







# Advancing work–life supportive contexts for the “haves” and “have nots”: Integrating supervisor training with work–life flexibility to impact exhaustion or engagement

Ellen Ernst Kossek<sup>1</sup>  | Caitlin M. Porter<sup>2</sup>  | Lindsay Mechem Rosokha<sup>1</sup>  |  
Kelly Schwind Wilson<sup>1</sup>  | Deborah E. Rupp<sup>3</sup>  | Jared Law-Penrose<sup>4</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Mitchell E. Daniels Jr. School of Business, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management, University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee, USA

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, USA

<sup>4</sup>Madden School of Business, LeMoyne College, Syracuse, New York, USA

## Correspondence

Ellen Ernst Kossek, Mitchell E. Daniels School of Business, 4091 Rawls Hall, 100 Grant Street Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA.

Email: [ekossek@purdue.edu](mailto:ekossek@purdue.edu)

## Funding information

Purdue University Human Resources Department; Purdue University Mitchell E. Daniels Jr. School of Business; Department of Psychological Sciences

[Correction added on 25 January 2024, after first online publication: Lindsay Mechem Rosokha's first name has been corrected in this version.]

## Abstract

Employers face many dilemmas in effectively implementing work–life flexibility to support employees' personal lives. A key issue is that some employees hold jobs with limited opportunities for work–life flexibility, making them susceptible to burnout; yet most employers believe they can do little to mitigate this dynamic. Furthermore, even when employees hold jobs with greater access to work–life flexibility, some do not take advantage of their flexibility to more fully engage in work and/or home roles. These issues are further exacerbated when supervisors are unsure of their role in supporting work–life flexibility. We identify *work–life supportive context* as a key factor that provides solutions to these dilemmas. Drawing on job demands resources theory, we posit that, when organizations provide work–life supportive training to supervisors, it promotes a *work–life supportive context* (i.e., signaling that the organization is supportive of employees' managing their work–life interface), which mitigates burnout for those with limited work–life flexibility and promotes engagement in work and home roles for those with greater work–life flexibility. Results from a year-long randomized field experiment suggest that, in contexts with trained supervisors and lower employee control over work schedules and boundaries (i.e., lower work–life flexibility), emotional exhaustion is reduced. In contexts with trained supervisors and higher employee control over work boundaries (i.e., higher work–life flexibility), family engagement increases. Surprisingly, irrespective of job access to work–life flexibility, supervisor participation in work–life support training did *not* enhance employee work engagement. Implications of our findings for fostering *work–life supportive contexts* are considered.

## KEYWORDS

boundary control, engagement, exhaustion, job control, schedule control, supervisor work–life training, work–life flexibility

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Work-life flexibility—the ability to manage where (boundaries) and when (schedules) one works—is considered “a valued resource that provides employees with the control and autonomy needed to adapt to simultaneous work and family demands” (p. 349; Allen et al., 2013; Kossek, Perrigino, & Lautsch, 2023). Despite the recognition of the importance of work-life flexibility for employee well-being and engagement, there are key dilemmas that plague the successful implementation of flexible work arrangements within organizations. First, employees who occupy jobs with limited work-life flexibility are more likely to experience stress and burnout (Hill et al., 2008), but since these jobs are viewed as less suited to offering work-life flexibility, employers assume they can do little to mitigate exhaustion (Gonzales, 2023). Second, there is an assumption that employees who occupy jobs with greater access to work-life flexibility will take advantage of such flexibility to effectively manage their work-life interface and more fully engage in both work and home roles (Richman et al., 2008; Rothbard, 2001). However, employees do not always take advantage of the flexible work arrangements afforded to them (Leslie et al., 2012; Perrigino et al., 2018). Thus, even when employees have access to work-life flexibility, it may not translate into enhanced engagement.

We argue that each dilemma, one experienced by the work-life flexibility “have nots” (those with low flexibility) and one experienced by the work-life flexibility “haves” (those with high flexibility) may be addressed through a single remedy: organizational interventions that promote a *work-life supportive context*. The availability of work-life flexibility in and of itself is not sufficient for promoting employees' perceptions of work-life support; a key factor contributing to employees' use of work-life flexibility is the social context, particularly their supervisors use and support of work-life flexibility (de Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2013; Foley et al., 2006; Kossek et al., 1999; Lautsch et al., 2009). For work-life flexibility to be effective in promoting employee well-being and engagement, employees (and supervisors) need to perceive that the organization is supportive of employees managing the work-life interface (Allen, 2001; Lapiere et al., 2008). With this in mind, the key purpose of this study is to investigate whether a *supervisor work-life support training intervention*—targeted toward promoting the use and support of work-life flexibility—promotes the well-being (i.e., burnout) and engagement of employees with varying degrees of access to work-life flexibility.

Drawing from research on work-life flexibility and job demands-resources (JDR) theory (Bakker et al., 2023), we conceptualize access to work-life flexibility as a resource that enables one to more effectively manage demands in both work and home roles (Allen et al., 2013; Kossek, Perrigino, & Lautsch, 2023), which in turn should promote employee well-being (i.e., reduce burnout, enhance engagement). Yet, we suggest that these linkages are contingent upon a *work-life supportive context* (Allen, 2001; de Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2013), which is induced by training supervisors in the use and support of work-life flexibility. Moreover, we posit that the effects of this training intervention are contingent upon the availability of work-life flexibility for one's particular job.

On the one hand, lower work-life flexibility availability reduces one's ability to manage demands across the work-life interface, resulting in emotional exhaustion, which is a key component of burnout. Yet, having a supervisor trained in work-life support serves as a resource that promotes supportive behaviors such as role modeling, offering emotional support, and enabling practices for effectively managing the work-life interface (Hammer, Kossek et al., 2009, 2011). As such, having a supervisor trained in work-life support “buffers” the increased demands experienced by employees with limited access to work-life flexibility, mitigating emotional exhaustion (Bakker et al., 2023; Kossek, Odle-Dusseau, & Hammer, 2018; Kossek, Petty et al., 2018). On the other hand, higher work-life flexibility availability provides opportunities to more effectively manage demands across the work-life interface, and thus to more fully engage in both work and home roles (i.e., work and family engagement)—yet, employees are more likely to engage in work and home roles when they have a supervisor trained in work-life support, as this added support encourages employees with greater access to use the flexibility afforded to them (Goh et al., 2015).

We test these ideas using a year-long quasi-experimental field study of employees who were working in a wide range of staff jobs across departments and levels at a large public university, which created natural variability in their degree of access to work-life flexibility. We investigate how access to work-life flexibility relates to emotional exhaustion and work and family engagement 1 year later (controlling for initial levels of these outcome variables), and whether these relationships differ for employees of supervisors who received work-life supportive training as compared to employees of supervisors who did not receive such training.

This study has several implications for work-life flexibility and training intervention research. First, we provide evidence that a supervisor work-life support training intervention has benefits for the supervised employees, although the effectiveness of the training intervention—and for which outcomes—is contingent upon the work-life flexibility afforded to employees. Organizational decision-makers may assume that work-life training interventions impact employees uniformly; yet, there is evidence that interventions operate differently across different types of people and conditions (e.g., Ceci & Papierno, 2005). As such, social science intervention research is beginning to adopt a “realist evaluation” perspective, which seeks to answer “what works for whom in which circumstances” (p. 41; Nielsen & Miraglia, 2017). Indeed, research on workplace well-being interventions has demonstrated that intervention effectiveness is often contingent upon the personal work-life needs and characteristics of the beneficiaries of training (Hammer et al., 2011, 2016; Kossek, Odle-Dusseau, & Hammer, 2018; Kossek, Thompson, et al., 2019). Our study continues this line of inquiry and extends it by focusing on employees who are the distal beneficiaries of supervisor training. Whereas the HRM literature often focuses on direct trainee benefits, this study integrates findings from the occupational literature on the benefits of leader training for other stakeholders in the work environment (i.e., employees; Kelloway & Barling, 2010). In doing so, our study provides a rigorous evaluation of and insight into what outcomes are impacted by supervisor work-life support training (i.e.,

employee burnout, work and family engagement) and for whom (i.e., employees without or with access to work–life flexibility). Our research provides insight not merely into whether one benefits from a trained supervisor, but rather who benefits and how they benefit.

