

# Are we doing all we can to make working well more likely?

Good mental health is  
good for business



Frank O'Connor  
[www.workingwell.co.nz](http://www.workingwell.co.nz)



## Very different outcomes

### Fatigued people are:

- more likely to get sick
- more accident prone
- less easy on others
- stressed more quickly
- likely to die earlier

### Resilient people are:

- healthier and live longer
- better in school & work
- happier in relationships
- less prone to stress
- looking after themselves



## Good mental health is good business



### Costs if poor

- 2 x sick leave
- 2 x conflict
- 3 x cardiovascular
- 3 x back pain
- 2 - 3 x injuries

**“Work is miserable”**



### Benefits if good

- 31% higher productivity
- 37% more sales
- 3 x more creativity
- Better customer satisfaction

**“Work is good here”**

Harvard Business Review 2012;  
Robertson and Cooper 2011;  
Canadian Mental Health Commission 2013



## Too important to be left to chance

Mentally well employees are more productive:

- More interested and persistent
- More creative and adaptable
- Physically stronger and able to work
- More effective with others
  - Businesses dealing with complex tasks in demanding environments can use all of this

Employees and employers benefit from good mental health in the workplace



## Wellbeing at work is affected by:

- The kind of work we do
- The way work happens at our place
- How engaged and supported we feel
- Our own life circumstances and lifestyles



## More mental wellbeing at work

### Blockers

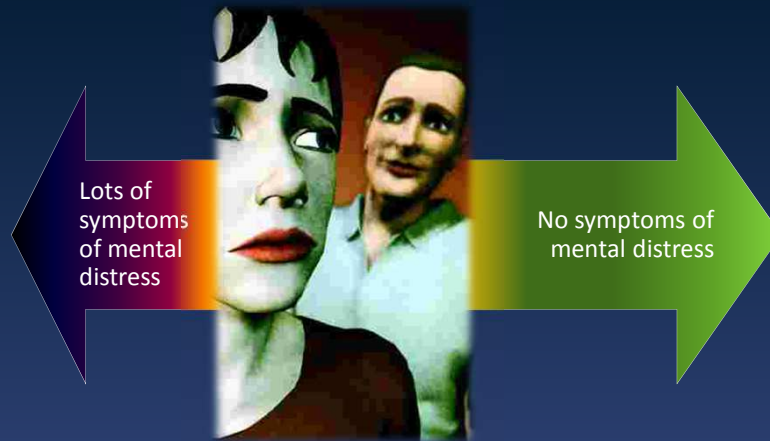
- Feeling chronic stress
- Aggression & intolerance
- Disengaged & distant
- Unclear or no purpose
- Burnout or fatigue
- Mental illness symptoms
- Poor physical health

### Helpers

- Positive emotions often
- Interest and involvement
- Friendly relationships
- Meaning and purpose
- Accomplishment
- Health awareness
- Good physical health

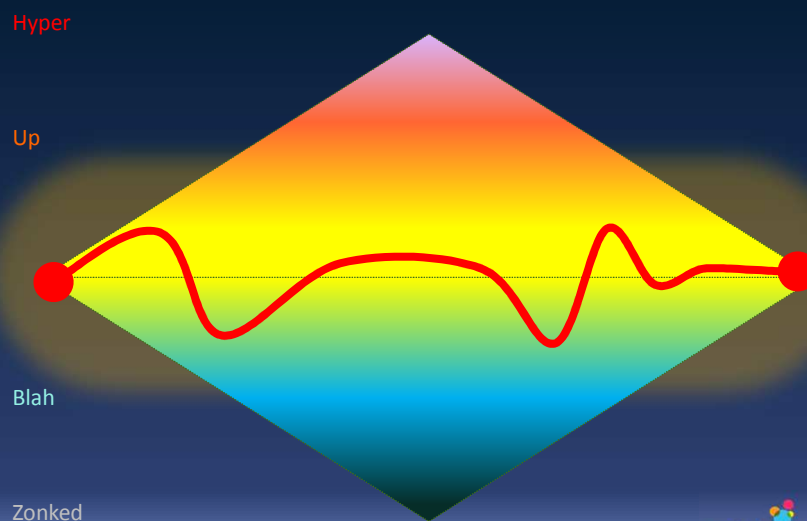


## Common perception of “mental health”



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## Personal fatigue and wellbeing range up and down



