



TOP TIPS

IN SUPPORTING
MENTAL WELLBEING



The background is a solid dark blue color. Overlaid on this are several large, overlapping, organic shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from a deep navy to a lighter, medium blue. These shapes resemble stylized leaves or abstract organic forms, creating a layered, textured effect. The shapes are primarily located in the top right and bottom left corners, with some extending towards the center.

This guide, launched for World Mental Health Day, brings together a collection of the Top Tips developed as part of the award winning mental health initiative Under The Tree, which was developed by Fox&Cat in partnership with the HCA, PRCA and CIPR.

Use these Top Tips to refresh your thinking and inform your actions. Then please keep mental wellbeing in mind with everything you do, and every interaction you have.

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LEADING A CHANGE IN MENTAL WELLBEING

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Manage Team Pressures**

While we're talking more about mental health across comms, and while more flexible working has helped lower stress, we need to continue the conversation and also take action to manage team pressure.

- **Educating Ourselves**

Training and development are critical to help ensure those working in comms have knowledge of the skills they need to manage high pressured situations.

- **People Before Profits**

It is everyone's responsibility to prioritise mental wellbeing in comms. Leaders should keep this topic "front and centre" of decision making, and we all need to take responsibility and accountability for our own mental wellbeing.



FIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Set a Good Example

Prioritise your own personal development and share your learnings with others.

When your teams see you take an active role, it will encourage them to do so also.

2. Make it Part of the Role

Turn learning and development in mental health into a key part of your team's/line's learning objectives.

By integrating it into roles, you open up the opportunity to talk more about individual workplace mental wellbeing concerns, both initially and when any reviews take place.

3. Lunch and Learns

Why not launch a regular "lunch and learn" where your team share their experiences which will help encourage others to use this platform to share theirs?

4. Invest in Training

Investment isn't just financial. It takes time and energy to ensure training is tailored to the specific needs of your business. Keep training sessions short, focused and of high-quality.

5. Take Advantage of Existing Expertise

There are a range of excellent free training programmes available.



WORK SKILLS CONFIDENCE

PROBLEM TALK VS SOLUTION TALK

When we feel stuck in life, our attention can be consumed by what's wrong and we find ourselves in a problem trance. However, it is possible for us to ask ourselves particular questions that can shift our focus towards solutions and help us get our mojo back.

TOP TIPS

- **Pivot**
When you sense you're getting bogged down with a challenge or problem, pivot from talking about what's not working to how you want things to be instead.
- **Describe**
Get a clear description of your preferred future. How would things be if the challenge/problem was solved? What would life be like then? Describe the difference in detail.
- **Assess**
How close are you to that preferred future now? What's the closest you've been to it? What's already happening that fits with that future that you could make use of? What small signs would you notice if you were moving closer to it?

“

Focusing on the solution is a proven way of bringing change to people, teams and organisations.

The method focuses on solutions (instead of problems), on strengths (rather than weaknesses) and on what's going well (instead of what's going wrong).

”



FIVE WAYS TO SPEND MORE TIME IN SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS

1. Spot Excessive Problem Talk

When you or others are describing a problem in great detail, speculating about causes, how bad it is, who's to blame, why it's not getting better and so on, and it's getting you nowhere, pause and be ready to pivot.

2. Practise Pivoting to What's Wanted

"Suppose us talking now made a positive difference to this challenge -what would you/we want that difference to be?"

Or: *"If we could have what we want instead of this, what would it be?"*

Or: *"If this started to resolve itself, what would be the first sign of that?"*

3. Use Scale Questions

On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is the future we say we want, and 1 is the total opposite of that, where are we now? Why are we as HIGH as that number - what's happening already that puts us there? What would be happening if we were one point higher up that scale?

4. Look/Listen for What's Working

No problem is 100% happening the whole time.

Sometimes it is less, or completely absent.

Listen and look out for exceptions - when things are working okay - and explore what's going on in those instances.

5. Consider Some Training

A day spent with your team, getting to know and practice solution-focused conversations, could set some new habits in motion that mean you spend less time discussing problems and more time moving towards what you want.

