

Spatial Effectiveness in the Evolving Workspace



As organizations consider options for their unique 'return to workplace' approach, they will need to take a fresh look at their overall approach to space. Will their office footprint decrease in reaction to more distributed work? Will the office landscape increase to support an ecosystem of space types and locations? Or will the overall real estate footprint scale out neutral, due to a rebalance of locations and strategy?

These are just a few of the many questions clients, designers and real estate organizations are asking. Without history to guide us, we are in speculation mode.

Post COVID: Potential Shifts in the Workplace Landscape



Underlying Factors

Industry/Work Performed

People in certain roles need to be in the workplace to access resources they cannot access elsewhere; resources = technology, people, unique workspace, etc.

Location & Size

A large company in small community vs. a small company in larger city will have different consideration sets; access to talent, corporate real estate costs, and transportation.

Extent of Distributed Work Strategy

How willing an organization is to support employee expectations of choice and control over where they work.

Workplace 2025: If Only We Had a Crystal Ball...

We can imagine a range of scenarios in how different organizations might approach their workplace strategy moving forward.

Scenario A

Updating Existing

(Minimal \$, Traditional Space Types)



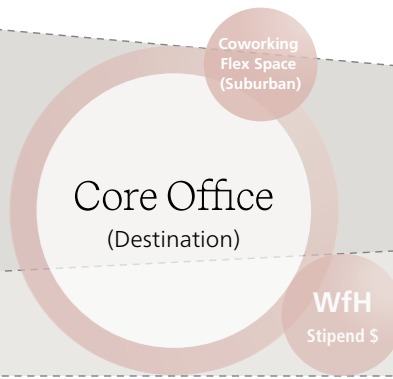
Furniture Implications

Reconfiguration of existing
Additional (additive) screening

Scenario B

Exploring the New Normal

(Modest \$\$, Enhanced Space Types)



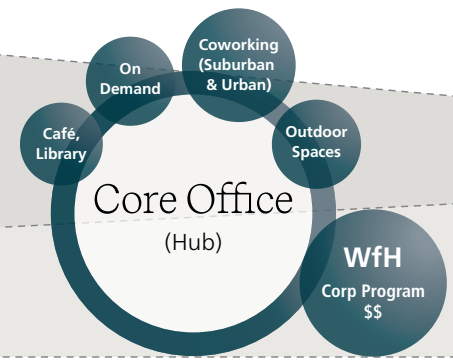
Furniture Implications

Flexible spatial KOP
Advanced meeting spaces
Enhanced focus ie: micro offices
Coworking/flex space for those who cannot WfH effectively

Scenario C

Creating an Ecosystem

(Diverse Portfolio, Hub + Satellites)



Furniture Implications

Diverse, adaptable solutions, new space considerations ie: biophilia & wellness
'Branded' coworking sites
Increase in unassigned desking & lockers
Corporate WfH programs

Overall CRE footprint may stay the same or slightly decrease, offset by rebalance to satellite locations

Anticipated increase in distributed workplace strategies

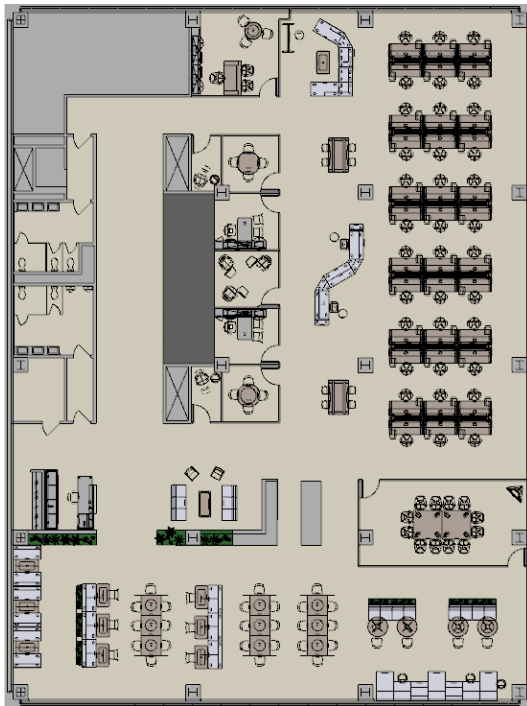
“In times of uncertainty, analytics and predictive modelling based on human behavior can guide and inform decision making; maximizing the outcomes while empowering clients to optimize the design and operations of their workplaces.”

