



Building Greener and Healthier Institutions: The Role of RDs in Sustainability- Driven Wellness

Presented by:
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Disclosures

- I have received an honorarium for this presentation.
- I am an employee for the food service company, Guckenheimer.

Learning Outcomes

1

Understand the connection between nutrition and sustainability in institutional food service settings.

2

Demonstrate how institutions are integrating sustainability and wellness programs, with an emphasis on the RD's role in these initiatives.

3

Identify strategies for RDs to drive environmental change within their organizations and communities.

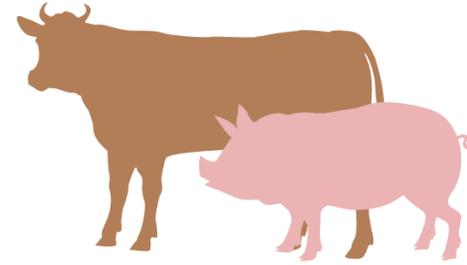
Facing the Facts



26% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the food system



50% of the world's habitable land is used for agriculture



94% of global mammal biomass (excl. humans) is livestock



80% of humanity could require more food by 2100



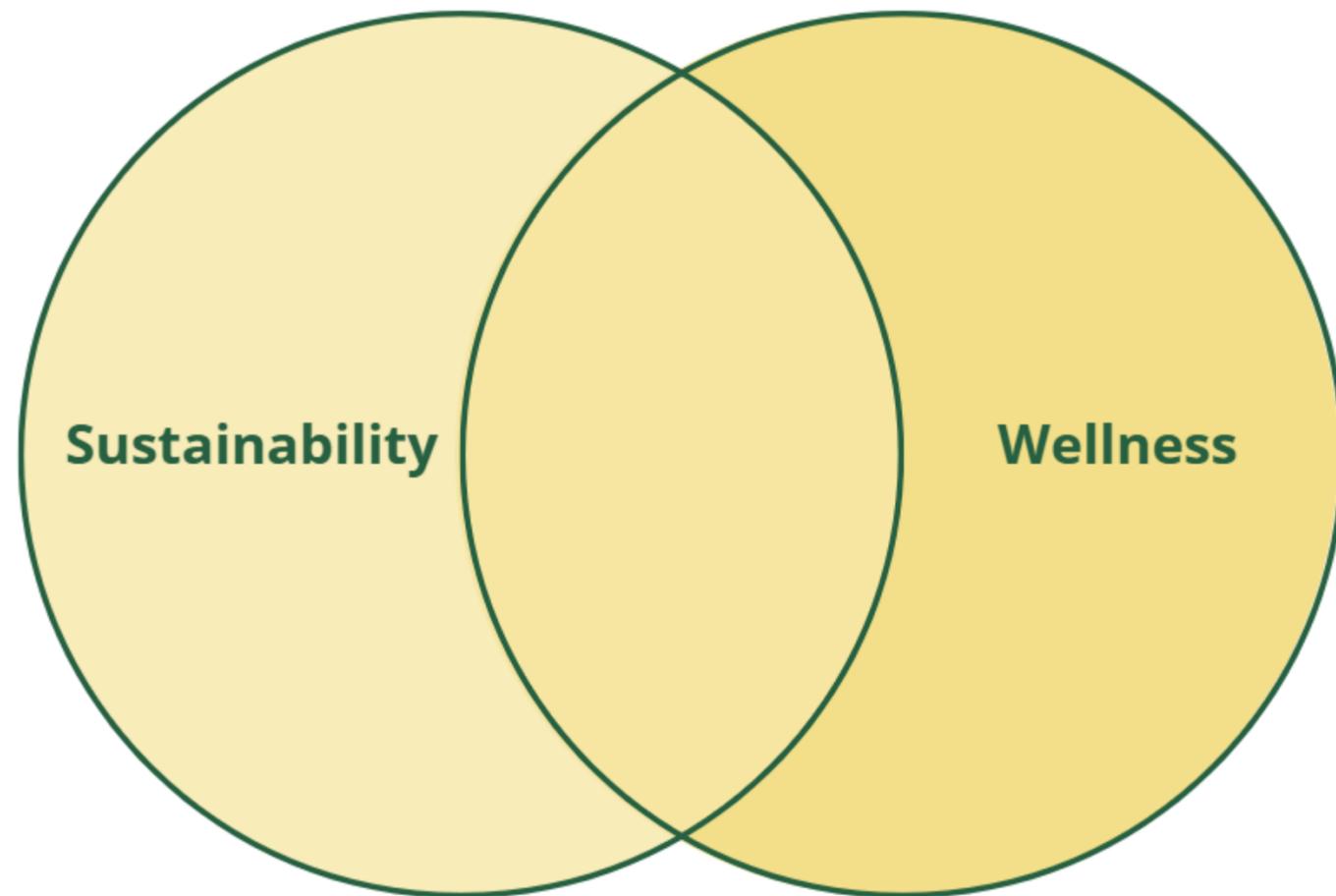
70% of global freshwater withdrawals are used for agriculture