Second, our investigation of supervisor work–life support training also sheds light on how organizations can promote *work–life supportive contexts*, which addresses several challenges within work–life flexibility research. Specifically, we find that having a supervisor trained in work–life support serves as a resource that mitigates burnout experienced by employees occupying jobs with limited access to work–life flexibility (Kossek, et al., 2018; Kossek, Petty, et al., 2018; Matthews et al., 2014; Odle-Dusseau et al., 2016); and having a trained supervisor serves as a resource that promotes (family) engagement for those who have greater access to work–life flexibility. As such, we illustrate that *work–life supportive contexts* can improve outcomes for both those with limited access and those with greater access to work–life flexibility, albeit in different ways. Whether and how exposing managers to work–life supportive training can help workers across jobs that vary in work–life flexibility is a critical issue given growing occupational disparities in workers' control over schedules and boundaries (Golden et al., 2011; Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). Given such disparities often intersect with employees' racial, class, and gender backgrounds, as lower income employees, and women and people of color tend to hold jobs afforded lower work–life flexibility (Kossek et al., 2023; Kossek & Lee, 2020), this study addresses an important job equality policy concern.

We also contribute to work–life research by examining how work–life supportive supervisor training impacts employee well-being across two different types of work–life flexibility: Boundary control and schedule control. Prior research has illustrated that distinguishing between these two types of work–life flexibility is useful for clarifying mixed findings from previous studies of worklife support initiatives (Allen et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2008; Kossek, Odle-Dusseau, & Hammer, 2018; Kossek, Perrigino, & Lautsch, 2023; Kossek, Petty, et al., 2018). Our study provides evidence that work–life supportive supervisor training mitigates employee emotional exhaustion when employees have low schedule and boundary control; however, supervisor training only enhances family engagement when employees have higher boundary control. These findings illustrate that work–life supportive supervisors have a positive impact on employees who have limited work–life flexibility, but only have a positive impact on family engagement when their employees have greater access to boundary control. By examining two types of work–life flexibility—schedule and boundary control—we provide nuanced insights into the conditions under which employees are most likely to benefit from having a supervisor trained in work–life support.

Finally, our study extends JDR by recognizing that resources stemming from the job–work–life flexibility and a supervisor trained in work–life support—complement one another to positively impact the home domain. Currently, JDR recognizes that job and personal resources interact with one another to enhance engagement (Bakker et al., 2023), and that job resources can “spillover” to positively impact home outcomes (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Building

from these insights, our study recognizes that resources relevant for the work–life interface can enrich one another to enhance family engagement (but not work engagement). That is, our study illustrates how resources relevant to the work–life interface may interact with one another to enhance family engagement, illustrating that spillover may not only occur directly, as suggested by current spillover arguments, but also due to the interaction of job resources.

## 1.1 | Theoretical background

JDR theory suggests that job characteristics can be divided into two categories, job demands and job resources (see Bakker et al., 2023 for a review). Job demands instigate an occupational health impairment process, wherein demands deplete resources, leading to lower well-being and health; job resources, on the other hand, instigate a motivational process wherein resources satisfy basic needs, promoting engagement. Moreover, job resources buffer the impact of job demands on well-being (i.e., the buffering hypothesis), and (challenge) job demands boost the impact of job resources on engagement (i.e., the boost hypothesis).

We rely on these tenets of JDR to better understand how contextual (work–life) resources interact to enhance employee well-being and engagement. Our approach represents an extension of JDR theory in that we focus on the combined impact of contextual resources relevant to the work–life interface and their impact on employee burnout and engagement. Drawing from the notion that resources and demands offset (buffering hypothesis) and enhance (boost hypothesis) one another, we suggest that contextual resources relevant to the work–life interface may also interactively impact employee well-being (i.e., emotional exhaustion) and engagement.

We focus on two work–life resources: (1) work–life flexibility and (2) having a supervisor trained in work–life support. We suggest that work–life flexibility is a contextual resource in that it provides employees greater latitude in managing the work–life interface, which in turn likely enhances employee well-being and engagement. However, we also suggest that this resource alone may be insufficient to promote these outcomes; employees must also perceive that their work context is supportive of the work–life interface (Allen, 2001; Hammer et al., 2013; Kossek, 2005; Lapierre et al., 2008). A *work–life supportive context* is more likely when supervisors and managers are supportive of work–life well-being (de Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2013; Foley et al., 2006). Thus, a second resource we investigate is having a supervisor trained in work–life support, as prior research has suggested that supervisors are important for shaping access to resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and for facilitating a *work–life supportive context* (de Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2013; Kossek, 2005; Lautsch et al., 2009). We discuss the conceptual basis for each type of resource, then we discuss our theoretical rationale for how these work–life resources interact to promote employee well-being and engagement.

First, we focus on work–life flexibility as a contextual resource because it provides opportunities to manage the work–life interface,

with implications for employee well-being and engagement. Work–life flexibility has roots in notions of job autonomy (Kossek, Perrigino, & Lautsch, 2023), but it is distinct from job autonomy in that it specifically focuses on the control one has over where one works (i.e., the boundary between work and life domains) and when one works (i.e., schedules; Allen et al., 2013; Kossek et al., 2006; Kossek, Perrigino, & Lautsch, 2023). Two key aspects of work–life flexibility are boundary control and schedule control. Boundary control refers to the degree to which an individual has control over whether work boundaries are flexible, permeable, and integrated or whether work and nonwork role boundaries are separate (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Kossek et al., 2006). Schedule control, also referred to as temporal control, pertains to how long and when one works, as well as the ability to control when to take breaks and be away from work (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). As such, work–life flexibility serves as a resource that creates opportunities to effectively manage the work–life interface (Allen et al., 2013). However, whether employees take advantage of such opportunities likely depends upon the extent to which their work context is supportive of work–life (Allen, 2001), which is impacted by various factors ranging from human resources policies to supervisor support to cultural backlash for policy use (Kossek, Perrigino, Russo, & Morandin, 2023; Perrigino et al., 2018).

Thus, we also focus on whether the employees' work context is supportive of managing work and life simultaneously, as indicated by whether the supervisor is supportive of work–life concerns. Having a supervisor trained in work–life support is a contextual resource that is akin to social support, and specifically, social support for effectively managing the work–life interface. Indeed, supervisors have a key role in creating work–life supportive cultures (de Sivatte & Guadamilas, 2013; Kossek, Perrigino, Russo, & Morandin, 2023). They control how work is organized, serve as work–life role models and as gatekeepers for job resources by determining the access and consequences of policies and practices (Eaton, 2003; Lautsch et al., 2009). Work–life support training is designed to increase awareness and skills regarding the importance of supervisory family supportive behaviors (Hammer et al., 2016) and respect of work–life boundaries (Kossek, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). Moreover, simply knowing that the organization has offered work–life supportive training to supervisors may serve as a signal that the organization is supportive of using work–life flexibility. In short, having a supervisor trained in work–life support increases the likelihood that employees perceive their workplaces as work–life supportive (Kossek et al., 2011).

## 1.2 | Hypotheses

Although work–life flexibility is a resource that creates opportunities to effectively manage the work–life interface, employees differ with regard to (1) whether they have access to this work–life resource (the “have nots”), and (2) if they do have access, whether they take advantage of the flexibility proffered by this work–life resource (the “haves”). We posit that having a supervisor trained in work–life support promotes a *work–life supportive context*, serving as an additional

resource for employees who either lack work–life flexibility or who may be hesitant to leverage their access to work–life flexibility. Below, we discuss how having a supervisor trained in work–life support promotes a *work–life supportive context* that enables employees to cope with demands stemming from a lack of work–life flexibility (reducing emotional exhaustion) and to leverage their access to work–life flexibility to engage more fully in their work and life roles (enhancing work and family engagement).

To begin, we posit that, under conditions where work–life flexibility is lower, having a trained supervisor will be associated with less emotional exhaustion. Bakker et al. (2023) and Bakker and Demerouti (2017) have clarified that lack of resources are not the same as demands and that resources do not instigate the health impairment pathway; however, there is some evidence that low levels of job resources (e.g., autonomy) are associated with burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shirom et al., 2010). In light of theoretical and empirical research, we suggest that less access to work–life flexibility (resources) creates difficulty managing the work–life interface, such as difficulty coordinating work and household tasks; this difficulty managing such tasks is associated with increased emotional exhaustion (Hill et al., 2008, 2010). However, having a supervisor trained in work–life support substitutes for less access to work–life flexibility, enabling employees to more effectively manage work and life tasks and responsibilities, resulting in lower emotional exhaustion. Indeed, employees of trained supervisors are more likely to experience increased perceptions of support for their work and nonwork roles, which will reduce work–nonwork conflict and psychological distress that are often linked to emotional exhaustion (Hammer et al., 2011; Kossek et al., 2019). Moreover, trained supervisors are more likely to care about the “whole person” (i.e., employees' lives on and off the job; Matthews & Toumbeva, 2015), reducing employee strain and burnout (O'Driscoll et al., 2003). Thus, we expect that in work contexts characterized by lower work–life flexibility, a supervisor trained in work–life support will be associated with reduced emotional exhaustion.