Lisa Miller
Director, Product Insights & Applications

Now that we have moved beyond the initial shock and subsequent reactions to a place where we as designers and place makers can begin to think—perhaps even dream—about a ‘return to workplace’, we have the opportunity to provide a place that offers psychological comfort, is inspiring and collaborative and provides users with choice and control of how, when and where they do their best work.



To evolve our understanding of how to best plan for social distancing and circulating in the office, we have partnered with global engineering and analytics firm Buro Happold.



Base Layout

This plan will be assessed for its accommodation of social distancing, using the Buro Happold Workplace Analytics Model with over 15 years of research into human behavior.



Intervention Layout

The review of peak capacities and bottlenecks helped to inform this intervention layout—featuring reconfigured and additional furniture elements.

Dynamic Movement & Heat Mapping Studies

See the Simulation in Action →



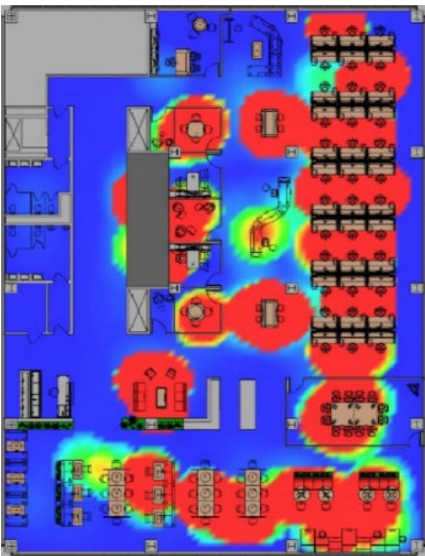
Base Layout:
No furniture changes



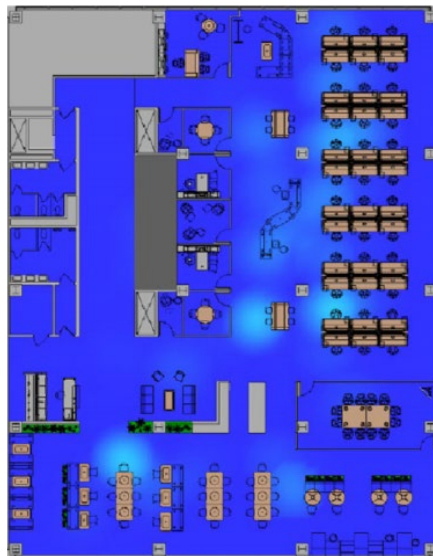
Base Layout with Distancing:
Removal or marking of seats



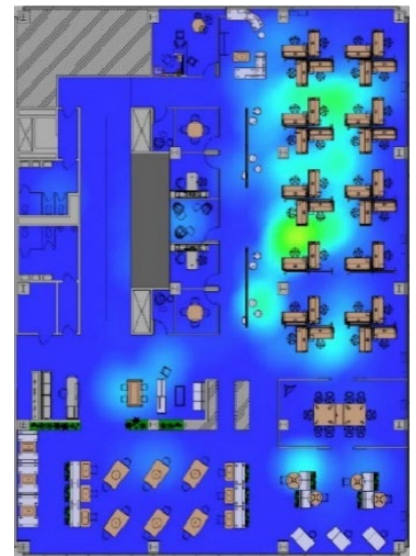
Intervention Layout:
Furniture reconfigurations



100% desk occupancy
Collisions 75% of the time



52% desk occupancy
Collisions 0.7% of the time



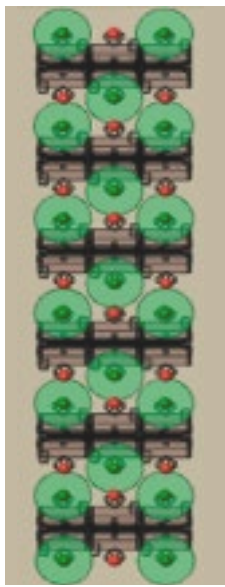
100% desk occupancy
Collisions 1.4% of the time

Insight #1

Orientation matters. A simple reconfiguration of furniture elements can increase utilization from 52% to 100%.

