

# Part 1: Mental health, self-care and academia

Dr Gareth Furber

eMental Health Project Officer

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/people/gareth.furber>





Flinders University acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which its campuses are located, these are the Traditional Lands of the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South East, First Peoples of the River Murray & Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders past, present and emerging.

# About me

- Psychologist
- Work with Health, Counselling and Disability Services and Oasis
- <https://www.flinders.edu.au/people/gareth.furber>
- Responsible for the **eMental Health Strategy**
  - **Improve staff and student mental health through the provision (via digital channels) of information, tools, programs and resources**
    - Digital information channels (*Student Health and Wellbeing Blog*)
    - Online delivery of group therapeutic programs (*Be Well*)
    - Delivery of mental health themed presentations/seminars/workshops
    - Working on a variety of mental health themed education initiatives (*Positive Shifts*)
    - Supporting university-wide mental health promotion (*Good Vibes Experiment*)
    - Mapping/promotion of mental health and wellbeing initiatives (*Wellbeing Working Group*)
    - Service data and improvement

# Learning objectives

- Better understanding of the term 'mental health'
- Be able to identify different activities that constitute self-care for mental health
- Have considered a domain of mental health in which you might like to improve
- Have a basic plan for a self-care activity to make progress in that domain of mental health





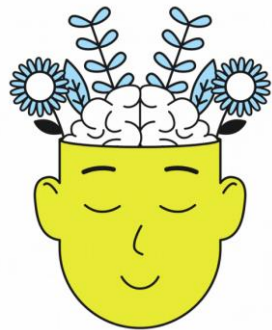
# Mental health

A healthy brain, a healthy mind

"The mind refers to the complex set of cognitive faculties and processes that includes consciousness, thought, perception, memory, emotion, and decision-making. It is the aspect of an individual that enables them to be aware of their surroundings, experience subjective feelings, process information, and engage in mental activities."



What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the term 'mental health'?



# How I understood the term after my training



**Well**

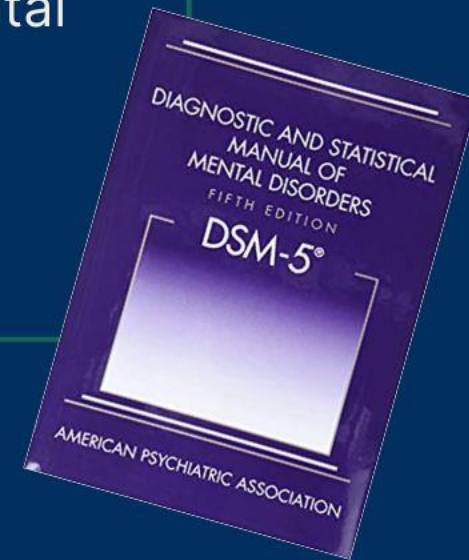
Does not meet criteria for a  
mental illness

**VS**



**Ill**

Meets criteria for a mental  
illness





From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

(Redirected from [DSM-IV Codes](#))

**DSM-IV codes** are the classification found in the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition, Text Revision**, also known as *DSM-IV-TR*, a manual published by the [American Psychiatric Association](#) (APA) that includes almost all currently recognized [mental health](#) disorders. The DSM-IV codes are thus used by mental health professionals to describe the features of a given mental disorder and indicate how the disorder can be distinguished from other, similar problems.<sup>[1]</sup>

The coding system utilized by the DSM-IV is designed to correspond with codes from the [International Classification of Diseases](#), Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification, commonly referred to as the ICD-9-CM. Since early versions of the DSM did not correlate with ICD codes and updates of the publications for the ICD and the DSM are not simultaneous, some distinctions in the coding systems may still be present. For this reason, it is recommended that users of these manuals consult the appropriate reference when accessing diagnostic codes

**NOS** is an abbreviation for *Not Otherwise Specified*, indicating a cluster of symptoms that do not clearly fit in any single diagnostic category. NOS is often a provisional diagnosis pending additional information or testing.

For an alphabetical list, see [DSM-IV codes \(alphabetical\)](#).

## Disorders usually first diagnosed in infancy, childhood, or adolescence [ edit ]

### Mental retardation [ edit ]

- 317 Mild mental retardation
- 318.0 Moderate mental retardation
- 318.1 Severe mental retardation
- 318.2 Profound mental retardation
- 319 Mental retardation; severity unspecified

### Learning disorders [ edit ]

- 315.00 [Reading disorder](#)
- 315.1 [Mathematics disorder](#)
- 315.2 [Disorder of written expression](#)

# Mental Health Continuum

## Mental Fitness

- ▶ Superior emotional and social functioning
- ▶ Ready for and energised by challenges
- ▶ Mood resilient to acute stressors
- ▶ Strong impulse control
- ▶ Aware of emotions
- ▶ Consistent sleep patterns
- ▶ Motivational drive high
- ▶ Leading others to achieve outstanding results
- ▶ Anxiety control
- ▶ Energised by work
- ▶ Superior focus, problem solving, and memory
- ▶ Self aware and able to reflect

## Healthy

- ▶ High Social and emotional functioning
- ▶ Mood recovers quickly from stress
- ▶ Manages anxiety
- ▶ Good impulse control
- ▶ Normal sleep patterns
- ▶ Physically well, full of energy
- ▶ Consistent performance
- ▶ Socially active
- ▶ Ready and able to face work challenges
- ▶ Enjoying work
- ▶ Responsive to others
- ▶ Patient
- ▶ Flexible
- ▶ Focus, memory and problem solving are high
- ▶ Self aware

## Reacting

- ▶ Impacted social and emotional functioning
- ▶ Reactive to anxiety
- ▶ Nervousness
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Sadness
- ▶ Trouble sleeping
- ▶ Physically tired
- ▶ Low motivation and energy
- ▶ Muscle tension, headaches
- ▶ Procrastination
- ▶ Indecisiveness
- ▶ Decreased social activity
- ▶ Lowered resilience to daily stressors
- ▶ Reactive to others
- ▶ Some impulse control difficulties
- ▶ Problem solving, focus and memory changeable

## Injured

- ▶ Impaired social and emotional functioning
- ▶ Uncontrolled anxiety, anger,
- ▶ Pervasive sadness, hopelessness
- ▶ Disturbed sleep
- ▶ Physical fatigue, low pain threshold, aches and pains
- ▶ Impaired problem solving, unable to focus, memory disruption
- ▶ Decreased work performance
- ▶ No enjoyment from work or hobbies
- ▶ Social avoidance or withdrawal
- ▶ Impulsive
- ▶ Reactive or disinhibited
- ▶ Using alcohol to cope
- ▶ Self aware limited when distressed

## Illness

- ▶ Social and emotion dysfunction. Unable to function.
- ▶ Excessive anxiety, depressed mood
- ▶ Thoughts of self-harm or of harming others
- ▶ Blunt, numb or highly reactive moods
- ▶ Unable to fall or stay asleep
- ▶ Exhaustion, physical illness
- ▶ Unable to perform duties, absenteeism
- ▶ Impaired cognitive functioning
- ▶ Social isolation, avoiding others
- ▶ Abuse of alcohol
- ▶ Limited self awareness or insight

‘**Mental health** is a state of **well-being** in which an individual realizes his or her own **abilities**, can **cope** with the **normal stresses** of life, can work **productively** and is able to make a **contribution** to his or her **community**.’

[https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab_1)

## Bring Your Strengths to Life & Live More Fully

*Join the over 27 million people who have taken the only free, scientific survey on character strengths.*

**ACTIVATE YOUR STRENGTHS**

## Why Do Character Strengths Matter?

Character strengths are the positive parts of your personality that make you feel authentic and engaged. You possess all 24 character strengths in different degrees, giving you a unique character strengths profile. Research shows that understanding and applying your strengths can help:

- ✓ Boost Confidence
- ✓ Increase Happiness
- ✓ Strengthen Relationships
- ✓ Manage Problems
- ✓ Reduce Stress
- ✓ Accomplish Goals
- ✓ Build Meaning and Purpose
- ✓ Improve Work Performance

<https://www.viacharacter.org/>

# Mental health

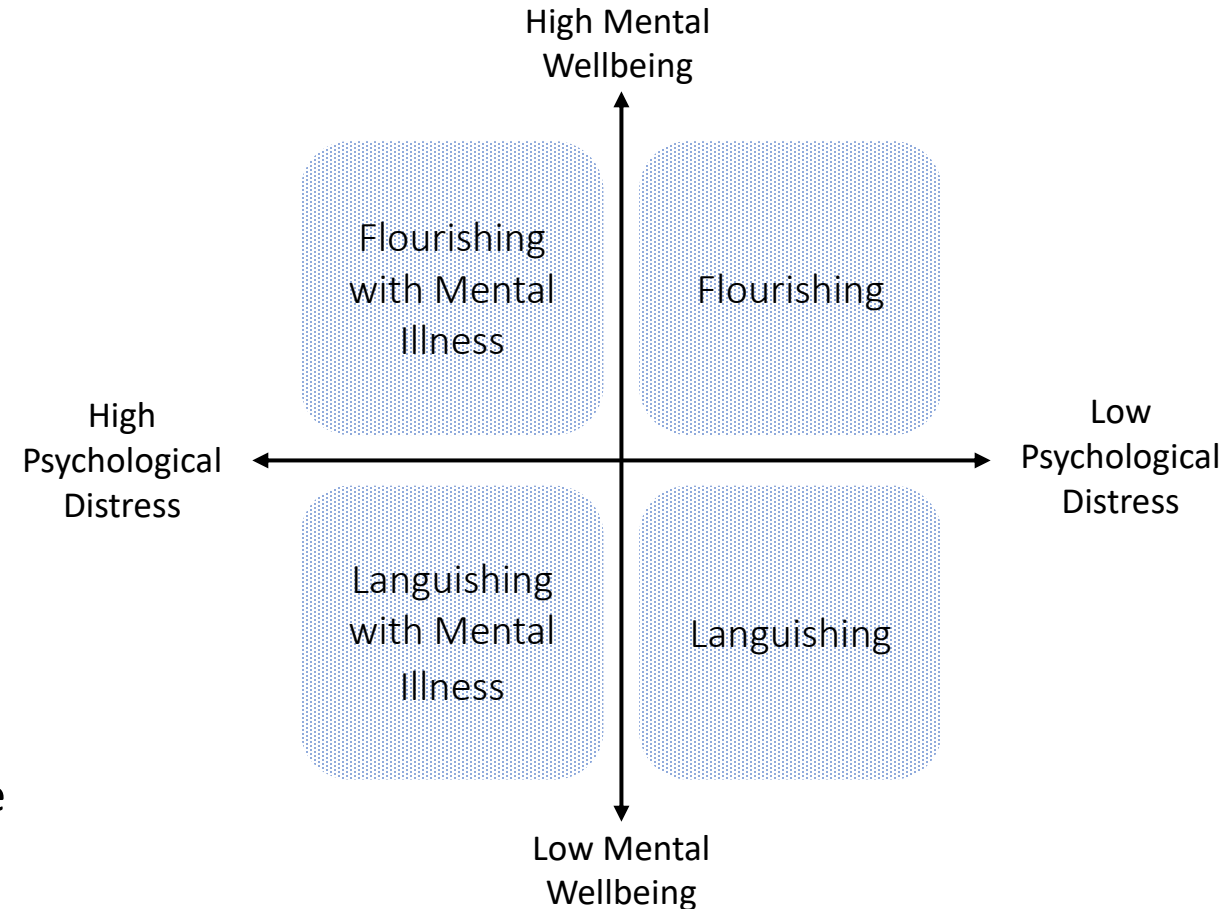


- **Illness/distress dimension**

- Presence or absence of **suffering**
  - Depression, anxiety, frustration, dread, despair, irritability, sadness
- At one end is the usual fluctuations of everyday life
- At the other end is diagnosed mental illness

- **Wellness/wellbeing dimension**

- Presence or absence of **positive states of wellbeing**
  - Positive mood, life satisfaction, pleasure
  - Self-confidence, self-acceptance
  - Feeling resilient and capable of coping
  - Feeling of purpose and meaning
  - Sense of belonging
  - Cultural alignment/connection
- At one end you've got someone with few positive things in their life
- At the other end, you've got someone with multiple positive things in their life



### Feelings/mood

'I generally feel good. I am happy and satisfied with my life. I have the normal down times and anxieties, but I experience a range of positive emotions and I know how to manage difficult feelings.'

### Functioning

'I feel like I am doing well and acting effectively in the different aspects of my life: work/study, friends, family, hobbies and health. I feel competent and confident in these areas and am

### Self-understanding and acceptance

'I think I understand myself pretty well – strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, triggers and personality. I accept myself. I use the self-knowledge to make better decisions.'

### Presence, awareness and flow

'I can be in the present moment and feel connected and part of something and open to opportunity.'

### Self-regulation and behaviour change

'I pay attention to making good choices and developing and sustaining good habits when it comes to productivity, sleep, diet, physical activity, drug and alcohol use etc.'

### Social integration

'I feel like I have a place in the world through my friendships, family, workplace and groups to which I belong and contribute. The groups to which I belong are doing well.'

### Mental health

'When I've experienced mental ill health I have been able to seek support and treatment and manage the illness in a way that means I am still leading a full life.'