WORK SKILLS CONFIDENCE



“
People won't always
recall what you
said, but they **WILL**
remember how you
made them feel.
**Connection beats
perfection
every time!**

”

PRESENTING WITH IMPACT: ACHIEVING THE RIGHT MINDSET

It is incredibly common to get nervous about public speaking, whether you're giving a big presentation or speaking up in a meeting. Wouldn't life be better without that discomfort though? Here's a step-by-step approach to better understand, control and manage those unhelpful thoughts and feelings, so you can be in the moment with your audience and focused on your content.

TOP TIPS

1. **Get Curious About The Underlying Cause**

Recognise how your nerves manifest themselves physically and note this down.

Do you experience shaky hands? Faster heart rate? Get hot or cold? These physical reactions aren't just happening in our bodies, but are a result of what's going on in our heads. So connect to what you might be telling yourself – are you worried it won't be right if it's not word perfect?

Concerned you will be caught off guard in the Q&A, triggering your 'imposter syndrome'? Do you tell yourself what you're saying won't be of interest to your audience?

2. Understand Your Own ‘Cognitive Distortions’

These unhelpful thoughts about not being good enough are known as cognitive distortions – internal mental filters that fuel our anxiety and make us feel bad about ourselves.

Examples include catastrophising (expecting/overestimating the likelihood of bad events) or mind reading (assuming we know what other people are thinking) or perfectionism (if anything is other than perfect it's a failure). What are your's?

3. Reframe

Start to unpick your own cognitive distortions by asking yourself some rational questions.

What's one reason why it's probably not going to be as bad as you fear?

What's one reason you know you can handle it?

What's a practical thing you can do to prepare or prevent it?

What's an upside of the situation?

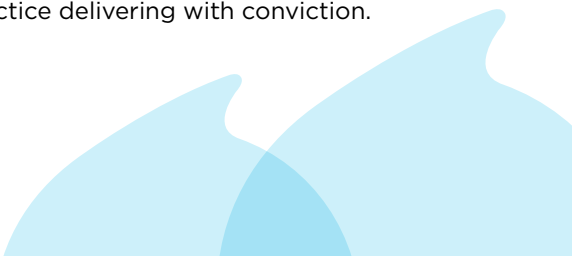
4. Create A Mantra

You don't have to meditate daily or practice yoga to have a mantra.

This mantra will serve as a shortcut to your brain to get back in the moment and connect with your content when you feel those physical signs of nervousness. Now you know WHY you're feeling it (because of what you may be telling yourself) and this mantra is the antidote. If your cognitive distortion is connected to worrying about how you'll be judged by others, a helpful mantra might be "They're not as obsessed with me as I am." Or if you identify with imposter syndrome, try "I'm pretty smart, I wouldn't be here otherwise." Stick it on a post-it to your computer screen if you're preparing to present virtually, or write it in your speaker notes to remind you.

5. Prepare & Rehearse

For many, the key to tackling nerves is to know "I've practiced and prepped well. I've done everything I can." Double-down on your prep by familiarising yourself with the tech beforehand, write yourself a script or capture speaker notes, and importantly – always practice what you're going to say out loud. Don't just speak it in your head. If time doesn't allow for a full rehearsal, at least really nail the opening: memorise the first two sentences and practice delivering with conviction.



WORK SKILLS CONFIDENCE

ADDRESSING COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS HEAD ON

Courageous conversations with others start with having a courageous conversation with ourselves. Different people feel differently about conflict. Some avoid it at all costs, while others can comfortably address difficult issues head on. Regardless of where you are on this scale, these tips will help you feel more prepared to achieve better outcomes all round. Consider a real-life scenario you've dealt with previously or are currently facing and test these out using the tips.

TOP TIPS

1. Start with Looking Inward

Note down and acknowledge the unhelpful thoughts and feelings you might be having about the scenario you're facing. Guess what? This is your emotional brain trying to hijack the conversation, so you need to get back into your rational brain.

What's one reason why it's probably not going to be as bad as you fear?

What's one reason you know you can handle it?

What's a practical thing you can do to prepare or prevent it?

