Remote work since Covid-19 is exacerbating harm
What companies need to know and do

	Men only	Nonbinary	Women only

Asian
- Men only: 16% 2% 82% — 105
- Nonbinary: 30% 28% 87% — 33
- Women only: 30% 40% 82% — 360

Black
- Men only: 41% 4% 77% — 41
- Nonbinary: 14% 14% 55% — 10
- Women only: 46% 27% 86% — 121

Latinx
- Men only: 11% N/A 71% — 59
- Nonbinary: 67% 67% 100% — 10
- Women only: 26% 33% 83% — 75

White
- Men only: 1% 1% 81% — 574
- Nonbinary: 1% 41% 87% — 157
- Women only: 1% 36% 89% — 804

Multiracial
- Men only: 8% 16% 82% — 51
- Nonbinary: 9% 40% 84% — 33
- Women only: 26% 34% 86% — 136

Percentages of people at intersections of race/ethnicity and gender experiencing harm

- Race-based hostility
- Gender-based harassment
- Anxiety
- Number of people

Please read inside cover for more detail

Notes on the cover visualization:

Due to small sample size and privacy concerns, respondents who identified as Indigenous, Middle Eastern, and individually specified race/ethnicity are not represented in the chart.

For Indigenous/First Nations respondents: Race-based hostility increased for 1 of 2 men and 1 of 3 women and/or nonbinary people. Gender-based harassment increased for 1 of 3 women and/or nonbinary people. Anxiety increased for 2 of 4 men and 3 of 4 women and/or nonbinary people.

For Middle Eastern respondents: Race-based hostility increased for 3 of 9 women and/or nonbinary people. Gender-based harassment increased for 4 of 8 women and/or nonbinary people. Anxiety increased for all 6 men and 14 of 17 women and/or nonbinary people.

For respondents who individually specified race/ethnicity: Race-based hostility increased for 4 of 12 women and/or nonbinary people. Gender-based harassment increased for 3 of 11 women and/or nonbinary people. Anxiety increased for 6 of 9 men and 11 of 17 women and/or nonbinary people.

Our gender identities center people's self-identification (e.g., "women" includes both trans and cisgender women). Due to small sample size and privacy concerns, we use the term "nonbinary people" to encompass all people who identify with genders that do not exist on the gender binary, including gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, two-spirit, genderqueer, bigender, and/or as individually specified.

"Asian" includes people who identified as East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Asian American, or any combination of these identities.

"Black" includes people who identified as African, African American/ Black, or both.

"Latinx" includes people who identified as Hispanic or Latinx.

"Multiracial" includes anyone who identified as more than one identity that did not all fall into one of the aggregations above.

"Number of people" is the number of survey respondents who identified with both race/ethnicity and gender identities.

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Introduction

As Covid-19 moved the tech industry online, we wanted to understand how it was affecting the tech workforce. Even with vaccinations on the rise, remote work is here to stay for many companies.[1]

Covid-19 and remote work bring their own problems and amplify long-standing ones. Harassment and hostility are taking new forms since the pandemic, and workplace expectations and monitoring have ramped up, along with an increase in mental health conditions and anxiety. This combination unfortunately creates a perfect storm for distrust, harm, and counterproductivity.

Numerous studies have noted how Covid-19 and Covid-19-related workplace problems are hurting all employees, and especially Black women and Latinx/Hispanic women, with insurmountable job loss, layoffs, and lack of support for caregivers, unbounded work expectations, a lack of mental health support, increased mental health conditions and anxiety, and increased workplace hostility and harassment. Generally, discrimination by race and gender was common at work before Covid-19. Until now, little has been researched on how Covid-19 is impacting patterns of harm in the workplace as more jobs move online and increase disparate effects on the personal lives of workers.[2]

97%

of respondents are working remote

85%

of respondents experienced increased anxiety since Covid-19

Covid-19 and the Workplace

Since May 2020, our research team has been analyzing remote workplace experiences in the tech sector since Covid-19: who is experiencing the most harm in the workplace and how. These harms draw from systemic issues of injustice and inequity, but also from specific outcomes of Covid-19, and they affect all workplaces, large and small, in all sectors, around the world.

37%

say their managers expect them to be available on demand

Notably, people with marginalized identities are experiencing more harm than before. As workers, including 97% of those we surveyed, adjust to working remote, we have an opportunity for transformational changes that improve working conditions, fairness, and equity, in addition to business performance and outcomes.

Covid-19 is a pivotal cultural moment that will affect our workplaces for years to come. In this time of massive shift, our team feels a responsibility to share specific, practical recommendations and build humanity and equity into companies and workplaces. We surveyed almost 3,000 people and interviewed a dozen others to research how work interactions have changed, the types of harm happening, and to whom. We focused on the technology industry, but found our survey results were consistent across industries. We interviewed ten experts in the fields of human resources, organizational development, community psychology, psychiatry and behavioral science, antiracism, race and gender differences, and diversity, equity and inclusion to provide the most impactful actions companies can take to prevent, mitigate, and even resolve the harms we encountered.

The Data and the Findings

From May 2020 to February 2021, we interviewed a dozen tech workers, ten experts, and asked 120 questions of 2,796 survey respondents across 1,186 U.S. zip codes, 48 countries, 50 industries, and 8 work levels.

One year into the Covid-19 pandemic, we've witnessed a massive transformation of the tech industry into mostly remote working. We found this shift has increased three types of problems: harassment and hostility, harmful work expectations, and anxiety. Our approach incorporates data equity and an intersectional[3] lens to center on the people who experienced the greatest harm. People harmed were disproportionately Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx, especially women and nonbinary people, and transgender and non-binary people generally, and people over 50.

We found increased anxiety in workers who experienced harassment, hostility and higher work expectations, an increase in harassment for women and nonbinary people, Asian, Black, and Latinx people, transgender people, and especially people with more than one of these identities, work and tool overload, and inconsistent, poorly created or non existent remote work communication practices.

30%

experienced gender-based hostility at work

13%

experienced race-based hostility at work

45%

of Black women experienced race-based hostility at work

Focusing on the Bigger Picture

Company leaders need to actively counteract systemic problems in all our communications and processes to build a more effective and healthier team and culture. Our recommendations in this report target all company leaders, from CEOs to managers of any level, as you are the people who have the power and resources to affect the structural changes and culture shifts needed to support your employees and thus company.

First, leaders need to understand that it is a systemic problem; that tech has been built on a foundation of inequity and exclusion that will require changes in leadership to make it more diverse at its highest levels. Leaders need to make mental health a top consideration in all decisions, processes, funding, and planning. Companies need to proactively address mental health and offer all workers support and resources instead of ignoring mental health concerns and placing the burden on employees to work on their mental health on their own. Leadership teams need to focus on what people actually need to be able to do their best work. Workplaces across the globe emphasize assigning tasks and deliverables that "look like work" but often actually get in the way of people doing their jobs well.[4] For example, multiple check-in calls with managers throughout the day may read to some as productivity but keep people from being able to focus and do the tasks being checked on. What employees need is space and time to work, and fewer meetings, and a focus on quality and impact of work instead of the number of hours worked online or available during the day. Leaders need to realize that an employee is more effective when well-rested and trusted. In addition, leaders need to model these changes themselves, showing they are experiencing the same anxieties and challenges and are taking time to rest and recover.

Harassment and Hostility

In this report, we categorized harm into harassment and hostility.[5] Both can be directed at people based on their identity, perceived identity, and any combination of the two.

Harassment can include yelling at coworkers, uncomfortable or repeated questions about identity or appearance, dismissive attitudes, teasing put-downs, repeated requests for dates, groping or grinding, or quid pro quo requests for sex.[6] Hostility refers to forms of harm that are less abusive than harassment and may not be considered abuse or against company rules, but are still toxic or harmful in nature. Workers described harassment and hostility across all identities, including perceived immigration status and country of origin.[7] Since Covid-19, we found harm including retaliation for reporting harassment, chastising, harmful work reviews, expectations of always being available to

work, and work tools being used for harm. We also heard how a lack of structure led to harassment and hostility, ranging from no ways to document or share work, priorities, or plans, the lack of clearly defined workplace boundaries separate from home, inconsistent definitions of work goals, and poor communications practices.

Our survey focused on changes in workplace experiences since Covid-19. The percentage of people who experienced increases in harassment and hostility based on age, gender, and race/ethnicity were noticeably greater than others.
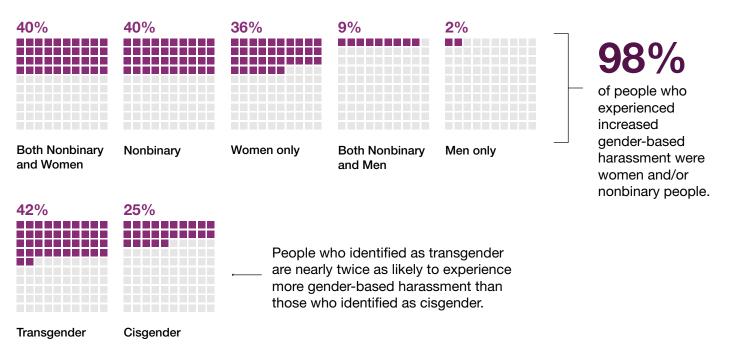
Percent of people who experienced an increase in gender-based harassment:

39% Asian women and/or nonbinary people
25% Black women and/or nonbinary people
38% of Latinx women and/or nonbinary people
35% of Multi-racial women and/or nonbinary people
37% of White women and/or nonbinary people
along with 1 of 3 Indigenous woman and 4 of 8 Middle Eastern women[11]

People experienced an increase in harassment based on age (14%), gender (26%), and race/ethnicity (10%), and slightly more experienced increased levels of hostility (15%, 30%, and 13%, respectively).

Increased gender harassment was experienced more often by people from specific marginalized groups.[8] More than a quarter of respondents said they experienced gender-based harassment more often or much more often since Covid-19,[9] and almost all (98%) of those respondents self-identified as women, or as genderqueer or nonbinary people.[10] 40% of women, genderqueer or nonbinary respondents said they are experiencing increased harassment. About 2% of men respondents said the same.

Since Covid-19, more than 1 in 4 people have experienced an increase in gender-based harassment.

INCLUDE

Percent of people who experienced an increase in harassment and identified as*...

40% Both Nonbinary and Women

40% Nonbinary

36% Women only

9% Both Nonbinary and Men

2% Men only

98% of people who experienced increased gender-based harassment were women and/or nonbinary people.

42% Transgender

25% Cisgender

People who identified as transgender are nearly twice as likely to experience more gender-based harassment than those who identified as cisgender.
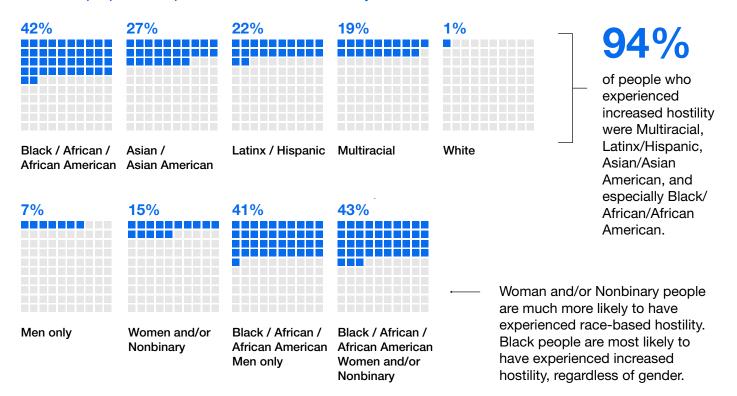
*These gender identities center people's self identification (e.g, "women" include both trans and cisgender women). Due to small sample size and privacy concerns, we use the term "nonbinary people" to encompass all people who identify with genders that do not exist on the gender binary, including gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, two-spirit, genderqueer, bigender, and/or as individually specified.

