Telecommuting creates unique physical and emotional challenges and the risk of ‘pandemic’ burn-out.

The result can be a sense that tasks are never completed or at least not done well, work never ends, and days are blurred together; this can create exhaustion, frustration and despair.

Identify the most important way to use your time right now. What is essential?

Look for creative activities to engage in that will help you connect with the present circumstances and prepare for the future

Identify thoughts, feelings or behaviours you can release that aren’t helping you adapt to the evolving new normal

What are new thoughts, feelings or behaviours you can adopt that will support you now and guide you in the future?

Summary of breakout group discussions

Current challenges with scheduling and blurring of work and home activities

- Carrying the weight of additional responsibilities (e.g., family, work, students, day-to-day living, grocery shopping)
- Back-to-back Zoom meetings are exhausting
- Not having quiet times to reflect about bigger issues (e.g. during travel time)
- Need for real social interaction
- Dealing with uncertainty: difficulty to plan ahead of time, and ever-changing challenges
- Disrupted schedule, lack of sleep
- Not having summer vacation to look forward to
- Uncertainty about student courses which may be scheduled during the summer
- Difficulty focusing during Zoom meetings when multitasking at the same time
Suggested strategies to help create new routines

- Importance of building in unstructured, down-time between meetings and during the day
  - Regularly doing something different (e.g., exercise, cooking, getting away from your desk)
  - Regularly doing nothing!
- Importance of having structured time
  - Making time to read articles, think about larger-scale projects
  - Going for a walk with a friend
  - Having 10-minute breaks between meetings
- Importance of having clear boundaries
  - Saying no to requests that are not a priority
  - Keeping the same schedule every day
  - Keeping a limit on screen time
  - Keeping work/weekend/family time separate
  - Recognizing things over which we have control, and letting go of things over which we have no control
- Prioritizing small, quick-win projects
- Being kind to yourself
- Taking time in the summer to slow down or be creative (e.g., taking a nano-sabbatical for a week)
- Visiting online museums and touristic sites etc.

Benefits/opportunities of the new ‘normal’

- Reflecting on priorities and work schedule management
- Spending more time with family
- Setting new, healthier norms around our work as leaders for the future