



understanding mental health

skills for life



what is mental health and why does it matter?

the world health organisation defines mental health as:

"a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."

wellbeing is rather more difficult to define, but there is consensus around the following definition: "being comfortable, healthy or happy."

mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. it affects how we think, feel, and act. staying in positive mental health allows people to function well, cope with the day-to-day stresses of life and to find a sense of meaning and purpose.

being in good mental health is therefore important to individuals, organisations and society and adopting approaches that help keep us in good health and being resilient to the pressures of life is essential.

mental health, like physical health, can fluctuate on a spectrum from good to poor. mental health problems can affect any of us irrespective of age, personality or background. they can appear as a result of experiences in both our personal and working lives.



if you have good mental wellbeing, you are more likely to:

- feel relatively confident in yourself and have positive self-esteem
- feel and express a range of emotions
- build and maintain good relationships with others
- feel engaged with the world around you
- live and work productively
- cope with the stresses and strains of daily life
- adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

what is mental ill health?

Mental ill health covers a variety of different conditions, ranging from depression, anxiety and stress related disorders to schizophrenia and personality disorder. In the workplace, the primary manifestations of mental ill health are anxiety, stress and depression, which although they may not be caused directly by work, they are frequently exacerbated by it.

Poor mental health is one of the biggest issues in the workplace today, causing over 70 million working days to be lost each year (1). This includes everything from the most commonly experienced symptoms of stress and anxiety, right through to more complex mental health conditions, such as depression, bipolar disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. As well as having a huge impact on individual employees, poor mental health has severe repercussions for employers including:

- Increased staff turnover
- Sickness absence due to debilitating depression, burnout and exhaustion
- Decreased motivation and lost productivity
- Reduced employee engagement

facts and figures on mental health

- One in four people will experience a mental health issue in any given year. (2)
- Between one in five and one in six working age adults is depressed, anxious or experiencing stress-related problems at any one time (2–4)
- The Chief Medical Officer estimates that around 70 million working days are lost every year because of mental ill health, costing Britain between £70bn and £100bn (1)
- In 2014/15 anxiety, depression and stress accounted for 35% of all work-related ill health, and 43% of all working days lost to ill health, according to the Health and Safety Executive (4)
- The Centre for Mental Health estimates that presentism accounts for 1.5 times more losses in productivity than absences (5)
- One in five people take a day off due to stress, yet up to 90% feel unable to be honest about this being the reason for their absence (6)
- Research from Time to Change found that 49% of respondents would feel uncomfortable talking to their employer about their mental health (7)

Mental health is an integral part of how we feel about ourselves and about the world around us, how well we function and how well we interact with those around us. With one in four of us likely to experience mental health difficulties each year and one in six employees currently experiencing mental health problems, mental health is an essential life and workplace concern. Work is often very important to our sense of identity. Taking a positive, proactive approach to your mental health and wellbeing can help you to continue to thrive and live well.

We know that poor mental health has a huge impact on an individual's life and those around them. Impacts can range from lack of sleep or panic attacks; difficulty in concentrating; and low confidence. This can lead to a downwards spiral, as an individual may withdraw from social situations and lose their support networks and structures at a time when they need them most.

The knock-on impact on family life and friends is also important here, with many people 'holding it together' at work, but then not being themselves at home. Poor mental health also means that individuals can find

themselves less able to cope with elements of their personal lives such as relationship breakdown, problem finance and housing worries.

"I know from first-hand experience what it can be like to suffer from depression and heightened anxiety and be afraid to speak out at work for fear of what others might think. This led in my case to having a complete breakdown, being off sick for 3 months and being in a psychiatric hospital for three weeks. I now know if I had help earlier, much of what I suffered could have been avoided. My experience even back then was that people at work and family were much more supportive than I expected after the crisis. Thankfully at Deloitte we have taken some really great steps over the last 10 years to get training in mental health awareness and prevention firmly on the agenda."

John Binns MBE, City Mental Health Alliance (Farmer and Stevenson Report 2017)

Mental ill health: Why?

Anyone can develop mental ill health at almost any time in their life, just as they can a physical ill health. Mental ill health is no respecter of age, background or circumstances. It can be triggered by a range of things – including ostensibly happy events like getting married, having a baby, getting a new job or being promoted. Change and times of transition are often times that are difficult for people, and it can have an impact in their mental wellbeing.

Other reason might include:

- Starting a new job and working with new colleagues
- A first job
- Difficulties within relationships
- Coping with increased workload or promotion
- Bereavement
- Health scares or physical illness
- Divorce or relationship breakdown
- Redundancy, or fear of redundancy
- A change in the business or other periods of transition
- Trauma, neglect or abuse in childhood
- Substance misuse

Mental ill health affects people in different ways, including the length of time they experience difficulties and how much it affects their lives. In general, we categorise mental ill health as temporary, fluctuating or ongoing.

- **Temporary** – the person experiences the condition for a short time and recovers after treatment
- **Fluctuating** – sometimes the person experiences the condition, and sometimes they don't
- **Ongoing** – the person experiences the mental health condition all the time, but manages it through one or a combination of the following: -

What helps?

Medication, talking therapies, self-help and practical support can all be helpful in different ways. Common types of support are as follows.

- **Medication** – prescribed by a GP or psychiatrist, this may for example, alleviate some of the symptoms of depression or anxiety by calming emotions or combating sleeplessness or improving motivation

- **Talking therapies** – such as IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or psychotherapy. A GP, the mental health service or Employee Assistance Scheme may all afford access to these
- **Self-help** – including learning mindfulness techniques and improving wellbeing through diet and exercise
- **Additional practical support** – such as helping the individual to resolve financial issues, advising them on lifestyle choices (including diet and exercise) or pointing them in the direction of relationship advice or counselling

Recognising mental ill health in yourself and others...

Early intervention is vital and may stop the difficulties getting worse. Encouraging people to seek help at an early stage will also improve the likelihood that they will recover more quickly. It is important for us all to recognise the signs that people may be distressed and have the confidence to start conversations around mental health. Enabling open and honest conversation around mental health and wellbeing will help to reduce the stigma, which often surrounds mental ill health.

Here is a list of behaviours and warning signs to watch out for.