Harassment and Hostility

Women, genderqueer people, or nonbinary people were 40 times as likely on average to have experienced an increase in gender-based harassment than white men since Covid-19. Transgender people were 42 times and transgender nonbinary men were 50 times as likely.

Transgender respondents were almost twice as likely to have experienced increased gender harassment (42%) than cisgender respondents (25%), with transgender male and nonbinary/male employees (50%) even more likely.

While only 1% of white men experienced more harassment since Covid-19, 4% of African/African American/Black men, and 15% of men who

Since the begining of the pandemic, 1 out of 10 people have experienced an increase in race/ethnicity-based hostility.

INCLUDE

Percent of people who experienced an increase in hostility and identified as*...

42%	**27%**	**22%**	**19%**	**1%**
Black / African / African American	Asian / Asian American	Latinx / Hispanic	Multiracial	White

94%

of people who experienced increased hostility were Multiracial, Latinx/Hispanic, Asian/Asian American, and especially Black/African/African American.

7%	**15%**	**41%**	**43%**
Men only	Women and/or Nonbinary	Black / African / African American Men only	Black / African / African American Women and/or Nonbinary

Woman and/or Nonbinary people are much more likely to have experienced race-based hostility. Black people are most likely to have experienced increased hostility, regardless of gender.

*Due to small sample size and privacy concerns, people who identified as Indigenous/Native American, Middle Eastern and/or as individually specified are not represented here; and we use the term "nonbinary people" to encompass all people who identify with genders that do not exist on the gender binary, including gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, two-spirit, genderqueer, bigender, and/or as individually specified.
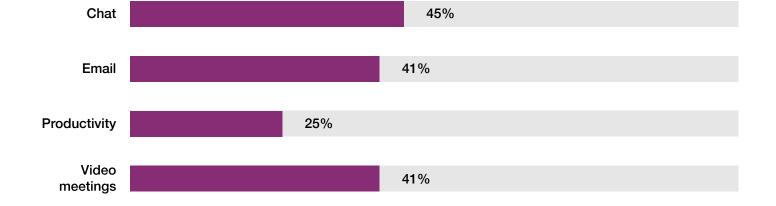
identified with more than one race/ethnicity experienced more gender-based harassment.

Race-/ethnicity-based hostility also impacted certain workers more. Four out of ten (42%) African/African American/Black[12] respondents said they experienced more or much more race-/ethnicity- based hostility since Covid-19; 27% of Asian American/Asian[13] respondents, 22% of Latinx/Hispanic respondents, and 21% of multi-race/ethnicity respondents said the same. At most 1% or fewer people who identified as white, regardless of gender, said they experienced an increase in race-based hostility. 2 out of the 5 Indigenous/First Nations respondents and 4 out of the 13 Middle Eastern respondents said they experienced more race-based hostility.[14]

Taking a more intersectional look, women of color were more likely to experience increases in race-based hostility than men of color at the following levels: African/African American/Black (45% compared with 41%), Asian American/Asian (30% compared with 16%), Latinx/Hispanic (26% compared with 11%), and multi-race/ethnicity (26% compared with 7%). When we disaggregated identities with enough respondents, we also found differences in who experienced increased race-based hostility between African American/Black women and men (47% compared with 39%), and with African women (36%), and across South Asian women (38%), Southeast Asian women (37%), East Asian women (25%) and women who identified with more than one Asian ethnicity or didn't further specify their Asian race/ethnicity (25%).

The workers who were most likely to experience an increase in age harassment and age hostility since Covid-19 were age 50 and above (23%)

Percent of workers who have seen harassment in tools

Tool	Percent
Chat	45%
Email	41%
Productivity	25%
Video meetings	41%

Harassment and Hostility

in both, compared to 15% and 14% respectively on average for all workers.

Significantly more respondents experienced harassment over chat (45%), email (41%) or video meetings (41%) than productivity (25%) tools, though no specific company's tool was listed more than others. Respondents noted that individual harassers would follow them across online spaces to where they were; they were often harassed in 1:1 and other less public situations.

Cate Huston, current engineering director at Duck Duck Go, and an engineering leader with stints at Automattic and Google, has worked remotely for several years, and explained why: "One reason why there's less harassment on productivity tools is because it's public by default. The chat app is always making it possible to get the person one on one, and normalizing that communication is one of the things that causes harassers to get away with stuff; they do stuff and they present it like it's normal."

42%

of transgender respondents experienced increased gender harassment

23%

of workers age 50 and above experienced an increase in age harassment and age hostility

Increased Work Pressure

Whether by design or inadvertently, companies have increased work pressure on their employees since Covid-19. Employees are being hurt by increased work expectations, poor communication practices, and a focus on activity over productivity.

People are working longer hours with almost two-thirds (64%) saying their work hours have increased since Covid-19. Many felt increased pressure to be online, even outside of working hours, and to be available for their managers. Many felt tool overload, with the expectation of being responsive requiring checking multiple tools throughout the day--and sometimes night. Interviewees said managers are checking if they are online or active on collaboration or production tools.

Even company efforts to decrease hours do not always help, and sometimes increase work pressure. Nearly 1 in 4 respondents (23%) said their workplaces do not support them emotionally to take time off, to have space, and to respond to hardships. One interviewee mentioned a no Zoom day in their workplace that ended up not being supportive or helpful, because there was no reduction in the number or length of Zoom calls. One respondent wrote, "My company pays a lot of lip service to helping with mental health, yet when push comes to shove, even taking a mental day is frowned upon."

Haley Jones, MS, LPC-Intern CBTP, is a therapist who works with many individuals who are LGBTQIA2S+, autistic or neurodivergent. They described how their clients are experiencing increased or shifted work hours without time to rest and recover: "These places have unlimited part time or paid time off. But the workload didn't go down. When I take one day off and then have to work so many hours a day before and after, that can feel worse or it's not even possible.

64%

of people are working longer hours since Covid-19

Increased Work Pressure

So many clients have so much anxiety that they feel a need to respond to emails that come at midnight or early in the morning, absurd hours that they're not even meant to be working."

Some respondents blamed poor communications. Often their managers did not share clear expectations around work; many workers said they wanted more transparent and consistent ways to find and share information and to coordinate. One interviewee mentioned a lack of task organization after moving online. In the physical office, the manager used a whiteboard to track what employees were working on, but during Covid-19, the manager had employees message him on Slack for their tasks. The manager later chastised and punished the interviewee for not doing enough work, and the employee had no way to prove they met their performance goals, given the lack of communicating and documenting tasks. The employee eventually quit.

Steven Aquino, who reports on disability and whose parents are deaf, described the communication challenges deaf employees face in a world where masks and distancing prevent lipreading, mask wearing has made it increasingly difficult for deaf people to navigate, and dominant society does not often consider the needs of disabled people and communities by design. Zoom and Skype, for example, don't provide captioning and screens are too small for deaf people who use lip-reading as a means of tracking and engaging in conversation. Some employees are already

Increasing work pressures

Legend: **Agrees** (light pink), **Agrees strongly** (dark purple)

Category	Agrees	Agrees strongly
Manager expects availability	27%	10%
Pressure to be online	33%	19%
Pressure to be online outside of work	36%	18%
Work longer hours	33%	31%

Increased Work Pressure

dealing with additional stress in their day-to-day lives from Covid-19, and reduced accessibility in the remote workplace adds to the stress and anxiety.

Work and tool overload sometimes comes from managers using meetings to substitute for effective communications. Especially since moving remote, managers are having unnecessary meetings, including too many check-ins that add to the work day.

More than 10% of respondents said managers were checking on them daily, with almost 5% being checked on two or more times a day and nearly 1% five or more times a day. More than half of people (53%) felt more pressure to get online or post online for work as quickly as possible. More than a third of people (37%) said their managers expected them to be available on demand.

One respondent described how managers pressured young, female, and nonbinary coworkers to work after hours, on weekends, and during mealtimes, and how they increased this pressure to work since Covid-19.

In addition, some companies add pressure with surveillance technology used, for example, to track keyboard strokes or take videos or screenshots as an employee works.[15]

Shoshana Zuboff, PhD, professor emerita from Harvard Business School, described two concerns with workplace surveillance tools, starting with their disparate impact on employees based on gender, race, and sexual orientation: "Surveillance is hierarchical. The white male group is more likely to be hierarchically advantaged than the other groups, which experience greater intensification of surveillance with Covid." She also predicts surveillance at work will result in its spread outside work, "Once you can normalize it and habituate it in the workplace, then you can bring it back out to society because people have been broken at work."

One interviewee mentioned how she led her product development team remotely before the pandemic, when the start up she worked at went fully remote. She developed a plan for her team, already based across multiple time zones, to work asynchronously. Another team, led by the startup founder, worked in back-to-back calls for most of the day since the founder felt like video conferences meetings created more productivity and showed productivity. She described how

The percentages of workers of a race/ethnicity and gender who said their financial situation has gotten worse since Covid-19:

48% Asian/Asian American nonbinary or genderqueer people
19% Asian/Asian American women
28% Asian/Asian American men

28% Black nonbinary or genderqueer people
26% Black women
25% Black men

42% Latinx nonbinary or genderqueer people
31% Latinx women
18% Latinx men

32% Multiracial nonbinary or genderqueer people
21% Multiracial women
21% Multiracial men

29% white nonbinary or genderqueer people
24% white women
17% white men

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3 of 3 Indigenous women
1 of 2 Indigenous men

a member of the other team worked until 2am, having no time to do their actual work during the day because of these back to back meetings.

Additional pressure comes from the need to work and fear of losing a salary—and health care—during a global pandemic as unemployment disproportionately increases for marginalized communities.[16] Some have the added stress of financial insecurity, which have affected people inequitably in tech. The percentages of workers who said their financial situation has gotten worse since Covid-19 was highest for nonbinary people of each race/ethnicity and lowest for white men.

54%

of respondents feel pressure to be online outside of work

Relating a frequent experience, one interviewee said she stayed in a job she described as toxic until she was able to land a new one, because she couldn't afford to lose her paycheck during the pandemic.

The lack of clear policies has exacerbated problematic workplace interactions. Over 40% of respondents said their companies had not provided updated or new clear guidelines on appropriate and expected behavior in online communications and around communicating across remote work-places since Covid-19. One interviewee mentioned how coworkers and managers kept saying "this isn't a best practice" or "don't do that—that's not a best practice" but then never defined or explained the "best practices;" they weaponized the term to punish and push out employees and interns. Policies can also be unfairly applied. Several employees and Haley Jones gave examples of caregivers and transgender people being denied time off that others were able to take freely with no explanation.

Near Ubiquitous Mental Health Impacts

It is hard to look at someone and know if they're okay or not; today, they most likely are not. The word that multiple experts used was "trauma." Trauma has taken on extreme levels as we experience unprecedented catastrophes:

Global pandemic that has already killed 500,000 people in the United States and disproportionately impacted people who are disabled, immunocompromised, Black, Latinx/Hispanic, Indigenous/Native American, Asian/Asian-American, women, and from lower socioeconomic groups.

Climate change disasters, ranging from the deep freeze that shut down roads, power, and water in the southern United States in February 2021 to the massive California fires with smoke so thick it blocked the sun and made it hard to breathe in March 2020. Environmental racism and climate injustice mean the most impacted areas are often last to recover and disproportionately house people from marginalized communities.

Political disinformation and exclusion.