**Hypothesis 1.** *Having a supervisor trained in work–life support moderates the negative relationship between employees' work–life flexibility [(a) boundary control and (b) schedule control] and emotional exhaustion. Specifically, employees who have supervisors trained in work–life support will report lower levels of emotional exhaustion a year later (controlling for baseline levels of exhaustion) when they also have lower baseline levels of work–life flexibility.*

Next, we posit that work–life flexibility and having a supervisor trained in work–life support interact with one another to promote employee engagement, both in the work (i.e., work engagement) and home domains (i.e., family engagement). JDR scholarship has suggested that personal and job resources may complement each other to promote engagement; we extend this idea to contextual resources. Specifically, we posit that work–life flexibility is a contextual resource

that promotes engagement in both work and life domains, but this resource is most likely to be effective in motivating employees when they also have the contextual resource of having a supervisor trained in work–life support. Although access to work–life flexibility is valuable in and of itself, we suggest that the presence of a supervisor trained in work–life support supplements the context for work–life support, such that employees are more likely to feel empowered to exercise the work–life flexibility afforded to them via their jobs. Without having a supervisor trained in work–life support, employees are less likely to perceive that it is appropriate or acceptable to utilize the work–life support resources available to them—in this instance, work–life flexibility (Allen, 2001; de Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2013). Thus, the combination of work–life flexibility and having a supervisor trained in work–life support creates a critical mass of resources that enables one to more effectively engage in multiple life roles (i.e., the work role, the family role) because an individual has more resources to contribute to each role. Thus:

**Hypothesis 2.** Having a supervisor trained in work–life support moderates the positive relationship between employees' work–life flexibility [(a) boundary control and (b) schedule control] and work engagement. Specifically, employees who have supervisors trained in work–life support will report higher levels of work engagement a year later (controlling for baseline levels of work engagement) when they also have higher baseline levels of work–life flexibility.

**Hypothesis 3.** Having a supervisor trained in work–life support moderates the positive relationship between employees' work–life flexibility [(a) boundary control and (b) schedule control] and family engagement. Specifically, employees who have supervisors trained in work–life support will report higher levels of family engagement a year later (controlling for baseline levels of family engagement) when they also have higher baseline levels of work–life flexibility.

## 2 | METHOD

This field study was conducted at a large public research university in the United States. The research team worked with the Human Resource department and an employee advisory group to conduct focus groups to design theoretically-based training and the pre and post training survey, a pretest–posttest controlled quasi-experimental design (Shadish et al., 2002). The training was conducted as part of a supervisor development initiative designed to improve employees' engagement and the quality of the work environment. The study was conducted across 17 departments. Two thirds of the departments ( $n = 12$ ) were randomly assigned to the experimental group, and supervisors working in those departments were invited to

voluntarily participate in work–life support training. Supervisors in the remaining third of departments ( $n = 5$ ) were assigned to the control group.<sup>1</sup>

In consultation with our partner organization, we conducted two employee engagement surveys (in late March to early April) 1 year apart, and began training supervisors in October, which provided sufficient time to deploy training (over a two-month period) before the holiday season. The first survey (Time 1) was collected 7 months before the training as a baseline survey. As such, this study took place over a 12-month time frame, which provided sufficient time for training to have an effect on employee outcomes; this time frame is similar to other supervisor work–life support training studies (e.g., Hammer et al., 2019).

### 2.1 | Pre and post employee survey sample

The sample consisted of non-faculty university employees who were emailed a link to the baseline survey with a note from the HR Vice President. In compliance with the university's leadership preferences, no financial incentives were offered to participate in the survey or training, but staff were allowed to voluntarily participate in the survey or training during paid time.

Our study sample consisted of 241 employees (analyses are based on sample sizes ranging from 231 to 234 due to missing data); 57 employee survey participants were in the training group (had supervisors that participated in training) and 184 were in the control group (had supervisors that did not receive training).<sup>2</sup> Table 1 reports demographic information for the sample which shows a wide range of job groups (administrative, operations, clerical, service, operations). Table 2 compares levels of the dependent variables for employee experimental and control groups, which we matched with the HR database; our sample was similar to the university employee population with the exception of slightly higher participation by women.

### 2.2 | Work–life support supervisor training

The work–life support training consisted of three components: (1) three web-based online training modules; (2) personal goal-setting and use of post-training self-monitoring behaviors on the job for 2 weeks after the training; and (3) a face-to-face 2-hour workshop. The research team developed the training based on previous field-tested training studies (Hammer et al., 2011; Kossek, 2016b; Kossek, Odle-Dusseau, & Hammer, 2018; Kossek, Petty, et al., 2018), adapting the content to the university setting. The training was designed to increase awareness and understanding of (1) why employee well-being and work–life issues matter for the workplace and the importance of the supervisor role in creating a culture of support and well-being for productivity; (2) the diverse work and nonwork demands that all employees have; and (3) the importance of work–life



**TABLE 1** Sample demographic information at Time 1.

	Overall sample		Control group		Training group	
		N		N		N
Nonwork demographics						
Age (M, SD)	48.7 (11.3)	241	49 (11.4)	184	47.7 (10.9)	57
Gender (% Female)	71.0	241	73.4	184	63.2	57
Married/cohabitating (%)	70.1	233	71.7	179	64.9	54
Children at home (%)	38.2	233	36.4	179	43.9	54
Number of children (M, SD)	2.1 (1.1)	92	2.1 (1.1)	67	1.9 (1.0)	25
Eldercare (%)	22.0	234	19.6	180	29.8	54
Work-related demographics						
Full-time (%)	91.3	241	91.3	184	91.2	57
Supervising (%)	32.8	241	31.0	184	38.6	57
Tenure (M, SD)	13.32 (10.7)	241	13.6 (10.9)	184	12.4 (9.9)	57
Annual salary (M, SD)	46,474 (19,307)	241	48,199 (18,408)	184	40,904 (21,189)	57
Job types (%)						
Administrative	47.7	115	52.7	97	31.6	18
Clerical	21.2	51	19.0	35	28.1	16
Management	7.9	19	9.2	17	3.5	2
Operations/technical	14.5	35	14.1	26	15.8	9
Service	8.3	20	4.3	8	21.1	12

Outcome	Condition	Time 1		Time 2	
		M (SD)	N	M (SD)	N
Emotional exhaustion	Control group	2.48 (0.82)	181	2.64 (0.89)	184
	Training group	2.71 (1.02)	55	2.64 (0.84)	55
Family engagement	Control group	3.33 (0.66)	180	3.41 (0.68)	183
	Training group	3.52 (0.72)	54	3.55 (0.74)	55
Work engagement	Control group	3.70 (0.61)	181	3.73 (0.58)	184
	Training group	3.69 (0.57)	55	3.67 (0.60)	55

Note: Emotional exhaustion ( $t(234) = 1.71, p < 0.10$ ) and family engagement ( $t(232) = 1.90, p < 0.10$ ) were higher in the training condition compared with the control condition at Time 1.

**TABLE 2** Variable means, SDs, and employee sample sizes by training condition.

boundary control strategies for individuals (both supervisors and subordinates) and work groups. The first module encouraged supervisors to increase their use of supportive supervisory behaviors (including emotional support, instrumental support, role modeling, and creative work-life management) to support employee well-being on and off the job and to reduce carryover of stress between work and home (Hammer et al., 2009; Hammer et al., 2013; Kossek, Odle-Dusseau, & Hammer, 2018; Kossek, Petty, et al., 2018). The second module included a validated psychological assessment of the supervisor's work-life boundary management style (see Kossek et al., 2012) and emphasized the importance of supporting a diversity of boundary management styles (Kossek, 2016c). The third module helped trainees identify personal work-life support goals to support their own and work groups' needs and track goals on the job for 2 weeks. The goal-

setting and tracking drew on principles of cognitive self-monitoring previously piloted by Hammer et al. (2011) and replicated (Hammer et al., 2016; Kossek et al., 2019). After completing the training and tracking, in order to support transfer of training, a month later supervisors were invited to participate in a 90-min face-to-face workshop, where they discussed insights and shared experiences.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.3 | Measures

Unless noted otherwise, participants responded to items on a 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*) scale. Scale means, standard deviations, and coefficient alpha reliability estimates are reported in Table 3.