- Changes in performance at work – missing deadlines or forgetting tasks
- Erratic behaviours which are untypical of the individual
- Irritability, aggression, tearfulness
- Being withdrawn and not participating in conversations or usual activities
- Increased consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes and/or sedatives
- Inability to concentrate
- Indecision
- Difficulty remembering things
- Loss of confidence
- Unplanned absences from work or social gatherings
- Arguments/conflicts with others
- Increased errors and/or accidents
- Taking on too much work and volunteering for every new project
- Working too many hours – first in, last out/emailing out of hours or while on holiday
- Being louder or more exuberant than usual

Physical signs might include the following.

- Constant tiredness
- Being run down and experiencing frequent minor illnesses
- Headaches and muscular tension in other areas, such as back ache
- Difficulty sleeping
- Weight loss or gain
- Lack of care over appearance
- Gastrointestinal disorders and nausea
- Rashes/eczema

Emotional signs might include the following.

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Persistent sadness and despair
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Worthlessness
- Emotional lability
- Anger and frustration which may be increasing and affecting relationships

Approaching a sensitive conversation regarding mental ill health.

Every conversation we have with someone experiencing distress and mental ill health will be different. Sometimes, a person may feel able to be very open with others and at other times, it may be difficult for a person to open up and it might take several conversations. Below are a few tips and considerations to think about when approaching a conversation with someone you are concerned about.

What emotional support can I offer?

If someone lets you know that they are experiencing difficult thoughts and feelings, it is common to feel like you don't know what to do or say – but you don't need any special training to show someone you care about them, and often it can be the most valuable help you can offer.

For example, it can be helpful to:

- **Listen.** Simply giving someone space to talk and listening to how they are feeling is really important, and can be very helpful in itself
- **Offer reassurance.** Seeking help can feel lonely, and sometimes scary. Let them know that they are not alone, and that you will be there to help
- **Stay calm.** Even though you might be feeling distressed. This will help them feel calmer too, and show them that they can talk to you openly without upsetting you
- **Be patient.** You might want to know more details about their thoughts and feelings or want them to get help immediately. But it's important to let them set the pace
- **Try not to make assumptions.** Your perspective might be useful, but try not to assume that you already know what may have caused their feelings, or what will help
- **Keep social contact.** Part of the emotional support you offer could be to keep things as normal as possible. This could include involving your friend or family member in social events, or chatting about other parts of your lives

What practical support can I offer?

There are lots of practical things you can do to support someone who is ready to seek help. For example:

- Look for information that might be helpful. When someone is seeking help, they may feel worried about making the right choice, or that they have no control over their situation. The sections 'What decisions can I have a say in?' on p.8 and 'How can I make sure people listen to me?' on p.10 in this booklet suggest ideas for information you could find to help them feel empowered
- Help to write down lists of questions that the person you're supporting wants to ask their doctor, or help

- to put points into an order that makes sense (for example, most important point first)
- Help to organise paperwork, for example making sure that your friend or family member has somewhere to keep their notes, prescriptions and records of appointments safe.
- Go to appointments with them, if they want you to – even just being there in the waiting room can help someone feel reassured
- Ask them about specific practical tasks you could help with, and work on those. For example, this could include offering a lift to their appointment, arranging childcare for them, taking over a chore or household task
- Learn more about the mental health problem they experience, to help you think about other ways you could support them

What can I do if someone does not want my help?

If you feel that someone you care about is clearly struggling but cannot or will not reach out for help, and won't accept any help you offer, it is understandable to feel frustrated, distressed and powerless. But it is important to accept that they are an individual, and that there are always limits to what you can do to support another person.

You can:

- Be patient. You won't always know the full story, and there may be reasons why they are finding it difficult to ask for help
- Offer emotional support and reassurance. Let them know you care about them and that you will be there if they change their mind
- Inform them how to seek help when they are ready (for example, you could show them this booklet)
- Look after yourself, and make sure you don't become unwell

You cannot:

- Force someone to talk to you. It can take time for someone to feel able to talk openly, and putting pressure on them to talk might make them feel less comfortable telling you about their experiences
- Force someone to get help (if they are over 18 and are not posing immediate danger to themselves or someone else). As adults, we are all ultimately responsible for ourselves. This includes when – or if – we choose to seek help
- See a health care professional for someone else. A doctor cannot share any specific advice or details about someone else without their consent

How can I look after myself?

Supporting someone else can be stressful. Making sure that you look after your own wellbeing can mean that you have the energy, time and distance to help someone else.

For example:

- **Take a break when you need it.** If you are feeling overwhelmed by supporting someone or it is taking up a lot of time or energy, taking some time for yourself can help you feel refreshed
- **Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling.** You may want to be careful about how much information you share about the person you are supporting, but talking about your own feelings to a

friend can help you feel supported too

- **Be realistic about what you can do, and don't take too much on.** Your support is valuable, but it is up to your friend or family member to seek support for themselves. Remember that small, simple things can help, and that just being there for them is probably helping lots

Look after your own mental health difficulties

If you are living with a mental health problem, taking steps to look after your mental health can help you improve your wellbeing.

- **Tell people what helps.** If certain treatments have helped in the past, tell your doctor. Let your friends and family know how they can support you, whether it's listening to you when you're having a bad day, helping you keep on top of your commitments, or being aware of your triggers
- **Spot your early warning signs.** If you can, try to be aware of how you are feeling, and if you can spot any signs, you might be becoming unwell. These will be individual to you, but it can be useful to reflect on what these may be so you can get support for your mental health problem as soon as possible
- **Keep a mood diary.** Tracking your moods can help you to work out what positively and negatively affects your mental wellbeing. You can then take steps to avoid, change or prepare for negative

situations. You can create your own mood diary or try one available online such moodpanda.com, moodscope.com, and mappiness.org.uk

- **Build your self-esteem.** Increasing your self-esteem can help you to feel more confident and able to challenge adversity

Improving and looking after your mental health and wellbeing

As part of the government's 2008 Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing, the New Economics Foundation (NEF) researched and developed what it calls 'The Five Ways to Wellbeing' - a set of evidence-based, everyday actions that can boost our wellbeing. They are a deceptively simple recipe for improving mental health and wellbeing.