Systemic racism ranging from ongoing police brutality against Black people, a 1900% increase anti-Asian hate crimes since the pandemic,[17] and ongoing antisemitism, transphobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and transphobia with increasing displays and influence of white supremacy.

Unemployment and financial distress, more often experienced by marginalized and lower socio-economic communities.

Near Ubiquitous Mental Health Impacts

With all types of trauma and increased harassment and hostility added to more work pressures, it's no surprise that almost all employees have experienced an increase in anxiety since Covid-19. Across the board from CEOs to directors to entry level employees, 85 to 86% of workers at each level said their anxiety had increased. A majority of interns (67%) and contractors (77%) also felt increased anxiety.

Work interactions also increased anxiety. More than half of workers (51%) had increased anxiety about communicating with coworkers. Nearly 3 of 10 workers (29%) had increased anxiety about being on calls when children or dependents are home, with women most likely at 31%, nonbinary people at 29%, and men significantly less likely at 24%.

Professor Leanne Williams, PhD, of Stanford's Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Director of the Center for Precision Mental Health and Wellness, explained why most people are experiencing this increased anxiety. "It's almost like everyone going through the pandemic is more likely to have like, by definition, one of the stresses that causes anxiety, and extra load, as a result, on their brain function. And it's the same brain function you need to plan and for executive function. So we're in the ideal situation to make planning really hard, and the output of that is anxiety, problems concentrating, and brain fog."

She added that in remote work, we also don't have a lot of outlets for releasing anxiety. "It's made even harder, because we can't just walk around and say hello to someone. Contact and that positive reward calms down the stress hormones and boosts the positive reaction to the brain. And makes you feel that literally that connection to someone and that someone has your back."

Near Ubiquitous Mental Health Impacts

Some workers from marginalized backgrounds were more affected than others. People with the largest likelihood to have an increase in anxiety include people who identified as both gender nonbinary/non-conforming and as women at 89% and women at 87% compared with people who identified as both gender nonbinary/non-conforming and as men at 75% and men at 80%, and respondents respondents who identified as gender nonbinary/non-conforming/queer at 84%.[18]

Mental health conditions, including anxiety, were also widespread and varied by gender. Nearly 3 out of 4 people (74%) have at least one type of mental health condition, and nearly 1 in 2 people (47%) have multiple types of mental health conditions. More than 9 out of 10 (91%) people who identified with one or more of gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, two-spirit, unsure, or individually specified had at least one mental health condition.

The percentage of people with multiple types of mental health conditions was 37% for men, 48% for women, and 74% for people who identified with one or more of gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, two-spirit, unsure, or further specified.

Diamond Greer-Jones described trauma from Covid-19, "When you have Black women, nonbinary, and trans folks dealing with a culmination of things at once including: racial trauma, the pandemic, daily racial and gender bias, our healthcare system's mistreatment of Black people resulting in folks dying at an alarming rate more than their white counterparts, conflicting feelings about even trusting a vaccine given centuries worth of trauma related to science and Black people…it's a whole different ball game."

Near Ubiquitous Mental Health Impacts

People are very depressed, because the workload is not going down, and it continues going up, and they have no energy. And then the anxiety piece comes in, because there's no separation between work and home; you have nowhere else to be private now that the bedroom is the workspace. And a lot of people feel trapped and stuck and aren't going anywhere. It feels like a 24-hour work day, every day.

HALEY JONES

While racial and ethnic identities did not have significantly different likelihoods of increased anxiety, an intersectional look showed people with nonbinary gender(s) and certain racial/ethnic identities were more likely to experience increased anxiety. Among the small pool of nonbinary women, the few who had no increase in anxiety were all white or Asian except 1; 21 of the 22 nonbinary women (100%) who also identified as African/African American/Black, Latinx/Hispanic, Indigenous/Native American, multiracial, or an individually specified race/ethnicity said their anxiety had increased since Covid-19.

People with disabilities were also more likely to have experienced an increase in anxiety than those without disabilities (91% compared with 84%). Almost all (96%) deaf/hearing impaired employees and people with chronic pain (93%) said they were more anxious since Covid-19.

People with mental health differences were also more likely to have increased anxiety since Covid-19, with 89% saying they had an increase in anxiety compared with 73% of people without mental health conditions.

Near Ubiquitous Mental Health Impacts

People who are neurodiverse or have multiple mental health conditions are three times as likely as people without any to strongly agree that there's more pressure to be online. Neurodiversity can cause an employee to require accommodations, which many companies are not providing. Haley Jones said many of their clients are autistic and are harmed by company requirements that cameras be turned on during video conferences, but often don't trust the company enough to tell them about their ASD in fear of getting fired or in trouble.

People with mental health conditions were on average (29%) twice as likely to have felt harassment since Covid-19 compared to those without mental health conditions (14%); 87% of people who experienced harassment since Covid-19 also have mental health conditions. People with PTSD were three times as likely (42%) as those without mental health conditions to have felt harassment, with the highest level for any type of mental health condition.

For people being harassed, working from home can make it even worse. Leigh Honeywell, CEO and founder of Tall Poppy, a start up that protects companies from outside online harassment, said "The same level of like threats, or creepy postings, or doxxing, feels more threatening, because everything is closer to home."

Employees Do Not Trust Companies to Deal with Harm

A complicating factor for addressing these three types of harm is a lack of trust. Employees do not trust their companies to respond to or prevent harassment.

People tended not to report it; only 15% responded that they had reported harassment since Covid-19, despite 38% saying they had observed it and 27% saying they had experienced it. In long answers, many said they did not report, because they did not trust their HR group or their company to handle their complaints; one said there was no one to report it to. Many don't trust their companies to treat them fairly and do not disclose their sexual orientations, transgender identities, disabilities, or mental health conditions with their employers.

For some, based on past experience before or during the pandemic, employees decided it was not worthwhile to report harassment to the company. Several said they "learned" or were "taught" not to based on past reporting experience; one said they had suffered retaliation. Additionally, some didn't report as the harassment was already known in their company. Sometimes the harassment happened in a large group, often including the executive team or in a big group setting. One person said the CEO made an anti-LGBTQIA comment to the whole company. Another said HR was the harasser. Many people (26%) said they do not feel supported by the company to call out harassment.

38%

have seen harassment at work since Covid-19

35%

do not trust their company to respond fairly to harm at work

Employees Do Not Trust Companies to Deal with Harm

Others said it was difficult to have conversations about harassment or harm with their managers while working remotely. One interviewee said they would have walked by the manager's office and looked for a time to pull them aside for the conversation live, but did not feel comfortable asking for a private 1:1 during the pandemic. Generally, 28% of workers said they had had difficult conversations with their manager over video chat, email, or text messages that were poorly handled.

Less than half (42%) of respondents trust their company to fairly respond to problems related to harm and harassment in the workplace, and more than a third (35%) do not; one out of six strongly disagreed that their companies would be fair. Many (28%) said they don't have tools for intervening when they notice online harm at work.[19] Even more (35%) said they don't have tools to solve or prevent it.[20]

For many companies, a focus on limiting short-term legal risk prevents long-term solutions. Professor Sanaz Mobasseri, PhD, of Boston University's Questrom School of Business and Associate Director for the Tech Initiative at the Center for Antiracist Research, studies how organizational and social network forces shape gender and race differences in the workplace. "In our research, we had to find a workaround to the legal culture against experimentation," she said. "Typically, if research finds evidence that there are race and gender inequalities inside a company, researchers often cannot interrogate what is going on because of the heightened legal risk. Despite important precautions like de-identification and maintaining company anonymity, companies still worry about discrimination lawsuits if people know inequities were detected. Without knowing where the inequities are, how can we find ways to address them? We need to encourage companies to weigh that legal risk against the opportunity to develop real solutions that work."

This broad distrust prevents workable solutions for reporting and for providing mental health resources and other support directly when they are experienced as part of a system of apathy, harmdoing, retaliation, or all three.

Solutions

Anything simple is not going to work.

PROFESSOR ROBIN ELY, the Diane Doerge Wilson Professor at Harvard Business School
and researcher on race, gender relations, and cultural change in organizations

We call attention to a need and opportunity for systemic change, a change that addresses deep-seated, structural problems within the tech industry that should be removed as part of this rethinking of how we work.

Much research has shown the technology industry is rife[21] with harassment, hostility, inequitable hiring practices,[22] stringent NDAs,[23] and large-scale bias,[24] along with the technology itself perpetuating racism,[25] as well as many other harms. That means hard work and no easy solutions. It means acknowledging the power imbalances that cause these problems and redesigning processes and hierarchies.

We have no easy playbook for solving systemic biases in tech, and each company and leader should have solutions tailored to their circumstances and situations. We urge companies to treat these cultural and process transformations, especially around belonging and mental health, as you would any other business imperative: **Measure, fund, staff, and experiment.**

It means addressing belonging and mental health as core business imperatives, and learning how to make each of them core competencies fundamental to company success. It means funding and staffing each, and measuring results. It means taking risks and reforming how you think about human resources and balancing long-term company health and employee trust over short-term legal risk. It means having hard conversations and feeling awkward as you learn how to shift priorities. We are no longer in a short-lived pandemic firefighting mode; this move to remote, distributed, and online work is a lasting part of how workers and companies will work going forward.

One big barrier to change is the belief that tech is a meritocracy: Many tech companies strongly believe that success is based on merit that can be objectively measured. Change requires leaders to willingly deconstruct the system that they achieved success in. Often, we see that leaders are likely (and motivated) to defend the "meritocratic" and "objectively assessed" system, and struggle to identify how this system perpetuates inequity. We need to push the conversation past this place.

PROF. SANAZ MOBASSERI, PhD, Boston University's Questrom School of Business and Associate Director for the Tech Initiative at the Center for Antiracist Research on how organizational and social networks shape gender and race differences at work.

Shortcuts are Bad

Short-term approaches by companies can actually cause more damage. One-off quick fixes like listening sessions will worsen the problem; employees are looking for follow up and action items that get done. Marketing campaigns and policy statements without commitments of resources and prioritization don't work. Ongoing focus on firefighting without addressing the core problems of racism and sexism won't work, even if you ban conversations about them, it is happening and will continue to happen. Surveillance technologies add to distrust and anxiety. Harassment won't go away with a new reporting tool if employees fundamentally fear retaliation and inaction. Days off don't matter if workloads don't change; they just shift the timing of work and extend the length of workdays. Listening sessions don't work if conversation doesn't lead to action.

Self-help mental health solutions, like meditation, mindfulness training, or wellness training, are insufficient and can actually cause more harm.

According to Prof. Williams, "It actually almost sweeps it under the carpet, because if for example you try a mindfulness app and it doesn't work then you feel even worse. Mental health is one of those areas of function where it's presumed to be that the burden is on the person, not on the whole of the system. You would not do that if someone had broken their leg. You wouldn't say, 'Just hop around for a while.'"

Finally, no tool will work if employees don't trust you, your executive team, or your human resources group to do the right thing. There are excellent reporting tools, but if your HR team is intent on pushing out the person who reports instead of fixing the problem of harassment, those won't work either.

There's simply no amount of free therapy or other corporate wellness perks that can offset the toxicity of racism and sexism in the workplace.

JENNA WORTHAM, The New York Times [26]

Recommendations

We recommend CEOs and leaders take these 6 actions for lasting, meaningful change and to build long-term trust and community health in their companies, regardless of size.