### Meaning & purpose

'I have a sense of the person I want to be, the life I want to lead, the contribution I want to make and the legacy I want to leave.'



# Context is (very) important.....

A pair of hands is shown from the bottom, holding a green apple on the left and an orange on the right. The background is a solid, dark grey color. The text is overlaid on the image.

- Jane is happy with life. She has a job she enjoys where the work feels meaningful. She looks after herself, has good health, has a strong network of friends. She's gained a good understand of her strengths and weaknesses through therapeutic work and finds herself excited to take on the world most days.
- Greg is going through a tough time. He recently lost his father, is providing support to his mother and the company he works for is going through a restructure and there is lots of uncertainty. A series of big costs have put pressure on his finances. On a typical day, he finds himself cycling between being stressed and being sad but he's mindful these are normal reactions. Greg finds the time each evening to reflect and plan for the next day. A close friend and mentor is helping him navigate through the difficult times.

# Recap

- Mental health = the health of one's mind and brain
- A useful way to think about it comes from the Keyes' dual continua model of mental health
  - Distress and wellbeing dimensions
- Implication being that you can improve mental health through
  - Reduction or elimination of distress/illness states
  - Activation and maintenance of states of wellbeing
- Our diagnostic system classifies many states of illness and distress
- Increasing articulation and measurement of states of wellbeing:
  - Positive feelings, competence, control, self-acceptance, presence, awareness, flow, resilience, decisiveness, autonomy, relatedness, meaning, purpose, values
- Context should be taken into consideration



# Be Well Measurement

**BE WELL TRACKER DASHBOARD**

Timeline: < > 5 SEPTEMBER 2022 SEP 5, 2022

HEALTH → WELLBEING → RESILIENCE → MOOD → ANXIETY → STRESS →

DOING WELL WITH	CAN IMPROVE ON	TAKE ACTION WITH
<p>These areas are currently the strongest pillars of your psychological health. By understanding and applying where you are scoring highest, you can then use these factors to support yourself in other areas and when things get a little rocky in life. Remember that celebrating what you do well helps support your health and wellbeing across the</p>	<p>These factors are potentially the easiest for you to shift for the better. With some focused attention on these areas, you could find yourself feeling and functioning better than you have before! There are many resources, ideas and supports available that you can choose to apply in your life, with the potential to notably improve your psychological health.</p>	<p>These aspects are worth paying attention to, as ignoring them can present health and wellbeing risks. Your scores in these areas indicate that you could be feeling and functioning better than you are now, and that there is potential for positive change. Don't be afraid to reach out for support, as new perspectives, resources, skills and guidance are useful components of change for all of us.</p>

**YOUR MENTAL HEALTH PROFILE**

We used your answer to the measurement to create a quick summary of six important drivers of your mental health and wellbeing. These six domains have a strong influence on how you feel on a day to day basis. They are what we call **core outcomes**.

We grouped them into three overarching groups to give you insight into areas you do well in, areas you can improve on and areas you should take action with. Select each domain to find out more about the scores, what they mean and why it is important to work on them.

You can see how your scores have changed between measurements, by selecting different circles on the timeline at the top of the page, or by pressing the arrows next to the date.

Feeling confronted by what you are seeing? While we provide this overview to help you find areas of improvement, becoming more aware of your psychological health profile may be distressing.

If you're feeling concerned or distressed right



[Take a measurement](#)

What is interesting about mental health in academia?

# Mental health in academia

- References

- <https://academicmatters.ca/mental-health-in-academia-the-challenges-faculty-face-predating-the-pandemic-and-require-systemic-solutions/>
- <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.562457/full>
- <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0268890>
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajhb.23664>
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-00419-0>
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-04998-1>
- <https://psychology.org.au/for-members/publications/inpsych/2020/february-march-issue-1/enhancing-wellbeing-for-academics>
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/smi.2956>
- <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0268890>

# Mental health in Academia

- Prevalence of distress higher in academics than general population
  - General population
    - One in five (21.4% or 4.2 million people) had a 12-month mental disorder
    - In 2020-21, 15.4% of Australians aged 16-85 years experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress
  - Academics
    - 43% of Australian academic staff identified as possible cases of psychological illness
    - “Survey data indicate that the majority of university staff find their job stressful. Levels of burnout appear higher among university staff than in general working populations and are comparable to ‘high-risk’ groups such as healthcare workers”

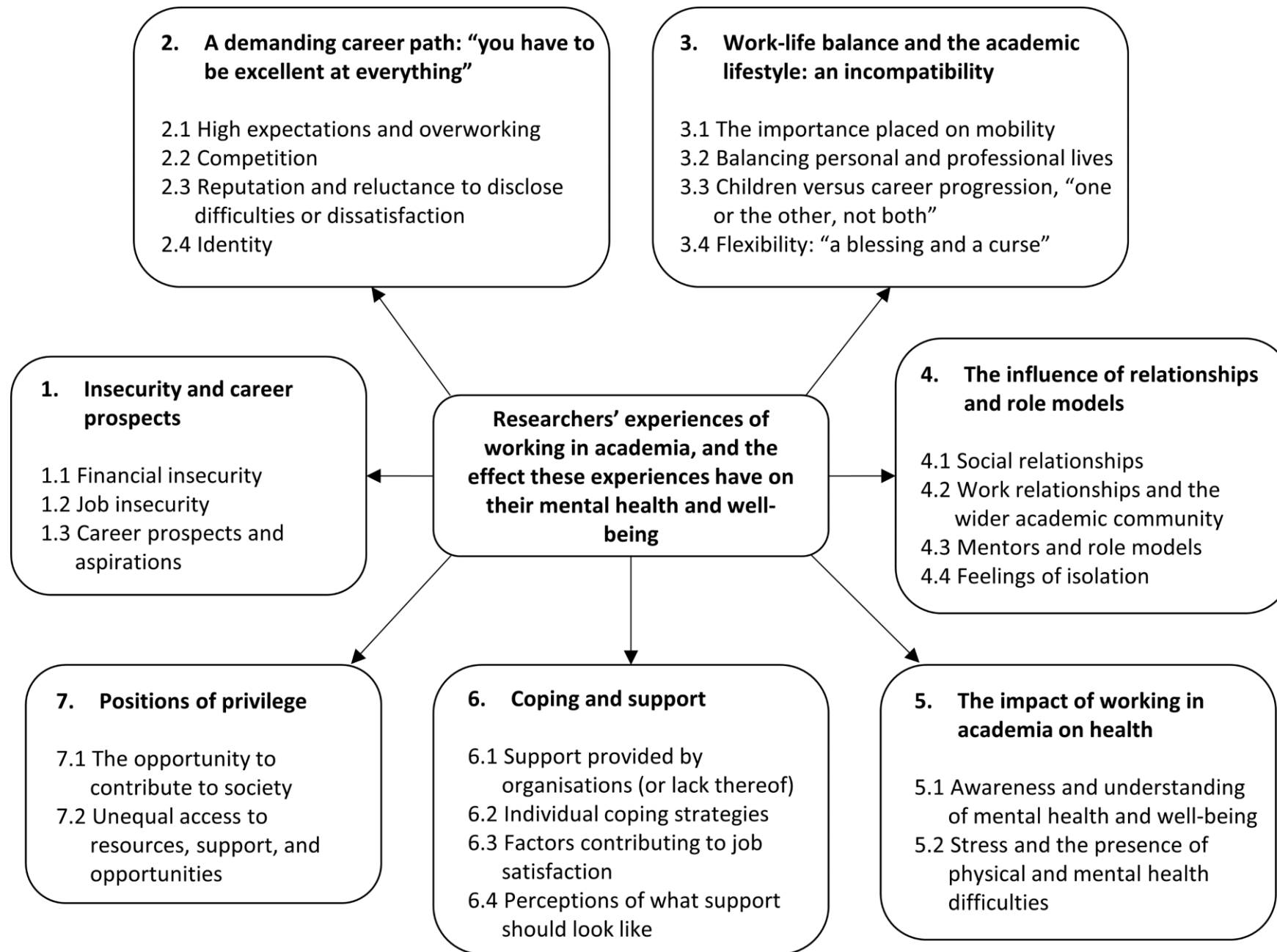
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/2020-21>

<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2003-06067-006>

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2022.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2022.html)

# Mental health in academia

- Multiple potential stressors
  - Choose between productivity and mental health
  - Heavy workloads/ unreasonable expectations
  - Job insecurity/ casualisation
  - Uncertainty
  - Pressure to build increasingly more impressive CV's
  - Publish or perish/ Visible or Vanish
  - Grant competition/ distribution of funding
  - Under constant evaluation
  - Predetermined metrics
  - Cultures of productivity, innovation, competition, overwork
  - Discrimination and inequity
  - Work/life balance challenges
  - Stigma associated with reporting difficulties
  - Teaching responsibilities



The experience of  
academia simultaneously  
grows and challenges  
different aspects of mind  
and thus has varied impacts  
on mental health

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### Functioning

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### Self-understanding and acceptance

'I think I understand myself pretty well – strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, triggers and personality. I accept myself. I use the self-knowledge to make better decisions.'

### Presence, awareness and flow

'I can be in the present moment, engaged and feel connected and part of something and open to opportunity.'

### Resilience

'I feel like I am pretty good at managing stress and cope with most setbacks thrown my way.'

### Self-regulation and behaviour change

'I pay attention to making good choices and developing and sustaining good habits when it comes to productivity, sleep, diet, physical activity, drug and alcohol use etc.'

### Social integration

'I feel like I have a place in the world through my friendships, family, workplace and groups to which I belong and contribute. The groups to which I belong are doing well.'

### Mental ill health

'When I've experienced mental ill health I have been able to seek support and treatment and manage the illness in a way that means I am still leading a full life.'

### Meaning & purpose

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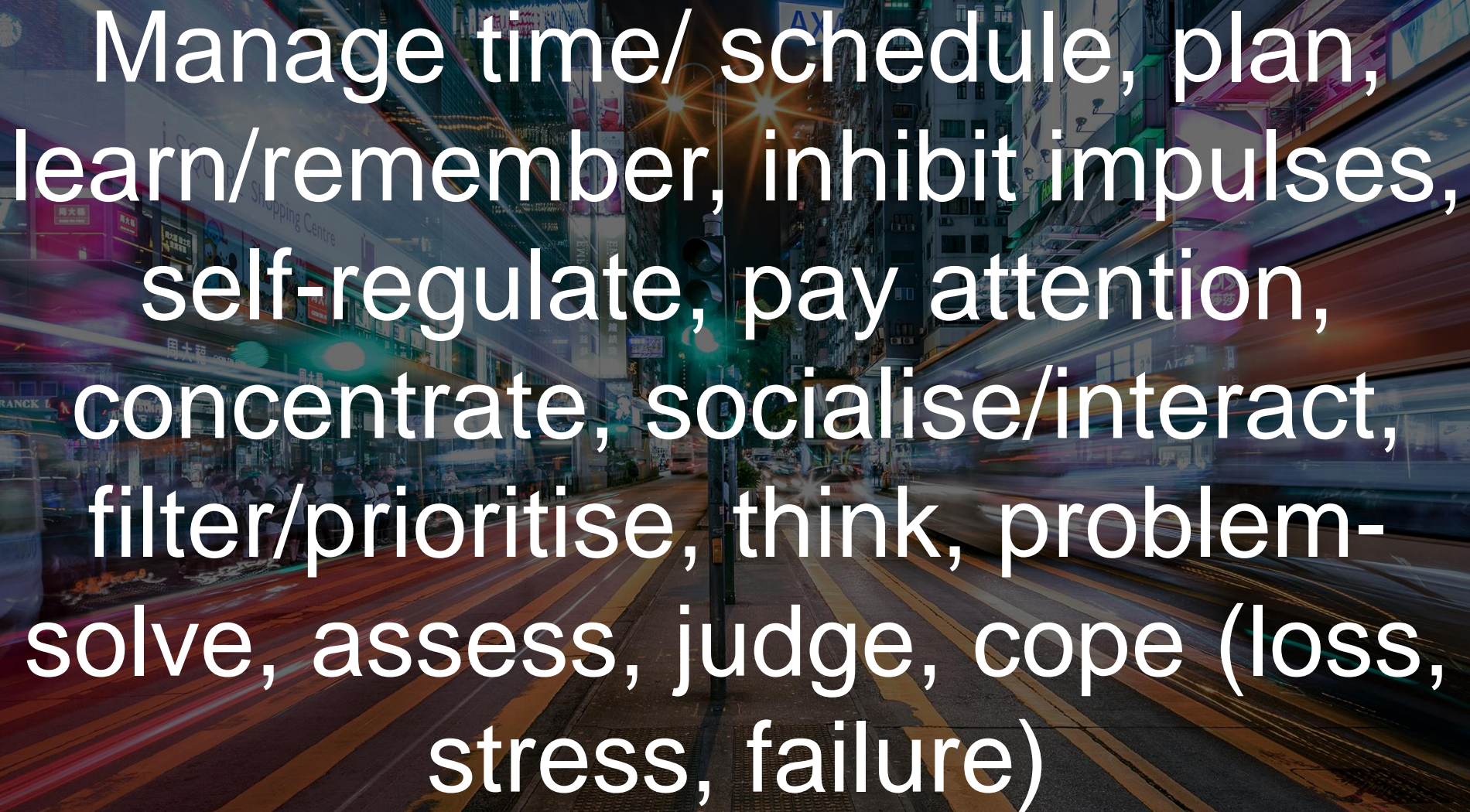
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### **Meaning & purpose**

'I have a sense of the person I want to be, the life I want to lead, the contribution I want to make and the legacy I want to leave.'