1. **Connect.** Evidence shows that feeling close to and valued by others, whether at home, work, school or in the local community, is a basic human need. So, connecting with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours is essential to our wellbeing. NEF advises people to think of these as the cornerstones of their lives and to invest time in developing relationships with them. The return on that investment is a set of connections that will support and enrich people on a daily basis
2. **Be active.** Exercising makes us feel good, whether it's a walk or a run, playing a game, dancing, cycling or gardening. The trick is to find activities that we enjoy and that are appropriate to our mobility and fitness, and to build them into our daily lives
3. **Take notice.** "Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual," advises NEF. "Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends." Being aware of the world around us and what we are feeling is at the heart of what has come to be known as mindfulness'. In addition, if we can reflect on our experiences, it helps us to appreciate what matters to us
4. **Keep learning.** Trying something new, picking up an old interest or signing up for a course we have been thinking about for a while provides the kind of stimulus that is essential for wellbeing. At work that

might mean taking on a new responsibility or role or doing some training. At home, it could be learning how to fix a bike, experimenting with a new recipe or learning to play an instrument. We need to set ourselves challenges that we will enjoy achieving. Learning new things is both enjoyable and confidence boosting

5. **Give.** Happiness research has found that doing an act of kindness once a week for six weeks is associated with an increase in wellbeing. Many of us will have experienced the surge of wellbeing that comes from doing a fundraising event such as a run or cycle ride. Just thanking someone or smiling at them is a form of giving and volunteering your time can be incredibly rewarding. Giving also creates connections with others - which is an example of how these 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' are linked

activity 1 – what is mental health

In small groups discuss the questions below and write down some thoughts. What does the term, 'Mental Health' mean to you?

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What might the triggers be for episodes of poor mental health?

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activity 2 – mental health language

Language and mental ill health difficulties

In your groups spend a few minutes creating a list of the following:

Acceptable, neutral or positive words and phrases helpful when speaking about individuals with mental ill health difficulties.

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Unacceptable, judgmental and negative words and phrases associated with mental ill health

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activity 3 – signs and symptoms

In small groups discuss how you might recognise distress within individuals.

Physical Symptoms

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Emotional Responses

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Cognitive Changes

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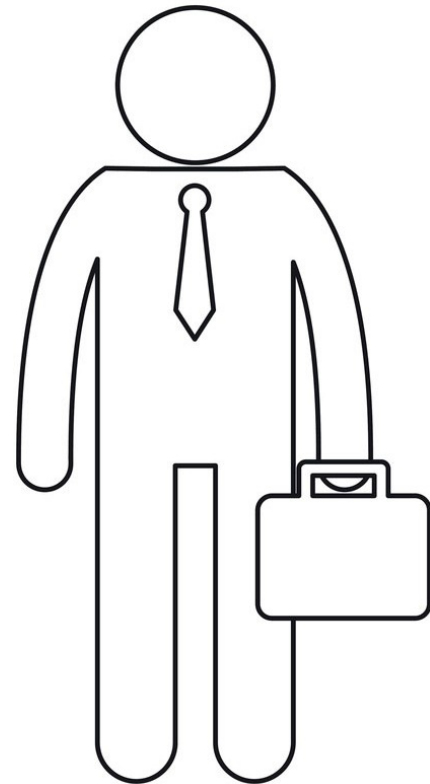
Behavioural Indicators