Change leadership

Systemic change requires rebalancing power with attention to how power and hierarchy prevent people from doing their best work, from building products for broad markets, and from growing an enduring business. Bring in leaders to make your leadership team more diverse, and empower them. Project Include has long advocated for representation at the leadership level, but do it meaningfully and with intention. Look at each level in your organization and measure diversity levels. Set targets and examine why your company is not diverse at its board level, executive level, and manager level. Overhaul your human resources team if employees have learned or been taught not to trust them. Invest in an audit of your culture and structures for accountability, including long-term diversity and inclusion training, for yourself and your executive team and managers; make sure your facilitators, trainers, and vendors include genderqueer and, nonbinary people and, women, Black, Asian, Indigenous, and Latinx people, and trans men, especially people who hold more than one of these identities. Bring in a C-level executive to head diversity, equity and belonging, and empower them. Hold yourself,

your executives, and your managers accountable for change in diversity and belonging, and make sure they hold their teams accountable. Make sure you track whether the actions you're taking are working.

Haley Jones has run corporate listening groups as a consultant: "The biggest feedback that came up is people wanted folks with oppressed identities in higher up positions. They didn't want to report to some older cis-straight white man that wasn't going to listen, or was the one doing the harassing, which was actually the most common thing, or saying the racist things, or transphobic thing. What would be most helpful would be structural changes. And that's kind of the feedback that facilitators often brought back, but [management] didn't really want to hear that; they more wanted to hear self care things that people can do alone on their own time, not things [the managers] actually have to change."

Most companies are not ready to bring people back together physically, even electively. People at the executive level are going to be shocked to find out that what they're actually dealing with is a whole lot of live active trauma. A lot of companies that go back and try and make it like it was before will wonder, 'why aren't these pieces fitting together anymore?' And the answer, I hope, that we get collective agreement on is: Those pieces never fit together. They just fit together for you. Now, you're seeing all the seams and all of the vulnerabilities, and now you have to reinvent your company.

NICOLE SANCHEZ, 25-year tech veteran and founder/CEO of Vaya Consulting, a firm that advises companies on diversity, equity, inclusion, and organizational culture

Recommendations

Hold yourself, your leaders, and your teams accountable

Proactively build systems to track positive and negative outcomes. Ask about harm proactively, and improve reporting and communication around it. We've foundseen that employees don't trust the system and don't feel safe reporting discrimination and harassment problems. Employees need space to talk about these problems; giving space means, no non-disclosure agreements,[27] no retaliation, and leadership checking back on problem situations every quarter. Set clear expectations; update your code of conduct or walk through how your existing code applies to these new situations, and hold wrongdoers accountable. Make the tough decisions to punish for harassing and hostile behaviors and reward for ensuring employee belonging and mental health. It will build trust and a culture of belonging and performance. Remember, employees who harass and are hostile are actually hurting your employees directly and indirectly.

Educate yourself, your leaders, and your employees on empathy and inclusion and how that translates into conversations on chat and in email and any other interactions at work. The earlier you address this problem and really fix it, the more problems you will avoid. According to Prof. Ely, "These are the same problems manifesting differently, and more prevalent, and we are less well-equipped to deal with them." She used a metaphor to describe how companies designed to support white men.

"People from traditionally underrepresented groups can experience the workplace in systematically different ways from the white men who've tended to occupy the positions of power and status. So I'll borrow here Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres's metaphor of the miner's canary: Miners used to send a canary into the coal mine, and if the canary didn't return (in other words, if it died), it meant the mine's environment was too toxic for the miners to enter. So think of underrepresented groups entering roles traditionally reserved for cis white men as the canary in the coal mine: They encounter toxins in the environment—and, unlike those who have managed to adapt to that environment with their metaphorical gas masks—these people show signs of distress. Moreover, no one seems to see that some people are getting a gas mask while they are not, which is demoralizing. But the broader point is that their distress may be a signal that the environment isn't altogether healthyfor anyone, that it needs to change. And that change might actually benefit everyone. Because even the white male executives are having heart attacks."

Women and nonbinary people, Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people, transgender people, and especially people who hold more than one of these identities, are not afforded the same benefits as cis-white men in the workplace, and they have been most hurt by the failure to prevent harm in remote workplaces. Build the skills to have hard conversations about these harms and to seek repair. Build connection. Increase social chit-chat and casual connections through inclusive, non-mandatory social get-to-gethers. Find time to reward and recognize accomplishments and peer praise.

Give workers real time off

If you give a day off, whether it's paid time off, medical leave, a holiday, or a no-meeting day, make it a day off from meetings, email, accessibility. Build a real plan and system for employees to be able to have time off and actually take a break. Get rid of unlimited paid time off without minimums, which results in less clarity and less usage of vacation days, and no payments for vacation days not taken. Even a five-minute break during a long meeting can help.

Prof. Williams explained how the brain needs time off: "Going through a major trauma, major stress, or extenuating circumstances is going to cause a stress on the brain in the same way that if people are physically hurt, their capacities decrease. It's almost like we're doing a marathon daily. And if you do that, physically, you know you need recovery time. You can't just keep pushing it. We forget how plastic the brain is, and that it takes 20% of the energy of our whole body to function. In order for that brain plasticity to settle, you actually need to schedule in recovery time, the same as you would if you're doing intensive physical work."

Make mental health as a priority for your workplace

We're in a global pandemic and dealing with structural inequities as we move to remote workplaces. Reset your expectations of what people can accomplish and accommodate the changes our brains and our workplaces have undergone during this pandemic. Build alternatives to address the differences in how your workers want to communicate, what hours work best for them, and how they work best. Accommodate different ways to join meetings, make messages and processes simple, transparent, and consistent, and allow for customized schedules and interactions for workers, and allow these options for everyone. Understand how people want to work, how they want to communicate, and what hours are better for them. That may mean making mental health resources more accessible and paying for them directly for activities and time off, paying for physical activities and giving people free time. Provide better health care coverage for mental health care, care for transgender people, general medical coverage, flexibility of coverage if workers are out of state or move.

Recommendations

Prof. Williams explained, "If companies can accept that their employees' brains are part of their best asset, then you want to find out how to optimize their mental health in relation to how they process information."

Diamond Greer-Jones, a leadership coach with seven years' experience in human resources, said: "We need to humanize work, we need to allow people to have more power over their hours, their schedule, right, this idea of how work gets done, as long as it gets done."

Lead by example

The CEO's actions will determine whether teams adopt these recommendations. If you are the CEO or a leader, show your teams that you are following them. Ask your teams if they are doing them also. Talk about and acknowledge what you are going through. According to Prof. Williams, "We are all experiencing this, talking about that just takes away some feelings of isolation." Take care of your mental health by reducing your own meetings, taking days off and showing people how they can, too. Follow your company's no meeting days without exceptions. Use written communication in your productivity tool. Be explicit about not expecting an email response right away. Ask if people are available to talk when you reach them. Earn trust with transparency and action.

Take the time to read and learn about systemic problems to inform your messages and actions.[28]

Y-Vonne Hutchinson, founder and CEO of diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting firm ReadySet, shared an example: "A person on my team who is based in the South got caught in the freeze, where people lost power and couldn't travel the roads, and didn't have access to their work laptop. Their manager asked me, 'How should I handle this? What should my expectations be? Should I tell them to use their vacation time?' And I said, 'They're dealing with a natural disaster—of course, their productivity is going to be limited. They are relatively new on the team, already scared they are going to get fired. We have to be understanding here.'...As we are professionals and are advising managers struggling with it, I can only imagine what people in tech companies are struggling with. And the manager, like them, was Black. I can't even imagine if it was a white manager, who wasn't from the South, who wasn't thinking about how to be inclusive, and didn't have the vocabulary."

Recommendations

Focus on impact over activity

Move to deliverables and metrics over surveillance. Two big changes can reduce mental strain and improve efficiency and communication: reducing meetings and communicating in writing. As Cate Huston stated, "Delete boring meetings, consider no meeting days, remove status of going to meetings, make meetings transparent." Multiple experts mentioned how meetings on video are exhausting and no longer provide much social connection.

"If you can get it down from four hours of meetings that are useless to like two hours of meetings that are actually useful, you've not just given somebody two hours back, you've given them a huge amount of cognitive freedom." Cate Huston

To track work, not time working, Cate Huston suggested written communications. She recommended moving work conversations from meetings, chat, and email to productivity tools that are persistent, transparent and allow asynchronous updates. "Putting it into a chat tool is not viable; chat should be transient. if somebody takes three days off, they have to read three days of chat history in order, with cat gifs as well as the actual important work itself." Moderate group chat conversations, manage new group creation, and move work conversations to productivity tools.

Regulation is coming

Keep in mind, regulatory changes may be coming in the future that could make these important changes, such as making it easier for employees to unionize, requiring companies to treat employees as humans, new privacy rules, transparency on harassment and harm in the workplace, and requirements around diversity on boards and reporting on diversity. As the balance of power between workers and executives begin to widen, companies need to address growing pay gaps, lack of transparency in harmful processes, and address the growing surveillance in digital tools that damage workers.

Covid-19 is a reckoning as it exacerbates and amplifies the problems with systemic inequities and harassment, mental health, and poor management that have long-existed in tech. We have an opportunity to transform our companies to try to "do no harm" to our employees. In addition to being the more ethical path, treating belonging and mental health as business imperatives will create better cultures, more productive employees, and higher financial returns. If we don't, we'll have the continued departure, often forced or under pressure, of marginalized workers, especially Black women, from the tech workforce. And it's what the latest generation of employees expects and will continue to demand through protests, boycotts, and union-organizing if regulators don't get there first.

Appendix

We engaged in concerted outreach with communities and people from marginalized backgrounds and groups who have been traditionally overlooked in the tech industry; our respondent demographics do not reflect overall industry demographics. Of survey respondents who answered each demographic question:

AGE: 10% were 50 years old or older, 22% were between 40 and 49, 20% were between 35 and 39, 25% were between 30 and 34, 18% were between 25 and 29, and 6% were under 25 years old.[29]

DISABILITY: 1% blindness/visual impairment, 7% chronic illness or pain, 1% deafness/hearing impairment, 4% multiple types of disabilities, 2% specified otherwise, 70% none apply (15% did not respond to this question).

GENDER:[30] 55% women only, 31% men only, 9% one or more of gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, two-spirit, unsure, or further specified (half of whom also identified as either women or men) (5% did not respond to this question).

IMMIGRATION STATUS: 17% immigrants, 14% not an immigrant and both parents are immigrants, 8% one parent is an immigrant, 59% not an immigrant or child of immigrants. 1% responded with an unlisted category.[31]

RACE/ETHNICITY:[33] 19% Asian/Asian American, 5% Hispanic/Latinx, 0.4% Indigenous American/First Nations,[34] 1% Middle Eastern, 58% white, 8.6% more than one race/ethnicity, and 1% specified otherwise.[35]

MENTAL HEALTH: 18% anxiety, 5% depression, 2% neurodiversity, 1% PTSD, 47% more than one type, 26% none apply, 1% specified otherwise.[32]

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: 10% bisexual, 62% heterosexual, 4% queer, 16% one or more of asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, or further specified (8% did not respond to this question).

Literature Review:

Other Research on Covid-19's Widespread Harms in the Workplace

A note when reading the Literature Review:

Much research has been done on the impact of Covid-19 on the workforce; we distinguish ours with our focus on marginalized groups over averages that might overlook the worst experiences and with our intersectional approach, different demographics and people from marginalized groups are facing kinds of harms and experiences during Covid-19 than dominant and more privileged groups, and our focus on solutions. This literature review shares related outside research that we found useful in providing context for and confirming our own findings. However, we did find less focus on marginalized groups and intersectional groupings in these outside reports both in their categorizations of identities and coverage, and these limitations show up in our summaries. For example, gender demographics in outside research did not seem to include transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonbinary respondents, and in some studies, disability was not mentioned or highlighted within the findings. Other findings mentioned "people of color" as a monolithic, singular group in their results but without specifying who or which groups were affected.