Definitions

Sustainability: The responsible management of natural resources to fulfill current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

Wellness: The active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health and well-being.

Definitions



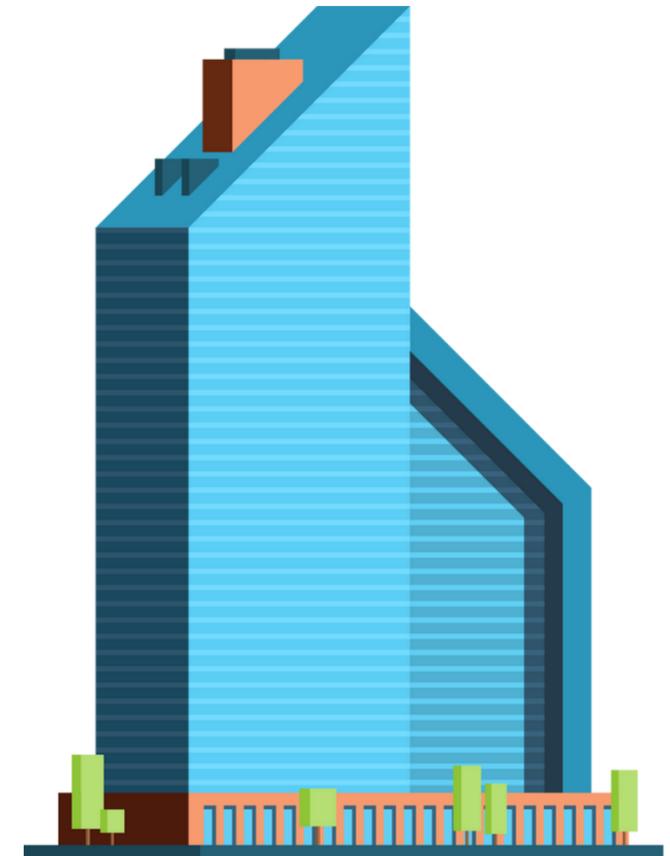
Sustainability-driven wellness

Integrates the principles of sustainability into the practices and strategies aimed at improving well-being

- Promotes long-term health and wellness
- Considers environmental, social, and economic impacts
- Supports not only personal well-being but also the health of the planet and society

Definitions

Institutions: Established structures that serve specific organizational or societal purposes.



Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

Hospitals

Improves patient care, saves resources and money, promotes public health

Hospitals that implemented energy-efficient technologies, green building standards, zero-waste policies, and/or waste management programs experienced:

Reduced respiratory issues for patients²

Up to **\$200,000** of savings annually on waste disposal costs³

Lower levels of harmful pollutants in the surrounding community⁴

Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

Hospitals

Improves patient care, saves resources and money, promotes public health

Hospitals offering organic and locally sourced food experienced:

Improvements in patient satisfaction and recovery times ⁵

Reports of better digestive health and energy levels from patients ⁶

Hospitals that introduced outdoor healing gardens and plant-based meal options experienced:

Reduction in patient stay lengths ⁷

Cost savings of over 50 cents per meal served ⁸

Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

Schools/Universities

Fosters long-term healthy habits, supports communities, promotes social responsibility