Even with a 6-foot wide workspace on the Base Plan, the back to back dimension between seats can cause collision, therefore requiring a 'checkerboard' or every other seating occupancy.

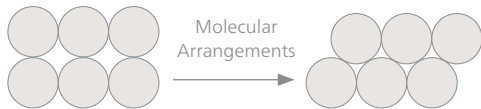
Reconfigured plan uses slightly more square footage and will require additional in feeds, however—this achieves 100% occupancy at the desks.



Base Plan
19 Seats



Intervention Plan
36 Seats



Social distancing would suggest one person per booth (105 sq.ft.)



Pinwheel configuration provides solo spaces in a more efficient footprint (90 sq.ft.)

Kit-of-Parts in Action



Surface

30"x72" Height Adjustable Table



Storage

Undermount Bin

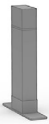


Space Division

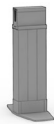
Desk Screen



60W Power Rail with 2 duplexes per station



Beam End Leg



Beam Mid Leg



Seating

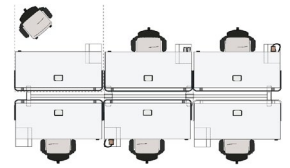
Task Chair

A thoughtfully curated KOP demonstrates the ability to effectively accommodate shifts in planning, with minimal new product required.

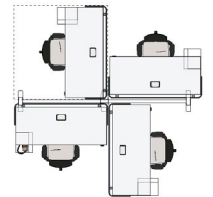
Product Needed for Conversion

- 4 Power In-Feeds
- 2 Power Beams
- 8 End Legs

Base Plan Linear Bench



Intervention Plan Pinwheel



Insight #2

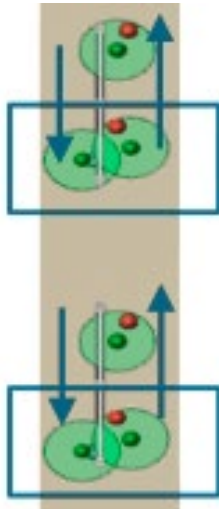
Architectural elements can support higher utilization.

By adding a Viz Wall architectural element from floor to ceiling, the 6-foot diameter circles are allowed to come closer than social recommendations would suggest because of the vertical separation.

These elements also promote a clear path of travel to reduce collisions and direct 'path of travel'.



Base Plan
Social Collaborative
5 seats



Intervention Plan
Viz Wall Integration
6 seats



Before Viz Wall

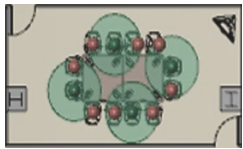


After Viz Wall

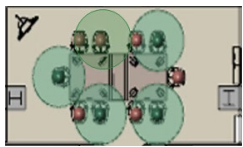
Insight #3

Expandable meeting room design comfortably supports a range of group sizes and addresses opportunities for social distancing.

A simple separation of two tables allows a 25% increase in capacity.



Base Plan
Continuous table
4 Seats



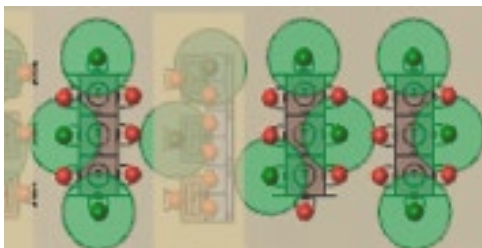
Intervention Plan
Bench in the middle
5 Seats



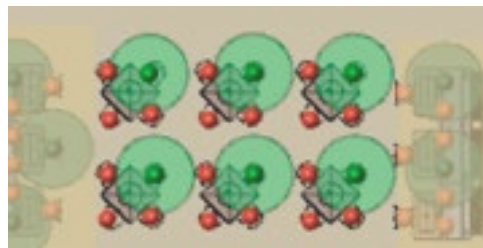
Reconfiguration of Beyond Walls to allow for double door entry for distanced entrance and egress.

Insight #4

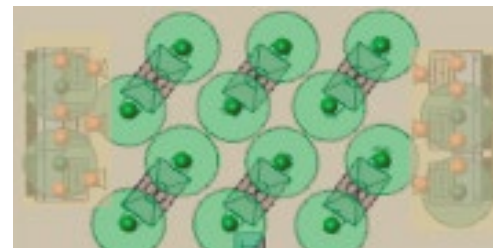
A series of tables placed together can accommodate more socially distanced seats than if they were spaced apart.