We highlight this because in the following paragraphs as we are outlining relevant research into the topics of Covid-19, the workplace, and workplace tools, the language reflected below is the language and demographic framing reflected from that specific research. Within our research, we created an intersectional framework focusing on disability, sexual identity, sexual orientation, perceived gender, race, and class. As researchers, we view this lack of intersectionality as one of the shortcomings in almost all the research conducted.

The Tech Industry and its Systemic Harms

We cite a variety of resources that use terms, such as "women," "BIPOC," or "people of color," that may have more specific or more inclusive alternatives for representing people's identities or experiences.

Our initial research framing focused on the technology industry, but survey respondents were also in tech-related or -adjacent industries. Much research has shown the technology industry is rife[36] with harassment, hostility, inequitable hiring practices,[37] stringent NDAs,[38] and large-scale bias,[39] along with the technology itself perpetuating racism,[40] as well as many other harms. In 2017,[41] BuzzFeed surveyed nearly 800 tech industry respondents and found that almost 500 respondents had faced harassment or harm in the technology industry, with 61% of survey respondents who had experienced discrimination and/or harassment, stating it had affected their personal lives. Additionally, 85% of respondents said they had been harassed by a superior, 75% reported being harassed by an equal and 30% faced harassment from a subordinate. In that same article, BuzzFeed reported that the tech industry demographics are about 64% of employees are male, with 29% of tech workers identifying as Asian American, African American, or Hispanic. Other research studies found similar findings. Women Who Tech's research study in 2020 found that 44% of women founders, 65% of LGBTQ founders and 47% of women founders of color

said they have experienced harassment.[42] Another study conducted by Reveal and the Center for Investigative Reporting in 2018 found dismal demographics from EEOC data on 177 large tech companies in the San Francisco Bay Area. Four companies' workforce had only 17% women or lower overall. One third had no women of color in the executive ranks. This same report found that Asian women dropped from 12% of professionals to 8% of managers to 4.5% of executives in 2018. Conversely, white men went from 39%, to 47%, and 59%, while white women stayed relatively flat, going from 14% to 18% to 14%. Latinx women drop by half, from an already low of 1.6% to 1.6% to 0.8%. Black women fall to the lowest levels, going from 1.1% to 0.9% to 0.4%.[43]

On top of the systemic and well-documented inequity in the technology industry, comes the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on workers' bodies,[44] work structures, personal lives, work/life balances, and mental health. But Covid-19 is also a mirror to society, revealing systemic injustices that have already existed against people from marginalized groups. The effects of the actual virus as well as the downstream effects created by Covid-19 in society's attempt to stymie the virus spreading are real: the Covid-19 pandemic and stay at home orders are creating and exacerbating a myriad of other problems and serious issues for people from marginalized groups, who already face significant bias-based disadvantages in the workplace, from systemic inequity and structural racism. Themes we noticed throughout our

literature view included: mental exhaustion, physical pain, longer hours, less support in the workplace, companies trying but not following through on good norms, general anxiety, balancing kids/personal life with work, and overall stress. For example, in the United States, only 41 percent of the people who had a mental disorder in the past year received professional health care or other services.[45] Our literature review draws from investigative journalism and general press articles featuring findings from doctors, experts, and academics, as well as academic research and research studies conducted by companies and consulting firms on the state of the workplace during Covid-19.

Across the Board, Employees from Marginalized Groups Are More Affected by Covid-19

We cite a variety of resources that use terms, such as "women," "BIPOC," or "people of color," that may have more specific or more inclusive alternatives for representing people's identities or experiences.

Covid-19 is affecting marginalized groups in unequal ways from their health to their safety and their work environments. In April 2020, 84% of all hospitalizations in San Francisco were people from people who identified as Latinx/Hispanic.[46] The Women in the Workplace[47] (a joint effort study with LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company) conducted research on workplaces and how they were affected by Covid-19. During their "six years

of conducting this research, we've never had findings this stark. Our data show that due to Covid-19, 1 in 4 women are considering down-shifting their careers or leaving the workforce."

Physical Pain and Longer Working Hours

We cite a variety of resources that use terms, such as "women," "BIPOC," or "people of color," that may have more specific or more inclusive alternatives for representing people's identities or experiences.

Working remotely is affecting worker's bodies and minds. For example, what is behind Zoom fatigue? According to the BBC, video calls require more work from the participants, such as more observation, and more intent and active listening than a face to face meeting.[48] An Atlantic article[49] reported that people are working longer hours by now working from home. These elongated work hours are leading to workers experiencing physical pain such as body aches, and higher anxiety to general stress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. "In the office, people work for eight or nine hours, but now they find themselves working 10 or 12 hours at home just because there's no commute time," remarked Natalia Ruiz, a physical therapist at NYU Langone Orthopedic Center to the Atlantic. This kind of elongated working hours are leading to joint pain, dryer eyes, and headaches from sitting in uncomfortable positions, having poor ergonomic furniture and staring at a screen for too long.

Multiple survey-based studies have shown that remote workers are working longer hours during the pandemic, and are creating more flexible hours, such as starting at a later time or an earlier time. A study conducted by Asana found employees are working on average 213 hours more in 2020 in comparison to 2019.

Context Switching, More Work and a Loss of Productivity

We cite a variety of resources that use terms, such as "women," "BIPOC," or "people of color," that may have more specific or more inclusive alternatives for representing people's identities or experiences.

Additionally, Asana's report also found that employees working in remote settings during Covid-19 are struggling with tool overload and reported having to switch between 10 apps up to 25 times a day, but with workers in the US using an average of 13 tools at 30 times per day. "Over one-quarter (27%) of workers say that actions and messages are missed when switching apps and 26% say app overload makes individuals less efficient. Employees who switch between apps are also more likely to struggle with effectively prioritizing their work." [50] This kind of context switching and tool overload is negatively weighing on employees by interrupting their work flow and work day. Additionally, Asana found that longer work days also included more work, while many employees have limited bandwidth, be it internet bandwidth,[51] emotional bandwidth[52] or time

bandwidth,[53] due to Covid-19. This increased work is related to unrealistic expectation, and a lack of clarity caused by unclear processes.

Mental Stress and Anxiety

We cite a variety of resources that use terms, such as "women," "BIPOC," or "people of color," that may have more specific or more inclusive alternatives for representing people's identities or experiences.

Covid-19 is having a widespread effect on people's mental health and anxiety, with a rise in more mental health issues and stress[54] and is disproportionately affecting marginalized groups.[55] The CDC reported that "Younger adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers reported having experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation." [56] One academic study found that higher rates of depression during Covid-19 compared with rates of depression before the pandemic in the US. This stress is disproportionately affecting people from marginalized groups or vulnerable populations, such as people with lower incomes or greater levels of stress associated with the pandemic; people from these groups had even more pronounced depressive symptoms.[57] A 2020 Gallup poll on mental health found that respondent's "'good" mental health has dropped from 43% to 34% from 2019 to 2020.[58] Gallup also found that women's mental health is suffering more than men's, along with lower

income Americans, young adults, and unmarried respondents. Silicon Valley's workforce is reporting feeling more burned out than before the pandemic. A survey released in February 2020 from anonymous workplace chat app Blind found that 73% of tech workers[59] feel more burned out than they did when they worked at an office, citing a lack of work and life balance, unmanageable workloads and lack of support from managers. Business Insider has reported remote working during Covid-19 has added new stress in employee's lives like longer hours, less work-life balance, and video-chat-fatigue.[60] It feels safe to say, that depression, anxiety, stress and other mental health issues are on the raise in relation to the global pandemic.

Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Employees are Disproportionately Affected

We cite a variety of resources that use terms, such as "women," "BIPOC," or "people of color," that may have more specific or more inclusive alternatives for representing people's identities or experiences.

Covid-19 is disproportionately affecting Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities within the US.[61] Covid-19 also deeply affecting Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx workers along with trans workers, and nonbinary workers and women workers more in the workplace across all different levels and sectors. In the month of December 2020, in the United States,

the Bureau of Labor Statistics data showed that 82,000 fewer Black women, 31,000 fewer Hispanic women, 40,000 fewer Asian people, and 238,000 fewer Hispanic men were employed, while 106,000 more white women were employed.[62] The 19th found that Black women are continuing to lose jobs. Unemployment of Black women rose to 8.9 percent in February 2021 from 8.5 percent in January 2021.[63] The Women in the Workplace Study found that Black women are facing more barriers, exhaustion, burn out and against the backdrop of racial violence, facing less support in the workplace. Working mothers are three times more likely as fathers to be managing housework and caregiving during the pandemic, and are worried about being more negatively judged in the workplace. Senior level women are more likely to experience burn out than their male counterparts.

In a report conducted by the TIME'S UP Foundation, they found that 17% of working women were more likely than working men to have trouble paying bills before the pandemic began, and 45% of women reported increased challenges covering household expenses since then. Women of color also had a significantly harder time paying household expenses since the pandemic began than men of color. Additionally 48% of Black workers, 29% of Latinx workers and 15% of Asian workers are worried about receiving substandard health care due to their race if they become seriously ill. Lastly, TIME'S UP found that workers of color were much more likely to have lost health insurance (potentially

related to employment) during the pandemic than white workers at a rate of 10% for workers of color vs. 7% of white workers.[64]

Lastly, the Women in the Workplace study found that "fewer companies are addressing the underlying causes of stress and burnout. Less than a third of companies have adjusted their performance review criteria to account for the challenges of Covid-19, and only about half have updated employees on productivity expectations during the pandemic." The Women in the Workplace study also found that while some companies are trying their best to "step up—but many aren't addressing the underlying causes of burnout. Many companies have taken important steps to support employees during the Covid-19 crisis" such as sharing details about paid leave policies and expanding mental health services, something our research found as well. However, "fewer companies have taken steps to adjust the norms and expectations that are contributing to employee burnout" which is a similar sentiment expressed by a few of our qualitative interviewees.

It's important to note that not all harm is experienced the same by all employees; people from marginalized groups and particularly people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or Asian employees are experiencing more stress and harm. This finding was prevalent in our study as well. For example, Women in the Workplace found that "compared with women overall, Latinas are more likely to worry about layoffs and furloughs. LGBTQ+ women are almost twice as likely as employees overall to cite mental health as one of their biggest challenges during Covid-19. Latina and Black mothers are shouldering heavier burdens than white mothers. They are more likely to be their family's sole breadwinner or to have partners working outside the home during Covid-19. They are doing more at home, too: Latina mothers are 1.6 times more likely than white mothers to be responsible for all childcare and housework, and Black mothers are twice as likely to be handling all of this for their families."