A blurred night city street with light trails from cars and buildings. The text is overlaid in white on a dark background.

Manage time/ schedule, plan,  
learn/remember, inhibit impulses,  
self-regulate, pay attention,  
concentrate, socialise/interact,  
filter/prioritise, think, problem-  
solve, assess, judge, cope (loss,  
stress, failure)

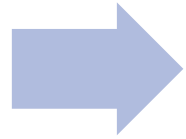
We've inherited hunter-gatherer brains

- Fight or flight
- Social comparison
- Confirmation bias
- Addiction



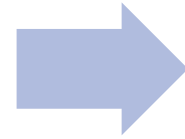
## Excess Stress

- Challenges exceed capacity to cope (severe or chronic)



## Burnout

- Energy depletion
- Mental distance from study
- Reduced productivity



## Illness

- Physical and mental

Planet and ecosystem

Society and culture

Organisations and institutions

Family and upbringing

Adverse exposures

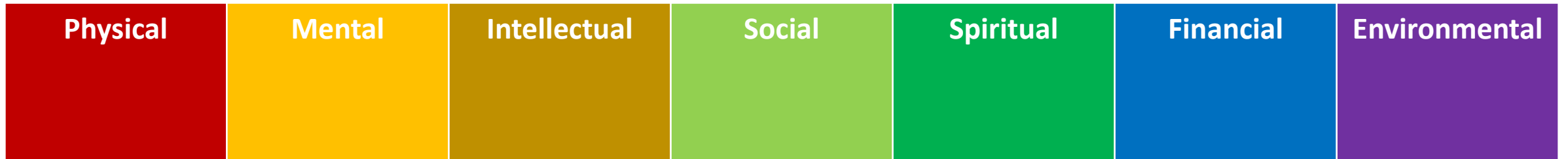
Identity groups

Genetics and biology



self-care as “the practice of activities that **individuals initiate and perform on their own behalf** in maintaining life, health, and well-being”

Dorothea Orem





The attitude that one takes towards oneself, and the endeavour of self-care is also important.....

- Understanding and acceptance
- Kindness to oneself
- Mindful awareness
- Setting boundaries
- Balancing self-compassion and accountability
- Cultivating gratitude
- Self-care as a nurturing act
- Learning from mistakes
- Celebrating achievements
- Seeking support



What can **you do** to look after,  
improve or repair your mental  
health?

# Start simple, work your way up

- Step 1 – stress reducers (NSDR), energy management
- Step 2 – foundational habits
- Step 3 – personalisation
- Step 4 – deep dive

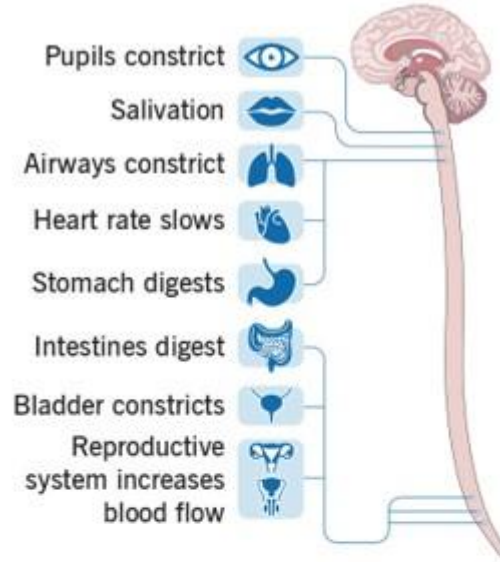


# Step 1

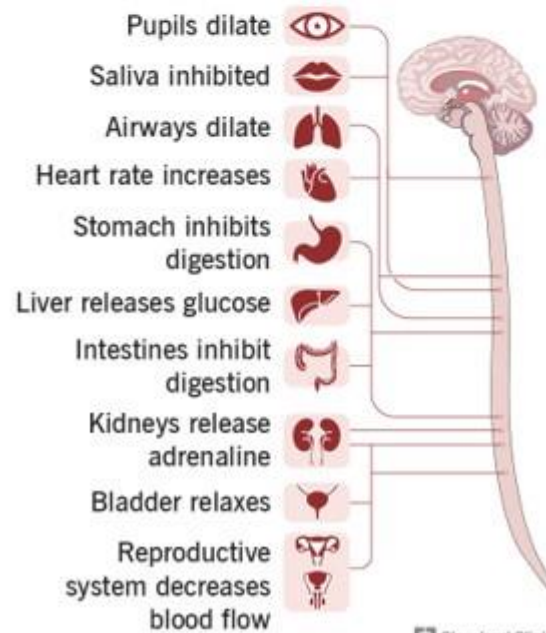
Add stress reducers

# Autonomic Nervous System

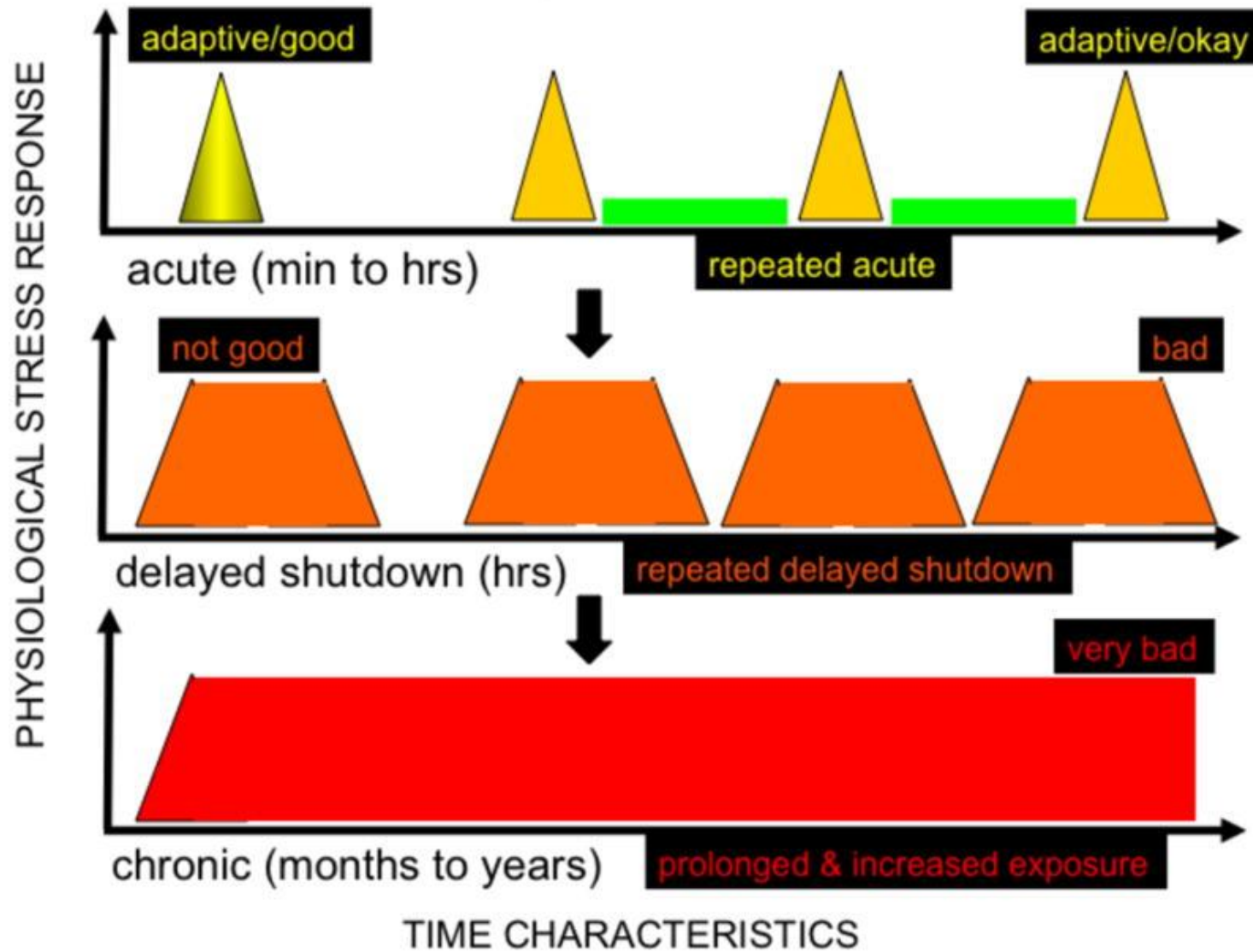
## Parasympathetic Division

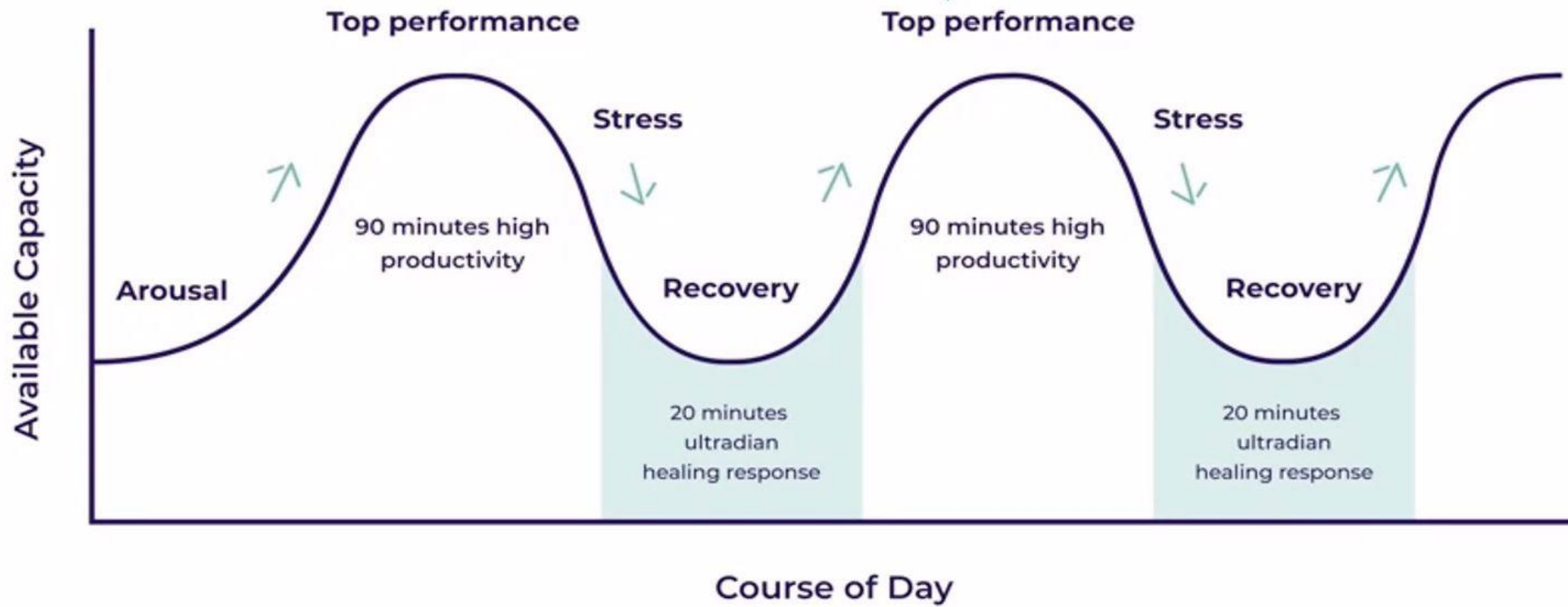


## Sympathetic Division



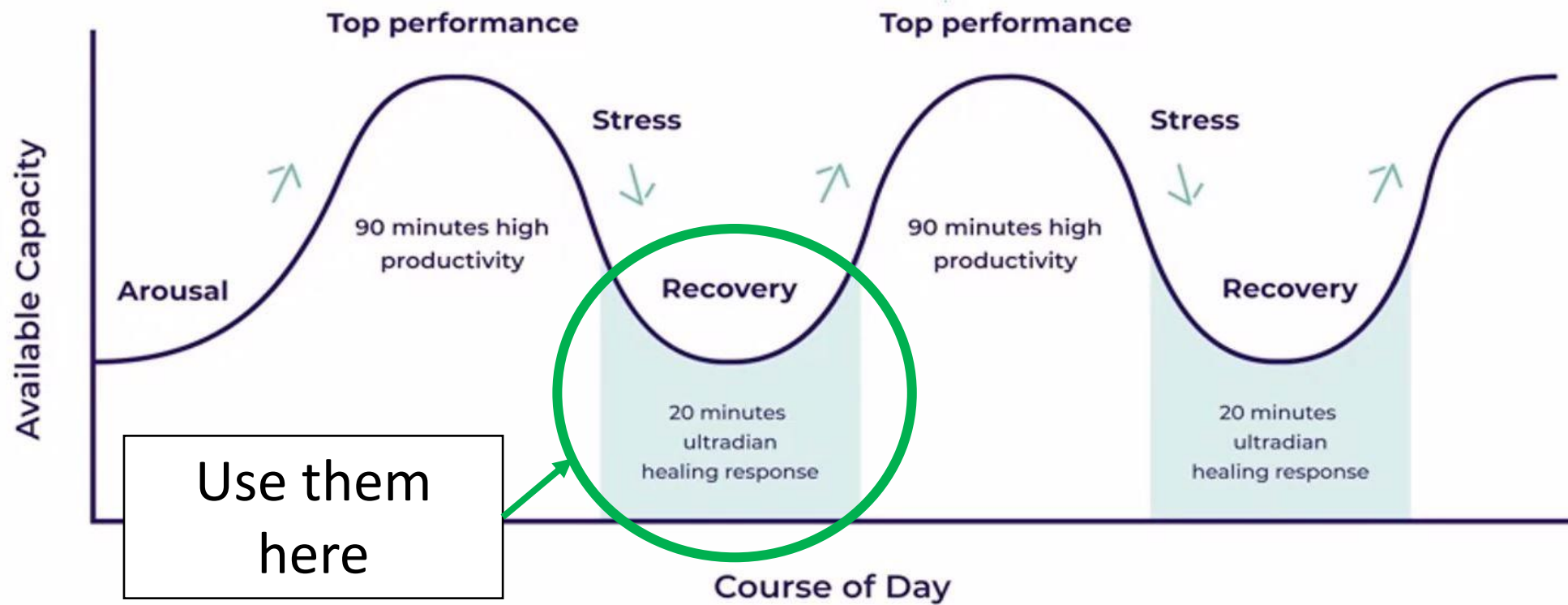
# Transitioning from Adaptive to Harmful Effects of Stress





