me, but that's how I felt. I felt like, well, I have to take the burden, and I had to juggle everything because I was given more flexibility than my husband was. It was, you had to pull teeth to get my husband's employer to give him some time to run our daughter to have my sister-in-law take care of her because I have a meeting that I couldn't shift around. There was definitely quite a bit of disparity.

Participant: I think that it was partly because of traditional roles, but women had an extra challenge with taking care of children for sure. I had a couple of high schoolers at the time, and they obviously don't need as much help with homework and so forth as younger children, but really it took a while. Of course, some of our professors here failed miserably in transitioning to providing good education for their students, and some were fantastic. So, it was a mixed bag at the university, but it was the same for the high school students. Some of them really did not know what was going on with what the teacher chose.

There were a lot of platforms that were available to use, and no one really was familiar that much with Zoom, and so some did other things. It really was important to have someone there to take care of the young people, and I think traditionally that usually falls on moms and made an extra challenge. I also think it was a time where those roles were questioned a little bit, and so there was some discussion around making it more equitable when both parents were trying to work and provide a good space for their kids.

So, I think it was both ways. I think initially there was more challenge for women, but I have also seen where husbands and wives kind of stepped, just balanced that role better so that it was spread more equitably, which is often great for the kids, too.

Moderator: I'd love to hear more about that. Were the changes more difficult for one gender versus another? I've heard a little bit about that. I'd love to hear more. And also, were the changes more beneficial for one gender versus another?

Participant: I didn't see that much according to gender. I saw a lot according to job type. My work and my job was such that I could be at home, but I have a husband who was deemed an essential worker, and he had to go every day to work. We developed a lot of processes. I mean he got undressed in the

garage and came in through the back door, which our laundry room was right there, and put all of his clothes into the washer and started just the washer with his clothes in it. And then, he went and showered immediately. All I could say -- and that's not because of our gender -- that was because of our work.

I mean I sat there and thought, I'm so glad to stay home where I don't have to worry about all of this. I mean he'd call me and say, "I'm in the driveway. Is there anybody there?" Because he was going to walk from our laundry room to the bathroom nude. I'd be like, just me, or I'd have to say, yep. Let me bring something to the laundry room for you. I don't know if it was as much gender-specific as role-related or job-related. I think, was it that kind of talked about her husband's job being more tight. That was the case in my household also.

Moderator: Any other thoughts about that? I wonder. I think what I'm hearing so far is that is that it's not so much innate to gender how the changes affected people. It's more innate to job, but the exception to that maybe is if you have kids that are home doing school at home. And that tends to fall more on a female partner. Is that what I'm understanding?

Participant: Well, for my kids even though they were older, they just wanted their mom. It was hard. They consistently turned to me for comfort, and I was the mental health care professional for them and they for me, likewise. So, we lived in Minecraft and built a gorgeous, wonderful world together.

Participant: Nice. I think it's interesting to think about the way ages were impacted, too, generations were impacted. As I mentioned, my mother and mother- in-law are elderly, and they were so entirely isolated. It was very difficult for them. We didn't hug them for months and didn't have dinner with them. We would do design sidewalk chalk outside the door with pictures so they could see that, or we would do different things to try and help them to feel loved, but it was very interesting to me that they were the most vulnerable population, most isolated, and most at risk, but they were so resilient.

I thought about some of our teenagers and some of our students. I love them all. I have no judgement for them at all, but our current generation, they have so much suicidality, so much difficulty with coping. They were the least likely to actually die or have really long-term, serious consequences, and it taught me a lot about the resilience of the older generation that lived through the Depression that lived through World War II that had been already through really hard things.

Even though they were the most at risk, they were so resilient, so positive, and really just a great strength. I learned from that the importance of connecting, in my personal case, my children, to make sure they have a strong connection and can learn from those older people who had so much grace and resilience when they were at such risk. That's a real benefit, but I think the children, each different age group through this had different kinds of difficulty and impacts to them. Some of them, we don't really fully know as the impact to our children, but so many of them really just didn't get the learning that they needed at all for a variety of reasons.

Moderator: That's a really inspiring example. I love that. Seeing their resilience; that's really cool. I recognize we're coming up on the hour. If anyone has time to stay for an extra 10 minutes or so that would be fabulous. We're kind of wrapping up. I have one more main question after this, but if you need to hop off right at 2:00, I totally understand, so definitely feel free to do that. Before I move on to that last question, does anybody want to share anything else about gender and any differences you saw in genders in what's beneficial, what's more difficult, anything about that?

Participant: I'll share one thing. This isn't from my personal; it's just an observation. I work with a lot of men. In IT, it's pretty common. What I found is what they would talk about when they would come, when we were transitioning back. It was that they were kind of surprised that their spouse, who in some of the case was an at-home parent before COVID hit, that they might possibly need some extra assistance during this insanely-crazy time where suddenly the kids are all home and somebody is in charge of their education and it's her.

They seemed rather -- their perspective was interesting -- let's put it that way, where they kind of looked at it and were like, why do I need to be involved in this? You just handle that. That worked, that kind of division of labor had worked before, but this was a unique experience where she was being asked to take on a lot more and the expectation, which I felt was reasonable, that she would have extra support from the other parent of said children. It was just really interesting to hear their perspective on like, wow, that was really hard for me.

In my mind, I'm thinking it wasn't for her, but also it was just kind of an interesting thing to watch some of those dynamics even in a more traditional, she's-at-home, runs-the-household split of labor. He goes off to the office. When he wasn't doing that and he was at home, they didn't necessarily adjust easily. They had to kind of come to a whole new approach on how they're going to handle this because yes, the traditional roles didn't necessarily fit 100 percent in the new environment.