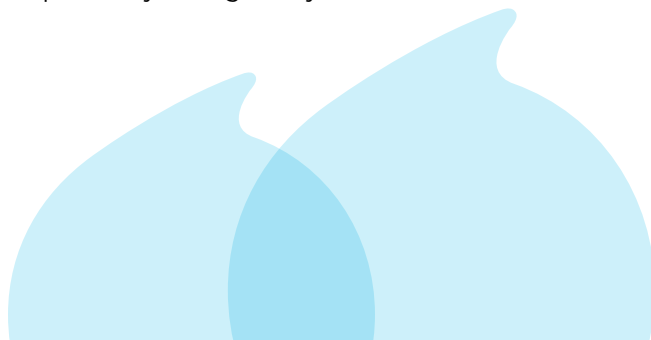
Let these answers be what you tell yourself as you head into the conversation, so you can remain level-headed in the moment.

2. Consider Your Audience

Explore 'the world' of the person you're addressing.

What might they be thinking about this issue? How might they respond?

What environmental pressures might they be facing that would influence their behaviour either positively or negatively?



3. Words Matter

The wrong words can derail a conversation. Choosing your words carefully is part of getting where you want to go.

- Avoid language like “obviously” or “clearly” – this only speaks to YOUR interpretation of reality. What’s obvious to you might not be obvious to them.
- Minimise the use of words like “always” or “never” which can lead you down a path about frequency – be specific about data/examples.
- Phrases like “You are XXX. You make me feel...” indicate a character deficit where the whole person is under attack. Make it about their behaviour instead with “I observed XXX. When I witnessed this, I felt...”
- Using the “...BUT...” approach often means people will only hear/recall what came after the ‘but’. Try “...AND...” instead.

4. Think CALM

Once you’ve begun the interaction, use the following to guide you towards a positive outcome:

Create dialogue: “Can you help me understand what you’re thinking/feeling about this?”

Acknowledge: “I can hear you’re upset; that wasn’t my intent and I respect your openness with me here.”

Listen: Paraphrase and playback their words –
“Let me make sure I understand you...”

Merge: Articulate commonalities to align on priorities/values that move things towards a conclusion
“I think we share a common desire/belief/goal that...”

5. Resolution

You don’t have to resolve things 100% with one conversation, but it’s about moving things forward in a positive way.

Answer the following questions together to agree next steps that hold each other accountable.

Where are we now?

What is common to both of us at this stage?

What is a reasonable approach from here?

WORK SKILLS CONFIDENCE

INFLUENCE WITHOUT AUTHORITY

Influence is one of the most valuable skills you can develop in the workplace. And the good news is that whatever level you are, you have more of it than you might think.

TOP TIPS

1. Identify your 'Circle of Concern'

Our circle of concern includes all we are concerned about with regard to a situation. Take Covid as an example – we might have been concerned about when the vaccine would be available, when will the children go back to school, how many people have the virus in my area, will there be a resurgence, not being able to go out, the gym being closed, not being able to see family. Lots of these things we had no control over and dwelling on them and letting them consume us, may have led to feelings of helplessness, frustration and being overwhelmed.

“
The depth of
research in
behavioural science
has turned the art
of persuasion into
a learnable skill that
enables you to use
small, practical and
ethical techniques
to influence others.
”





2. Avoid the 'What Ifs' Taking Over

If, on the other hand, we take a proactive approach and focus on what we DO have control over – our circle of influence – we're more likely to feel empowered, productive and content.

Using the coronavirus example again – we had influence over how often we went out, how we exercised at home, connecting with family and friends virtually, getting into a routine that prioritised things that helped you, how often you watched the news, etc.

Focusing on things you can influence is a way of taking positive control of a situation and giving less time and space for the 'what ifs' to take over.

3. What Currencies Can You Offer

The Law of Reciprocation is a key principle of influence; it states that others are more likely to comply with what you want, if you have done (or can do) something for them. So what can you do for them?

The key is to understand what they value – which 'currencies' are most important to them. Research has found these go deeper than money, promotion or status. Now think about your own currencies. How can you position what you want to encourage a (reciprocal) exchange?

WORK SKILLS CONFIDENCE



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People or teams who are struggling are still experts of their own lives and contexts, and they come loaded with qualities, skills and resources, even if they're currently obscured. We can bring all those assets back into play through skillful conversations, enabling people to thrive by rediscovering their own agency.

