

Findings from ACCO/UVA Research on Job Stress & Coping Mechanisms



MCINTIRE SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

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To begin

- Leadership and climate change
- Interviews
- UVA, climate scientists
- Job stress in climate-change work



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Big picture

- Sample size = 112 (70 f and 42 m; thank you!)
- “Felt responsibility” for mitigation higher than for adaptation, and both higher than an independent sample
- Priorities for resource allocation, in order:
 - Mitigation
 - Adaptation
 - Preparedness for extreme events



Personal outcomes of interest:

- Burnout
- Physical symptoms
- Thriving
- Career satisfaction



Burnout and/or stress symptoms

- Disagreement about climate change with others at work (strongest relationship = direct supervisors, more than senior leadership and coworkers)
- Overload, hassles, frustrations
- Role ambiguity (e.g., no clear goals)
- Role conflict (conflicting demands/expectations)



Coping with these stressors

- Taking care of yourself, sure (what are your priorities? You deserve some TLC)
- but also tackling the specific sources causing the stress
- This is very different from passively hoping that things improve
- Conflict management/productive conversations, workload management, time management, seeking information, negotiating competing demands



Thriving and Career Satisfaction

- Agreement with others (e.g., boss) re: climate change
- Role clarity
- Optimism (a general trait)
- Optimism re: climate change (this is different!)
- Perceived Progress regarding climate change



Thriving and Career Satisfaction

- “Self assets”, i.e., climate change expertise and knowledge
- Generally behaving proactively (action orientation, not passive, tackling problems and pursuing opportunities)
- Engaging deeply, immersing self in climate change



“Self assets”

- I stay up to date on the latest climate science
- I understand how climate change will impact my organization’s operations
- I follow international and domestic climate policy activities
- I strongly value the protection of our environment
- I am an experienced advocate for climate change response



Climate Change Engagement

- In my work responsibilities in the climate change arena...
- I’ve been taking action to try to make the situation better
- I’ve been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do
- I’ve been thinking hard about what steps to take
- I’ve been getting emotional support from others
- I’ve been getting help and advice from other people



Key Mindset: Action orientation

- Proactivity (vs. passivity)
- Tackling problems
- Scanning for and seizing opportunities
- Self-development (self-assets)
- Deep engagement
- Sense of forward movement



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