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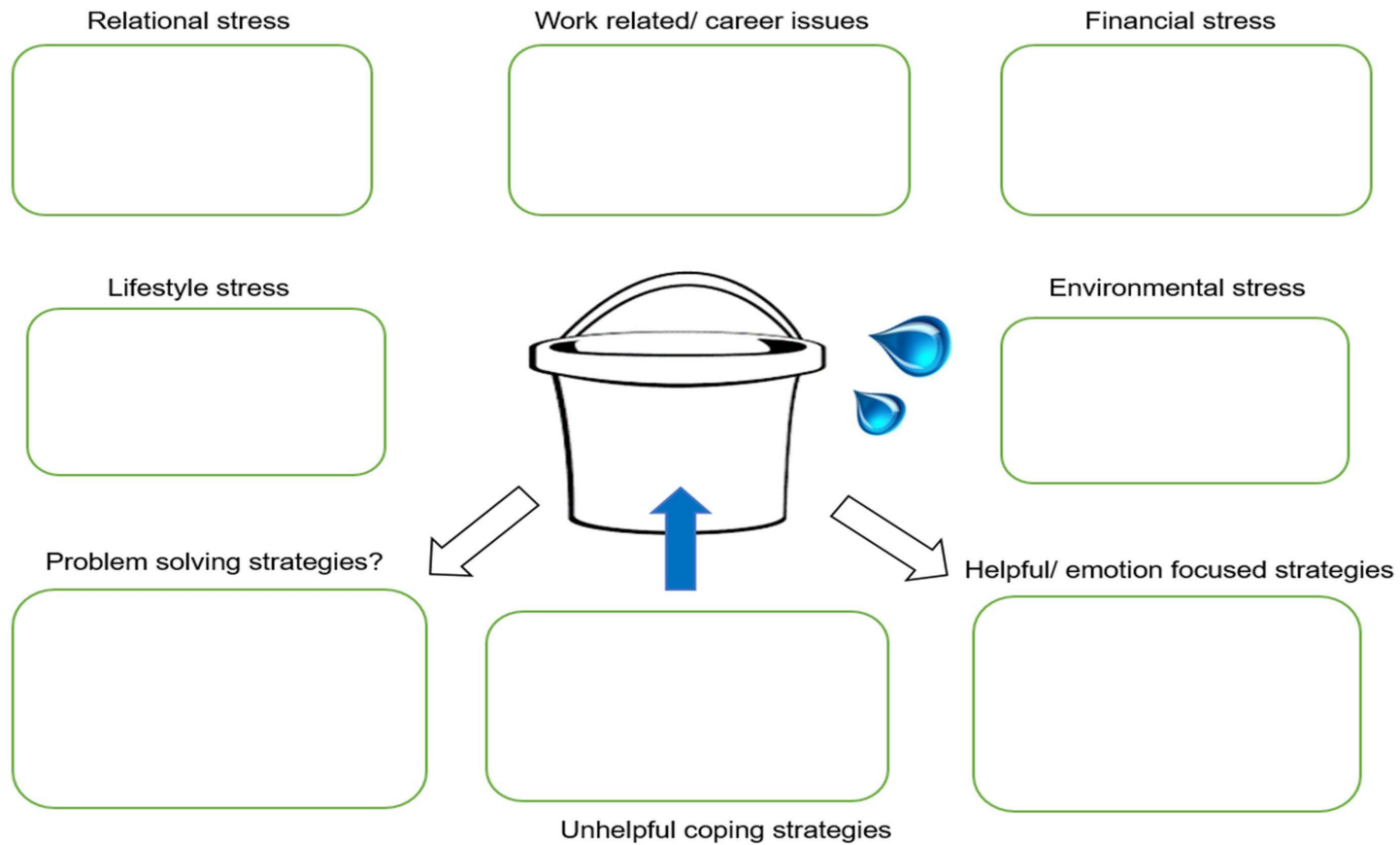
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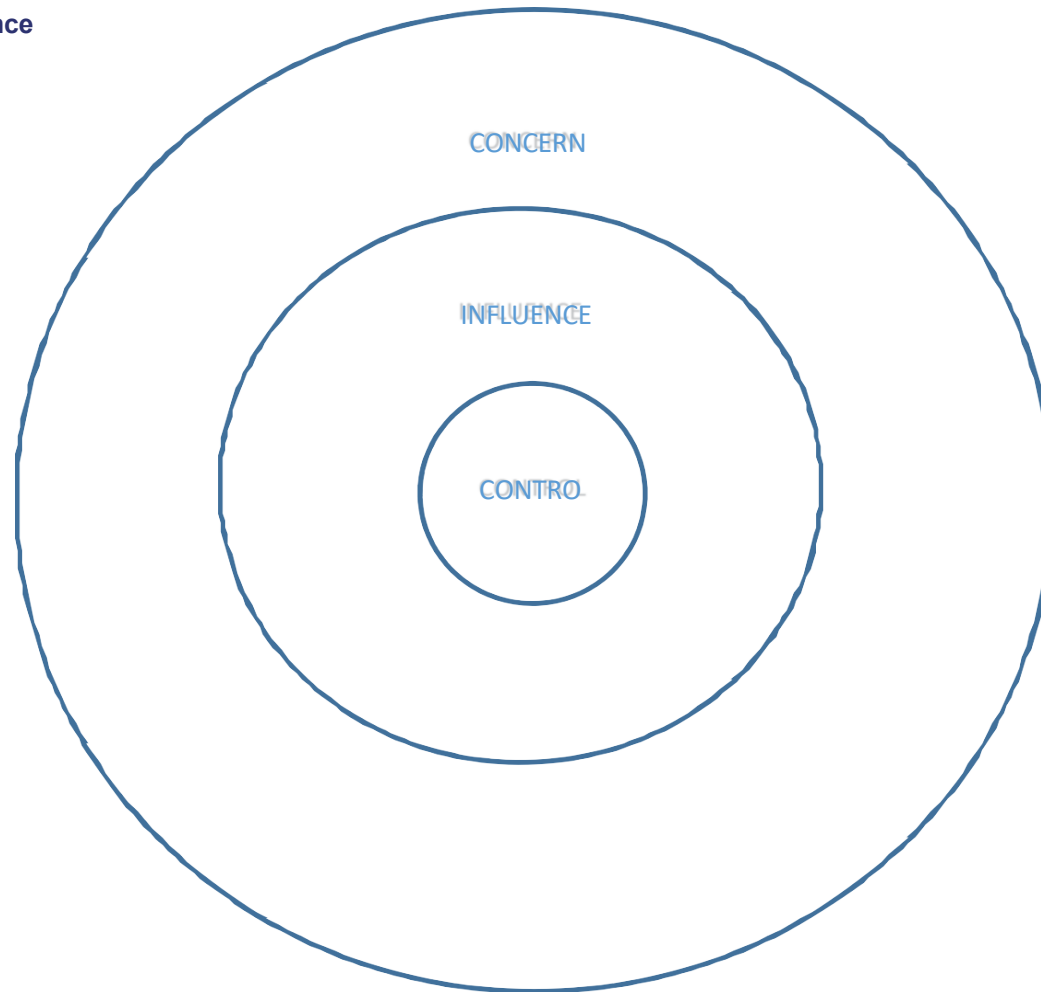
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activity 4 – my stress bucket