## Ultradian Performance Rhythm

(Kleitman's model of basic rest-activity cycle, or BRAC)



# Ultradian Performance Rhythm

(Kleitman's model of basic rest-activity cycle, or BRAC)





# Ways to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system

- Breathing exercises
- Visualisation
- Meditation (including mindfulness)
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Massage
- Time in Nature
- Exercise
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Socialise
- Hobbies (active leisure)
- Prayer
- Laughter
- Touch
- Reading



Utilise as on-ramp or off-ramp activities (leading into or following periods of focused work)

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a sandy surface. Several footprints are visible, showing the texture of the sand and the shape of the feet. The footprints are arranged in a path that leads from the top right towards the bottom right. The lighting is soft, creating subtle shadows and highlights on the sand grains.

# Step 2

Build daily foundational habits

Published on 5.7.2022 in Vol 6 , No 7 (2022) :July

📌 Preprints (earlier versions) of this paper are available at <https://preprints.jmir.org/preprint/38837>, first published April 19, 2022.



## Measures of Daily Activities Associated With Mental Health (Things You Do Questionnaire): Development of a Preliminary Psychometric Study and Replication Study

Nickolai Titov <sup>1</sup> ; Blake F Dear <sup>1</sup> ; Madelyne A Bisby <sup>1</sup> ; Olav Nielssen <sup>1</sup> ; Lauren G Staples <sup>1</sup> ; Rony Kayrouz <sup>1</sup> ; Shane Cross <sup>1</sup> ; Eyal Karin <sup>1</sup>

Article

Authors

Cited by

Tweetations (8)

Metrics

- [Abstract](#)
- Introduction
- Study-1
- Study-2

### Abstract

#### Background:

A large body of research has identified modifiable cognitions and behaviors (actions) associated with psychological health. However, little is known regarding the actions that are most strongly associated with psychological health or the frequency with which they should be performed.

### Citation

Please cite as:

Titov N, Dear BF, Bisby MA, Nielssen O, Staples LG, Kayrouz R, Cross S, Karin E Measures of Daily Activities Associated With Mental Health (Things You Do Questionnaire): Development of a Preliminary Psychometric Study and Replication Study  
JMIR Form Res 2022;6(7):e38837  
doi: [10.2196/38837](https://doi.org/10.2196/38837)  
PMID: [35788101](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35788101/)  
PMCID: [9297144](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9297144/)

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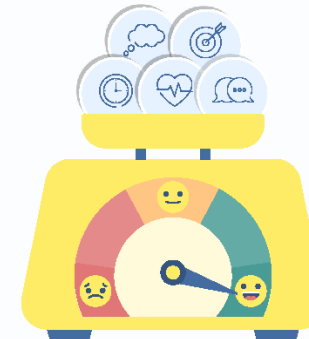
- <https://formative.jmir.org/2022/7/e38837/>

# The Big 5

THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR  
BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Research has proven there are five types of actions that are strongly linked to good mental health. We call these 'The Big 5' and we know that doing them regularly can help us thrive and bounce back from challenges.

**We believe that everyone should know about The Big 5— that's how big of a difference they can make to our mental health. These building blocks for good mental health are:**



THE MORE OFTEN YOU DO **THE BIG 5**,  
THE BETTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



## 1. Meaningful Activities

Actions which give us a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. They can be small things, like listening to a favourite song or watching a good show, and they are often fun to do.



## 2. Healthy Thinking

Having realistic thoughts about ourselves, the world and the future. This means keeping perspective and treating ourselves with respect and kindness, particularly when things are difficult.



## 3. Goals and Plans

These energise and motivate us. Planning gives us something to look forward to and stops us from dwelling on past problems.



## 4. Healthy Routines

These are the things we do automatically, like going to sleep and waking up at the same time, which set us up for the day.



## 5. Social Connections

Staying bonded to our family, friends or tribe. Regular contact with people we love and value helps us feel validated/ part of a community.

# The Big 5 Self-Assessment Sheet

Date:



- This Planning Sheet contains five types of activities, which are strongly linked to mental health
- We have listed three examples for each of these areas
- Tick the column which best matches how often you did this type of activity in the past week
- If any of your answers are in the red section, check the next column to get some ideas about how you might do them more often

THE BIG 5	EXAMPLES	HOW OFTEN DID YOU DO THESE EACH WEEK?					SUGGESTIONS
		Every day	5-6 times per week	3-4 times per week	1-2 times per week	Never	
<b>1. Meaningful Activities</b> 	I did something enjoyable						Take at least 10 minutes each day to enjoy a favourite piece of music, art, or literature
	I spent time doing something I believed in						Make a list of the simple things you used to enjoy doing and start to re-engage with that hobby or interest
	I did something that was very satisfying to me						Find activities that align with your values, including doing things for the community, friends, family, pets, or environment
<b>2. Healthy Thinking</b> 	I allowed myself to be less than perfect						Practice accepting that making mistakes is normal and not a sign of weakness
	I stopped myself from thinking unhelpful or unrealistic thoughts						Check, are your thoughts overly self-critical or are you expecting too much of yourself?
	I treated myself with respect						Check that you are treating yourself in the same way that you would treat others
<b>3. Goals and Plans</b> 	I set realistic and achievable goals						Make a simple plan each day listing the things you will achieve
	I did something to help me achieve my goals						Use an online calendar or notebook to help remind you of your goals and plans
	I made a plan and stuck to it						Accept that some days you won't achieve all your goals, but commit to trying to complete them in coming days
<b>4. Healthy Routines</b> 	I went to bed and woke up at a regular time						Create a relaxing bedtime routine to help you settle at night and get up at a regular time each morning
	I kept a healthy daily routine						Start to take a short (or longer) walk each day
	I prepared and ate a healthy meal						Add a bit more fruit and veggies to your daily diet
<b>5. Social Connections</b> 	I socialised with positive people						Make a list of the people you care about, then select three you will talk to each week
	I had a meaningful conversation with someone						Think about what you want to talk about and to whom
	I talked about my day with a friend or family member						Make a regular time each week to talk to someone you care about

# DAILY SCHEDULE PLANNER

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

(S) (M) (T) (W) (T) (F) (S)

## TODAY'S SCHEDULE

8:00am	
8:30am	Goals of the day
9:00am	work
9:30am	work
10:00am	work
10:30am	relax
11:00am	
11:30am	
12:00pm	
12:30pm	work
1:00pm	work
1:30pm	work
2:00pm	relax
2:30pm	
3:00pm	work
3:30pm	work
4:00pm	work
4:30pm	relax
5:00PM	
5:30PM	
6:00PM	Reflection

## TOP PRIORITY

- 
- 
- 
- 

## TO-DO LIST

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

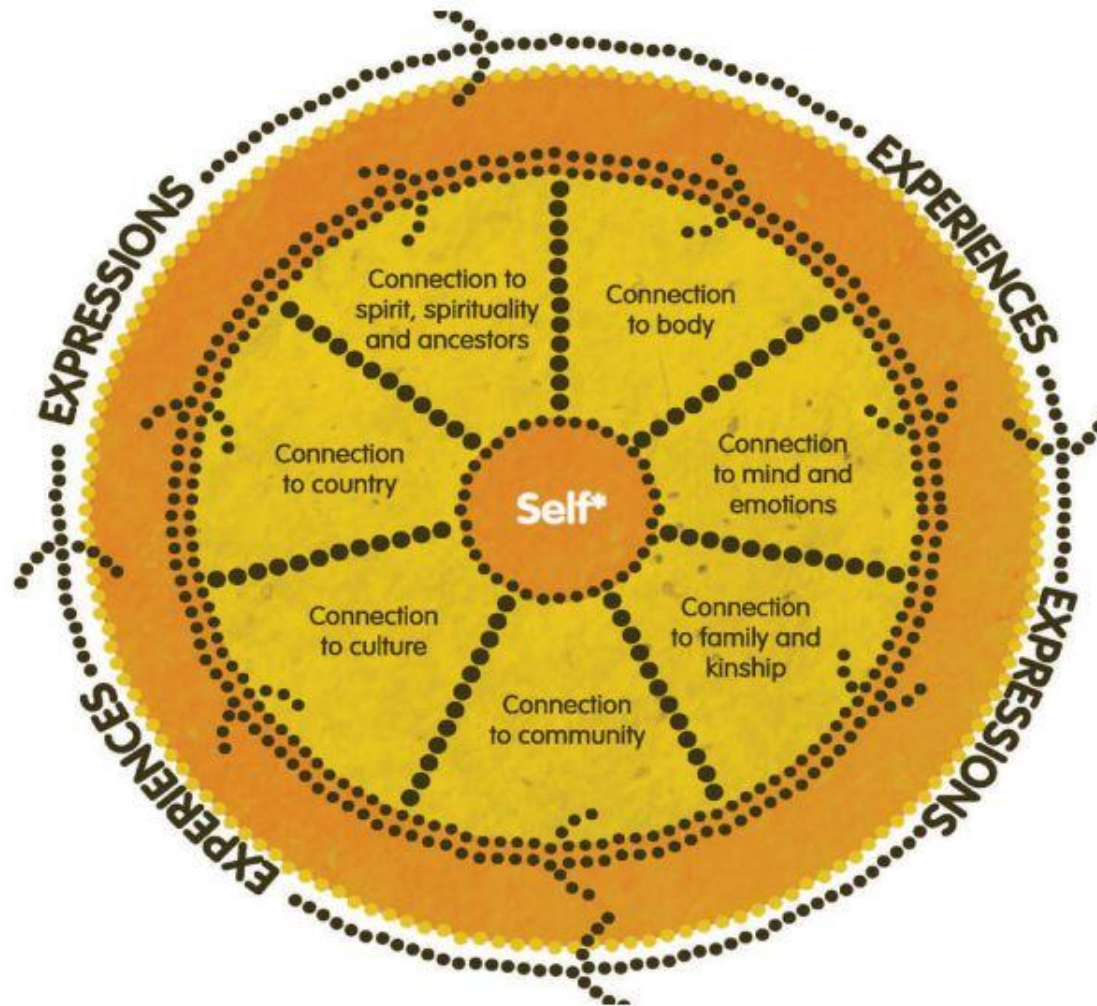
## NOTES/ REMINDERS

Evening is hobby time  
Morning is exercise  
Weekend is social time

# TIME AUDIT

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							

**Figure 4.1:** Social and Emotional Wellbeing from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' Perspective



<https://research.bond.edu.au/en/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-and-emotional-wellbe>

Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice

\*This conception of self is grounded within a collectivist perspective that views the self as inseparable from, and embedded within, family and community.

© Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart and Kelly, 2013  
Artist: Tristan Schultz, RelativeCreative.



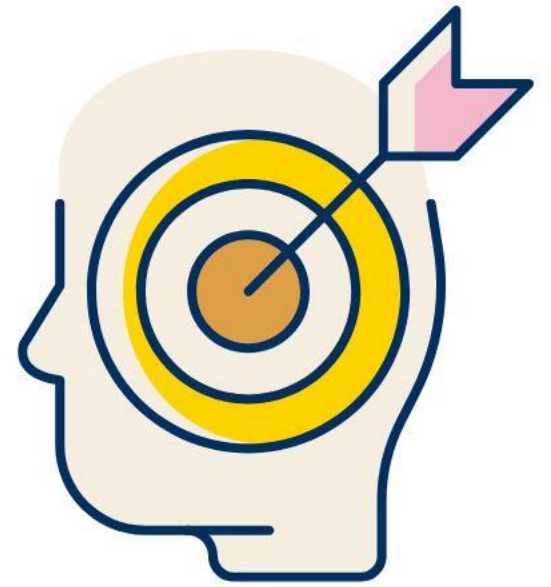


# Step 3

Personalising your mental health plan

# Mental health improvement

- Identify what you want/need to change
  - What isn't working the way I'd like it to work?
  - What would I like to grow/improve?
- Identify what you could do to change it?
  - What has been shown to help grow in the areas I've identified?
- Implementation
  - Habits, routines, rituals, goals, plans, help, trial and error, experimentation, tracking



## Three Funny Things

[https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/three\\_funny\\_things](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/three_funny_things)

## Functioning

'I feel like I am doing well and acting effectively in the different aspects of my life: work/study, friends, family, hobbies and health. I feel competent and confident in these areas and am growing and learning.'