”

LISTENING WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE EAR

Just listening well to a struggling colleague can make all the difference.

TOP TIPS

- **Try to Support, Not Shift**

Being a good listener includes the skill of keeping the focus of what's said on your conversational partner (support response) instead of responding by referencing yourself or handing out advice and opinions (shift response).

- **Ask Questions**

One way to reduce your shift talk is to ask your conversational partner a question based on what they just said, enabling them to elaborate and keeping the focus on them.

- **Ask Supportive Questions**

Ask questions that enable your conversational partner to say what they want or need; and to describe what means they have to get what they want – their experience, skills, qualities and resources.

FIVE WAYS TO DEVELOP LISTENING WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE EAR

1. Remember Everybody Wants Something

Every time someone appears for a conversation with you, practice consciously spotting and caring about what they want from it (small talk, information, reassurance, help...).

Sometimes you might ask directly. Knowing and caring about what someone wants affects the quality of how you listen and what you say in response.

2. Make a Choice Over the Way You Listen

Most of us most of the time listen on auto-pilot. It can be very hard work giving someone your full attention and you can't always do so. When you choose to do so, make the conversation about what they want or hope for, and ask questions that throw light on how they will move towards and get those things.

3. Remember People are the Experts of Their Own Lives

While there are of course times to advise and instruct, people are deeply resourceful and experienced, and know how to find their way forwards as they navigate life. Ask questions that assume this and that dust off and reveal all their good stuff.

4. Don't be Afraid of not Knowing What to Say

One reason we revert to shift responses (away from the wants and needs of our conversational partner) is that we are uncomfortable with not knowing how to respond. However, just saying "I don't know what to say, I want to be useful, I'll do my best if you want to talk" can be so helpful for someone who needs a listener.

5. Listening is a Skill and Can be Learned

And it's worth learning because the impact of listening well is huge. It's costly because it means you suspend or quieten your own needs and ego, but it's ultimately for the benefit of all and is rewarding when lives change for the better. Please get in touch if you would like your team to have some constructive listening training.

PERSONAL WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

CULTIVATING PERSONAL RESILIENCE

There has never been a better time to understand more about resilience and identify your strengths, all of which will lead to a happier and more productive experience at work. Resilience is such an important capability to cultivate in the modern working world. It allows us to feel an engaging amount of challenge at work, without that developing into stress, and helps us manage the circumstances around us so that we feel happy and in control.

TOP TIPS

1. **Imagine You're a Mountain Climber**

A certain amount of pressure can motivate us, help us focus and to give us drive. But too much pressure, and for too long, can be problematic. Imagine 'stress' as a mountain, and you are a climber. All the way up you are putting in clamps to hold your safety rope – exercise, eating well, socialising with loved ones, finding time for your hobbies, walking the dog. And that means if you go over the peak and feel yourself starting to fall into crisis or overwhelm – you have some mechanisms to pull yourself back to safety.





2. Identify What's in and Out of Your Control

On a day to day basis, many small stressors can mount up causing a big feeling of overwhelm. However, there are other times when a single big event will be the thing to push you into strain. Map out everything that concerns you, and then divide these into ones where you have control over the outcome and ones where you do not. Devote your energy towards affecting the factors IN your control and let go of what you can't influence.

3. Find Your Energisers

The key to resilience is understanding what energises you, and what saps you of your energy. In moments of low resilience, you need ways to 'fill your cup.' This is the idea behind 'energy renewal'. We expend energy, and we need to renew it. This will vary considerably from person to person - some will want to run a 5K while another would prefer to renew their energy curled up in a quiet corner with a book.

4. Minimise Your Energy Drains

Imagine this analogy: when you recharge your phone, it's ready for its next use. The more apps you can shut down and trash you can clean out, the less the charging time takes and the better the phone's perform on its next use. The same is true of us, we must find ways to really shut off to recharge quickly and fully; and be energised for what lies ahead. What's currently draining you that you can minimise or cut out?

5. Create Commitments

Write down three simple commitments you can make to yourself to boost your resilience based on the tips above. Keep them visible, refer back to them often and they'll help keep you on track for a more resilient lifestyle.