Students who participated in university-run sustainable food programs (e.g., plant-based diets, zero-waste cafeterias) were more likely to:

Adopt healthier eating habits long-term⁹

Continue waste reduction practices in their personal lives⁹

Advocate for sustainable practices within their social circles⁹

Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

Schools/Universities

Fosters long-term healthy habits, supports communities, promotes social responsibility

Universities that implemented sustainable food systems contributed to:

Local food
production and
availability of
healthy food
options¹⁰

Stronger
networks and
improved health
literacy in the
community¹¹

Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

Corporate Offices

Enhances brand value, increases productivity, attracts talent in competitive industries

71%

of employees say that they want to work at a company with a strong environmental agenda.¹²

63%

of employees would like to learn more green skills to become more valuable in the workplace.¹³

82%

of employers plan to focus on social connectedness as part of their well-being program.¹⁴

79%

of employers plan to focus on community as part of their well-being program.¹⁴

Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness? Corporate Offices

Enhances brand value, increases productivity, attracts talent in competitive industries

McKinsey Health Institute 2023 Survey of >30,000 employees across 30 countries on employee health¹⁵



Holistic health

Employees with strong holistic health are more likely to:

Be innovative at
work

Perform better
at their jobs

Want to—and
be more able
to—work
longer

Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

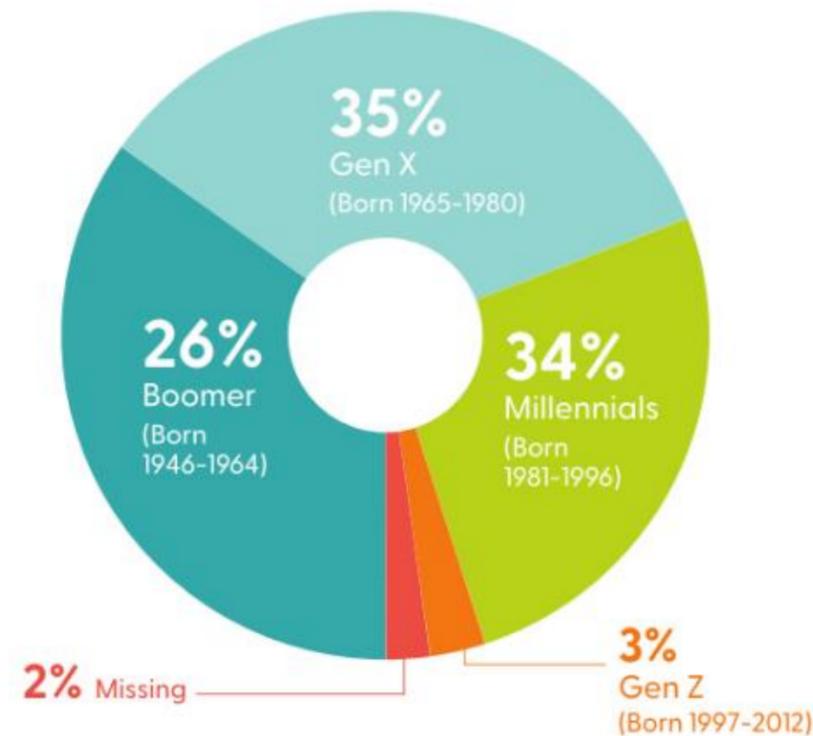
For RDs

Showcases expertise, enhances career value, expands impact and reach

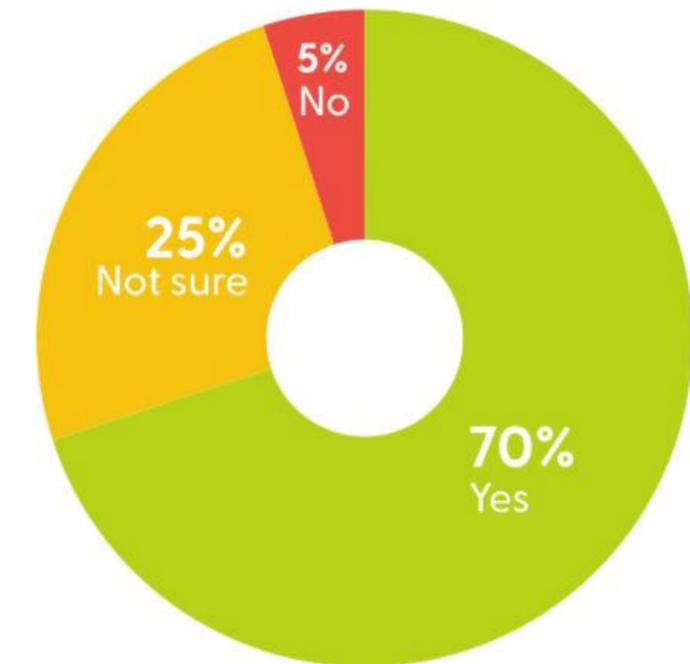
2024 Sustainability and Food Insights Dietitian Survey¹⁶



Age Range / Generation



Sustainability science should be formally integrated into the Dietary Guidelines



Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

For RDs

Showcases expertise, enhances career value, expands impact and reach

2024 Sustainability and Food Insights Dietitian Survey¹⁶

Key Findings:

Dietitians reported...

That they lack formal training in sustainability

Disproportionate knowledge and confidence levels across sustainability domains

Multiple barriers for advancing sustainable diets in their practice settings

Why Sustainability-Driven Wellness?

For RDs

Showcases expertise, enhances career value, expands impact and reach

2024 Sustainability and Food Insights Dietitian Survey¹⁶

But...

Almost all (96%) felt they should be involved in advocating for sustainability

Dietitians have a significant opportunity to accelerate consumer impact

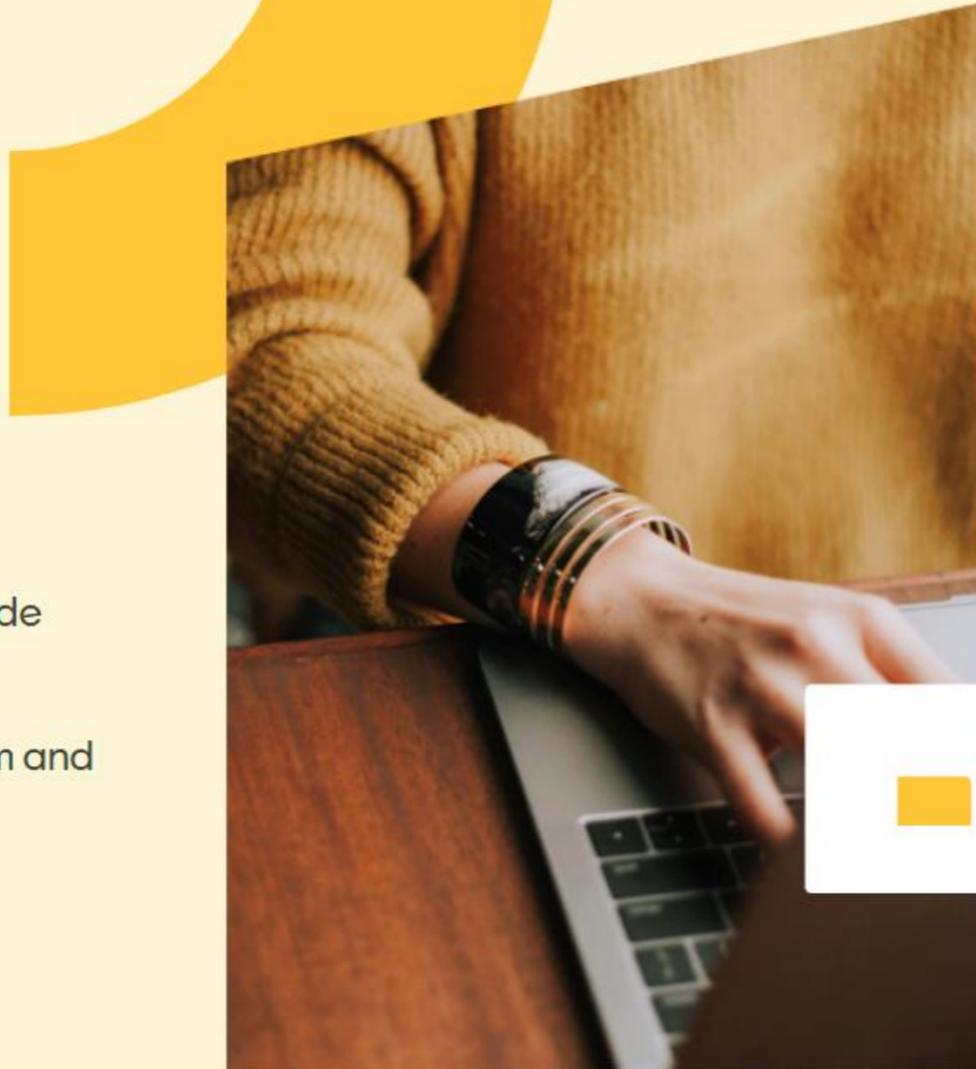
Dietitians have a unique skill set for addressing sustainability