## Self-understanding and acceptance

'I think I understand myself pretty well – strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, triggers and personality. I accept myself. I use the self-knowledge to make better decisions.'

## Mindful meditation

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

## Resilience

'I feel like I am pretty good at managing stress and cope with most setbacks thrown my way.'

## Self-regulation and behaviour change

'I pay attention to making good choices and developing and sustaining good habits when it comes to productivity, sleep, diet, physical activity, drug and alcohol use etc.'

## Social integration

'I feel like I have a place in the world through my friendships, family, workplace and groups to which I belong and contribute. The groups to which I belong are doing well.'

## Mental ill health

'When I've experienced mental ill health I have been able to seek support and treatment and manage the illness in a way that means I am still leading a full life.'

## Meaning & purpose

'I have a sense of the person I want to be, the life I want to lead, the contribution I want to make and the legacy I want to leave.'

# Body

Sleep

Nutrition

Movement

Breathing

Exposures (sun, cold)

# Successful Goal Pursuit

Self-reflection

Time and task management

Focused deep work

Reading and learning

Mentorship

# Mind

Non sleep deep rest

Contemplative practices

Mental models, rituals and mindsets

# Connections

Country

Culture

Community

People

Spirit/spirituality/ancestors

# Resource maximisation

Safety

Living spaces

Mindful consumption

Mindful investment

Leisure

**targets,  
tools and  
techniques**

# Change

---

- Experimentation
  - Try different activities, see what works/sticks
- Learn about building habits, routines and rituals
  - Tiny Habits by BJ Fogg
  - Atomic Habits by James Clear
  - Capability, Opportunity, Motivation (COM-B)
  - <https://blogs.flinders.edu.au/student-health-and-well-being/2022/06/02/building-new-habits/>
- Self-compassion
  - Be your own kind coach
  - The second (arguably most important part of self-care)



# Greater Good In Action



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**Greater Good in Action**  
SCIENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

PRACTICES ▾ ABOUT US 🔍 Sign In/Register

## Beating yourself up? Here's a recipe for success.

Treat Yourself with Compassion

### Discover New Practices

All Practices


Awe   Compassion   Connection   Empathy   Forgiveness   Gratitude

Happiness   Kindness   Mindfulness   Optimism   Parenting   Purpose   Resilience to Stress

Self-Compassion

Showing 1-12 of 93 results Select sorting option... ▾

Pathway to Happiness Program




#### Noticing Nature

Pay attention to nature to boost feelings of connection.

Moderate  
★★★★☆

Pathway to Happiness Program




#### Common Humanity Meditation

Build compassion and interconnection by seeing your similarities with others.

Casual  
★★★★☆

Pathway to Happiness Program




#### Small Talk

Strike up a brief conversation with a stranger to feel happier.

Moderate  
★★★★☆

Pathway to Happiness Program




#### Best Possible Self


Foster optimism by imagining a positive future.

Moderate  
★★★★☆


Pathway to Happiness Program




Pathway to Happiness Program



Pathway to Happiness Program



Pathway to Happiness Program





# Step 4

Deep diving on your mental health

# Quick measure of anxiety and depression

---

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/mental-health/check-your-mental-health/k10>


Home > Learn about mental health > Check your mental health > Anxiety and Depression Test (K10)

## Anxiety and Depression Test (K10)

We're glad you're taking the time to reflect on your mental health.

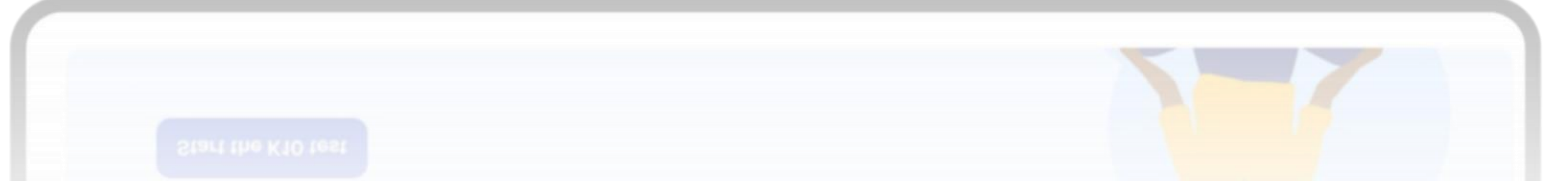

Mental health often changes over time. You can have ups and downs, good days and bad days. Whatever you're going through, you're not alone. Help is available.

This test will help you understand your level of distress. It will suggest support options and resources to help you based on your results.

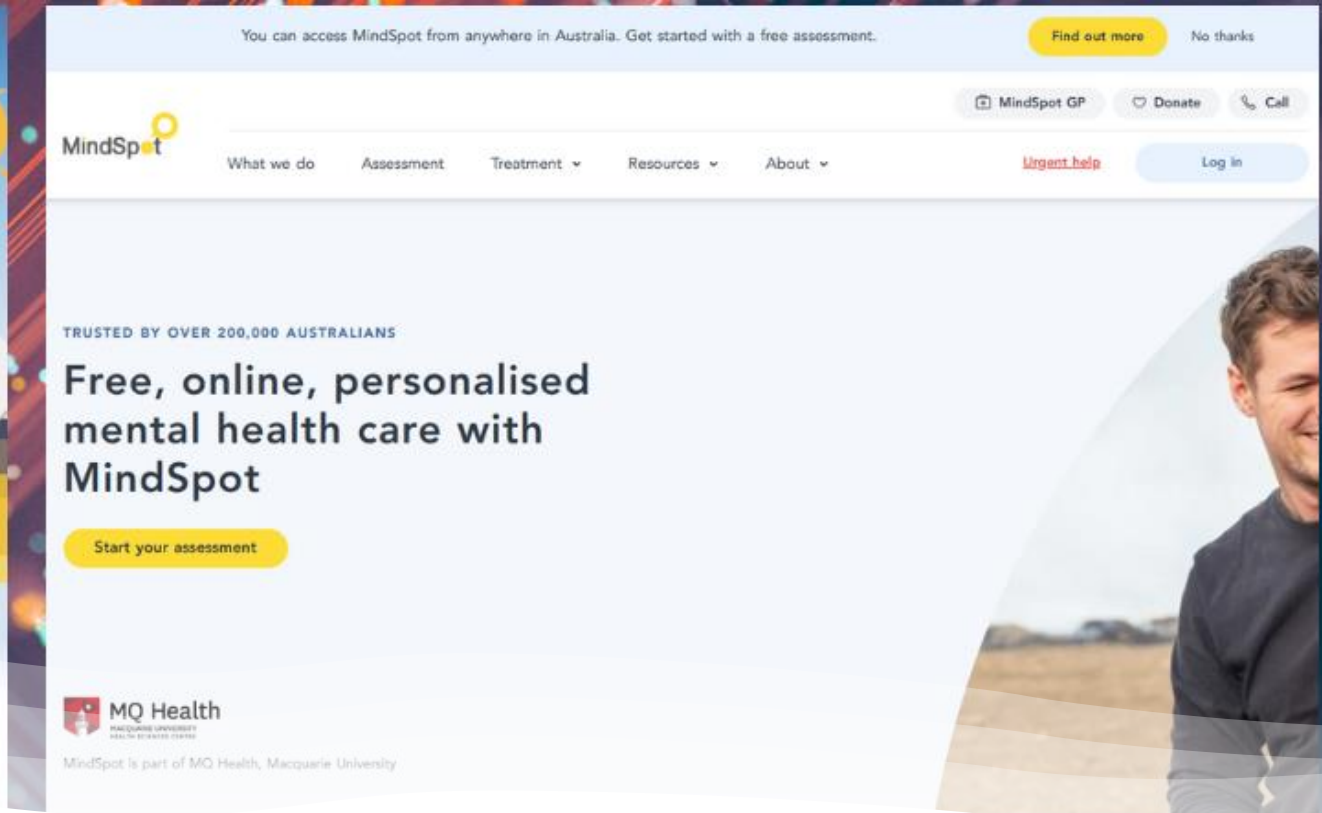
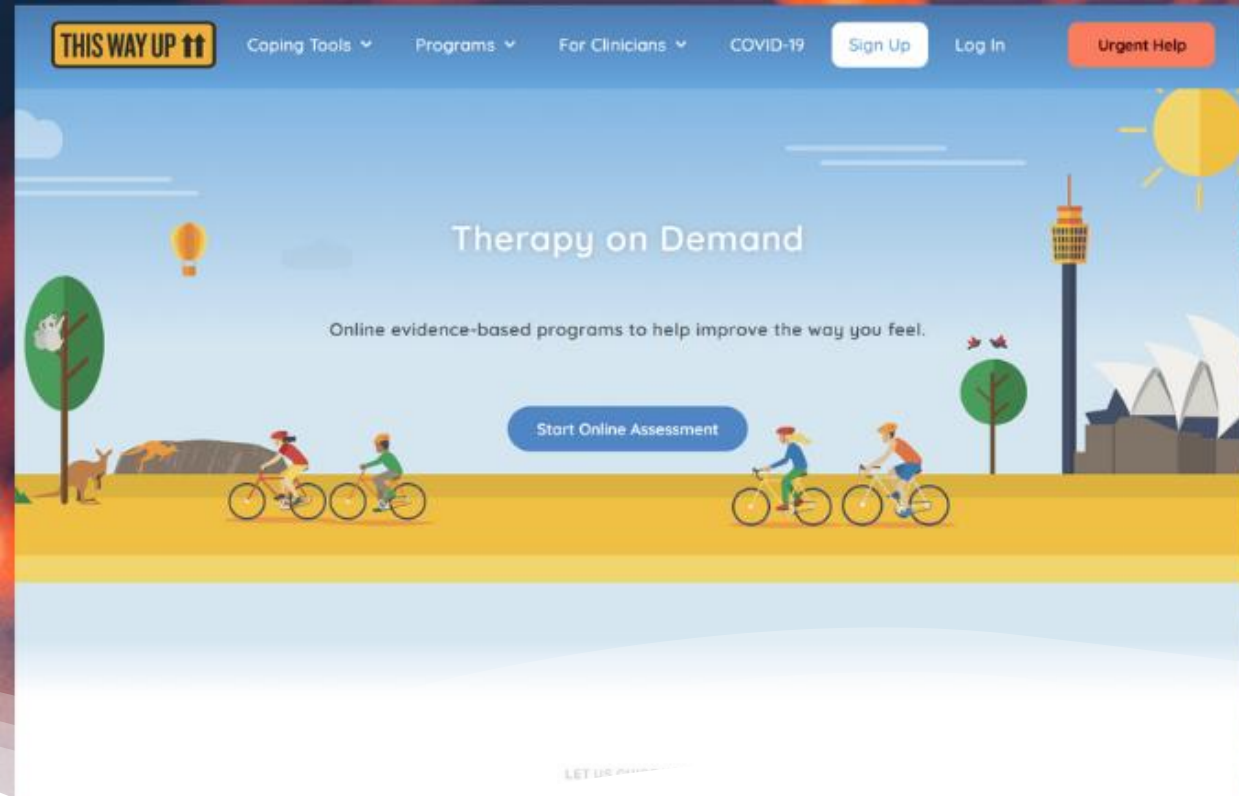


Ready to start the K10?

[Start the K10 test](#)







More comprehensive  
mental illness evaluation

- <https://thiswayup.org.au/>
- <https://www.mindspot.org.au/>



flinders.edu.au Staff Students Library

Flinders University Employee resources Workplace support Teaching and research resources Colleges and services Quick links

## Employee assistance program

Home > Workplace support > Work Health and Safety > Health & wellbeing > Employee assistance program

+ Report an accident, incident or hazard
+ Emergency and fire safety
+ Managing risk
+ WHS system, roles and responsibilities
+ Information & documents
+ Injury management
<b>- Health &amp; wellbeing</b>
Health and wellbeing
Personal safety and security
Employee assistance program
<b>Employee assistance program</b>

Flinders University treats the health and wellbeing of employees seriously and offers a range of assistance programs and counselling services.

- Employee assistance program
- Manager assist program
- Acute trauma counselling

### Employee assistance program

The Employee assistance program is available to all staff and is voluntary. Staff may be made aware of or encouraged to use the program but can't be directed to participate.

The program is strictly confidential. Your name will not be disclosed to anyone at the University at any time.