PERSONAL WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

MINDFULNESS FOR MANAGING PRESSURE

At times it's impossible to control the level of pressure we face. What we can control is how we react to it. There are many ways that mindfulness can help us respond well to pressure, and also how to prepare us for it.

3 KEY PRINCIPLES OF MINDFULNESS FOR MANAGING PRESSURE

1. **Mindful Intention**

Actively choosing to soothe the nervous system on a regular basis will bring you out of the stress state and into the state of calm & resilience.

2. **Mindful Attention**

Noticing where you place your attention and consciously bringing it to the present moment will leave you feeling more grounded, alert and focused.

3. **Mindful Attitude**

Practice observing your thoughts and feelings in a compassionate and non-judgmental way.

WAYS IN WHICH MINDFULNESS CAN HELP YOU MANAGE PRESSURE AND PREPARE YOU FOR IT

1. There is so much external stimulation, information and a general bombardment of negativity, much of which is out of our control. Mindfulness helps us control our internal system and to face whatever comes at us with more resilience.
2. Practicing mindfulness has been proven to have many benefits especially at work including; increasing productivity, motivation and concentration, improving brain function, feelings of empowerment, and a happier state of mind.
3. Mindfulness is not one practice. It's a way of living and a state of mind that allows us to move through life with more inner peace, strength and compassion. Yet it's through the practices that we get there.

3 KEY PRACTICES

1. 3-Minute: Conscious Breath & Body Practice

(Recommend at least twice daily)
Please click [HERE](#) for a 3 min audio file

2. Grounding Sensory Technique

Watch the video [HERE](#)

3. 5-Minute: Mindful Attitude Practice When Under Pressure

Please click [HERE](#) for a 5 min audio file



“

Being mindful under pressure is like being the mountain in the storm, it may be raging, but we remain unshaken, able to weather the storm in all its forms

”

PERSONAL WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

CONNECTION IS THE KEY INGREDIENT TO ENHANCE YOUR WELLBEING

We all have a largely untapped resource for enhancing our wellbeing. Leaning into relationships with your colleagues could be the answer to a long and happy life.

EXTEND YOUR LEARNING

1. Reframe Time in the Office

- Reframe time with colleagues as a benefit not a cost. Instead of focusing on what it costs you in travel time, less flexibility, childcare headaches, look to the benefits of office time as an opportunity to connect, to lean into relationships.
- Switch out screen time for people. Reap the physical benefits that face to face time brings, boosting oxytocin (your love/trust hormone) and reducing cortisol (your primary stress hormone).
- Seek out people who have common passions and create a culture to be proud of. Are there people who love to run, who enjoy curling up with a good book, who are crazy about crazy golf? Create a club and share what gives you joy.

2. Bring your Vulnerability to Work

- Be authentic. If someone asks you if you're ok, say how you really feel for once. Open a conversation. Be more human, that will always unlock connection. As Brene Brown says, "Allow yourself to be seen, really seen."
- Start team meetings with an opportunity to share something from your personal life. Hearing about each other's worlds outside of work is a great leveller and opportunity to create connection and belonging.
- Reflect on whether you wear a mask at work, and what you deny yourself and others in terms of connection when you do this. Reflect on the impact wearing a mask has on your wellbeing, it's exhausting to pretend to be something we're not.

3. Choose the Bigger Life

- Adopt Gretchen Ruben's, author of The Happiness Project, motto - "Choose the Bigger Life" - when making decisions large and small. Challenge yourself to say yes to opportunities to connect.

- Encourage yourself to go to the edge of your stretch zone. If we stay in our comfort zone, we never grow. Try stretching yourself in small ways to begin with such as saying yes to a social plan you might not have done.

- Lean in to a brave conversation. Have you noticed someone who isn't quite themselves?

What would happen if you had a conversation with them, where you listen really deeply?

What might that give them?

What might it give you?



TEAM WELLBEING



HUMAN LEADERSHIP AND WHY IT CREATES A CULTURE OF WELLBEING

People are feeling increasingly safe to bring their 'whole selves' to work but are our leaders well equipped to manage this? In order to navigate this new terrain, we must tap into what really makes us human.