Base Plan
Community Tables
9 Seats



Intervention Plan 1
Separate Square Tables
6 Seats



Intervention Plan 2
Separate Square Tables
12 Seats

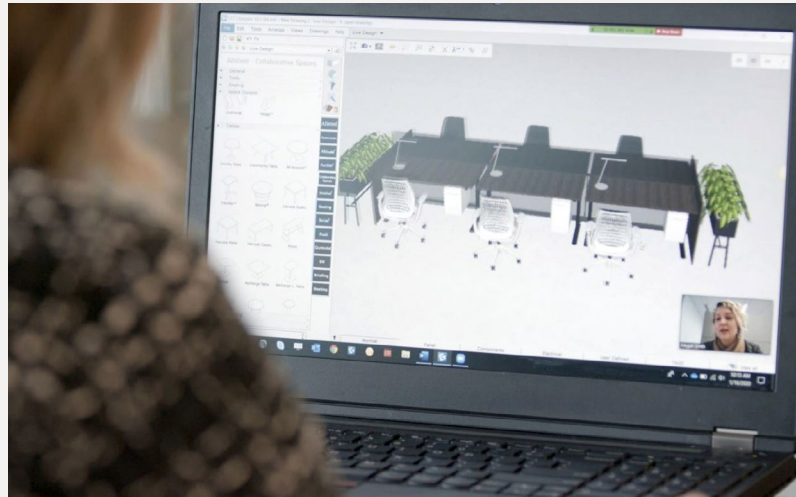
Designer on Demand

Allsteel and our dealer partners have dedicated designers ready to help.

We understand each customer's approach to the evolving workplace will be unique.

We have been working hard to research and share our continuous learnings with our design teams to apply new ways of thinking including analytics, flexible planning practices and new product enhancements, all realized through the real time CET Live Design experience.

[Learn about CET Live Design →](#)



“How can we build social cohesion when we need to social distance?”

Jan Johnson
VP, Workplace Strategy

Assess & Prioritize



As each organization considers what might come after initial, interim safety measures can be phased out, how might we use this time to explore new ways of working? With worker demand for more autonomy and choice in when, where and how they work, and even more emphasis on psychological safety, wellness and social cohesion, how might we newly understand and design for both function and behavior?

Critical Questions

What safety measures and learnings from assessments or remote work experiences should be carried forward?

Who will work when and where? What's the nature of their work?

How might we reimagine our portfolio and workplace strategies given how the world has changed?

What elements of people, place and technology strategies will best support their functional and social requirements and expectations?

Key Action Items

With a cross-section of workers/teams, identify how their work processes may have changed.

Consider what can be done to advance wellness support.

Analyze the nature of each group's work and determine key factors for productivity and psychological comfort.

Consider what can be done to improve the workplace's accommodations for neurodiversity and other physical and cultural differences.

Assess current levels of social cohesion to identify where there's room for improvement.

Knowledge & Resources

[Social Cohesion Series →](#)

[What Your Workplace Design Says →](#)

[Our Workplaces Will Change →](#)

[Wellness Considerations for Working from Home →](#)

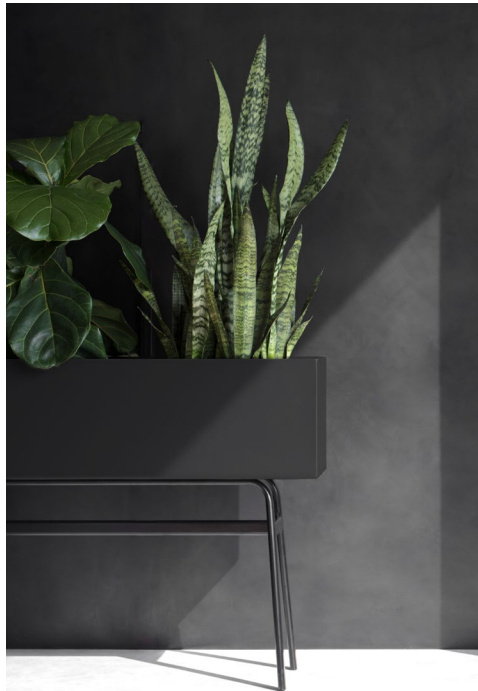
Social & Collaborative Spaces

If we have learned anything from current events, the ability to reconnect with our friends, families and coworkers is top of mind.