Resources are growing

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Case Studies

Opportunities for Impact

Dietitians can drive sustainability in institutions through:



Sustainable Procurement



Recipe and Menu Development



Food Waste Management



Environmental Education and Advocacy



Agricultural Programming

Case Study #1

Sustainable Procurement



Strategy	Local & seasonal sourcing	Reduces carbon footprint of transporting goods and supports local economies
Example	The University of California, Berkeley's Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy	Emphasizes sourcing food from local farmers and producers
Role of RDs	Determine selection criteria for vendors and products	Ensures that the food purchased is both nutritious and sustainably sourced

Case Study #2

Recipe and Menu Development



Strategy	Plant-based menuing	Reduces greenhouse gases as growing plants typically requires less energy, land, and water than raising animals
Example	Google has committed to making 50% of their food plant-based by 2025	Prioritizes plant-based offerings on menus and optimizes consumption
Role of RDs	Create menus and behavioral architecture practices	Ensures that plant-based options are not only nutritionally balanced but also appealing to employees

Case Study #3

Food Waste Management



Strategy	Waste reduction programs	Reduces the amount of organic waste sent to landfills, decreasing methane emissions
Example	The Cleveland Clinic's hospital-wide food waste reduction program	Includes using a composting system for organic waste and managing portions of both patients and staff
Role of RDs	Manage portions	Ensures that portion sizes meet specific needs without exceeding requirements

Case Study #4

Environmental Education and Advocacy



Strategy	Education and awareness campaigns	Empowers individuals and communities to make informed, eco-friendly choices
Example	The University of Vermont's Environmental Council	Develops workshops and seminars on sustainable practices and experiential learning opportunities
Role of RDs	Teach workshops and speak in seminars	Equips students with the knowledge and tools to make healthy and sustainable food choices

Case Study #5

Agricultural Programming



Strategy	Gardening and agricultural interventions	Promotes sustainable farming practices that conserve resources, reduce pollution, and enhance biodiversity
Example	Chicago Public Schools' farm-to-school program	Connects students to fresh, local produce through onsite gardens and menu incorporation
Role of RDs	Lead gardening classes and create menus	Ensures that produce harvested is not only safe and ready for consumption but also nutritionally beneficial

Summarizing the Opportunities for Impact

Dietitians can drive sustainability in institutions through:



Sustainable Procurement - sourcing local and eco-friendly ingredients



Recipe and Menu Development - creating nutritious and appealing plant-based meals



Food Waste Management - optimizing portion sizes to reduce waste



Environmental Education and Advocacy - teaching healthy, sustainable eating habits



Agricultural Programming - connecting students with local food sources

Measuring Sustainability-Driven Wellness

Why is it important to measure impact?

Ensures
accountability

Optimizes
strategies

Demonstrates
results

Drives progress

Enhances
engagement

Supports
funding

Measuring Sustainability-Driven Wellness

How do we measure impact?