**TABLE 3** Means, SDs, correlations, and reliability estimates of study variables.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Time 1												
1. Salary (ln)	10.70	0.37	-									
2. Emotional exhaustion	2.53	0.87	0.05	(0.93)								
3. Family engagement	3.37	0.68	-0.22**	-0.12	(0.90)							
4. Work engagement	3.70	0.60	0.04	-0.03	0.07	(0.89)						
5. Boundary control	3.85	0.79	-0.13*	-0.44**	0.14*	0.02	(0.86)					
6. Schedule control	3.00	1.02	0.29**	-0.19**	-0.03	0.14*	0.29**	(0.80)				
7. Supervisor W-L support training	0.24	0.43	-0.20**	0.11	0.12	-0.01	-0.05	-0.18**	-			
Time 2												
8. Emotional exhaustion	2.64	0.88	0.04	0.76**	-0.11	0.02	-0.41**	-0.21**	0.00	(0.93)		
9. Family engagement	3.44	0.69	-0.14*	-0.07	0.69**	-0.02	0.08	-0.06	0.14*	0.03	(0.90)	
10. Work engagement	3.71	0.58	0.08	-0.11	0.14*	0.65**	0.10	0.11	-0.04	-0.07	0.04	(0.87)

Note:  $n = 231$ – $241$ . Reliability estimates along the diagonal. ln refers to the natural logarithm transformation. W-L refers to work-life.

\*\* $p < 0.05$ . \* $p < 0.01$ .

### 2.3.1 | Supervisor work-life support training

We used a dummy variable to indicate whether an employee's supervisor received work-life support training (=1) or not (=0).

### 2.3.2 | Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion was assessed using a nine-item measure from Maslach and Jackson (1986), which evaluates the extent to which one feels overextended and exhausted by work. A sample item is "I feel emotionally drained from work."

### 2.3.3 | Family engagement

Family engagement was measured using Rothbard's (2001) nine-item measure, which assesses an individual's attention and absorption in one's family or nonwork roles. A sample item is "I focus a great deal of attention on my family/nonwork life."

### 2.3.4 | Work engagement

Work engagement was measured using Rothbard's (2001) nine-item measure, which assesses an individual's attention and absorption in

his or her work role. A sample item is "I focus a great deal of attention on my work."

### 2.3.5 | Work-life flexibility: Boundary and schedule control

We assessed individuals' degree of work-life flexibility pertaining to two common forms of job control pertinent to the work-life interface. *Boundary control* was assessed using Kossek et al.'s (2012) three-item measure, which evaluates the degree to which individuals have control over the permeability of work roles' degree of integration or the separation with nonwork role. Sample item: "I control whether I combine my work and personal life activities." *Schedule control* was assessed using three items from Thomas and Ganster's (1995) scale to evaluate the degree to which individuals have temporal control over the work role. Sample item is "I control when I begin and end each work day." Higher scores on these scales indicate that participants have greater control over the scheduling or the permeability of the work role.

### 2.3.6 | Control variables

Given that work-life flexibility varies by the type of job held and hierarchical level, we controlled for salary as a proxy for job type and

level. We also collected job titles. Typical jobs held by lower paid employees included front line jobs such as janitor or clerical worker. Typical jobs held by higher paid employees included accounting supervisor or information technology director.

We also statistically controlled for the baseline measures of our dependent variables (emotional exhaustion, family engagement, work engagement) for two reasons. First, we adopted a pre-test/post-test design, which allows us to evaluate the change in the levels of employee well-being (exhaustion and engagement) as a function of work-life flexibility and having a supervisor trained in work-life support. Therefore, it was important for us to control for initial (baseline) levels of our outcome variables at Time 1, so we could then evaluate whether having a trained supervisor impacted employees' level of well-being. Second, this design has the advantage of controlling for initial levels of our outcome variables, accounting for any differences between employees who had trained supervisors versus those who did not have trained supervisors at the start of the study, which strengthens our study design.

## 2.4 | Evaluating data discriminant validity and multilevel nesting assumptions

We conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses to provide evidence of the discriminant validity of study measures. First, we examined a five-factor model, in which all of our Time 1 variables were examined as separate factors (i.e., boundary control, schedule control, emotional exhaustion, work engagement, family engagement). The fit of the five-factor CFA was ( $\chi^2(485) = 1906.10, p < 0.01, CFI = 0.76, TLI = 0.74, RMSEA = 0.11, SRMR = 0.09$ ), with all items significantly loading on their assigned factor. Furthermore, we compared this five-factor model to four alternative models (four-factor with combined schedule and boundary control; four-factor with combined work and family engagement; four-factor with combined emotional exhaustion and schedule control, and four-factor with combine emotional exhaustion and boundary control). These alternative models demonstrated less fit to the data ( $223.94 \leq \Delta\chi^2_s (\Delta df = 4) \leq 1471.9$ ).

Given that employees work in different departments and under different supervisors, there is the potential for non-independence of observations. We evaluated whether the data were nested by comparing a model with nested effects to a model without nested effects for each dependent variable (emotional exhaustion, family engagement, work engagement) for (1) department and (2) supervisor (Pinheiro & Bates, 2000). Evidence suggested that the data are not nested by department; the ratio of within department variance to between department variance was minimal with interclass correlations (ICCs) ranging from 0.00 to 0.02. We ran models with supervisor nested effects for family and work engagement and found that the results were no different than the models without supervisor nested effects (ICCs < 0.00). For emotional exhaustion, ICC was 0.07, suggesting little variance between supervisors. We turned to Muthen (1999), who suggests for an ICC of 0.07 for this research design (with an average of three subordinates per supervisor), supervisor clustering does not

need to be taken into consideration during estimation. We used Muthen's (1999) calculation for design effect,  $1 + (\text{average group size} - 1) * \text{intraclass correlation}$ . With a sample size of 241:  $241/81 = \text{average group size of } 3$ , we calculate  $1 + (3 - 1) * 0.07 = 1.14$ . Since the design effect is not large, these analyses suggest that evaluating our hypotheses using linear regression is appropriate.

## 3 | RESULTS

Variable means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations, and reliability estimates are reported in Table 3. We tested our hypotheses using hierarchical linear regression. The control variables (salary and the dependent variables at baseline), having a trained supervisor, and work-life flexibility variables (boundary control, schedule control) were entered at Step 1, and the interaction terms of having a trained supervisor with each work-life flexibility variable were entered at Step 2. Table 4 reports the results of these analyses. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Hammer et al., 2011; Kossek et al., 2019), there were no main effects of having a supervisor trained in work-life support on employee emotional exhaustion or employee work or family engagement. Using linear regression and controlling for baseline levels of emotional exhaustion, work engagement, and family engagement respectively (see Table 4), having a supervisor trained in work-life support was unrelated to these outcomes.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that having a supervisor trained in work-life support moderates the relationship between employee (a) boundary control and (b) schedule control on emotional exhaustion, such that employees whose supervisors were trained experience lower emotional exhaustion in low work-life flexibility contexts (controlling for baseline levels of exhaustion). We tested Hypothesis 1 by examining the interactions of baseline work-life flexibility (i.e., boundary control and schedule control) with supervisor training predicting (Time 2) emotional exhaustion. The interaction term was positively related to emotional exhaustion. To understand this interaction, we plotted it at high (one standard deviation above the mean) and low (one standard deviation below the mean) levels of boundary control (Cohen et al., 2003). As Figure 1a shows, compared with the control group, supervisor work-life training participation was associated with less emotional exhaustion when boundary control was low (point value =  $-0.32, p < 0.01$ ). We also examined the interaction of having a trained supervisor and schedule control, which was positively related to emotional exhaustion. As Figure 1b shows, compared with the control group, having a trained supervisor was also associated with less emotional exhaustion when schedule control was low (point value =  $-0.35, p < 0.01$ ). Both analyses provide support for Hypothesis 1.

Next, we tested Hypothesis 2 by examining the interactions of (a) boundary and (b) schedule control with having a trained supervisor predicting (Time 2) work engagement. The interaction of supervisor training and boundary control was unrelated to work engagement; similarly, the interaction of training and schedule control was not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 received no support.



**TABLE 4** Hierarchical linear regression results for supervisor work–life support training on exhaustion and engagement moderated by work–life flexibility.