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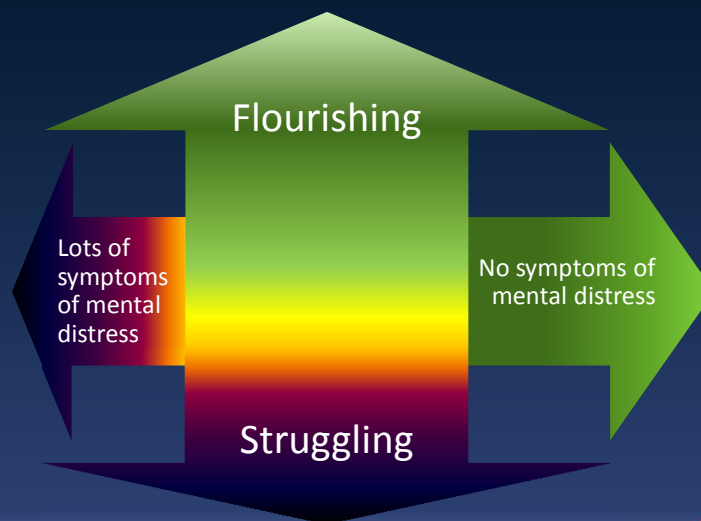
## HOW ARE YOU SLEEPING?

Do you fall asleep in front of the TV?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently
Are you irritable, at home or at work?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently
Do you fall asleep when you are a passenger in a car on long journeys?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently
Do you sleep more on your days away from work?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently
Does your partner (or other family members or friends) complain that you are not interested in doing things on your days off?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently
Do you wake up feeling tired?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently
Do you feel tired and have difficulty concentrating during the day?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently
Do you have to make an effort to do the things you used to enjoy?	Never	Sometimes	Quite often	Frequently

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## Mental distress vs wellbeing



# 1. ASSIST RECOVERY



## Stress, anxiety and depression

When it's present at work:

- What do we see or hear?
- How does the issue get talked about?



## Alcohol and drug abuse

When it's present at work:

- What do we see or hear?
- How does the issue get talked about?



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## Compounding effects

Often more than one thing going on

*No problem till m' bottle is empty*

Stigma makes discussion less likely

- Does the family know?
- Does the boss know?

*Who's safe here?*



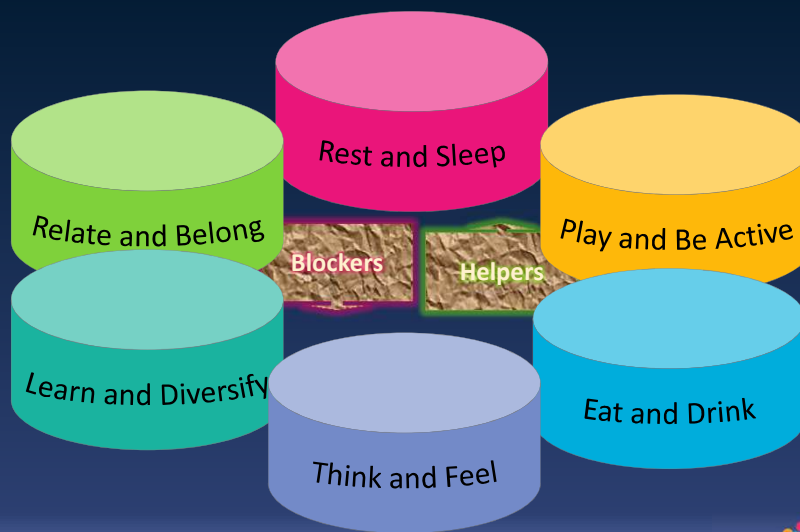
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## Talk around your table...

What we already do to support people who've lost mental wellbeing



## Personal wellbeing depends on





## 2. MAINTAIN AND RECOGNISE



### Signs of healthy teams

#### Blockers include

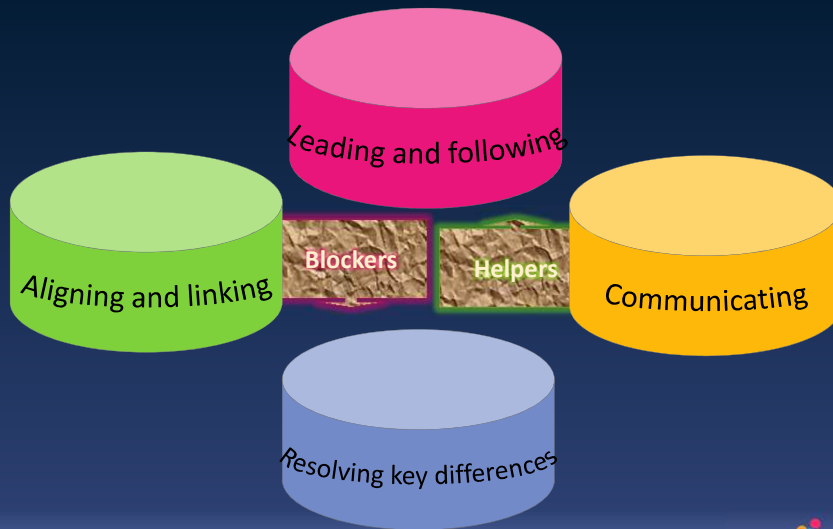
- always stressed / late
- aggressive reactions
- not talking to each other
- unclear process of work
- only deadlines matter
- arguments unresolved
- poor or no prioritisation