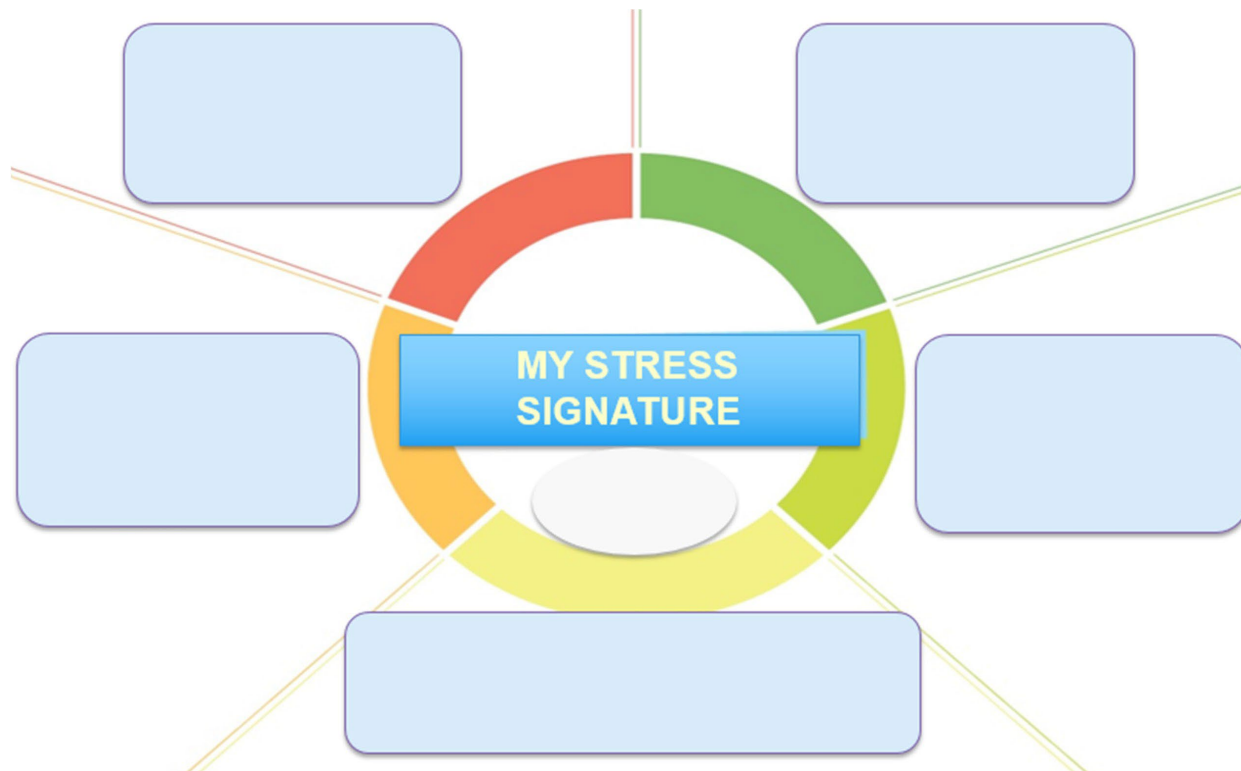


activity 5 – circle of influence



activity 6 - my stress signature

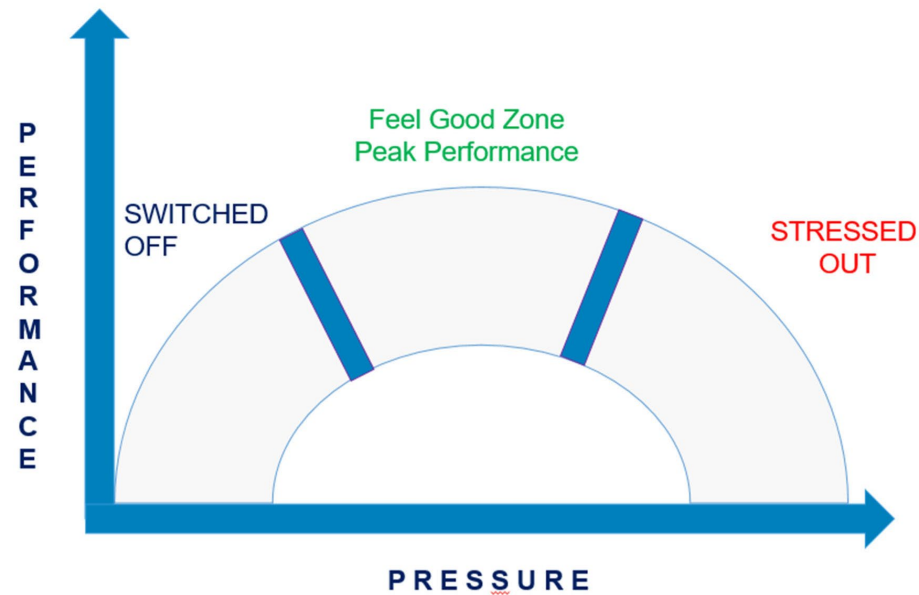
For each section consider how your thoughts, feelings, behaviours and responses change. How does your body respond? Awareness is the key to staying in balance...



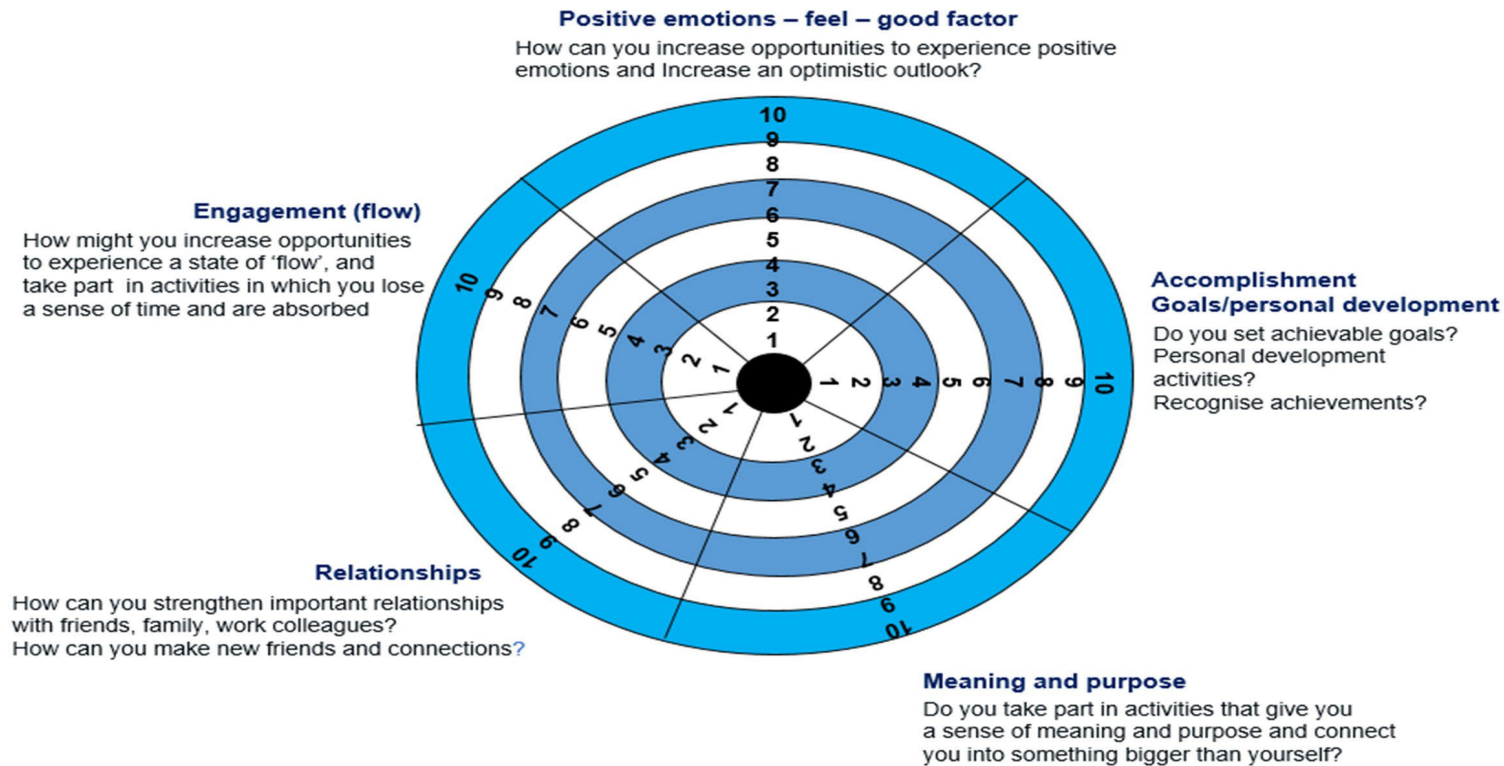
activity 7 – feel good zone

Think about the regular tasks or activities you do in your life and identify which section they fall into. Think about how you might plan these tasks more effectively to maintain your wellness.