Panel (a)	Emotional exhaustion (time 2)								
	Main effect			Boundary control			Schedule control		
	B	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	B	B	$\Delta R^2$	B	$\beta$	$R^2$
Step 1			0.58**			0.59**			0.59**
Salary (ln)	−0.10	−0.04		−0.15	−0.06		−0.05	−0.02	
Emotional exhaustion (Time 1)	0.77	0.77**		0.74	0.74**		0.77	0.76**	
Supervisor W–L training	−0.15	−0.07		−0.15	−0.07†		−0.11	−0.05	
Boundary control				−0.16	−0.15**				
Schedule control							−0.11	−0.13**	
Step 2						0.01*			0.01**
Supervisor W–L training × BC				0.22	0.10*				
Supervisor W–L training × SC							0.24	0.13**	
Total $R^2$						0.60			0.60
Panel (b)	Work engagement (Time 2)								
	Main effect			Boundary control			Schedule control		
	B	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	B	B	$\Delta R^2$	B	$\beta$	$R^2$
Step 1			0.42**			0.43**			0.42**
Salary (ln)	0.07	0.04		0.10	0.06		0.06	0.04	
Work engagement (Time 1)	0.63	0.65**		0.64	0.65**		0.63	0.65**	
Supervisor W–L training	−0.03	−0.02		−0.03	−0.02		−0.02	−0.02	
Boundary control				0.10	0.14*				
Schedule control							0.00	−0.01	
Step 2						0.01			0.00
Supervisor W–L training × BC				−0.12	−0.08				
Supervisor W–L training × SC							0.04	0.04	
Total $R^2$						0.44			0.42
Panel (c)	Family engagement (Time 2)								
	Main effect			Boundary control			Schedule control		
	B	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	B	B	$\Delta R^2$	B	$\beta$	$R^2$
Step 1			0.47**			0.47**			0.48**
Salary (ln)	0.05	0.02		0.01	0.01		0.08	0.04	
Family engagement (Time 1)	0.71	0.69**		0.71	0.70**		0.71	0.69**	
Supervisor W–L training	0.03	0.02		0.03	0.02		−0.02	−0.01	
Boundary control				−0.08	−0.09				
Schedule control							−0.01	−0.01	
Step 2						0.01*			0.01†
Supervisor W–L training × BC				0.24	0.14*				
Supervisor W–L training × SC							−0.14	−0.10†	
Total $R^2$						0.49			0.48

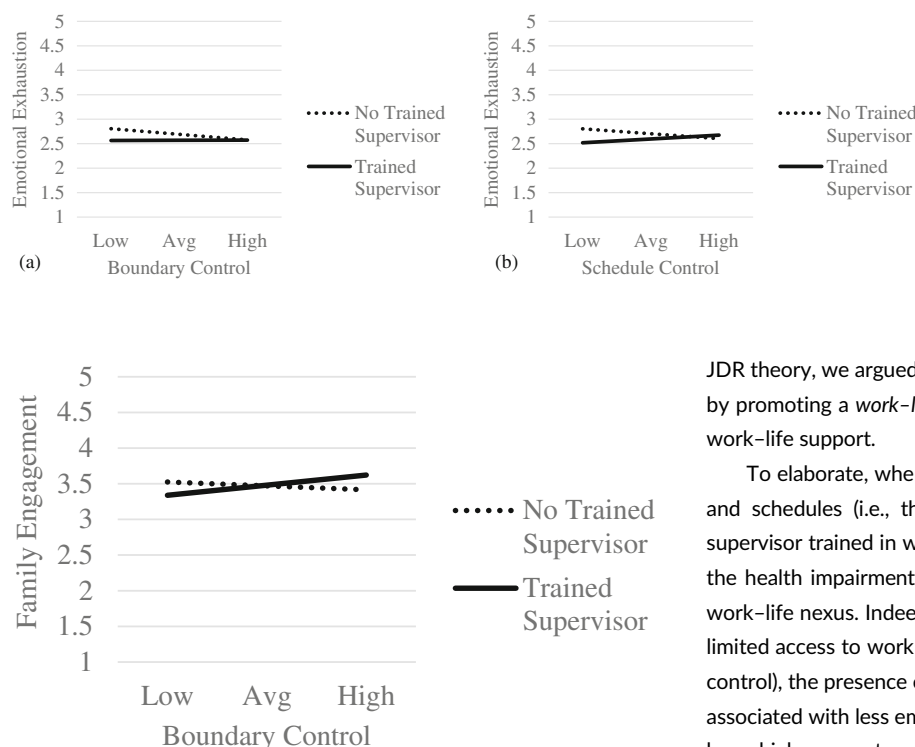
Note:  $n = 231$ – $234$ . Ln = natural logarithm.

† $p < 0.10$ ;

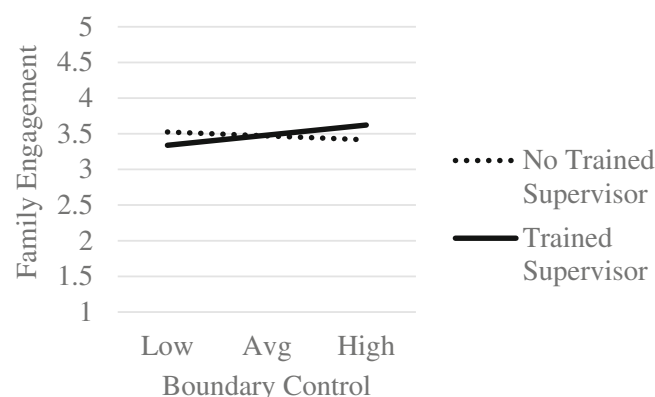
\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ . Abbreviations: BC, boundary control; SC, schedule control; W–L, work–life.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that supervisor work–life support training moderates the relationship between employee (a) boundary control and (b) schedule control on family engagement such that, compared

with the control group, employees whose supervisors were trained experience higher family engagement in high work–life flexibility contexts (controlling for Time 1 levels of family engagement). Results



**FIGURE 1** Supervisor work-life support training moderating the relationships between boundary control (a) and schedule control (b) and emotional exhaustion. Low control is one standard deviation below the mean, high control is one standard deviation above the mean. We report Time 2 levels of emotional exhaustion, controlling for Time 1 levels.



**FIGURE 2** Supervisor work-life support training moderating the relationships between boundary control and family engagement. Low control is one standard deviation below the mean, high control is one standard deviation above the mean. We report Time 2 levels of family engagement, controlling for Time 1 levels.

show the interaction of boundary control with having a trained supervisor positively predicted family engagement. As Figure 2 shows, compared with the control group, supervisor training was associated with greater family engagement when boundary control was high (1 SD above average; point value = 0.22,  $p < 0.05$ ). We also examined the interaction of supervisor training and schedule control, which was marginally related to family engagement. Yet when plotting this interaction at high (1 standard deviation above the mean) and low (1 standard deviation below the mean) levels of schedule control, we did not find a significant difference in family engagement between employees with supervisors who received work-life training and the control group. These results provide partial support for Hypothesis 3.

## 4 | DISCUSSION

Although scholars and practitioners have lauded the value of work-life flexibility for helping employees meet simultaneous work and home demands, two key issues of have plagued the successful implementation of work-life flexibility in organizations: One, some employees' jobs are designed with limited work-life flexibility (the "have nots"), which can contribute to burnout. Two, employees with access to work-life flexibility (the "haves") often do not use it to increase their engagement in work and nonwork roles. Drawing from

JDR theory, we argued that both of these dilemmas may be addressed by promoting a *work-life supportive context* via training supervisors in work-life support.

To elaborate, when individuals have little control over boundaries and schedules (i.e., the work-life flexibility "have nots"), having a supervisor trained in work-life support acts as a resource that buffers the health impairment resulting from restricted ability to control the work-life nexus. Indeed, our findings suggest that for employees with limited access to work-life flexibility (e.g., low boundary and schedule control), the presence of a supervisor trained in work-life support was associated with less emotional exhaustion. Moreover, when individuals have high access to work-life flexibility (i.e., the work-life flexibility "haves"), having a supervisor trained in work-life support acts as an additional resource that encourages employees to leverage their access to work-life flexibility to more fully engage in nonwork roles. Our findings illustrate that, when employees have greater boundary control and a trained supervisor, they are more likely to engage in their family role. Taken together, we find that having a supervisor trained in work-life support mitigates the health impairment more often experienced by the work-life flexibility have nots and encourages the work-life flexibility haves to more fully engage in their family roles. Below, we discuss how this research advances our understanding of work-life flexibility research and the design and implementation of supervisor work-life support training.

To begin, our study advances JDR theorizing by recognizing the interactive effects of resources relevant to the work-life nexus—that is, work-life flexibility and having a supervisor trained in work-life support—in enhancing employee well-being. JDR has recognized that job resources may buffer the negative impact of job demands on employee health, and that job and personal resources complement one another to enhance employee engagement (Bakker et al., 2023). Taking these JDR principles a step further, we suggested that both work-life flexibility and supportive work-life supervisors are resources that enable employees to effectively manage the work-life interface; as such, they may interact to enhance employees' well-being (i.e., less emotional exhaustion and greater engagement). As such, our study advances JDR theorizing by suggesting that job resources relevant to the work-life interface also interact to shape both the health impairment and the motivational pathways.