Assistance can be provided for a variety of personal, emotional or work related problems including:

- Anxiety, depression and general emotional problems
- Work related difficulties
- Marital or family problems

Search 'EAP' in your organisation



# Online therapy programs

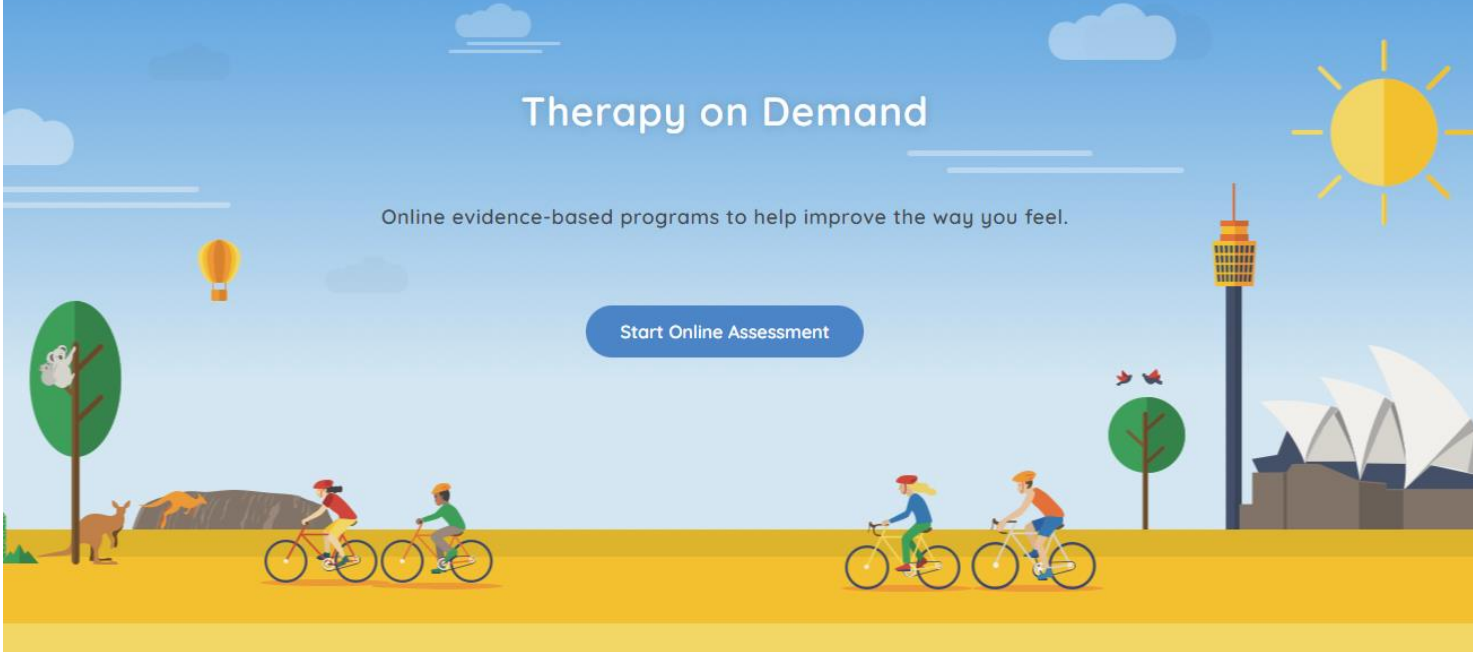
[Check your levels of stress, anxiety, and depression here](#)

**THIS WAY UP** ↑↑ Coping Tools ▾ Programs ▾ For Clinicians ▾ COVID-19 Sign Up Log In Urgent Help

## Therapy on Demand

Online evidence-based programs to help improve the way you feel.

[Start Online Assessment](#)



LET US GUIDE YOU

How Are You Feeling?

- <https://thiswayup.org.au/>

# Mental health focused services

Please help us improve Head to Health by exploring this site and [giving us your feedback](#).


Australian Government  
Department of Health and Aged Care

I need help now

HEAD TO HEALTH Living well Finding help Giving support For health professionals About Search Bookmarks

Not feeling like yourself lately?  
You're not alone.

It's something most people experience at some point. And there are simple things you can do that can help.




Head to Health connects you to mental health support

[Try our online quiz](#)  
Find the services that are right for you.

[Call 1800 595 212](#)  
Make a free call for mental health guidance and advice.

[Visit in person](#)  
A safe and welcoming space for information and support.



<https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/>

# Key Takeaways

- Mental health is multi-dimensional
- Self-care for mental health is:
  - Development of a caring attitude towards oneself
  - Implementation of specific mentally health habits and practices
- Start small with daily stress reducers, then
  - Building foundational habits (e.g. Big 5)
  - Targeting specific domains of relevance to you
  - Seeking help
- What is one thing you could start doing that would constitute a daily investment in your mental health?

SUMMARY

# Part 2: Psychosocial Hazards

Dr Gareth Furber

eMental Health Project Officer

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/people/gareth.furber>



# Learning objectives

- Be more mindful of the mental health of colleagues
- Understand what we mean by 'psychosocial hazard'
- Name 3 categories of psychosocial hazard
- Know how to assess the level of risk posed by a psychosocial hazard
- Have contemplated potential psychosocial hazards in your own workplace
- Consider options available to you to address those hazards





# Masterclass

---

## Wellbeing for People Leaders & Psychosocial Hazards







## Be Well Co

- The South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)
- Flinders University





# Session Overview

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**Wellbeing and Psychosocial Risk  
Fundamentals**

Assessing Psychosocial Risk

What can you do as a 'leader'?

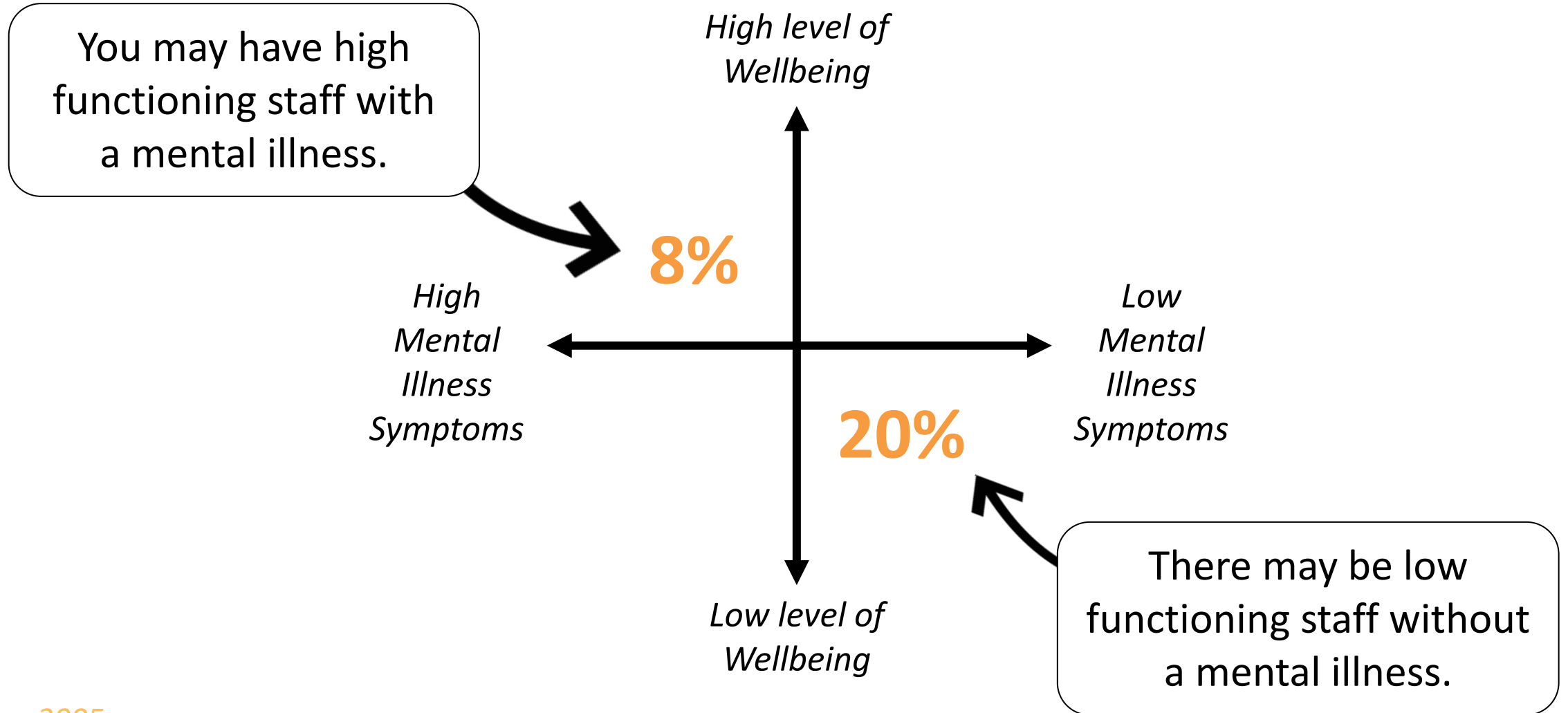




**8x risk  
of mental illness**



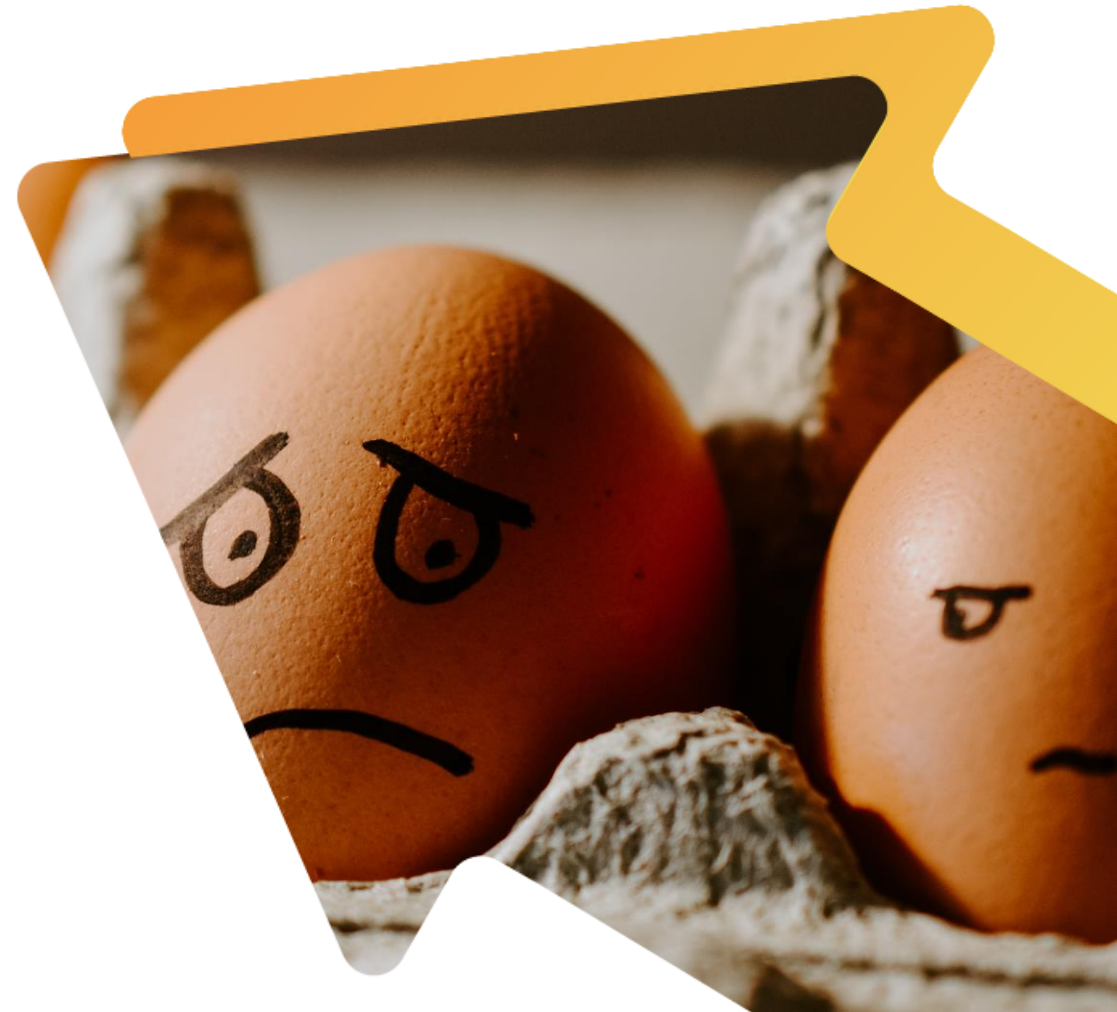
# Mental illness & mental wellbeing are not the same





## You may have staff and colleagues with active distress and/or a mental illness

- **Active distress or illness:** state of suffering. Feelings, thoughts, behaviours & interactions are significantly affected
- **'Stable' mental illness:** currently able to manage any symptoms of illness with different methods





# You may have staff and colleagues who are languishing

- **Languishing:** “the absence of feeling good about your life”
- Affects:
  - ability to develop relationships
  - confidence in expressing ideas or opinions
  - ability to manage responsibilities