How can you increase activities in the feel-good zone? How can you manage the 'switched off' and 'stressed out zone' differently?



activity 8 – perma... wheel of wellbeing



If 1 is the least and 10 the most mark on the chart where you are with each section

activity 8 – perma... wheel of wellbeing

Consider and reflect on how you can maintain or strengthen your score for each area...

Positive emotions, feel good factor

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Engagement (flow)

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Relationships

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Meaning and purpose

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Accomplishment, goals / personal development

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activity 9 – what helps you to stay mentally healthy in life?

WELLBEING

ACTION

PLAN

1. How do you know when you are well?
2. How do you know when you are feeling stressed?
3. What helps you when you are feeling stressed?
4. Who are your regular supports?
5. What do you need to do on a daily, regular basis to keep well?
6. What are the things that you find difficult? What are your triggers?
7. How can you manage them differently?
8. How will you know when the things you have chosen to help you are being effective?
9. What will be different?

activity 9 – my wellbeing action plan

From today's learning

What do I need to do on a daily basis to keep me well?

What do I need to do on a regular basis?

What am I going to change as from this week?

How can I show kindness to myself as I do others?

What will you do this evening to relax?

think better... feel better... (additional resource)

Using the prompts below see if you can reframe your experience of a situation, you have found stressful. Using the ABCDE model

What was the event? (A)

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What were the thoughts running through your head at the time? (B)

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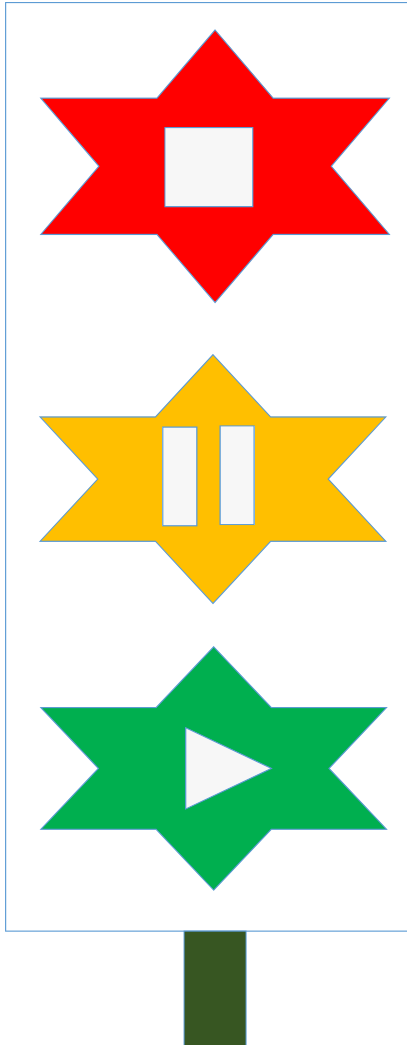
What emotion and physical sensations did you experience? (C)

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Dispute your thoughts... were they accurate? What evidence do you have? Were they helpful? Is there an alternative view? (D)

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Notice Do you feel differently? (E)



Recognise you are stressed...

Make yourself stop and give yourself time and space Take a few deep breaths and ground yourself

What are your thoughts?

Are they accurate? Helpful? Alternative view? What are you feeling? Allow it to subside and pass

What do you need to do next? Who can help or support you? Attend to your physical self, are you thirsty? hungry?

individual stress risk assessment tool and action sheet

Name

Date of Assessment

Job Title of Employee

Length of time in role

Department

Name and Title of Supervisor / Line Manager

The Supervisor / Line Manager should complete the following table together with the employee for Individual Stress Risk Assessments.

The questions are based on the HSE Management Standards and look at the key areas of work that, if effectively managed, can help to reduce work related stress. The questions are part of a supportive process to assist managers and individuals in the: Identification of hazards, deciding why individuals might be affected; evaluating the risks and frequency and recording your findings and proposed actions.

*The Possible Action/s column details some suggestions for consideration / action. This list is not exhaustive.

*The Action/s column should include details of what the issues are, what measures are currently in place, what improvements can be made and what actions will be taken to make the improvements.

| | Question | Yes | No | Possible Action/s | Agreed Action/s |
|---|---|-----|----|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Role Definition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you clear what is expected within your role? Do you understand your duties and responsibilities? Do you know the goals and objectives for the department | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree duties and responsibilities expected ensuring excessive and unreasonable demands are not made Clarify goals and objectives for the individual and department – ensuring no ambiguity Provide regular clear feedback on performance | |
| 2 | Control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have any say in how you do and plan your work? Can you set your own work speed? Can you decide when to take a break. | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where practicable, enable staff to exert autonomy within role Encourage delegation and empowerment of others Encourage training to support delegation (to individual and team) | |
| 3 | Work Pressures – High: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your deadlines within role unachievable? Are you required to work long hour? Are your time pressures unrealistic? Are you subject to work demands from different groups that are hard to combine | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer support in prioritising tasks and cut out unnecessary work and bureaucracy Try to give warning of urgent jobs Assist in the scheduling of work to ensure adequate and appropriate resources Ensure job demands are matched in terms of quantity, complexity and intensity to individual skills and abilities Support staff when undertaking new and unfamiliar tasks Meet regularly to review workload Avoid encouraging staff to work long hours, take work home or build excessive flexi Encourage staff to take annual leave allowance | |