Moreover, these findings have additional implications for work-life flexibility research, in particular, the differential functioning of types of work-life flexibility. Indeed, prior work-life flexibility research has illustrated that types of work-life flexibility impact how

employees experience the work–life nexus (Allen et al., 2013; Kossek, Perrigino, & Lautsch, 2023). We found that having a supervisor trained in work–life support mitigates emotional exhaustion for those with limited access to both boundary and schedule control. These findings suggest that *work–life supportive contexts*—instigated by having a supervisor trained in work–life support—help employees cope with limited access to any form of work–life flexibility. In contrast, our findings suggest that *work–life supportive contexts* facilitate family engagement for those with access to control over *where* work is done (boundary control), but is less likely to do so for those with control over *when* work is done (schedule control). As such, this study provides additional evidence of the differential functioning of different forms of work–life flexibility.

Related to this point, we also found that having a supervisor trained in work–life support did not moderate the relationship between work–life flexibility and work engagement. One viable explanation is that, for supervisor work–life training to impact work outcomes, employees need greater *job* resources to encourage them to invest in and become absorbed by their work role, such as control over their work goals, load, and procedures (as opposed to resources relevant to the work–life nexus). In addition, perhaps there are ways of increasing interest in work by increasing skill variety, perceived meaningfulness, and feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Finally, our findings illustrate that supervisor training interventions have the potential to positively impact the employees that supervisors oversee, but training intervention effectiveness is contingent upon the outcomes of interest and personal/contextual factors. Evidence within educational (Ceci & Papierno, 2005) and organizational (Hammer et al., 2009; Kossek, Odle-Dusseau, & Hammer, 2018; Kossek, Petty, et al., 2018) contexts has illustrated that stakeholders differentially benefit from training. As such, training intervention research has begun to take a “realist evaluation” perspective (Nielsen & Miraglia, 2017). Our study contributes to this line of research by illustrating that having a supervisor trained in work–life support “works,” but the effectiveness of the training intervention—and for which outcomes—is contingent on an employees’ degree of existing work–life flexibility. As such, this study illustrates that work–life training interventions are effective, but the implementation of such interventions must take into consideration both the range of theoretically relevant outcomes of the intervention (in our case, both positive and negative indicators of well-being; Bakker et al., 2023) as well as theoretically relevant contextual or personal factors that may impact intervention effectiveness (in our case, access to work–life flexibility).

## 5 | PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our study provides insights for HR practitioners seeking to promote *work–life supportive contexts* via supervisor training interventions. Employers tend to assume that there are certain jobs (e.g., front line) with limited work–life flexibility, and as such, there is little they can do to mitigate such employees eventual burnout. Yet, we show that even employees occupying jobs designed with less work–life

flexibility, organizations can take action to create a more supportive work–life context, which helps to mitigate burnout. Likewise, employers often assume that it is sufficient to merely offer work–life flexibility to facilitate better family and work engagement. Our findings, in conjunction with prior reviews (e.g., Allen et al., 2013; Kossek, Perrigino, & Lautsch, 2023), illustrate that merely offering work–life flexibility does not necessarily lead to positive employee outcomes. Indeed, often there is a gap between work–life policy use and availability, due to a lack of employee awareness and concerns by career-oriented employees over negative consequences from use (Eaton, 2003; Leslie et al., 2012; Perrigino et al., 2018). To enhance family engagement, additional support is needed to encourage employees to take advantage of such policies, such as a *work–life supportive context* instigated by supervisors. Taken together, our findings suggest that training supervisors in work–life support has a net positive effect on employees, regardless of their degree of work–life flexibility, albeit for different outcomes (health [i.e., work role exhaustion] versus motivation i.e., family role engagement). As such, employers can benefit from implementing comprehensive work–life supervisor training strategies, which are likely to positively impact employees, but in different ways, depending on their degree of work–life flexibility. As such, the findings from this study support recent calls from the U.S. Surgeon General (U.S. HHS, 2022) for employers to take a more active role in fostering work cultures supportive of helping employees manage the work–nonwork interface.

## 6 | STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Our study has both strengths and limitations. First, we were able to collect two waves of data over a year and implement a quasi-experimental design with a control group; doing so allowed us to evaluate the effectiveness of the supervisor training on employee well-being. Nevertheless, the number of supervisors recruited to participate in the training intervention and the number of employees who participated in the pre- and post-test surveys could have been enhanced. Indeed, the difference in the number of employees with ( $n = 57$ ) and without ( $n = 184$ ) a trained supervisor may result in range restriction for those employees with a trained supervisor; as such, our study findings may be attenuated (Aguinis et al., 2017). For instance, the interaction between schedule control and having a trained supervisor predicting family engagement was marginally significant; with a larger sample size and more variability in the employees with a trained supervisor, this finding may have been stronger. Many work–life training studies include financial incentives to participate in surveys and training (cf. Hammer et al., 2011, 2016; Kossek et al., 2019). In our study, organizational leadership’s philosophy was that incentivizing individuals to participate in training or surveys was not aligned with their intent of promoting normative change rather than forced change. Despite our response rate, our study design delivery followed a voluntary format that was on-line with a brief face to face discussion, which is how many firms might deliver

supervisor work-life training. As such, this study provides a quality evaluation of a realistic and generalizable voluntary training implementation.

Another strength of this study is that we were able to investigate how having a trained supervisor impacted employee well-being for employees who occupied a wide range of jobs (from janitors to directors of finance) with varying degrees of work-life flexibility, which represents an improvement over many previous studies that had restricted job types. Yet, our study was conducted in one large university. While studying one organization has the benefit of holding constant organizational culture, future research should replicate these findings across employers. Finally, our theorizing rests on the assumption that having a supervisor trained in work-life support contributes to a *work-life supportive context*, such as role-modeling, use of work-life flexibility, and supporting employees in their use of work-life flexibility (i.e., the content of the training intervention). However, we did not directly evaluate this assumption. As such, additional research is needed to identify and test the underlying mechanisms explaining the effectiveness of the supervisor work-life support training intervention. For instance, research may investigate family supportive supervisor behaviors (Hammer et al., 2009) or family supportive organizational perceptions (Allen, 2001) as potential explanations for why the training intervention has its effects. It is also possible that participating in training reduces supervisors' implicit bias toward employees' use of non-work supports and alters employees' perceptions of how organizational members interpret (or stigmatize) using work-life supports.

In addition to addressing these limitations, future research is also needed to further understand the conditions under which supervisor work-life support training is useful, for whom (which jobs and workers), and for which outcomes (Nielsen & Maglia, 2017). Although supervisor work-life training does not appear to have uniform effects across employees, these findings do not diminish the value of this training for improving employees' lives. Our study identified work-life flexibility (and boundary control, in particular) as a significant consideration for the effectiveness of supervisor work-life supportive training, but there are likely other work-life considerations that could facilitate the effectiveness of supervisor work-life training, such as degree of family demands (e.g., child care, elder care) and job demands (e.g., workload) and nonwork resources (e.g., household economic and caregiving resources). Such research will be valuable for illustrating the value of supervisor work-life training while also setting realistic expectations for the type of impact employers can expect. Furthermore, additional research is needed to determine the types of outcomes that are most likely to change as a function of supervisor work-life training. Our study illustrates that personal (i.e., exhaustion) and family (i.e., engagement) well-being outcomes were impacted, but questions remain as to whether supervisor work-life training impacts other personal or work outcomes.

Future research also should explore the effects of work-life training on supervisors themselves. Building on the qualitative training reactions of supervisors (see footnote 3 above), it may be possible that the training motivated supervisors to make personal changes in their own work and nonwork lives as well as work changes in how they managed others. Understanding the consequences of training for

supervisors themselves, including both the benefits and burdens of training for managers, will increase our understanding of the effects of such training on all organizational members.

## 7 | CONCLUSION

Given the growing power of employers in the economy, the decline of quality affordable child care and elder care supports (DePillis et al., 2022), and rising societal mental health challenges (U.S. HHS, 2022), the need for supervisor work-life support training that attends to employees' varied degree of work-life flexibility, is critical to enhancing personal, family, and societal well-being. Although some leaders are backtracking on flexibility that was experimented with during the pandemic (Telford & De Vynck, 2023), continue to overlook the work-life needs of front-line and essential workers or see the employer value of supporting employee engagement in family roles, we hope this article will advance increased attention to the critical role of employers in consciously developing *work-life supportive contexts* which ultimately fosters employee well-being.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the Purdue University Human Resources Department, and the Purdue University Mitchel E. Daniels Jr. School of Business and the Department of Psychological Sciences for their support of this research. Lisa Burke is thanked for assistance with employee focus groups. Kossek and Porter contributed equally to this article as lead authors.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

## ORCID

Ellen Ernst Kossek  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7630-6397>

Caitlin M. Porter  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4726-2871>

Lindsay Mechem Rosokha  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6667-8189>

Kelly Schwind Wilson  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8242-280X>

Deborah E. Rupp  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5992-3879>

Jared Law-Penrose  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5365-6498>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> This study was conducted as part of a joint initiative to offer two types of supervisor training, one focused on work-life support and one focused on general leadership competencies. Thus, the original design consisted of randomly assigning departments to one of four groups: (1) work-life, (2) general leadership, (3) both work-life and leadership, and (4) a control group. Because our focus is on supervisor work-life support training, we only include participants who engaged in work-life training (groups 1 and 3) and the control group.