TOP TIPS

1. Let Go of the Mask

- Notice and recognise what your current view of leadership is made up of. Is it a patchwork quilt of leaders you've had, things you've seen in films, read in books? What and who are you trying to emulate and is that serving you and your team?
- Tune back into yourself. Tap into what drives you and makes you unique. Ask friends and family, reference insights you have gleaned in the past, or could do; such as MBTI, Gallup's Strengthsfinder or The Four Tendencies.
- Do some unlearning. Become a more integrated version of yourself instead of managing impressions. This requires you to fear less and feel more. Being more authentic and vulnerable will create healthy people and high performers.

2. Embrace Compassion and Collaboration

- Prioritise compassion. Reflect on how you can do hard things and make hard decisions whilst remaining a good human being and bringing out the best in others.
- Become “The master of I don’t know”. It is an unwritten expectation that leaders always have the answer but that robs people of opportunity for creativity and growth. Instead, show your humility and leave space for others to help solve.
- Lay the ground for ideas to surface and flourish. Set the tone by encouraging people to contribute and to rise when they fall. By creating a safe environment for all ideas, collaboration will underpin the culture.

3. Recognise and Reward Human Leadership

- Define what human leadership means in your business. What are the values and qualities that you’d like to be commonplace? Is it about self respect, commitment to personal development, compassion, generosity?
- Create a workplace where aspects of human leadership are weaved into the everyday. A standard to which people aspire to. Rituals which feature in regular meetings and part of the vernacular.
- Reward human leadership. Notice and celebrate acts of human leadership and consider creating a Human Leadership Awards programme where people who are role modelling the key behaviours are recognised.



SPOTTING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN YOUR TEAM

You might not recognise or know how to support someone with poor mental health, but with a little knowledge, empathy and skill, you might save someone's life.

TOP TIPS

1. **Anxiety And Depression May Be Hard To Spot In The Workplace Because There May Be Barriers That Prevent People From Being Open. Look Out For These Common Signs And Notice Changes In Those You Know.**

- Avoidance of people / meetings
- Looking tired / changes in appearance
- Keeping camera off for online meetings
- Irritability / apathy / emotional snapping
- Lateness / presenteeism / over-working
- Overcompensating behaviours
- Changes in eating habits

2. **Handling Everyday Wellbeing Conversations**

Are you the right person to be assisting?

- You might approach a situation, or someone may approach you.
- Remember the importance of the Oxygen Mask analogy.
- Do you have the time and privacy needed to give your support?

Active listening is a skill that takes practice.

- Remember a time when you felt listened to, without judgement - and understood.

Notice what you saw, heard, and felt.

Ask for constructive feedback regularly to develop your listening skills, and self awareness focusing on these areas:

- Non-verbal communication: posture, pace, tone, intonation.
- Questioning techniques: your language, open, exploratory, clarification.
- Judgement: actively reflect: are you showing pity, sympathy, compassion or empathy?
- How can build rapport / a connection / trust?

3. Helping in a Crisis

Can you assess the urgency of the situation? Is this a near crisis, or crisis? Notice your instincts and consciously keep an open mind. Use simple language, reflect to check for understanding, keep questions short.

Be direct:

- Ask if they've felt like this before; if so, what/who helped? What does the person want – keep the person at the centre. Is there someone they know who can help? You may not be able to maintain confidentiality. Be mindful of your personal safety.
- If you suspect they are having a panic attack, show calm, it's infectious; use breathing and focus techniques to help the person regulate their breathing. Be mindful that the person you are supporting might think they're having a heart attack. If in any doubt, call 999.
- If you suspect the person may be thinking about or planning to take their life, ask them.

Ask if they have a crisis card.

If you are in any doubt about the person's safety, dial 999.

4. Extend Your Learning

1. Assess your stress: give yourself a wellbeing MOT using this online tool: <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/address-your-stress/stress-container-resourcedownload.pdf>

This is a superb conversation starter for leaders of teams at work.

2. Download the Hub of Hope App. Search by need or by postcode for available services.

3. Signpost to 'Shout' (24/7) the confidential texting App. Simply text 'Shout' to **85258**.

4. Signpost to The Samaritans: accessible via phone, email, online chat and App.

5. Explore the support available via your employer. From HR to Occupational Health, and Employee Assistance Programmes. Find out what your employer's Wellbeing strategy is. How will Leaders will be role modelling wellbeing and healthy behaviours?