Resource usage

Waste reduction

Sustainable
sourcing

Health
outcomes

Engagement &
education

Carbon footprint

Reporting Sustainability-Driven Wellness

Building certification programs are used to assess the built environment's contribution to the wellness of its occupants

**Third-party,
independent
evaluations**

**Compare
performance to
set criteria**

**Evidence-based
and highly
regarded**

Reporting Sustainability-Driven Wellness

Common Criteria

- Promotes physical activity
- Optimizes indoor air quality
- Enhances access to water and healthy foods
- Prioritizes comfort of occupants
- Optimizes occupant safety
- Manages waste responsibly
- Impacts surrounding community health
- Supports mental and emotional health
- Conserves water and energy



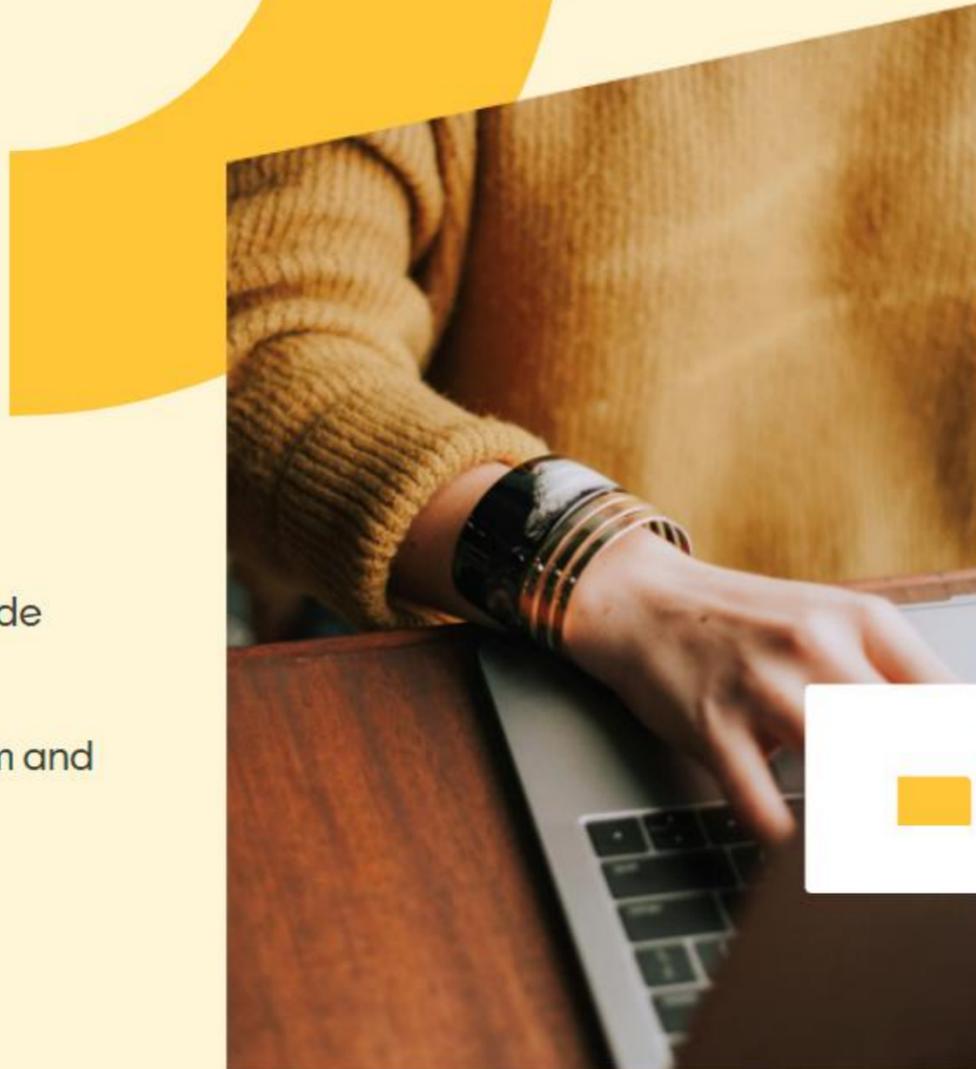
Roadmap for Making an Impact



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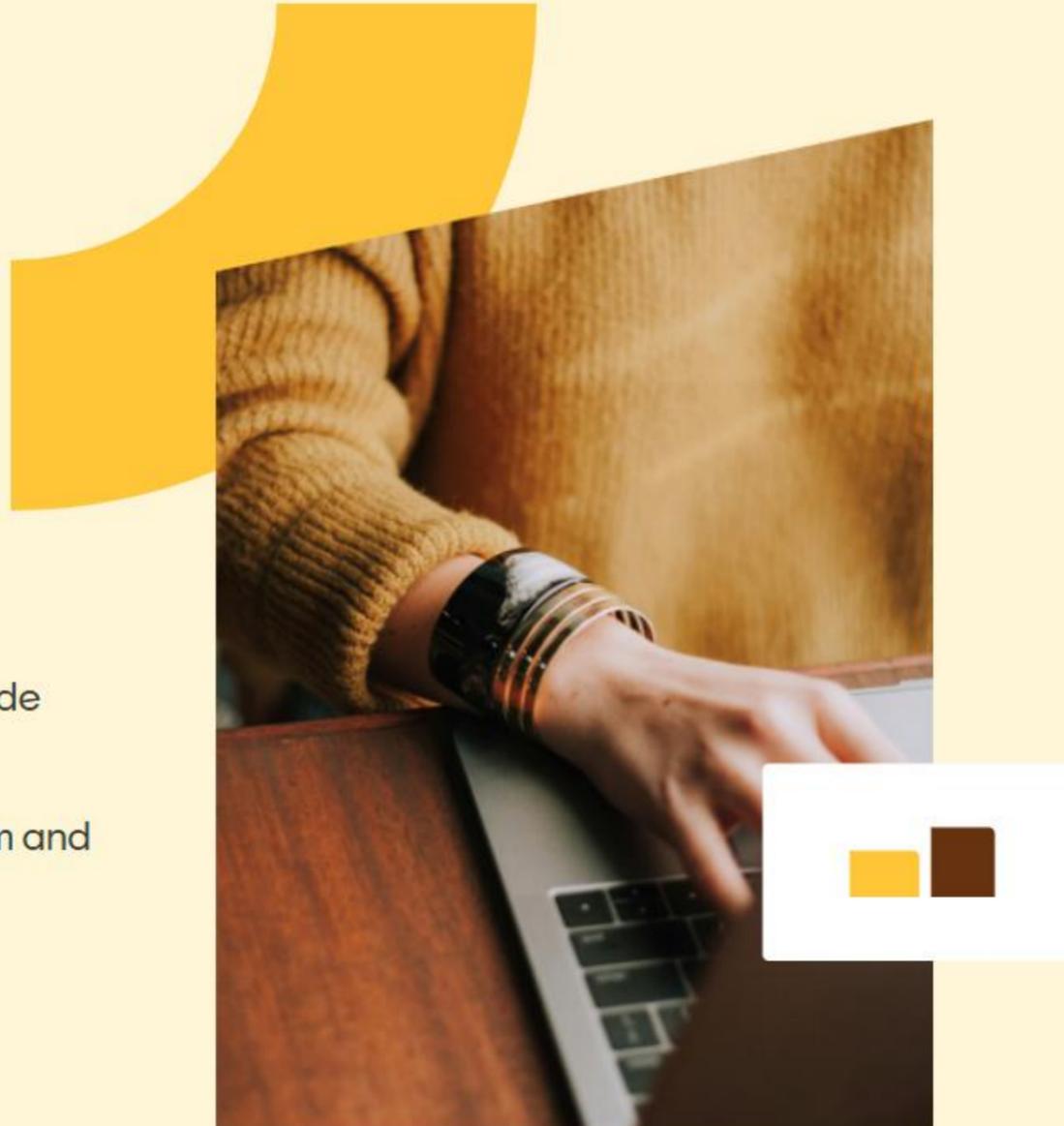


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Thank you!
Any questions?

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