<sup>2</sup> The sample size difference between the training and control groups is a result of (1) an inability to offer incentives to participate in supervisor

training and (2) survey dropout, as not all employees participating in the employee survey completed it at both time-points.

- <sup>3</sup> Qualitative data on training reactions was collected from supervisors after the workshop. One cluster of comments pertained to the benefits and importance of the training. Sample comments: 1) "I believe the information was relevant and helpful"; 2) "I felt the program was worthwhile and would recommend others participate"; 3) "It gave me more insight into the family needs of one of my staff and how to best deal with the situation to benefit them and still keep things covered at the office"; and 4) "I think the most important things were boundary setting and family support of staff." A second cluster of comments pertained to how the training was a reminder of the value of supervisors' exhibiting work-life support. Sample comments: 1) "Calling attention to work-life balance issues we all face just brought it more into the forefront of my thinking"; 2) "This was a good reminder class.... So, it was a good check to see what our status was."

## REFERENCES

- Aguinis, H., Edwards, J. R., & Bradley, K. J. (2017). Improving our understanding of moderation and mediation in strategic management research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20, 665–685. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428115627498>
- Allen, T. D. (2001). Family-supportive work environments: The role of organizational perceptions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 58, 414–435. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2000.1774>
- Allen, T. D., Johnson, R. C., Kiburz, K. M., & Shockley, K. M. (2013). Work-family conflict and flexible work arrangements: Deconstructing flexibility. *Personnel Psychology*, 66, 345–376. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12012>
- Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 472–491. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2000.3363315>
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands-resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056>
- Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. (2023). Job demands-resources theory: Ten years later. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10, 25–53. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-053933>
- Ceci, S. J., & Papierno, P. B. (2005). The rhetoric and reality of gap closing: When the "have-nots" gain but the "haves" gain even more. *American Psychologist*, 60(2), 149–160. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.2.149>
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2003). *Applied multiple correlation/regression analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203774441>
- de Sivatte, I., & Guadamillas, F. (2013). Antecedents and outcomes of implementing flexibility policies in organizations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(7), 1327–1345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.561225>
- DePillis, L., Smialek, J., & Casselman, B. (2022). Jobs aplenty but a shortage of care keeps many women from benefiting. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/07/business/economy/women-labor-caregiving.html>
- Eaton, S. (2003). If you can use them: Flexibility policies, organizational commitment and perceived performance. *Industrial Relations*, 42, 145–167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-232X.00285>
- Foley, S., Linnehan, F., Greenhaus, J. H., & Weer, C. H. (2006). The impact of gender similarity, racial similarity, and work culture on family-supportive supervision. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(4), 420–441. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601106286884>
- Goh, Z., Ilies, R., & Wilson, K. S. (2015). Supportive supervisors improve employees' daily lives: The role supervisors play in the impact of daily workload on life satisfaction via work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 89, 65–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.04.009>
- Golden, L., Wiens-Tuers, B., Lambert, S., & Henly, J. (2011). Working time in the employment relationship: Working time, perceived control and work-life balance. In K. Townsend & A. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Research handbook on the future of work and employment relations* (pp. 188–211). Edward Elgar. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1601524](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1601524)
- Gonzales, M. (2023, January 14). The plight of front-line workers. Society for Human Resource Management. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/the-plight-of-front-line-workers.aspx>
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 16(2), 250–279. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(76\)90016-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(76)90016-7)
- Hammer, L., Wan, W. H., Brockwood, K. J., Bodner, T., & Mohr, C. D. (2019). Supervisor support training effects on veteran health and work outcomes in the civilian workplace. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104, 52–69. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000354>
- Hammer, L. B., Johnson, R. C., Crain, T. L., Bodner, T. E., Kossek, E. E., Davis, K. D., Kelly, E. L., Buxton, O. M., Karuntzos, G., Chosewood, C., & Berkman, L. (2016). Intervention effects on safety compliance and citizenship behaviors: Evidence from the Work, Family, and Health Study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101, 190–208. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000047>
- Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Bodner, T. E., Anger, W. K., & Zimmerman, K. L. (2011). Clarifying work-family intervention processes: The roles of work-family conflict and family supportive supervisor behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96, 134–150. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020927>
- Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Bodner, T. E., & Crain, T. (2013). Measurement development and validation of the family supportive supervisor behavior short-form (FSSB-SF). *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 18(3), 285–296. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032612>
- Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Yragui, N. L., Bodner, T. E., & Hanson, G. C. (2009). Development and validation of a multidimensional measure of family supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB). *Journal of Management*, 35(4), 837–856. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308328510>
- Hill, E. J., Erickson, J. J., Holmes, E. K., & Ferris, M. (2010). Workplace flexibility, work hours, and work-life conflict: Finding an extra day or two. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 24(3), 349–358. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019282>
- Hill, J. E., Jacob, J. I., Shannon, L. L., Brennan, R. T., Blanchard, V. L., & Martinengo, G. (2008). Exploring the relationship of workplace flexibility, gender, and life stage to family-to-work conflict, and stress and burnout. *Community, Work and Family*, 11(2), 165–181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668800802027564>
- Kelloway, E. K., & Barling, J. (2010). Leadership development as an intervention in occupational health psychology. *Work & Stress*, 24, 260–279. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2010.518441>
- Kelly, E. L., Kossek, E. E., Hammer, L. B., Durham, M., Bray, J., Chermack, K., ... Kaskubar, D. (2008). 7 getting there from here: Research on the effects of work-family initiatives on work-family conflict and business outcomes. *Academy of Management Annals*, 2(1), 305–349. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520802211610>
- Kossek, E. (2016a). Implementing organizational work-life interventions: Toward a triple bottom line. *Community, Work and Family*, 19, 242–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2016.1135540>
- Kossek, E. E. (2005). Workplace policies and practices to support work and families. In S. M. Bianchi, L. M. Casper, & B. R. King (Eds.), *Work, family, health, and well-being* (pp. 97–115). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Kossek, E. E. (2016b). Managing work life boundaries in the digital age. *Organizational Dynamics*, 45(3), 258–270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2016.07.010>