6. Become a Mental Health First Aider. This will give you a lot of skills and confidence personally, socially, in your community, and at work. <https://mhfaengland.org/publicprofile/?id=472d2bb6-74a5-e911->

**Supporting Someone Can Be Distressing.
Practice Self Care And
Seek Support If Needed**

TEAM WELLBEING

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: THE SECRET TO HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

TOP TIPS

1. Reset Expectations

- Set the stage. If you are a leader or manager of people, this is about you establishing a new tone. Explaining that you understand and appreciate that everyone is operating in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. Acknowledge that this is not straightforward.
- This is about reframing failure – as an opportunity to learn. There will be mistakes and learning along the way and ‘failing fast!’ is the path to success.
- Emphasise purpose – identify what’s at stake, why it matters and for whom – you are trying to motivate effort here. As people can lose sight of the bigger picture and we all need a sense of purpose to bring our A game.



“
The research is overwhelming and unanimous. When people feel psychologically safe at work, they are free. Free to express themselves, free to challenge, free to think creatively, free to admit to mistakes, free to be themselves, and free to unlock their true potential.
”



2. Create an Environment of Participation

- Adopt a learning mindset. Become the master of “I don’t know”. No one will take an interpersonal risk and make a suggestion when the boss gives the impression they know everything. Never underestimate others. Be passionately curious.
- To encourage participation you need proactive enquiry – this means purposefully probing, cultivating genuine interest and curiosity in others’ views and responses.
- We must also design structures for input – quant, qual, focus groups, steering committees, cross functional, networks – safe spaces for learning and asking questions without judgment.

3. Make Good on Your Promise

- Respond mindfully. When it comes to reacting to people speaking up, it’s important to express appreciation first. This can be low level – small thank yous, or high level, celebrations or rewards for intelligent failure.
- A collaborative approach. And as you reframed failure when you set expectations in part 1, this is you making good on that promise when it happens. If a boss responds with anger or disdain as soon as someone steps forward to speak up about a problem, the safety will quickly evaporate. A productive response must be appreciative, respectful, and offer a path forward. This is about acknowledging failure, having open discussion.
- And repeat... This is a process that has to live and breath, it is not a one off ‘launch’. It is a way of working and leading. Notice how people are responding to changes. Is the culture shifting? Are people more creative, more settled, more engaged? Is this translating into performance? What measures can be tracked?

Need help?

These organisations are there to support you if it all gets too much:

Shout Crisis Textline

For immediate support, text SHOUT to 85258 for free, confidential text support available 24/7. Volunteers are on hand to listen and provide guidance.

Mind

Mind has a network of local branches that provide comprehensive mental health services, from crisis helplines to drop-in centres, housing support, and counselling.

Call Mind's support line on 0300 102 1234

This is a safe space for you to talk about your mental health.

Our advisors are trained to listen to you and help you find specialist support if you need it.

Open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays)

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Samaritans

You can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year:

Call 116 123 (free from any phone)

Call the Samaritans Welsh Language Line on 0808 164 0123 (7pm-11pm every day)

SANeline

If you're experiencing a mental health problem or supporting someone else, you can call SANeline

Call 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm-10pm every day)

National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK

Offers a supportive listening service to anyone with thoughts of suicide.

You can call the National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK

Call 0800 689 5652 (6pm to midnight every day)

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

CALM provides crucial support for anyone struggling with mental health issues.

Their helpline and live chat are available daily from 5pm to midnight, ensuring access to guidance when needed.

Helpline: 0800 58 58 58 (5pm-midnight, every day)

Website: thecalmzone.net

Papyrus HOPELINEUK

If you're under 35 and struggling with suicidal feelings, or concerned about a young person who might be struggling, you can call Papyrus HOPELINEUK

Call: 0800 068 4141 (24 hours, 7 days a week)

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Text: 07786 209 697

Switchboard

If you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, you can call Switchboard

Call: 0300 330 0630 (10am-10pm every day)

Email: chris@switchboard.lgbt or use their webchat service.

Phone operators all identify as LGBT+.