For Leaders

Leadership

On mental health at work: Profs. Leanne Williams and Jeffrey Pfeffer's report

How workplaces can support the mental health of their Black employees: HBR article

On the importance of an intersectional approach: GW University website

How diversity means changing corporate culture and power structures: Prof. Robin Ely and Prof. David Thomas's HBR article

Harassment

On workplace harassment: Emily Greer provides a good overview in her presentation

Why nondisclosure agreements harm tech companies and employees: Protocol article

Remote Work

Operational changes for managers and employees: Cate Huston and Eli Budelli's post

On why companies need structure: Jo Freeman's Tyranny of Structurelessness

On leading with experimenting and limiting process: Cate Huston's post

On making remote workplaces inclusive: Sonja Gittens Ottley's post

Inclusion

Recommendations for tech startups: Project Include

How younger workers highly value equity and culture: Washington Post article, Catalyst research brief

How harmful cultures drive costly employee turnover: Kapor Center study

On inclusion as a deciding factor for business success in 2030: Intel study

Short overviews of inclusion topics: Blair Imani's Smarter in Seconds

Glossary with more inclusive, holistic, and fluid definitions: Tatiana Mac's Self-Defined

For Employees & Workers

Covid-19 resources

CODE2040's Covid-19 Community Resources

Mental health

For everyone: Grief Resources, The Body Is Not An Apology, Inclusive Therapists

For queer and trans people of color: NQTTCN QTPOC Mental Health Practitioner Directory

For Black people: Self article, Henson resource guide, Black Mental Wellness site, Ethel's Club, Liberate App

For Black women and girls: The Loveland Foundation, Therapy for Black Girls

For Black men: Therapy for Black Men

For Latinx people: Proyecto Solace, Latinx Therapists Directory

For Indigenous people: Indigenous Circle of Wellness (CA)

For Asian people: Asian Mental Health Collective Therapist Directory

For Muslim people: Muslim Mental Health Directory

For people in larger bodies, people with disabilities, people with chronic pain, people over the age of 65 and people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community:[65] Decolonizing Fitness

For people with eating disorders, disordered eating, trauma, queer & LGBTQIA2S+ populations, and autistic & neurodivergent individuals:[66] The Queer Counselor

For transgender people: Forge

For journalists: IWMF

Mental health crisis support

For everyone: Crisis health textline: US and Canada: Text 741741 | UK: text 85258 | Ireland: text 50808

For LGBTQ Youth:[67] The Trevor Project

For trans people: Trans Lifeline

For Indigenous people: StrongHearts Native Helpline

Anti-harassment

Hotlines
Games hotline: US: Text "SUPPORT" to 23368 between 4 pm and 7 pm Pacific

RAINN national sexual assault hotline: US: 800.656.HOPE (4673)

Resources
Third-party tool for Twitter: Block Party

Self-help manual for online harassment: PEN America Field Manual

On sexual harassment: TIMES UP

Engaging in Intersectional Research, Data Equity, and Safety

From the beginning of our research process, our goal was to center aspects of recognition justice such as intersectionality, data equity, racial equity, and individual safety into every aspect of the research, across our data gathering, data analysis, and data communication for quantitative, qualitative, and visual data.[68]

In our survey design, we wanted to not only record the different aspects of respondents' identities, but also acknowledge and center those identities in our data collection. Since choices around identity are limiting by nature, we provided the option for individuals to write in custom responses. Our data analysis was guided by data equity and recognition justice principles drawing from racial justice and intersectional theory. Our goal was to be mindful of how we were presenting our data as well as how we were analyzing and reporting on our data. It's not enough for us to report on the majority of findings for people overall, but also to break down how different kinds of intersecting identities across race, gender, disability, and more experienced differences in harm in our survey data and in our qualitative interviews.

As researchers, we also want to acknowledge that any form of data analysis that summarizes or forms extrapolations from data could be engaging in a form of erasure.[69]

Given the many angles of data reporting possible from these survey results, we centered our research on where the harm is taking place and who is experiencing it, paying attention to who often does not get recognition. This is a conscious choice not to center on any one identity or to only average all experiences, because we know there has been a historical and ongoing pattern of focus on dominant categories in research by default and design, which often hides real problems. We also applied an intersectional lens, as named and defined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw

If we can offer solutions that center and are informed by the worst experiences and people most harmed, they should improve all experiences for all people.

Survey Results & Data Biography

For this research, we wrote a 120-question survey that we put on our in-house survey platform. Access to the answers was given on a need-to-know basis across a select group of 5 individuals affiliated with the project, and only the data scientist had access to the actual survey responses. We sent requests for survey responses using links over social media, through chain referrals, social media, listservs, lists, and email outreach, and word of mouth. We used a unique link for each outreach effort, so we could inactivate the link for any outreach that got disrupted by

spam or trolls without affecting other efforts. We shared the survey with online communities through our own social media accounts, the Project Include account, and partner individual and leader accounts. We made explicit appeals to people from marginalized communities to build our responses from Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people, women, nonbinary people, trans people, queer people, disabled people, and especially people who have more than one of these identities.[70]

We received a total of 2,928 responses between September 29, 2020 and January 4, 2021. We rejected 132 responses as unhelpful; these included empty submissions, submissions with invalid timestamps, submissions where every option was selected in questions where it didn't make sense, or submissions with so few answers provided (all questions were optional) that it was similar to an empty submission. The few submissions that included hateful or disparaging comments about the survey (with unhelpful responses like the above) were also excluded. The survey had 120 questions and included 5 open-ended questions. We surveyed and interviewed workers, who included full-time or part-time employees, and independent contractors for themselves or a contracting company, and freelancers. They included all levels of worker, from CEO to new hire and intern. Our survey respondents included non-tech workers across 50 industries total. The majority of respondents (80%) worked mostly in the tech/adjacent industry

(40% pure tech industry, 14% in no category, 6% finance, 4% nonprofit, 4% education, and 4.5 bio/healthcare). Additionally, respondents worked at companies covering a wide range of sizes across 1,186 U.S. zip codes and 48 countries.

Data Governance

The survey was conducted via Project Include's custom survey submission system, and the submissions are stored on the cloud with generated IDs for each submission and coded IDs for each question, choice, choice template, and choice type that only our survey engineer and data scientist could access and decode. The survey submissions were then exported to Project Include's custom survey analytics system. Due to the sensitivity of the data, we decided to host the survey analytics system and graph dashboard locally off the cloud, and only our data scientist/engineer has access to the individual anonymized and interpretable survey results. When sharing data insights and graphs, our data scientist only shared aggregations and rollups that were filtered and considered safe from a data privacy standpoint, and all shared files were first encrypted. These data were shared with our other three co-authors, and in practice just one co-author has decrypted aggregations and summary statistics. The only non-encrypted shared data files were given to our data visualization expert. Qualitative free-response questions were removed from any other survey context, given different IDs only interpretable by the survey analytics system, and only shared with two co-authors and two re-

search assistants via a cloud spreadsheet. We kept all encrypted and aggregated data files to a single email thread for data management. Finally, we plan to delete all data trails, including the email thread at the end of this project, retaining only the database of survey submissions, which may be used for a follow up project.

Data Analysis & Analytical Framework

Our focus on centering the experiences of people most harmed took us beyond power analysis from the framework of Western statistics to also consider recognition justice from the power analysis framework of a Just Transition (rooted in deeper understanding of inequities from people's experiences with climate change and climate injustice). We describe how we considered both statistical power and structural power and the practices we used for each, followed by real examples from our data reporting and visualization.

Statistical Power Analysis with Western statistics

We considered experiences of identity-based harm with a minimum sample size of n=10 when comparing one aspect of identity and a minimum sample size of n=5 when comparing two or more intersections of identity for any given question around experience. We focused less on precision of percentages and more on relative differences among them. We avoid causal statements, and we use "significant" only where there is higher confidence and clear assumptions about underlying distributions (and recognize how statistical significance may diminish the significance of individuals most harmed and the impact of their experiences and trauma). We chose to use "X times as likely," a more conservative statement different from "X times more likely." We calculated percentages out of people who responded ("respondents") to each particular intersection of questions being analyzed rather than out of all people who responded to the survey.

Although quantitative decisions around statistical power contribute to both precision and confidence in patterns of difference and individual privacy, measures like averages and aggregated distributions also contribute to potential misrepresentation, lack of recognition, or erasure of experiences for people with underrepresented aspects of identities, because they favor any overrepresented majority by default. Only considering statistical power and aggregated analyses would limit our understanding of data.

Structural Power Analysis with recognition justice and data equity

We consider recognition justice to address and balance the potentially inequitable and limiting downsides of statistical power analysis. We applied two practices throughout analyses, and made each decision on a case-by-case basis with a consideration of context.

— We included people regardless of sample size in places where we fully enumerated identity-based harms, even if we could not represent it as a more precise percentage for everyone of that identity. For example, we chose to state "1 of 3 Indigenous women" in a list of percentages to recognize their experiences, even if 3 people are not enough to state a precise pattern of 33% of Indigenous women experiencing harm.

— When considering what percentages and statistics to examine, we treated identities as their own reference classes. For example, we chose to state "X% of nonbinary people experienced harm" rather than "Y% of those harmed were nonbinary people." This decision allows people to understand experiences based on identities and counteracts the erasure of averaging based on the majority composition of who answered or didn't answer a particular question about experience.

Combining analytical frameworks with intersectionality

For intersectional analyses, we built a survey analytics system to configure any custom combination of two or more identities and experiences, calculate all combinations of samples and percentages (including those with respect to intersectional identities, e.g. "X% of Latinx/Hispanic trans women"), highlight significant differences across different levels of (dis)aggregation where applicable, and generate statistics and graphs of multiple dimensions at once by different facets of people's identities or experiences. This analytics backend enabled us to systematically consider hundreds of combinations of intersectional experiences.

Data aggregation principles

We chose to aggregate data around a few subsets of identities and experiences on a case-by-case basis, while also trying to include the experiences of people with as many identities as possible. We did so with a deliberate recognition of three types of erasure. Aggregating any nuanced and multidimensional aspect of people's lived experiences does not equally center people's self-identifications. Small sample size and data privacy concerns may exclude people of an identity (e.g., a single individual who identified with a unique set of gender identities no other respondents identified with, which is n=1 and

may be at potential risk due to the lack of diversity in tech). Choosing not to aggregate may hide larger patterns or differences in harm for people of multiple identities (e.g., not being able to recognize or share a broader pattern of gender-based harassment without aggregating experiences for people who identified beyond the gender binary).

To move towards more inclusion and less erasure simultaneously, we defined and applied 6 data aggregation principles.

— **We were context-based:** We disaggregated gender identities when looking at gender-based harassment and uncovering differences in experience levels for different people. We aggregated gender identities when looking at the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender in race-based hostility and uncovering more specific patterns for different people.

— **We were iterative:** We attempted and discussed multiple variants of aggregations collectively through tradeoffs, such as considering the nuances for people of multiple race/ethnicities or with multiple disabilities.

— **We started with the most disaggregated analysis first:** We counted each respondent's set of self-identified choices as unique, before incrementally aggregating identities until we reached sample size thresholds for as many people as possible (e.g. 98% of respondents) while minimizing the level of aggregation.

— **We considered both similarity of experience within the survey and difference of experience with structural inequities when aggregating identities:** For example, we observed similar experiences of gender-based harassment for people who identified as both gender nonbinary and as women; and also considered differences in lived experiences of race-based hostility for Indigenous/First Nations people compared to people of other race/ethnicities in society.

— **We were specific and transparent:** We include footnotes in reporting and visualizations to expand on who is counted in a particular percentage or label.

— **We shared decisions, impacts, and limitations:** Read more details in this section, especially limitations of our research below, and in Language Choices.

Decisions and data equity: specific examples

Our visualization on race-based hostility shows how a framework of recognition justice results in more equitable data analysis:

— The overall percentages of who experienced an increase in race-based hostility by gender were 7% for men and 15% for women and/or nonbinary people. The proportion of women and/or nonbinary people who experienced harm was twice as high compared to men.

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If we stopped here, what patterns of harm could we be failing to recognize?

— This level of aggregation disproportionately emphasizes the race-based hostility experiences of the 57% of white respondents (by comparison, the next largest proportion was the 19% of East/South/Southeast Asian/Asian/Asian American respondents, only a third of the number of white respondents, and the smallest proportion was the 0.3% of Indigenous/First Nations respondents). Only 1% of white people who responded to that question said they had experienced an increase in race-based hostility (1% of white men and 1% of white women and/or nonbinary people said the same).