- Kossek, E. E. (2016c). Organizational support and empowerment of diversity in work-life identities. In L. Roberts, L. Wooten, & M. Davidson (Eds.), *Positive organizing in a global society: Understanding and engaging differences for capacity building and inclusion* (pp. 176–184). Taylor & Francis.
- Kossek, E. E., Barber, A. E., & Winters, D. (1999). Using flexible schedules in the managerial world: The power of peers. *Human Resource Management*, 38, 33–46. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-050X\(199921\)38:1<33::AID-HRM4>3.0.CO;2-H](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-050X(199921)38:1<33::AID-HRM4>3.0.CO;2-H)
- Kossek, E. E., Lautsch, B. A., & Eaton, S. C. (2006). Telecommuting, control, and boundary management: Correlates of policy use and practice, job control, and work-family effectiveness. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68, 247–367.
- Kossek, E. E., & Lautsch, B. A. (2012). Work-family boundary management styles in organizations: A cross-level model. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 2(2), 152–171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386611436264>
- Kossek, E. E., & Lautsch, B. A. (2018). Work-life flexibility for whom? Occupational status and work-life inequality in upper, middle, and lower level jobs. *Academy of Management Annals*, 12, 5–36. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0059>
- Kossek, E. E., Lautsch, B. A., Perrigino, M. B., Greenhaus, J. H., & Merriweather, T. J. (2023). Work-life flexibility policies: Moving from traditional views toward work-life intersectionality considerations. In M. R. Buckley, A. R. Wheeler, J. E. Baur, & J. R. B. Halbesleben (Eds.), *Research in personnel and human resource management* (pp. 199–243). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0742-730120230000041008>
- Kossek, E. E., & Lee, K.-H. (2020). The coronavirus & work-life inequality: Three evidence-based initiatives to update U.S. work-life employment policies. *Behavioral Science & Policy*, 6, 77–85. [https://behavioralpolicy.org/journal\\_issue/covid-19/](https://behavioralpolicy.org/journal_issue/covid-19/). <https://behavioralpolicy.org/articles/the-coronavirus-work-life-inequality-three-evidence-based-initiatives-to-update-u-s-work-life-employment-policies/>
- Kossek, E. E., Odle-Dusseau, H., & Hammer, L. B. (2018). Family supportive supervision around the globe. In K. M. Shockley, W. Shen, & R. C. Johnson (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of the global work-family interface* (pp. 570–596). Cambridge Industrial and Organizational Psychology series. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108235556.031>
- Kossek, E. E., Perrigino, M. B., & Lautsch, B. A. (2023). Work-life flexibility policies from a boundary control and implementation perspective: A review and research framework. *Journal of Management*, 49(6), 2062–2108. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221140354>
- Kossek, E. E., Perrigino, M. B., Russo, M., & Morandin, G. (2023). Missed connections between the leadership and work-life fields: Work-life supportive leadership for a dual agenda. *Academy of Management Annals*, 17(1), 181–217. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2021.0085>
- Kossek, E. E., Petty, R. J., Bodner, T. E., Perrigino, M. B., Hammer, L. B., Yragui, N. L., & Michel, J. S. (2018). Lasting impression: Transformational leadership and family supportive supervision as resources for well-being and performance. *Occupational Health Science*, 2, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41542-018-0012-x>
- Kossek, E. E., Pichler, S., Bodner, T. E., & Hammer, L. B. (2011). Workplace social support and work-family conflict: A META-analysis clarifying the influence of general and work-family-specific supervisor and organizational support. *Personnel Psychology*, 64, 289–313. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2011.01211.x>
- Kossek, E. E., Ruderman, M. N., Braddy, P. W., & Hannum, K. M. (2012). Work-nonwork boundary management profiles: A person-centered approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 81, 112–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.04.003>
- Kossek, E. E., Thompson, R. J., Lawson, K. M., Bodner, T. E., Perrigino, M. B., Hammer, L. B., Buxton, O. M., Almeida, D. M., Moen, P., Hurtado, D. A., Wipfli, B., Berkman, L. F., & Bray, J. W. (2019). Caring for the elderly at work and home: Can a randomized organizational intervention improve psychological health? *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 24(1), 36–54. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000104>
- Lapierre, L. M., Spector, P. E., Allen, T. D., Poelmans, S., Cooper, C. L., O'Driscoll, M. P., et al. (2008). Family-supportive organization perceptions, multiple dimensions of work-family conflict, and employee satisfaction: A test of model across five samples. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73(1), 92–106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.02.001>
- Lautsch, B. A., Kossek, E. E., & Eaton, S. C. (2009). Supervisory approaches and paradoxes in managing telecommuting implementation. *Human Relations*, 62(6), 795–827. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726709104543>
- Leslie, L. M., Manchester, C. F., Park, T. Y., & Mehng, S. A. (2012). Flexible work practices: A source of career premiums or penalties? *Academy of Management Journal*, 55, 1407–1428. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0651>
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1986). *Maslach burnout inventory; manual research edition*. Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Matthews, R. A., Mills, M. J., Trout, R. C., & English, L. (2014). Family-supportive supervisor behaviors, work engagement, and subjective well-being: A contextually dependent mediated process. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 19(2), 168–181. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036012>
- Matthews, R. A., & Toumbouva, T. H. (2015). Lagged effects of family-supportive organization perceptions and supervision in relation to generalized work-related resources. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 20(3), 301–313. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038377>
- Muthen, L. (1999). Interclass correlations. <http://www.statmodel.com/discussion/messages/12/18.html>
- Nielsen, K., & Miraglia, M. (2017). What works for whom in which circumstances? On the need to move beyond the ‘what works?’ Question in organizational intervention research. *Human Relations*, 70(1), 40–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716670226>
- Odle-Dusseau, H. N., Hammer, L. B., Crain, T. L., & Bodner, T. E. (2016). The influence of family-supportive supervisor training on employee job performance and attitudes: An organizational work-family intervention. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 21(3), 296–308. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039961>
- O'Driscoll, M. P., Poelmans, S., Spector, P. E., Kalliath, T., Allen, T. D., Cooper, C. L., & Sanchez, J. (2003). Family-responsive interventions, perceived organizational and supervisor support, work-family conflict, and psychological strain. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 10, 326–344. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.10.4.326a>
- Perrigino, M. B., Dunford, B. B., & Wilson, K. S. (2018). Work-family backlash: The “dark side” of work-life balance (WLB) policies. *Academy of Management Annals*, 12(2), 600–630. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0077>
- Pinheiro, J. C., & Bates, D. M. (2000). *Mixed-effects models in S and S-PLUS*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0318-1>
- Richman, A. L., Civian, J. T., Shannon, L. L., Jeffrey Hill, E., & Brennan, R. T. (2008). The relationship of perceived flexibility, supportive work-life policies, and use of formal flexible arrangements and occasional flexibility to employee engagement and expected retention. *Community, Work and Family*, 11(2), 183–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668800802050350>
- Rothbard, N. P. (2001). Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46(4), 655–684. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3094827>
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.248>
- Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

- Shirom, A., Nirel, N., & Vinokur, A. D. (2010). Work hours and caseload as predictors of physician burnout: The mediating effects by perceived workload and by autonomy. *Applied Psychology: International Review*, 59(4), 539–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2009.00411.x>
- Telford, T., & De Vynck, G. (2023). To fill offices, Google issues ultimatum while Salesforce tries charity. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2023/06/08/google-salesforce-return-to-office/>
- ten Brummelhuis, L. L., & Bakker, A. B. (2012). A resource perspective on the work-home interface: The work-home resources model. *American Psychologist*, 67(7), 545–556. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027974>
- Thomas, L. T., & Ganster, D. C. (1995). Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 6–15. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.80.1.6>
- U.S. Health & Human Services. (2022). U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-being. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/workplace-mental-health-well-being.pdf>

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Ellen Ernst Kossek**, PhD, (Yale University) is the Basil S. Turner Distinguished Professor of Management in the Mitchell E. Daniels Jr. School of Business at Purdue University. She was the first elected President of the Work-Family Researchers Network. She is a Fellow of the Academy of Management, SIOP, and APA. She has won awards for scholarly, teaching, and practical impact, and for mentoring students. Her current research focuses on the intersection of diversity, equity and inclusion with flexibility, remote work, and caregiving in the STEM workforce. Before becoming a professor, she worked in industry on strategic human resource issues in United States, Europe, and Asia.

**Caitlin M. Porter**, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Management at the University of Memphis. Her program of research investigates how people navigate their careers within and across employing organizations, with an emphasis on the role of relationships in this process. Her research addresses the topics of professional networking and social networks, employee withdrawal and turnover, and career mobility and success, and has been published in outlets such as *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, *Journal of Management*, and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.

**Lindsay Mechem Rosokha** is a Clinical Assistant Professor in Organizational Behavior and Human Resources (OBHR) and the Director of the Business Undergraduate Honors Program at Purdue University. Her research focuses on performance management, leadership, diversity and gender equality, and the spillover of interpersonal exchanges in work and nonwork domains. Lindsay received her PhD in OBHR and her Master's in Human

Resource Management at Purdue University. Prior to joining academia, Lindsay worked as a Human Resources Advisor for ExxonMobil.

**Kelly Schwind Wilson** is a Professor of Management in the Mitchell E. Daniels Jr. School of Business at Purdue University. She received her Ph.D. in Business Administration from the Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University and her B.A. in Psychology and Communication Studies from the University of Michigan. Professor Wilson's research focuses on two main areas including the work-nonwork interface and leadership, with an emphasis on how work and nonwork interpersonal relationships influence and are influenced by employees' different roles and resources. Professor Wilson's research has been published in various leading outlets and she is an award winning scholar and teacher.

**Deborah E. Rupp**, PhD, is a Professor of Industrial and Organizational Psychology at George Mason University. Her research, consulting, and expert testimony expertise span the areas of employment discrimination, corporate social responsibility, the intersection of DEI and personnel practice, organizational justice, emotional labor, and personnel testing/assessment. She has published six books and over 130 papers and chapters in the field's top outlets, and is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, the Association for Psychological Science, and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

**Jared Law-Penrose**, PhD, is a Professor of Management, Leadership, and HRM in the Madden School of Business at Le Moyne College. His research and consulting focuses on helping organizations foster high-quality relationships between leaders and employees. His research has been presented at national and international conferences and published in a variety of journals. In his free time he can often be found backpacking and camping in the forests of central and upstate New York.

**How to cite this article:** Kossek, E. E., Porter, C. M., Rosokha, L. M., Wilson, K. S., Rupp, D. E., & Law-Penrose, J. (2024). Advancing work-life supportive contexts for the “haves” and “have nots”: Integrating supervisor training with work-life flexibility to impact exhaustion or engagement. *Human Resource Management*, 63(3), 397–411. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22207>