How might our evolving workplace integrate more natural light, more biophilic elements, sensory supports, and opportunities to embrace wellness best practices, both inside and outside of the office?

Expansion to outdoor spaces offers a change of scenery and fresh air.



Work Geometry

Learn More →



Human-centric considerations of posture, fit and tools to be comfortable and productive.

Table Height & Application

Considerations

Occasional 16" — 18"

Meeting Type: Casual conversations, shorter duration, likely free of technology.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–3 people.

Postures: Relaxed sitting or reclining.

In this application, the table will likely be used to place items such as coffee cups or phones not in use. Power access may be beneficial to charge items during a brief get-away from work.

Continental 26" — 27.75"

Meeting Type: Discussions that are intimate or informal, technology may be necessary to complete work tasks.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–3 people.

Postures: Relaxed sitting.

Smaller table sizes may be more appropriate for intimate conversations.

Standard 28" — 29.75"

Meeting Type: Suitable for technology-based meetings that are formal or informal, medium to long in duration.

Size of Group: Any, based on size of table.

Postures: Engaged sitting.

For longer meetings where technology is supported, power access will be important. This table height is versatile and can accommodate casual meeting or eating areas as well as formal conference spaces.

Counter 36" — 37.6"

Meeting Type: Short to medium length meetings, formal or in formal, technology or not.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–6 people.

Postures: Engaged sitting and relaxed standing.

Comfortable for sitting and standing work and a great option to promote posture changes. Higher or mid-back stools may be used for longer conversations.

Bar 41" — 42"

Meeting Type: Quick, casual conversations. Place to pause and chat.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–6 people.

Postures: Engaged sitting, leaning or upright standing.

Consider a lower stool back that can be tucked under the table and declutter the visual landscape. A footrest on the table or stool can support posture changes.

Consider & Solve



In this interim time between 'old normal' and as-yet-to-be revealed 'new normal,' Allsteel continues to explore how your existing products can be repurposed during COVID, then repurposed again post-COVID.

Critical Questions

How can we use space effectively today without making substantial new investments?

What safety measures and learnings from assessments or remote work experiences should be carried forward?

How might we reimagine our portfolio and workplace strategies given how the world has changed?

Who will work when and where post-COVID?

Are there things we know now about the nature of their work post-COVID?

Key Action Items

Determine how spaces/applications and circulation patterns must be modified to support six feet of distance.

Identify needed new supports/tech (i.e., white boards, video conference capabilities) to support in-office/remote workers during COVID.

Explore what might be possible to reimagine post-COVID and how to migrate with minimal investment.

Knowledge & Resources

[Material Cleaning Resource →](#)

[How Certain Smells Affect Our Brains →](#)

[Poka-Yoke: Mistake-Proof Your Space →](#)



Social & Collaborative Spaces



Collaborative spaces anticipated to grow

- A large percentage of focus work can be done remotely
- Employees will likely come to the core office to collaborate
- Employees have a strong desire for face-to-face interactions

Comfort is crucial for productivity

- Consider work geometry and support for various postures
- For many, distancing comfort will be psychological as much as physical

Work activities distributed across the floor

- Plan for user-reconfiguration for physical distancing and psychological comfort
- The average in-person meeting will likely be reduced to 2–3 people
- There will be an increased need for solo space (focus work and online meetings)

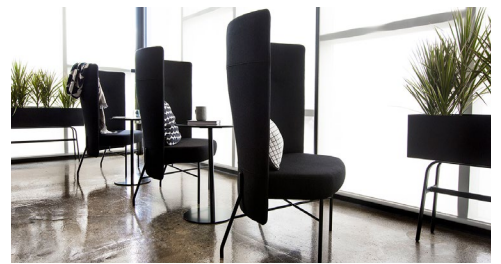
Social & Collaborative Solutions: Multiple Personalities?

Two-for-one functionality.

As we develop new products, we have an additional layer to consider. For many years we have seen the evolution of social collaborative spaces. Now we need to think how these products can be both collaborative and singular use.



Wedge seating in triad configuration for collaboration



Wedge seating in solo arrangement for focus work



Existing Booth Installation
Social distancing would suggest 1 person per booth (105 sq.ft.)