— A more intersectional analysis reveals that for respondents who were not white, the proportion of people harmed was twice as high across gender of each respective race/ethnicity compared to the overall percentages, and significantly higher than for white people of any gender (18% of men and 31% of women and/or nonbinary people who identified as Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Middle Eastern, multiple races/ethnicities, or as individually specified said they felt an increase in race-based hostility).

— But looking at "people of color" is also reductive. When disaggregating further to looking at individual race/ethnicity identities, we saw that the proportion of increased race-based hostility

was much higher for the 7% of Black/African/African American respondents regardless of gender, where 42% of Black people who responded to that question said they experienced an increase in race-based hostility (41% of Black men and 43% of Black women and/or nonbinary people said they experienced an increase in race-based hostility).

A second example comes from our visualization showing gender-based harassment and gender identities:

— **Centering people's self-identifications of gender:** We chose to disaggregate gender nonbinary/non-conforming people due to observing some differences among experiences of people who identified as women (and no other gender identities), men (and no other gender identities), any combinations of gender nonbinary/non-conforming/genderqueer/individually specified people as listed (and not either one of women or men, but inclusive of both), any combinations of gender nonbinary/non-conforming/genderqueer/individually specified people and women (and not men), and any combinations of gender nonbinary/non-conforming/genderqueer people and men (and not women). Through disaggregation, we found that 40% of people who identified as both nonbinary and women experienced an increase in gender-based harassment compared to 9% of people who identified as nonbinary and men.

— Recognizing patterns in difference and limitations of labels and choices: After observing how the specific combinations of identities outside of the gender binary often gave a sample size of n=1, we compared these individual differences in experiences of gender-based harassment and found similar responses in who was most harmed to aggregate the experiences of people who identified with combinations of gender nonbinary/non-conforming/genderqueer/individually specified identities.

— Inclusion minimizing erasure to center transgender people: To counteract the erasure of the experiences of trans people by including their experiences with cisgender people for all men and women, we also disaggregate experiences for trans people and cis people. This recognition is important everywhere and is especially important in the context of experiences around gender-based harassment. In doing so, we found that twice the proportion of trans people (42%) experienced an increase in harassment compared to cis people (25%). We also found that 42% of trans nonbinary/genderqueer people, 40% of trans women, and all trans men (n<5) experienced an increase in gender-based harassment.

Decisions in data gathering, communication, and visualization

We applied data equity practices to our data interpretation and communication. We aimed to be as specific as possible when reporting on people's identities or experiences and made deliberate language choices.[71] For clarity in the data visualizations and reporting, we embedded footnotes to provide more detail on identities such as race/ethnicity and gender described by the summary labels.

We acknowledge and still recognize who is erased by Western practices of quantitative analysis. We use descriptions, footnotes, qualitative data, external resources, and experts to better represent our responses for people who identify as, e.g., Indigenous/First Nations, Middle Eastern, or as individually specified, and people at the intersections of more than one identity, e.g., race/ethnicity and gender. We tried to center and include people's self-identified labels while retaining a threshold of sample size to show differences in experience for people's respective identities.

We also acknowledge that answering questions on topics such as harassment, hostility, and other forms of harm can be personally exhausting, triggering, or traumatic in itself. These may be a few of multiple factors that contribute to the reduced response rate of questions around harm

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and/or underreporting of percentages of people who experienced harm (e.g., while we had 2,796 overall respondents, only about half responded to specific questions around harassment or hostility). We included a section at the end of the survey that acknowledges potential harm to respondents with a list of mental health and harassment resources we thought might be helpful.

In addition, it's important to highlight that overall percentages can be misleading if used on their own, because the experiences of people with any majority identity can end up dominating experience data for everyone. That is, just because 58% of respondents were white does not mean their experiences should dominate the findings. Instead, we looked at percentages for people of each identity to treat each identity as its own reference class, rather allowing the majority racial experience to speak for everyone as the "default" or "average" experience ("average" for whom?). This approach revealed more nuanced

differences in people's experiences otherwise hidden or invisible.

Our data visualization expert used a large font and chose a color palette based on Webaim and Color Safe to check for accessibility combined with the color blindness check on Adobe Illustrator. We also considered social connotations of various colors. These colors were then used in the design of the overall report. We included footnotes as part of visualizations on harassment and hostility to be specific and recognize complexity in aggregating people's self-identifications. Data and language decisions were made from an equity lens as described above and in "Language Choices."

Limitations of our research

The goal of our research project was to measure increases in harm and anxiety, but within that our survey and practices had some limitations. Because we are focused on changes since Covid-19 and wanted to have a manageable number of questions, we did not include a baseline question asking about levels of harassment, because they were only asked about the changes from before Covid-19 to the survey response date. As a result, we couldn't disambiguate between people who experienced an unchanged amount of harm that continued to be negligible from people who experienced an unchanged amount of harm that continued to be traumatic. This may also have contributed to underreporting of (absolute) proportions of harm experienced. We also did not ask if people had switched jobs since Covid-19; several respondents mentioned in their long-form responses that they had, sometimes because their previous job had become intolerable during Covid, which suggests underreporting of harm. We had multiple choice answers for many questions; not all-inclusive, though write-in answers for many multiple choice limited questions. We had several places in the survey where the language could have been confusing. This is both something we want to improve upon and something we considered in analysis (we chose to analyze questions that were more clear in their phrasing).

We acknowledge that for Indigenous/First Nations, Middle Eastern, and other populations of people, our quantitative methods requiring larger sample sizes to draw representative conclusions for people of any identity was limiting (e.g. low precision in claims of "X% of Indigenous/First Nations" drawing from 0 responses or n<5 responses, compared to other sample sizes in the hundreds of responses). We attempted to counteract this by including some of the data descriptively, noting the small sample sizes. We also acknowledge that for people of certain (particularly intersectional combinations of) identities or multiple combinations of identities, we chose to err on the side of data privacy by not sharing individual experiences that may unintentionally identify them.

In terms of researching and analyzing results from people of more than one race/ethnicity, we did not want to aggregate respondents who identified as having more than one race/ethnicity as one group, since we would be erasing many specific combinations of identities and experiences. We also recognize a similar limitation with any aggregation of gender, race/ethnicity, or other aspects of identities that contain multitudes of combinations or complexities for people. Someone who identifies as Black and Indigenous will likely have different experiences than someone who identifies as white and Latinx, and their experiences should not be aggregated. Additionally, given the sample size, we aimed to maintain privacy and confidentiality in a non-diverse industry, and also to look for large enough numbers to provide more representative percentages.

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Due to the inherent reductive nature of Western statistical methods and any form of data aggregation, and in recognizing that no one identity is a monolith, we also looked at qualitative information, including the long free-response answers to two questions about experience and solutions in regards to workplace harassment and hostility. In order to protect people and the sensitivity of their qualitative data, we removed all other survey context from the qualitative responses and only share aggregated, higher level, manual categories of harmful experiences and ideas for solutions.

Our research mostly focused on disproportionate identity-based harm at the intersections of race/ethnicity and gender identities, and while we tried to analyze many different intersections of identity and experience, we did not analyze the infinite possible intersections or combinations of intersections. We included all geographies but did not look for consistency across answers in one specific location of respondent versus others in that same location. We performed an initial analysis of every question with at least one or two dimensions of either experience or identity to understand where to focus, but by deciding to center both who is most harmed around harassment, hostility, and mental health, and where there are large differences or large proportions among people's identity-based experiences as reported on above, we only analyzed and reported on a subset of the data. Given additional time and resources, we would appreciate the opportunity to investigate further along other dimensions, e.g., expanding our initial analysis of aspects like sexual orientation, caregiving, income, immigration, veterans, religion, education, level, job function, belonging, compensation for equity work, and much more.

Engaging in "transparent opaque" research design

Any data point in harassment is a real person's traumatic experience. Protecting the identity of the respondents and qualitative interviews is extremely important, since in some cases, a victim mentioning older harassment can restart that harassment or trigger new kinds of harassment. In researching online harassment, it's not enough to just anonymize data, which can be anonymized and used to identify individuals as an MIT study found,[72] even more care has to be taken to protect individuals. Within our research, we are engaging a protocol developed by one of our researchers, Caroline Sinders, from her years of online harassment practice, which is presenting data in a "transparent opaque" manner. "Transparently opaque" research presentation moves beyond anonymizing data at a detail level, and moves towards protecting victims by obscuring identifying markers. Within this methodology,

a researcher can state how many interviewees were interviewed, generally where they were from, and high level findings. If using social media data or blog posts, the research will state that information was gathered from "social media platforms such as X [e.g. Facebook] and from specific areas such as Y [a kind of Facebook group]," but it is not listing the exact url. Additionally, this methodology does not use direct quotes, instead it restates what an interviewee has said, to help obscure identifying markers such as the conversational "voice" and word phrases that may identify an interviewee. By taking such measures, the researcher is acknowledging where research came from, who the respondents are, and pertinent information about the research, but removing details that could be used to deanonymize survey respondents and interviewees.

Qualitative interviews, employee and expert interviewees

In total, we interviewed 17 individuals, with 5 employee interviewees, 12 interviews of workplace harassment victims with 10 qualitative video and/or audio interviews and 2 email interviews. Interviewees were based in the United States and worked across technology, education, technology focused research labs and or civil society organizations, creative/arts and design, who were cisgender female, trans nonbinary, and/or nonbinary. Despite outreach efforts, Interviewees were predominately white; two identified as Black and another as Middle Eastern. Two interviewees identified as disabled.

Our interviewees were found through chain referral sampling, targeted outreach and various individuals sharing our survey and calls to be interviewed with specific individuals suggesting they contact us.

Additionally, we interviewed subject matter experts in areas for recommendations and solutions. Steve Aquino, Prof. Robin Ely, Diamond Greer-Jones, Leigh Honeywell,[73] Cate Huston, Y-Vonne Hutchinson, Haley Jones, Prof. Sanaz Mobasseri, Nicole Sanchez, Prof. Leanne Williams, and Shoshana Zuboff, professor emerita.

Qualitative survey responses:
Frequency of type of harassment described [74]

Experience Type	Count	Percent
general toxicity	219	27%
sexist/gender based hostility work environment	95	12%
sexist harassment work environment	72	9%
sexism-based/gender identity based hostility	66	8%
sexism-based/gender identity based harassment	50	6%
(fear of) Unfair performance reviews and Retaliation	43	5%
racist hosility work environment	40	5%
expectations of always being available for work	26	3%
work tool problems	21	3%
racist harassment work environment	15	2%
racism-based hostility	14	2%
sexual identity/sexual orientation hostility	13	2%
(Threats of) physical violence	13	2%
financial stress	10	1%
age based hostility	10	1%
Ableist harassment	9	1%
Hostility toward parents work environment	9	1%
Ableist hostility	8	1%
Immigration status/country of origin hostility	8	1%
Hostility toward parents	7	1%
sexism and racism based hostility	6	1%
Ableist hostility work environment	6	1%
sexual identity/sexual orientation harassment	6	1%
age based harassment	6	1%
chastising	5	1%
racism-based harassment	5	1%
religious hostility	5	1%
sexual identity/sexual orientation hostility workplace	5	1%
sexual identity/sexual orientation harassment workplace	5	1%

Qualitative survey responses:
Frequency of type of solution suggested [75]

(Read Solutions section for report recommendations)

Experience Type	Count	Percent
Accountability	298	18%
Actions (Disciplinary and/or Restorative post harassment event)	158	10%
Top Down Allyship Company Culture	102	6%
Unspecified or Bottom Up Allyship Company Culture	98	6%
Training	83	5%
Psychological Safety	70	4%
Diversity in Leadership	68	4%
Clarifying and Improving Policies and Reporting Procedures	63	4%
Leadership Accountability (for dealing with others)	63	4%
Open Communication	62	4%
Leadership Accountability (for their own actions)	56	3%
Strict Zero Tolerance Policy	52	3%
DEI/Greater Diversity in Hires	52	3%
Transparency About Harassment Reports and Administrative Response	52	3%
Structural Changes in Relation to Work Flows	48	3%
Clear and Consistent Protocols for Dealing with Harassment	34	3%
Training Leadership Specifically	32	3%
Creating a New Policy	31	3%
Safe and Empowered Unionizing/Support Systems	24	1%
Extra-professional Policies/Cultural Shifts	24	1%
Third Party Reporting and Investigations	22	1%
Regular Conversations about Harassment + Appropriate Behavior	17	1%
Clear Tracked and Measured Goals (surrounding the culture)	16	1%
HR Specific Actions	16	1%
Propose a Brand New Tool	14	1%
Collaborative Decision Making	14	1%
Racial Justice Trainings and Education	11	1%
Anti-harassment Trainings/Education	11	1%

Language evolves

In the future, readers will find that some of the terms we use are out-of-date and do not stand the test of time. Some words have ambiguous meanings or negative connotations, and here we explain our uses and share other uses that we considered. Often, terms viewed as inclusive for some people were exclusive of others. Several identities did not have a fully inclusive term. We chose the terms we thought were most inclusive based on conversations and consultations with members of those communities we are trying to describe.