## languishing

verb /'laNG wiSHiNG /

1. A name for the blah you're feeling.



Key academic: Corey Keyes



# How does poor wellbeing impact your team & organisation?





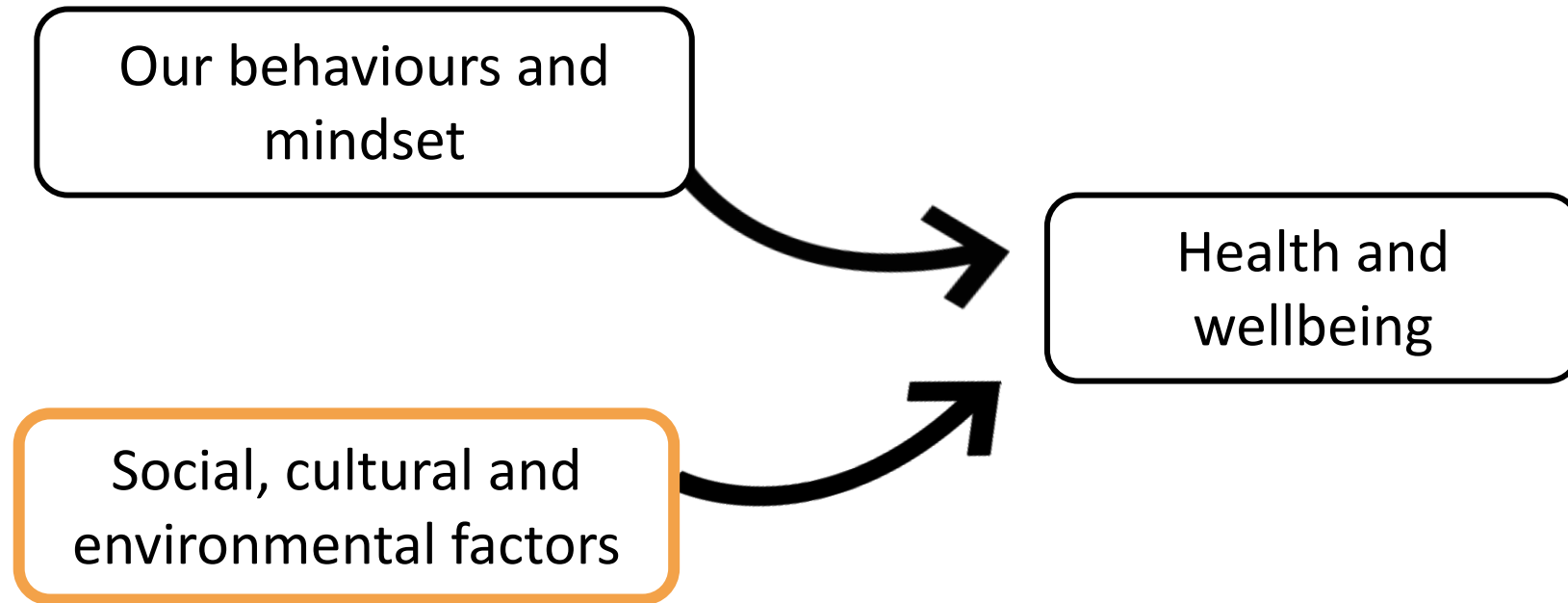
Part of your *role* as a  
‘leader’ is safeguarding  
your staff’s wellbeing







# The way we feel is influenced by a wide variety of factors





# What are psychosocial hazards?

**Psychosocial:** “Describing the intersection and interaction of social, cultural, and environmental influences on the mind and behaviour.”  
(APA, 2023)

**Hazard:** “A situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person.”  
(SafeWork Australia, 2023)

*A psychosocial hazard is anything that could cause psychological harm (i.e., harm someone’s mental health) to an employee*

ISO: 45003.2021



**What could the  
impact of  
psychosocial  
hazards  
look/feel like?**

## Potential behaviours

Feeling worried or  
unhappy

Losing interest in a  
hobby

Sleep disruption  
(too much or too little)

Weight/appetite  
changes

Lack of motivation

Emotional outbursts

Withdrawn/  
unsociable



# What could the impact of psychosocial hazards sound like?

## What psychosocial hazards sound like at work

Workers might talk about their exposure to psychosocial hazards in different ways.

### Recognise the signs.



For information on psychosocial hazards and how they can be managed see the [model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#).



# Why are psychosocial hazards a problem?

- increase the chance, or risk, of psychological harm (stress, anxiety, depression, PTSD etc)
- contribute to physical ill-health
- negatively impact working relationships, retention, engagement, productivity
- contribute to lower wellbeing





# Psychosocial hazards

**How the work is  
organised**

**Social  
interactions**

**Environmental  
conditions**



## Psychosocial hazards:

## How the work is organised

Expectations in the role

Lack of meaning

Ambiguous

No control

Too much or  
intense workload

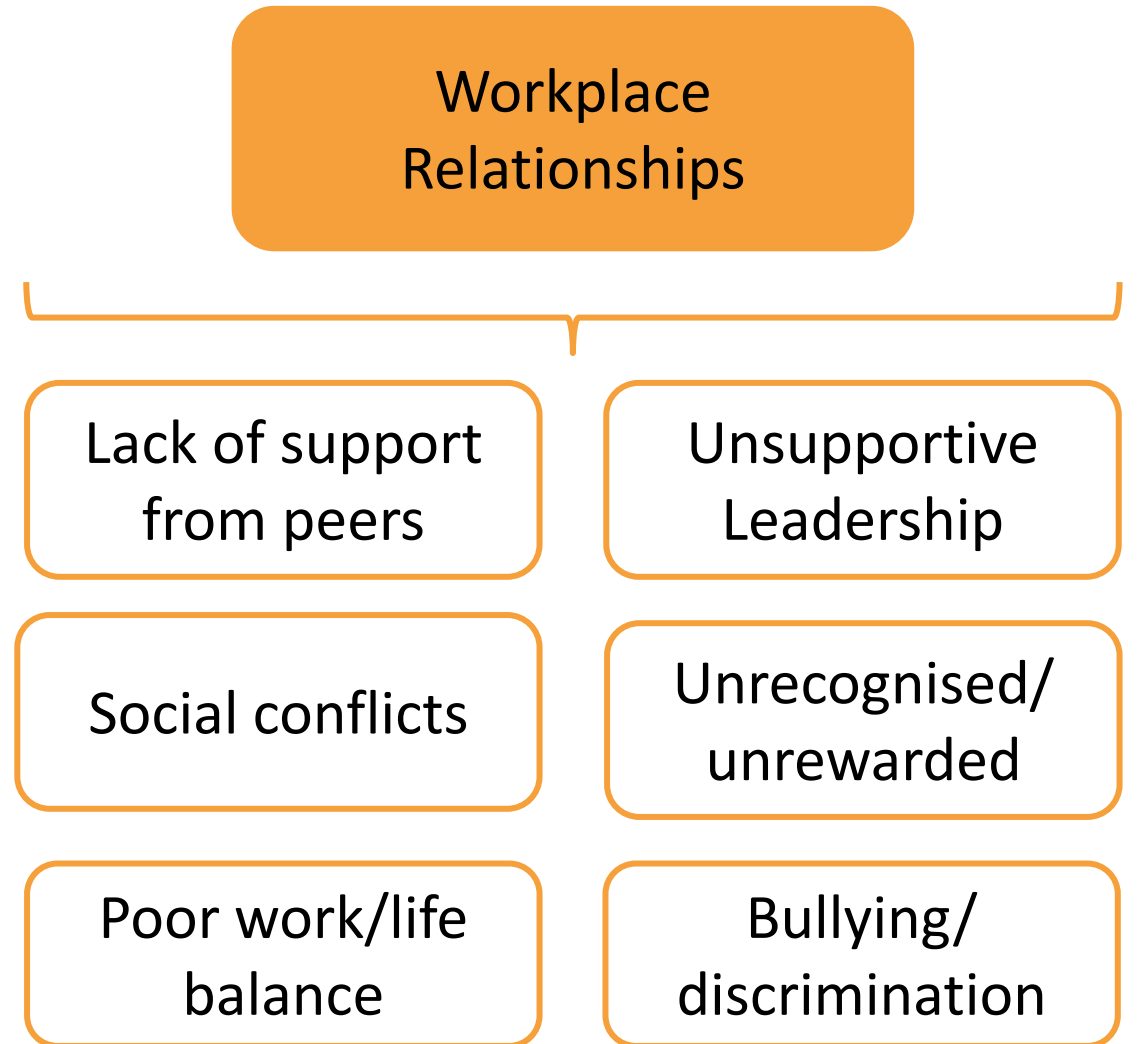
Under utilisation  
of skills

Burnout



## Psychosocial hazards:

## Social Interactions







**Psychosocial hazards:**

**Environmental**

Environmental Factors

Poor physical  
working space

Conflict about  
temperature

Lack of staff

Inadequate  
materials /tech

PPE not  
maintained

Long wait for  
resources



# What Psychosocial hazards exist within your workplace?

**How the work is organised**

**Social interactions**

**Environmental conditions**



# Session Overview

---

Wellbeing and Psychosocial Risk  
Fundamentals

**Assessing Psychosocial Risk**

What can you do as a leader?





# Reducing the impact of Psychosocial hazards

## Risk:

“The possibility that harm (death, injury or illness) might occur when exposed to a hazard (SafeWork Australia, 2023).”





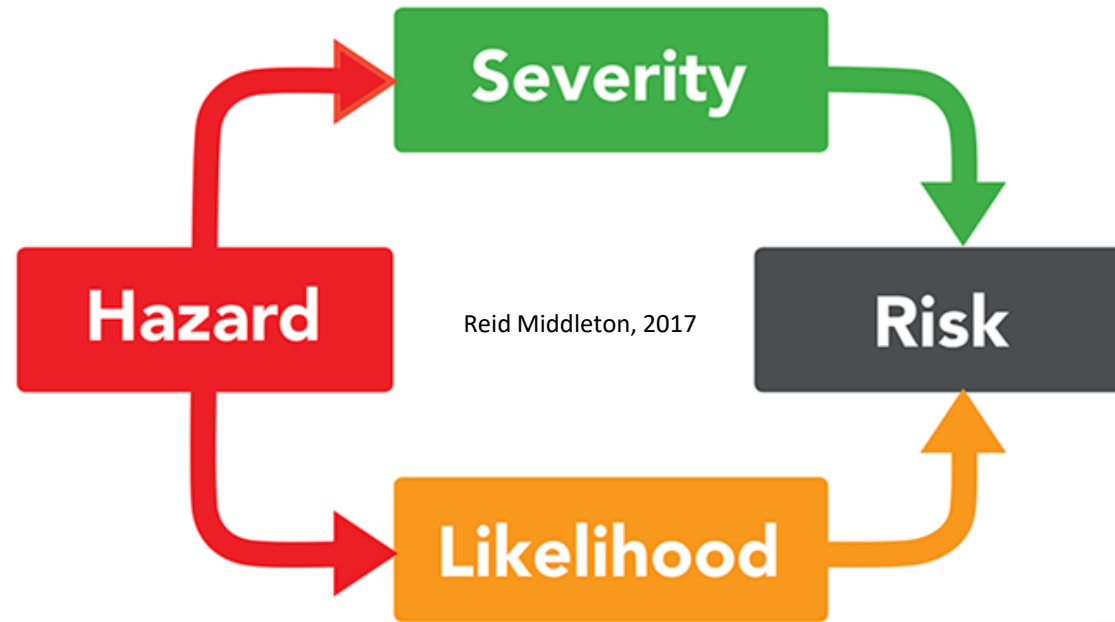
# How can you identify the level of risk?

	Severity				
Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost Certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	High	High



The consequence to you is moderate as you've noticed you are becoming stressed, not sleeping and forgetting other work tasks.

Your workload is extreme, and you have started to worry about meeting deadlines.



High risk to your mental health or emotional wellbeing.

Occurs on a weekly basis so likelihood is almost certain.

	Severity				
Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost Certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme



# Let's assess a case study together





## Case study

- Part of Penny's role is to process recruitment forms via an electronic workflow.
- When Penny was first onboarded, she was shown a paper form by her Line Manager that was a replicate of the electronic form that needs to be completed for each new starter.
- Since she started, Penny has been completing both the paper form and the electronic form for each recruitment because it wasn't made clear that completing both forms was unnecessary.
- As a result, she's fallen behind with her workload and is feeling stressed.



	Consequence				
Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost Certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	High	High





# What does that mean for me?

Know your responsibilities under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Take reasonable action (depending on the level of risk)

- Reach out to your workplace supports
- WHS policy and procedure
    - Your Manager
    - WHS or HR team
  - Health and Safety Rep/committee



# What happens next?





# Session Overview

---

Wellbeing and Psychosocial Risk  
Fundamentals

Assessing Psychosocial Risk

**What can you do as a 'leader'?**





# What can I do?

Model safe behaviours

Look for opportunities to learn more  
including HSW committees

Know what is within your control:  
all of us can positively impact **SOME**  
aspects



## As an employee it's NOT your role to:

- × Do anything alone or without support
- × Hide or downplay any risk including not escalating it as required
- × Act outside the confines of your job description
- × Be a WHS expert
- × Replace the responsibilities of WHS, injury management, People and Culture etc
- × Be the only contact
- × Have all the answers
- × Identify and action everything

It is your responsibility to maintain your safety and others *as far as reasonably practicable* within your role – who can you ask about this?