Moderator: Awesome. Thanks for sharing that. Based on pandemic decisions for work activities, what types of changes for your work are still in effect? I know some of you have mentioned still working remotely, at least part of the time. Some of you said you've gone back. What types of changes are still in effect now? Actually, while we're talking about that if you all wouldn't mind posting in the chat, are you still mostly working remotely at this time? Is it kind of half-and-half, or are you fully back on campus? That would be awesome. Feel free to jump in if you have any thoughts you want to share about changes that are still in effect or not still in effect.

Participant: One change that I see somebody -- , yes -- is there has been more flexibility and in fact more encouragement to not come in to work when you're sick. I mean I do this at my office. If you have the sniffles or you've got a sore throat and you would have pushed through prior to COVID, I now say please don't come in. We don't want that. If you feel like you can work, let's see if we can transition stuff to remote, but I encourage my staff to stay home when they're sick, and it's been interesting because we have not had massive illness go through our office because we are closely located. It used to be one person got a cold and pretty soon it went through the whole office.

But because we've been saying stay home, I mean they're good practices that we should have had all along, but we're now allowing our people to actually do that or at least in my office. I'm encouraging them.

Moderator: That's awesome. Anybody else? Do you feel like there has been any kind of change in equity in your job? If not, that's totally okay too. Thank you so much for all of you for being here, for sticking around for this. The last thing is just, is there anything else that you would like to share with us, any questions we should have asked that we didn't?

Participant: [Moderator], I think people are more willing to look outside of the traditional box because of things we were sure couldn't happen that we have proved could happen. And I think that is a really wonderful thing that has happened through COVID is people are more willing to look for that flexibility or that unique resolution to an issue.

Moderator: I have learned that, the silver lining, right?

Participant: I echo that. I think it also goes to I think a lot of people realized what it is they enjoy about their jobs. For me, I'm an extrovert. I already put a comment in, and it was harder on me to not be in person, face-to-face with my team because I thrive on being with other people. I mean my team jokes that I go to meetings because I need to talk to other people. I actually go to meetings because I kind of have to for my job, but I love, I'm happy

when I come out of a meeting. I'm doing this one from my home, and I'll go back to my office in just a minute, and I'm really going to go back happy, with a bounce in my step because I just spent time on Zoom with people, but I also get to go back to my actual, in-person peeps, and I'm super-excited about it.

Because I love that, and I didn't realize how much that mattered to me. I've also found team members who are like, I actually do better when it's quiet and I'm not being distracted. And so, we all kind of come back from the pandemic going, I've learned something about myself that I am then going to apply to different situations.

For the last couple of years, if a team member needed to work on a very heavy project where they basically need to put their head down and really focus, they would do a work-from-home day. They had the office space set up. They would put headphones in, and they could crack at it because that really worked well for them just because, again they were aware that I do better if, fill in the blank. So, I think that's been something that's come out, just awareness of there's more to just I like my job. It's good. It's more about, I like this, this, and this about my job. These things make it so I'm more productive. These things make it so that I can come away happy that I spent a day here or working with people.

Participant: One thing that I found out that I really missed about not being remote was to be able to move around a little bit more, to shift where I was working, to take my laptop onto the couch, to go outside onto my deck and work for a little while. I really miss that, and one thing that I've brought from that into my new job is I may try out a standing desk, which I did not have before, and I also bought myself a treadmill that goes under the desk. So, I can actually walk while I'm working and just being able to stay moving a little bit more than I did before is good.

What was not good about remote is because when I would go and work on the couch, my posture was garbage. I'd be working from my bed. I mean it was just not great. I mean at first we thought it was temporary, so I would just cobble together an extra monitor and my laptop and I was peering at that when I really needed three screens for my data entry position. When I finally just got tired of working from the kitchen table and realized this was going to be a long haul, I went back to the office and dragged home all my good monitors and all my stuff and bought myself a good office chair and made myself a good space.

And so, I think it made me more aware of where I was working and how I was working and what my body needed physically. That was a really good lesson and an important thing to learn.

Participant: I agree with what just said. I definitely had more of a focus on getting the setup that I want than in the office it was just more about this is what was given to me. I'll just deal with it. This desk is too big for me, but I'm going to use it anyway. So, it's definitely that I have more control. I no longer freeze because when we were in the office, the summer is the coldest time.

Participant: It's called women's winter.

Participant: Right. And then, I've also found that I'm better at setting boundaries. I used to always go in to work early. I would work through lunch. I would go home late, but now I don't eat outside of the kitchen, so then I have to go down to the kitchen and actually take a break to eat my lunch. I'll go for a walk around the block. If I get stumped on a project, I'm like, yeah. I'll go take my walk now because then it'll help me take a break to think about it and then come back. So, I feel like I'm a lot better at setting boundaries than I was when I was in the office.

Participant: I love that and have mad respect for you, because I actually found it to be the opposite for me. I would be like, well, I'm already up. I might as well go work now, and then at the end of the day I didn't stop because I had things I was working on. So, I love that you have built that. You learned that about yourself, and you built it into your day. That's fabulous.

Participant: I changed too. Where I was working remote in data entry, I'd be like, well, I need to finish entering these three reports before I get done. And sometimes they'd get a snag or things would not line up or whatever, and I felt like I needed to work until that project was done. Through COVID, I learned that no, I need to work until the time says I'm done, and I need to be more aware of the clock and just put a pin in where I was, make good notes about where I need to start, and then I could walk away from it. That was a really hard thing for me to do, but I had to shift when it was done. It wasn't the end of the project. It was my time, and that made me a lot healthier about work/life balance.

Moderator: Thank you so much, everybody for everything you've shared. This has been super-helpful, so many great insights, and it was fun to talk to you all. So, thank you so much for everything.

Participant: Thank you.

Moderator: Awesome. Thanks.

Researcher: Have a great day, everybody.