Return to Workplace 50%
Pinwheel configuration provides solo spaces in an efficient footprint (90 sq.ft.)



Return to Workplace 100%
Reconfigure back to 4-person work booths



Meeting Spaces

Come together again.

As more people begin coming to the office to collaborate, meeting spaces will need to be reexamined and enhanced, both with technology and furniture, as well as the protocols for people both in room and on video.



[Technology in the Workplace →](#)

Architectural Elements as Functional Division



Cabana booths create the perfect 'room within a room' meeting space.



Path of Travel is defined by Viz Wall while enhancing both spaces with functional vertical surface



Pavilion structure defines meeting area

Collaboration within Private Offices

Provide psychological comfort for guests inside private offices requiring collaboration by creating separation and zoning.

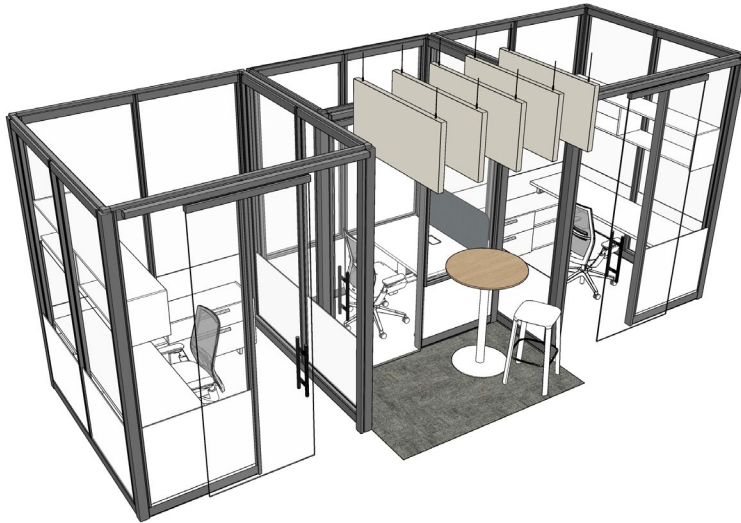
Height adjustability within a shared surface creates separation between users.



Individuals have their own 360 degree pivotable surface within a shared space for social distancing away from the primary desk.

Micro Offices

When in the core office, individual focus work will still be a critical component to the workday, even if only between collaborative sessions. For some, the office may no longer require or desire collaborative work within the space. This could drive to new concepts around smaller, efficient micro offices.



A potential 'in between' space may take on the form of a front porch or quick collaboration area outside the smaller office footprint.



This series of micro offices is the equivalent of three 7' x 7' workstations. The intention of the glass above the 30" datum line is to avoid a sense of false privacy.

Ecosystem of Space Types

As workplace strategies evolve, so will the variety of space types to accommodate how, when and where people do their best work.



Workstation Neighborhood



Private Office



Coworking Space



Meeting Spaces



Home Office



Outdoor Spaces

Implement & Feedback



Thoughtful organizations will make gathering user feedback simple, effective, and rapid. Think of the office as a continually improving space as users tell employers what works and what doesn't. Listen to concerns about distancing, efficiency, shared spaces, and workstation placement. Usable, applicable feedback will also come from Allsteel's entire client base and the latest findings from outside researchers on the evolving health situation.

Allsteel is also formulating our point of view of what's possible as we come through all the upheaval—how we can be opportunistic and create more relevant, inspiring and supportive-of-worker-and-organizational-success workplaces.

Critical Questions

What's missing and what needs to change?

How can we monitor how our changes are working?

How do we engage employees to provide honest feedback?

Key Action Items

Gather early feedback on functionality of space, fit-out, and tech support.

Adjust solutions in real time, i.e., add space delineation if needed.

Substitute touchless options where possible.

Adapt & Reconfigure



With evidence-based learning to drive improvements and design, organizations can adapt and build on their successes and learn from their setbacks. Allsteel learns from their entire client base what works for customers and combines data from industry findings to make further improvements as organizational goals evolve.

Critical Questions

How can our workplace evolve to keep up with organizational change?

How quickly can we apply new learnings?

How do we keep employees' psychological health a key consideration?

Key Action Items

Repeat these steps as new groups return and/or constraints are lifted.

Create a system to monitor and trigger change as internal and external factors evolve.

Open ongoing feedback loops.