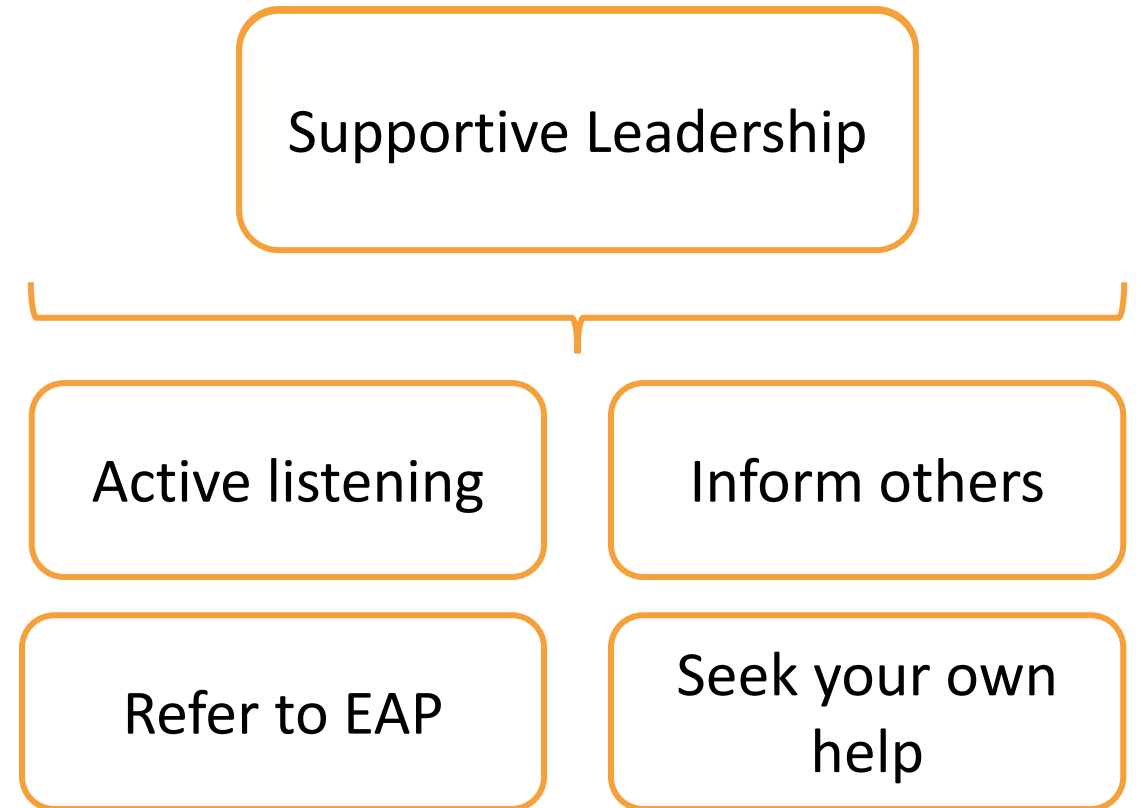
**What can you do that  
is within your control?**





## What can you do when things are outside of your control?

- You don't need to do it all





# What Psychosocial hazards exist within your workplace?

**How the work is organised**

**Social interactions**

**Environmental conditions**





# Areas of wellbeing control

Reflect on the behaviours you can engage in to stimulate staff wellbeing

- Where are you doing well?
- Indicate one area you would like to work on/prioritise



What Psychosocial hazards exist within your workplace?

How the work is organised	
Social interactions	
Environmental conditions	



## What is one action you can take?

- Speak with my line manager at our 1:1 meeting on Friday about the potential hazard
- Work on my own wellbeing to withstand stressors
- Get to know my WHS people
- Any other ideas?





# Activities to support action

## 23. Reflective and Active Listening



### CONNECTING

DURATION  
5 minutes  
FREQUENCY  
4x/day

DIFFICULTY  
Moderate

EVIDENCE QUALITY  
★★★☆☆

The way you respond to people makes all the difference

What is it?

- Good two-way communication is key to any positive relationship
- Learn skills related to reflective and active listening, and how to provide social support.

What can I use it for?

- To build, strengthen and maintain important relationships so that there is enough trust for times of need.
- There is a strong connection between positive communication strategies, good relationships and wellbeing.

## 28. Problem Solving



### DOING

DURATION  
15 minutes  
FREQUENCY  
Once off

DIFFICULTY  
Moderate

EVIDENCE QUALITY  
★★★☆☆

Feel more in control over your life

What is it?

- Sometimes, everyday problems can really get the better of us.
- Problem-solving techniques help us to cope with daily problems.
- It works best when a practical solution is available, and the problem is not too complex.

What can I use it for?

- Problem-solving techniques can be used for a wide range of problems and challenges, including feeling moody or anxious, relationship problems, stress management, anger etc.
- Problem-solving can be used when the root of your problem is a changeable situation.

## 24. Assert Yourself



### CONNECTING

DURATION  
15 minutes  
FREQUENCY  
2x/day

DIFFICULTY  
Moderate

EVIDENCE QUALITY  
★★★★☆

Communicate in an assertive way to minimise conflict

What is it?

- Assertiveness means communicating your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and opinion clearly and directly, while still respecting others.
- Being assertive is a communication style that everyone can learn to deal with tricky communication situations.

What can I use it for?

- Communicating assertively can help you to minimise conflict, control anger, have your needs better met, and to have more positive relationships with others.



# Activities to support your emotional response

## 1. Mindful Breathing



### THINK & FEEL

DURATION  
10 minutes  
FREQUENCY  
1x/day  
DIFFICULTY  
Easy

EVIDENCE QUALITY

### Take a moment and remember to breathe!

#### What is it?

- Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment, the here and now.
- We breathe all day long, often not paying attention to it at all. Turning our attention to our breath, even for a minute or two can bring us a more peaceful state of mind.

WI

## 14. Self-Compassion



### THINK & FEEL

DURATION  
20 minutes  
FREQUENCY  
1x/week  
DIFFICULTY  
Moderate

EVIDENCE QUALITY

### Start treating yourself as you would others

#### What is it?

- There is often a difference between the way we treat ourselves when we're going through a tough time or when things haven't gone so well, compared to how we would treat others in the same situation.

#### What can I use it for?

- Self-compassion can help reduce your feelings of self-criticism and shame. This in turn can lead to increased wellbeing. It may also help with personal growth.

## 12. Re-Thinking Thinking Traps



### THINK & FEEL

DURATION  
20 minutes  
FREQUENCY  
3x/week  
DIFFICULTY  
Moderate

EVIDENCE QUALITY

★★★★☆

### Avoid jumping to conclusions

#### What is it?

- When confronted with negative events, e.g. failing an exam or not getting a promotion, it is easy to fall into a spiral of negative thoughts.
- Our brain often misinterprets negative events and makes them much worse than they really are.
- These thinking traps (or cognitive distortions) can lead us to miss or mislabel our thoughts as "cognitive trap".

#### What can I use it for?

- Re-thinking your thoughts to understand and manage negative mood and emotions.

## 20. Thought Defusion



### THINK & FEEL

DURATION  
15 minutes  
FREQUENCY  
1x/day  
DIFFICULTY  
Hard

EVIDENCE QUALITY

★★★★

### Thoughts are just words

#### What is it?

- Your thoughts can have a big impact on your emotions, both positively and negatively.
- Thought defusion means that thoughts are merely words or sounds, stories or language; whether they are true or not, you don't automatically have to believe them; whether they are important or not, only pay attention if they are helpful.

#### What can I use it for?

- Thought defusion can help you deal with unhelpful thoughts and negative emotions.
- Thought defusion helps you to be aware of your thinking processes in order to reflect and problem solve effectively before taking action.



# What if you as the Leader are languishing?

- It is more difficult to help others if you are stressed, anxious, feel that work/life lacks meaning
- **Lead by example by modeling wellbeing behaviours**





# Establishing your baseline

- What/who is important to your mental wellbeing?
- What wellbeing activities are you already doing personally and at work?
- Do you see areas of improvement for yourself?

**Establishing your baseline**

**Drivers of your own wellbeing**

We all have our own drivers in life. Things, activities and people that are important to us. The aspects of life that get us up each day. Reflecting on this can help us inform what we could or should consider if we wanted to make positive changes to the way we feel. Write down what and who is important for your own mental health and wellbeing.

**Your wellbeing routine**

We are all engaged in activities that are good for our mental health. Some may be more obvious than others. Think of the social interactions you (regularly) have, the sports you play, the hobbies you have, the work you do etc. Write down what activities you are already doing that boost your wellbeing, in your personal and your professional life.

**Areas for improvement**

The answers to the above questions may have helped you identify some areas where you can make some positive changes. Use the box below to write down any areas where you feel you could strengthen your wellbeing activity.

People Leader Wellbeing

MASTERCLASS

2



**Your own mindset and wellbeing practices influence how you feel and how your team feels**

## **Emotional contagion**

*“a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behaviour of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioural attitudes”*



# We can all learn practical skills to improve our mindset!

- Focus on what is within your control to change
- We can all positively influence our mindset and behaviour

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms

– to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”



Viktor E. Frankl





# You can implement team wellbeing activities into day-to-day life

We need to be:

- flexible with our wellbeing strategies
- willing to test and experiment

Personalities

Skill levels

Educational backgrounds

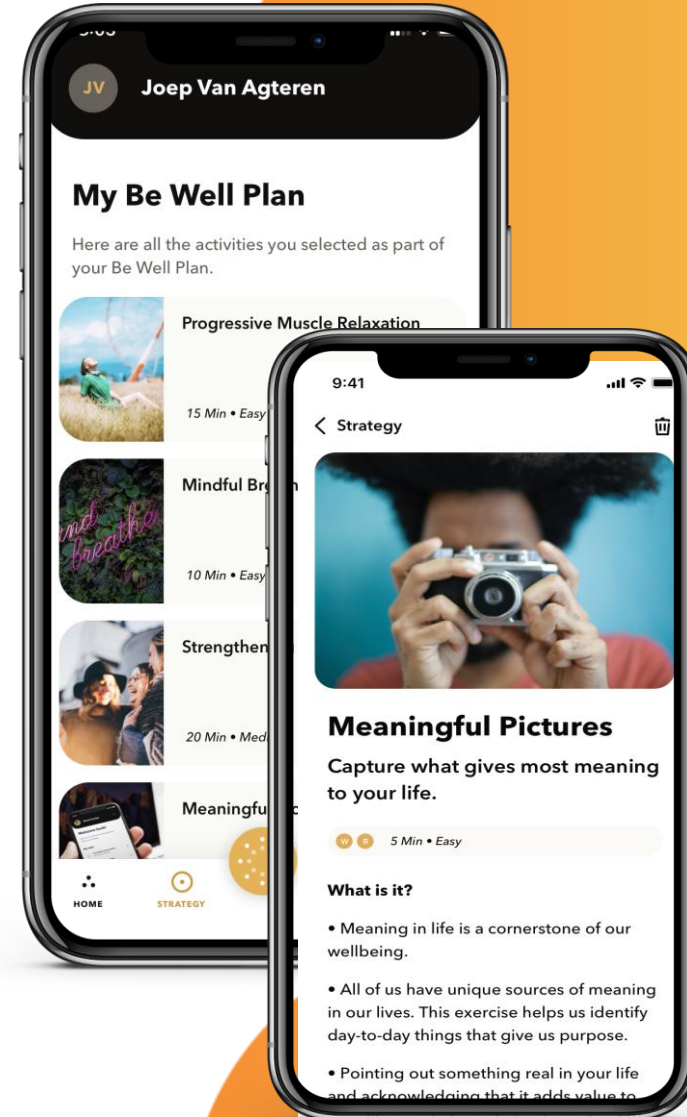
Values

Personal circumstances



# So many more activities for you and your team

- Mindfulness
- Problem Solving
- Goal Setting
- Reflective & Active Listening
- Strengthening Relationships
- Challenging Automatic Negative Thoughts
- Positive Reframing



# Greater Good In Action



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## Beating yourself up? Here's a recipe for success.

Treat Yourself with Compassion

### Discover New Practices

All Practices


Awe   Compassion   Connection   Empathy   Forgiveness   Gratitude

Happiness   Kindness   Mindfulness   Optimism   Parenting   Purpose   Resilience to Stress

Self-Compassion

Showing 1-12 of 93 results Select sorting option... ▾

Pathway to Happiness Program 1




#### Noticing Nature

Pay attention to nature to boost feelings of connection.

Moderate  
★★★★☆

Pathway to Happiness Program 1




#### Common Humanity Meditation

Build compassion and interconnection by seeing your similarities with others.

Casual  
★★★★☆

Pathway to Happiness Program 1




#### Small Talk

Strike up a brief conversation with a stranger to feel happier.

Moderate  
★★★★☆

Pathway to Happiness Program 1




#### Best Possible Self


Foster optimism by imagining a positive future.

Moderate  
★★★★☆


Pathway to Happiness Program 1




Pathway to Happiness Program 1



Pathway to Happiness Program 1



Pathway to Happiness Program 1





## Key takeaways

- Wellbeing is impacted (positively or negatively) by psychosocial factors
- You're not alone – there are supports within your organisations
- Building your own wellbeing is a protective factor against potential harm
- A cornerstone of positive wellbeing is knowing you can take action, no matter how small, including when mitigating risk



## Group Discussion

Who is happy to share an action or activity they are contemplating?





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