#### Helpers include

- sense of progress
- goals in common
- possibility of friendship
- pride in what gets done
- talk about differences
- way to share resources
- act as one, not as parts

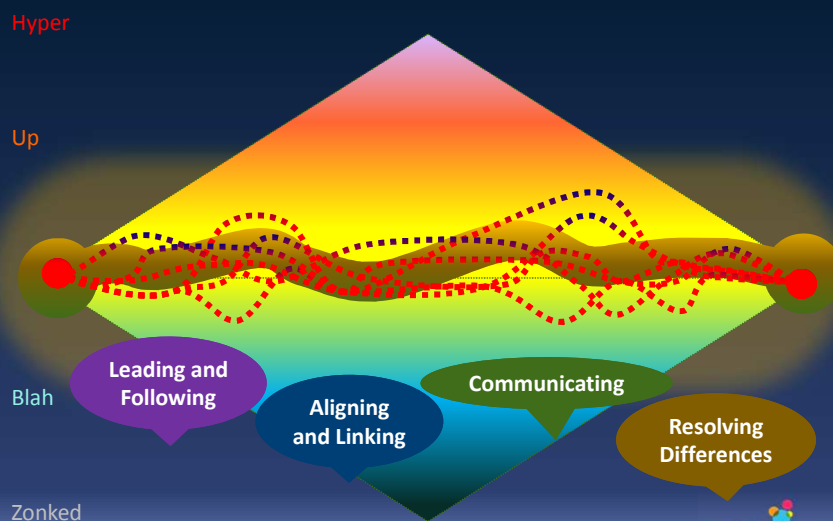


## Team wellbeing depends on



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## Team wellbeing depends on processes

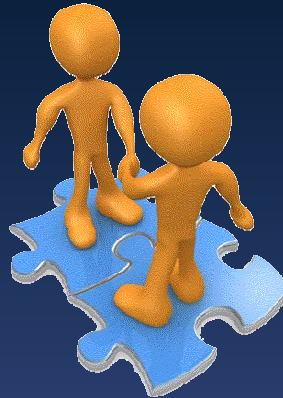


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## What high performing teams say

### Resolving key differences

- We resolve differences when we have them
- When you're out of line, you get hauled back
- Our team deals with non-performers quickly and fairly



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## Talk around your table...

What I already do to protect mental wellbeing in me and my workgroup



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### 3. BUILD AND ENHANCE



### Wellbeing is good for business

#### Blockers

- Work is poorly organised, without goals, priorities
- Personal “I-win-or-I-lose” trade-offs
- People don’t know how they are doing
- Heavy, relentless work demands
- Decisions are inconsistent

#### Helpers

- Clear purpose for the work
- Say what’s done well and what to improve
- Prompt response to heavy workload burdens
- Act with respect, in the context of type of work
- Involve employees in decisions about their work



## People ready, able and willing to do the work, today and tomorrow

### Leaders lift culture

- Move willingly in the chosen direction
- Ask for specific changes from the present ways
- Sanction actions that are not in line with overall goals

### Effectiveness from:

- Focus on future rather than present
- Engage willing followers
- Match actions to words
- Measure what needs to be done



## Talk around your table...

What we can do to increase mental wellbeing in my workgroup and the broader organisation



## What to say when you get back?

- to support people who've lost mental wellbeing ...
- to protect wellbeing in me and my workgroup ...
- to increase wellbeing in my workgroup and the organisation ...



## Working Well for employers

- advises employers and their employees on how to build, maintain and recover mental wellbeing so that their work can be done well, now and into the future
- increases the knowledge and skills of people at work to maintain and build mental wellbeing in individuals at work, teams and workgroups, and whole organisations
- provides information and guidance for those responding to or recovering from losses of mental wellbeing in and around the workplace.

A programme from the New Zealand Mental Health Foundation

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