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|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| 4 | Work Pressures – Low: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your work boring, monotonous or unchallenging | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where reasonably practicable, rotate boring and repetitive jobs Where possible increase the variety of tasks e.g., through projects, support to colleagues, etc. | |
| 5 | Relationships at Work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour? Are relationships at work strained Is there friction and anger between colleagues Are you subject to bullying | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage team working Encourage team members to give open and honest feedback to each other Demonstrate and encourage appreciation of others and difference Promote an atmosphere of mutual respect Ensure all staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour at work will not be tolerated. Refer to the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy and attend the training to support this policy Seek the support of HR if an allegation of Harassment or Bullying is made | |
| 6 | Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If work gets difficult are colleagues/manager available to help and support Are you given supportive feedback on the work you do | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how to raise concerns and call on your support Ensure you have attended the Stress Management Workshop Encourage enhance team working / support. Ask Staff Training and Development for support with this Hold regular team meetings Be approachable and receptive to feedback | |
| 7 | Change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you consulted / updated about changes at work that affect you? Are you clear about how the change will affect you in practice? Is there adequate consultation about workplace issues / changes | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure clear and appropriate communication on proposed changes Ensure individuals understand the reasons for change and the likely timescales Ensure adequate consultation wherever possible and provide opportunities for comment and input. Give support to individuals during the change process | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| 8 | Other Issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any other issues / stressors that need to be taken account of – e.g., difficulties at home, unexpected life changes, etc. | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support individual where possible Offer to support them through referring to Staff Support Adviser | |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|

A copy of the completed Stress Risk Assessment Tool should be kept by both parties completing it.

Following completion of questions above it is suggested:

- Both parties consider the possible actions and discuss and agree proposed actions for reducing the pressures that lead to stress, as far as reasonably practicable and annotate proposed actions within the action/s column. It may be helpful to talk with your HR Manager to assist you with this
- Refer to Occupational Health for assessment if employee or manager considers there may be a medical element leading to increased susceptibility to stress. Please include a copy of the risk assessment with the referral
- Both parties keep a record of proposed actions and agree a date for review

WRAP Template

This is a document drawn up between your manager, on behalf of [organisation], and you, as an employee, to outline steps we can take to support you and your health at work. This information will be held confidentially and regularly reviewed, in partnership with you. You only need to tell us details about your health in relation to your role and the workplace and as far as you feel comfortable. The WRAP is not legally binding but will help us to agree, together, how to practically support you in your role and address any health needs.

In your own words, how does your mental ill health problem affect you? How might your symptoms impact on your work?

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Can you describe in your own words any triggers for mental ill health and early warning signs that we might notice?

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What support or adjustments could we put in place to minimise triggers or support you to manage your symptoms at work? Is there anything we should try to avoid doing?

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If your health deteriorates, or we feel we have noticed early warning signs of distress, what should we do? Who can we contact?

Please include contact names and numbers and account for scenarios when your health changes in a minor way and you are still able to get into work.

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Merrett House
Swift Park, Old Leicester Road
Rugby, CV21 1DZ, UK
T: +44 (0) 1788 556 366
E: enquiries@caba.org.uk
caba.org.uk

What steps can you take? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them?

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Signed: Employer

Signed: Employee

Getting your Emotional Needs Met?

Humans all have similar needs which must be fulfilled to give us a sense of self-esteem, self-worth and emotional wellness. If you aren't getting one of your core emotional needs met, you may feel that something is missing in your life.

This is a great exercise to help you discover which needs are not being met in your life. It may be that you require more attention but less privacy. Bear in mind that we are all different and have different requirements for each emotional need.

The Emotional Needs Audit Scale



Instructions: The following questions ask you about your feelings and experiences during the last month. In each case, please indicate with a tick how often you felt or behaved a certain way.

1 = never 2 = almost never 3 = sometimes 4 = fairly often 5 = very often

1. In the last month how often have you felt secure in all major areas of your life?
2. In the last month how often have you felt that you have received enough attention?
3. In the last month how often have you felt in control of your life?
4. In the last month how often do you feel you have been able to have some influence over local issues affecting you?
5. In the last month how often have you felt a strong connection with friends?
6. In the last month how often have you had the time for reflection?
7. In the last month how often have you interacted with people from your wider community?
8. In the last month how often have you engaged in hobbies/sports activities with others?
9. In the last month how often have you felt you have had status that is acknowledged?
10. In the last month how often have you felt valued and respected by your friends?
11. In the last month how often have you felt you are achieving something in your life?
12. In the last month how often have you felt competent in your main occupation?
13. In the last month how often have you felt that there are people who need you?
14. In the last month how often have you felt that life is meaningful?

If you notice that you have some needs which are not being met enough for you, think about ways in which you can actively seek to get these needs fulfilled. Make a list of other people who support you and new things you can do.

caba:
for the everyday
and the exceptional

understanding mental health:
skills for life

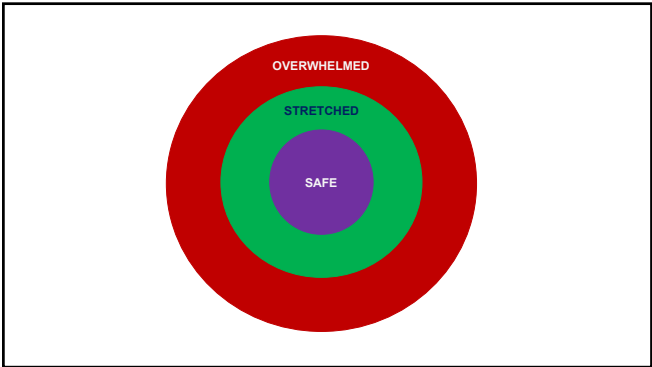
what we'll cover today

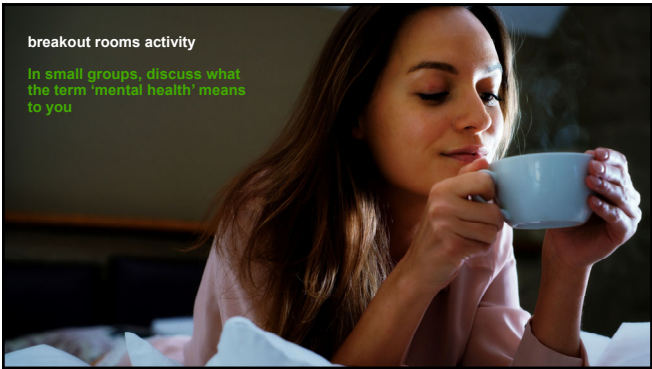
- gain a wider understanding of mental health and wellbeing
- identify distress in ourselves and others
- compassionate conversations, supporting others
- looking after your own mental health – Tips and Strategies

group agreements

group agreement

- mobiles off or on silent
- we keep to time
- we respect each others' views
- confidentiality – personal details shared in this room remain in this room
- opt out / personal safety – don't do or say anything that makes you feel uncomfortable
- no such thing as a silly question – ask if you don't understand
- try to get involved when you feel comfortable
- learn something new and have fun!
- any others?