We provided a description of **"harassment"** in our survey for clarity: "Harassment can take the form of actions directed at aspects of someone's identity like gender, race, perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, appearance, immigration status, socio-economic background or status, age, disability,etc., and any of the above combined. Harassment can include yelling at coworkers, uncomfortable or repeated questions about your identity or appearance, dismissive attitudes, teasing put-downs, repeated requests for dates, groping or grinding, or quid pro quo requests for sex." (This list is based on Emily Greer's description and was used with her permission.)

Race and ethnicity terms can be complicated. One term we have noticed is **"Latine"** instead of **"Latinx,"** a term we use. We've read some discussion of "Latine" as being more inclusive,

because it's easier to pronounce and more true to the Spanish language. We chose to use Latinx after consulting people from the Latinx community, because it more explicitly includes nonbinary and trans people. Here are some resources to learn more on Latina/o and Latinx, Latinx and Latine, the Indigenous-focused term Mazewalli, and a historical background. While Project Include has always capitalized the word **"Black"** and not **"white,"** it is now a more standard practice recommended, for example, in journalism. Race identities without hyphens have also become standard. We use **"African American,"** **"Asian American"** and **"Native American"** without hyphens in this report to reflect the use of "African," "Asian," and "Native" as adjectives describing types of Americans.

Our gender identities center people's self-identification (e.g., **"women"** includes both trans and cisgender women). Due to small sample size and privacy concerns, we sometimes used the term **"nonbinary people"** to encompass all people who identify with genders that do not exist on the gender binary, including gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, two-spirit, genderqueer, bigender, and/or as individually specified. We use **"genderqueer"** to describe a gender identity that may or may not fall into or fluctuate between the binary genders of man and woman. We use **"queer"** to describe the range of sexual orientations that exist outside heterosexual orientations. Some members of the LGBTQIA+ community dislike the terms; here is a description of reactions to "queer".

Language Choices

Our survey's gender choices included "female" and "male." We decided to switch to the more inclusive **"woman"** and **"man"** for this report, and we will use these gender identity demographics as options in future surveys. "Woman" and "man" are more inclusive, because they describe gender identity, while "female" and "male" describe a person's sex assigned at birth. Several respondents noted in the write-in choice that they chose "female" given their self-identification with "woman," because we didn't provide it as a choice. This experience highlights the importance of distinguishing between biological sex and gender identity and a more empowering survey design that includes options for individually specified text responses.

We use **"workers"** to include full-time or part-time employees, and independent contractors for themselves or a contracting company, and freelancers.

Terms we did not use include "people of color" and "BIPOC," which have become less helpful than listing out and specifying exactly what identities are being addressed. Over time, conversations may evolve to use even more specificity around origin country and other geographies. We encourage future research on differences based on immigration status. Colorism is another form of bias that affects people's experiences across many races and ethnicities, and we are hearing more discussions that acknowledge colorism, though the pain around colorism is hard to navigate.

Endnotes

[1] In San Francisco alone, Coinbase, Dropbox, reddit, Salesforce, and Square have announced long-term plans to be remote. Schneider, Benjamin. "Remote Work is Here to Stay." SFWeekly. February 11, 2021. https://www.sfweekly.com/news/remote-work-is-here-to-stay/.

[2] We surveyed and interviewed workers, who included full-time or part-time employees, and independent contractors for themselves or a contracting company, and freelancers.

[3] "Resources on Intersectionality." Office for Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement. George Washington University. https://diversity.gwu.edu/resources-intersectionality.

[4] Measuring efficiency instead of productivity can get in the way of actual work, growth and progress. Mankins, Michael. "Great Companies Obsess Over Productivity, Not Efficiency." Harvard Business Review. March 01, 2017. https://hbr.org/2017/03/great-companies-obsess-over-productivity-not-efficiency.

[5] This separation of abuse into two categories is from Amnesty International's methodology, which one of our researchers helped develop. "Project Completed. Troll Patrol: Our army of digital volunteers exposed abuse silencing women on #ToxicTwitter." Amnesty International. Amnesty International Ltd. 2019. https://decoders.amnesty.org/projects/troll-patrol.

[6] This definition comes from Double Loop Game's CEO Emily Greer, from a talk on rethinking workplace harassment at GDC Summer 2020. Greer, Emily. "R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Practical Tips to Prevent Abuse & Build Team Trust." GDC Vault. Informa PLC. 2020. https://www.gdcvault.com/play/1026789/R-E-S-P-E.

[7] In our surveys and qualitative interviews, we found examples of harassment and hostility that ranged from financial stress, sexism, racism, workplace toxicity, ageism, ableism, harassment and hostility related to religion, immigration, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, perceived immigration status and perceived country of origin. Read Qualitative Experiences for details.

[8] A significant percentage of respondents (up to 44%) did not provide sufficient information to be included. In several categories, we did not have sufficient numbers of respondents to provide reliable data, so we rolled up some categories. This speaks to the limitations and erasure in this quantitative analysis. Read Methodology for more details.

[9] Does not include respondents (44%) who did not answer the question.

[10] "Genderqueer or nonbinary" here included anyone who self-identified as genderqueer, gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, two-spirit, not sure, both women and men, women or men in addition to one or more of the above, an individually specified free response, and any combination of the above.

[11] "Women" here included transgender and cisgender people who self-identified as transgender and cisgender women who didn't identify as any other gender identity.

[12] No nonbinary Indigenous or Middle Eastern people responded to this question.

[13] "African/African American/Black" here includes anyone who self-identified as African, African American/Black, or both (people who identified as either of these and another race/ethnicity were included as multi-racial). We acknowledge the complexity of racial/ethnic identities and the limitations of decisions around it.

[14] "Asian American/Asian" here includes anyone who self-identified as one or more of Asian American, East Asian, South Asian, or Southeast Asian (people who identified as a subset of these and another race/ethnicity were included as multi-racial). We acknowledge the complexity of racial/ethnic identities and the limitations of decisions around it.

[15] While responses from 2 of 5 Indigenous individuals do not provide a reliable percentage or pattern of hostility, we include this description of responses to acknowledge that some quantitative methods can result in a lack of recognition or erasure. Read Methodology for more.

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[19] Here we chose to disaggregate experiences for gender nonbinary/non-conforming people due to observing differences that would otherwise be hidden. Read Methodology for more.

[20] I have the tools I need to intervene when seeing or experiencing harm online in my workplace. 49% agree, 30% disagree, 21% neutral.

[21] I have the right tools to solve or prevent harm I'm seeing online or experiencing in the workplace. 41% agree, 35% disagree, 24% neutral.

[22] DiscoTech. DiscoTech.com. https://discotech.tech/techtruths.

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[28] Nondisclosure agreements prevent workers from talking about their experiences, including harassment and hostility, and contribute to the lack of progress in racial equity in the tech industry. Birnbaum, Emily. "A wall of silence holding back racial progress in tech: NDAs." Protocol.com. Protocol Media. LLC. July 1, 2020. https://www.protocol.com/nda-racism-equality-diversity-tech.

[29] Read Resources for links to educational articles and websites.

[30] Does not include the 5% of respondents who did not answer this question.

[31] The survey question used "female" and "male" as two options; we use the broader terms "woman" and "man" here and throughout this report.

[32] Does not include 6% who did not answer this question.

[33] Does not include 7% of total respondents who did not answer this question.

[34] African/African American/Black includes African and African American/Black, and people who identified as both. Asian/Asian American includes East Asian (including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Taiwanese), South Asian (including Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Indian, Nepali, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan), and Southeast Asian (including Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Mien, Singaporean, Thai, and Vietnamese), and people who identified as more than one of these identities. Indigenous American/First Nations includes Native American/American Indian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian. Each category includes multi-race/ethnicity answers when all the answers are included in that category.

[35] For Pacific Islanders, after consultation, we chose to include them in the Indigenous/Native American choice. We could also have included them in the Asian/Asian American choice, where we have included them in past rollups.

[36] Does not include 5% of the total 2,796 valid respondents who did not respond to this question.

[37] We did not have significant enough numbers of respondents who answered questions about harassment or hostility or anxiety who identified as Indigenous/Native American or Middle Eastern to provide detailed analysis or conclusions. Read Methodology for more details. We looked for a minimum of 10 respondents for one identity and 5 for more than one identity.

[38] DiscoTech. DiscoTech.com. https://discotech.tech/techtruths.

[39] Prasanna Parasurama, Anindya Ghose, & Panos Ipeirotis, "Gender and Race Preferences in Hiring in the Age of Diversity Goals: Evidence from Silicon Valley Tech Firms." SSRN.com, SSRN, 2020, https://privpapers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3672484.

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67 Identity terms are from Decolonizing Fitness.

68 Identity terms are from The Queer Counselor.

69 Identity term is from The Trevor Project.

70 With gratitude for the work of data equity leaders such as: W.E.B. du Bois (Data Portraits), Yeshimabeit Milner (D4BL), David Schlosberg (EJ framework), Tawana Petty & AISP (Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration Toolkit), Urban Institute (Elevate Data For Equity), Heather Krause (We All Count), Jara Dean-Coffey (Equitable Evaluation Initiative), and Indigenous research methodologies.

71 Read more detail in the discussion of power analysis and the limitations of our research below.

72 Two examples of messages: "End of year ask: We want to hear from you, especially if you are a female or nonbinary BIPOC. Please take a 15-minute survey *by Jan 4* to share your experiences at work since Covid." and "Please share: We are seeking additional Indigenous people to take a survey measuring the rise of remote workplace harassment, toxicity and harm since Covid. We want to list the harms and recommend solutions for all groups, including marginalized ones. Thanks"

73 Read Language Choices for more details.

74 Kondor, Dániel, Hashemian, Behrooz, de Montjoye, Yves-Alexandre, and Ratti, Carlo. "Towards Matching User Mobility Traces in Large-Scale Datasets." IEEE Xplore. IEEE. 2020. https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8470173.

75 Ellen Pao is an angel investor in Leigh's startup, Tall Poppy.

76 Includes types with more than 1% of the 814 total respondents who answered this question.

77 Includes types with more than 1% of the 1,624 total respondents who answered this question.

Team

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