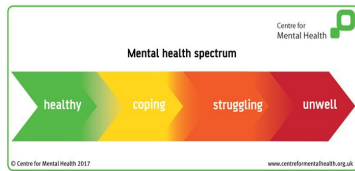


what does mental health mean to you?

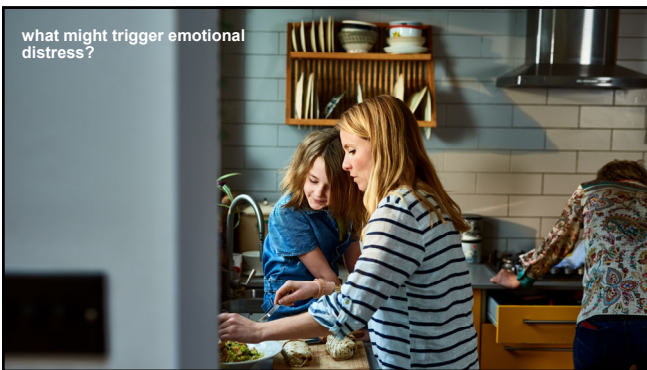
- Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. WHO 2014
-

think, feel, behave

- about 1 in 4 have a current mental health difficulty
- risk and protective factors determine our positions on the spectrum during our lives



what might trigger emotional distress?





recognising distress

- physical symptoms
- behavioural indicators
- cognitive changes
- emotional responses



reflect on a time that you felt emotionally supported and discuss

- what helped the most?
- is there anything that didn't help?

compassionate conversations

ask

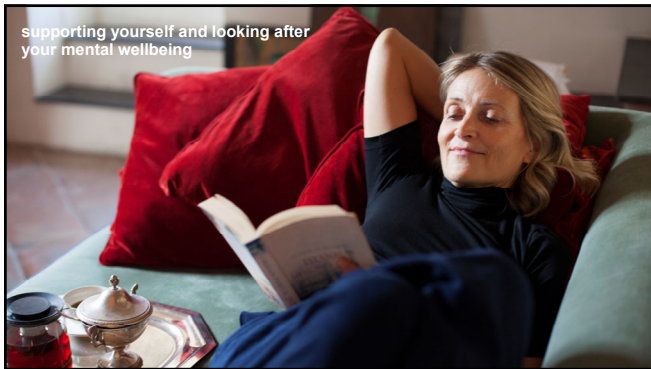
- Time available?
- Your emotional state?
- Environment and distractions
- Exploratory and invitational approach
- Open questions

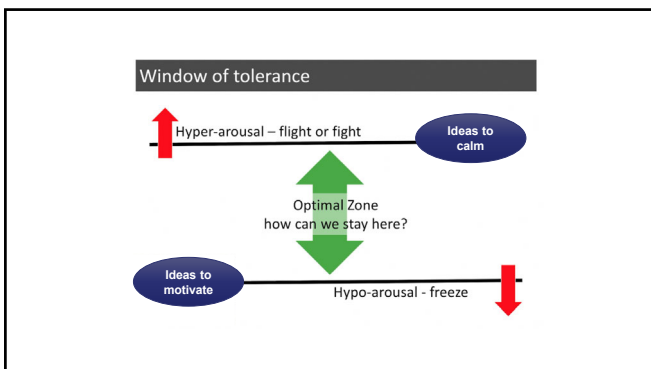
listen

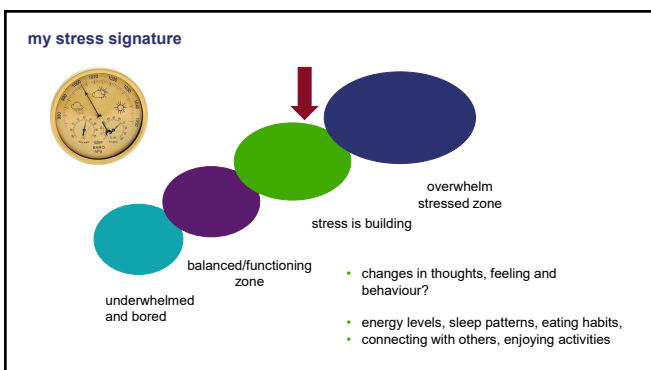
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- With your body
- Reflect
- Encourage

respond

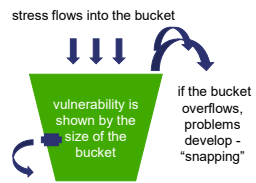
- Acknowledge and validate
- Offer support and help
- Avoid advice and trying to 'fix' the problem
- Check back in







what's in your stress bucket?



- helpful coping strategies = tap working, lets the stress out
- unhelpful coping strategies = tap blocked so water fills bucket and overflows

my stress bucket...



managing overwhelm?

- What do I know?
- What has stayed the same?
- How can I work with what has changed?



consider a situation you are experiencing at the moment
which is stressful and overwhelming

fill out your own circle of influence and
consider:

- What can you control and influence?
- Who can help you?
- What matters most?
- What resources, skills and strengths do you have available?



remember the basics...



take care of yourself

- a sensitivity to the distress of self and others with a commitment to alleviate and prevent

Paul Gilbert 2010



- treat yourself as you would a good friend

Kristin Neff



self compassion

mindfulness

- recognising when we are stressed without being judgemental or over-reacting



shared humanity

- remembering that we all make mistakes and everyone experiences difficulties at times, we are not alone!

self-support and kindness

- being supportive and understanding towards ourselves when we are having a hard time, rather than being harshly critical.



caba:

for the everyday
and the exceptional

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your views help our team to learn and improve.

tell us about the service you received in this short 5-minute survey.

all responses are anonymous, strictly confidential and won't affect the service you receive from us.

a link to the survey is in the chat box

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