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Understanding and assessing worker wellbeing

Paula Allen
Global Leader and SVP, Research and Client Insights
TELUS Health

October 27, 2023

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Our discussion today

Workers' mental health, now

The evolving landscape

Leaders' role and resilience

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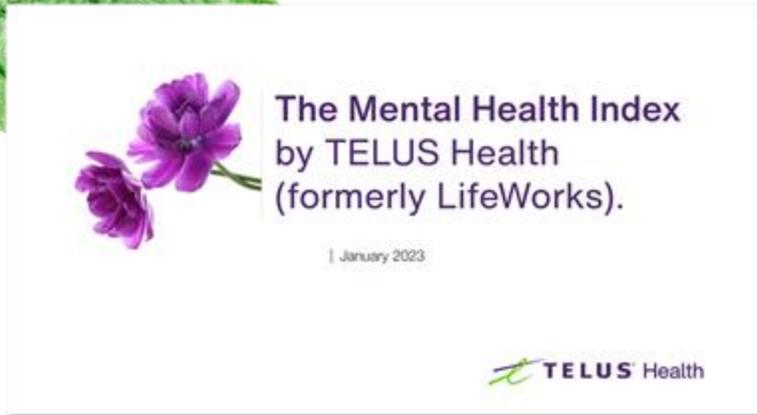# The TELUS Mental Health Index (MHI)

28,000 working individuals.

- Europe, United Kingdom, North America, Australia, New Zealand, Asia

Benchmarks from 2017-2019.

- **MHI is validated** against PHQ-9, GAD-7, WSAS, and the OLBI

- Country differences correlate with the GLOBE Index, The Happiness Index, and the Hofstede 6D of Culture

Widely referenced and **leveraged by governments** as well as organizations.

The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly LifeWorks).

| January 2023

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There has been a clear **shift in our collective mental health**

	High risk	Moderate risk	Low risk
August 2023	33%	43%	24%
April 2020	34%	45%	21%
2017-2019 (pre-pandemic)	14%	51%	35%

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The increased **risk shows in several ways**

Compared to 2019

2.4x
more high-
risk
mental health

4x
more high-
risk
drinking

1 in 2
more
sensitive
to stress

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The long-term strain of the pandemic appears to have reset our collective mental health

Prolonged strain <u>over-activates the "fight or flight" response</u>, and dampens empathy and emotional control.

Increased **sensitivity to stress** means more:

- Conflict
- Cynicism
- Anger
- Impulsiveness or apathy
- Mental health vulnerability

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The MHI is scored from 1-100

80 to 100 = Optimum
51 to 79 = Varying levels of strain
1 to 50 = Significant distress

Canada Overall 64.6	Manufacturing 66.3
Isolation and anxiety are consistently the worst scores	Manufacturing 11% concerned about their drinking or drug use 14% concerned about family

August 2023

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Challenges with **executive function** are prevalent

Half of workers have at least one ongoing challenge in executive function:

- 49% feel disorganized
- 42% struggle to finish important tasks
- 37% have trouble taking in new information

This is **most prevalent for workers under 40**

These challenges are strongly linked to **lower productivity and exacerbation of anxiety and depression** even when such issues were not the primary cause

The increased **challenges to mental health**, started prior to the pandemic and impact younger cohort more

- Increasing sense of **isolation**

- **Less trust** in friendships in younger cohorts

- The experience of an increasingly **rapid pace of change in society**

- **Feeling overwhelmed** and increases in anxiety

- **Financial risk** (the absence of emergency savings)

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2/3 managers have had "**behavioural**" challenges in their team

26% of managers have experienced team conflict in the past year
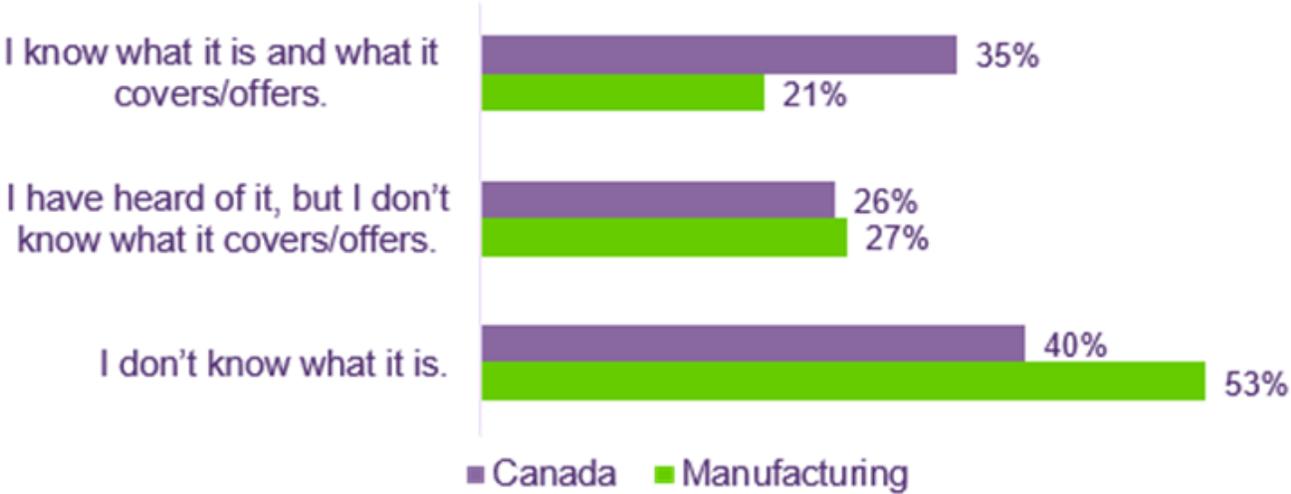
12% of managers have experienced harassment/bullying in their teams in the past year

13% have had challenges with an employee's **substance use**

12% have had challenges with an employee's **return from extended sick leave**

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A lower per cent of Manufacturing workers are **aware of EAP**

Do you know what an EAP is?

I know what it is and what it covers/offers.
- Canada: 35%
- Manufacturing: 21%

I have heard of it, but I don't know what it covers/offers.
- Canada: 26%
- Manufacturing: 27%

I don't know what it is.
- Canada: 40%
- Manufacturing: 53%

■ Canada ■ Manufacturing

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Even those who are aware have **misconceptions that are barriers to EAP use**

Reason for not using EAP	Canada	Manufacturing
I do not know specifically what it covers	34%	37%
Concern about cost	27%	20%`
I do not know how to access it	21%	26%

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Key Point:

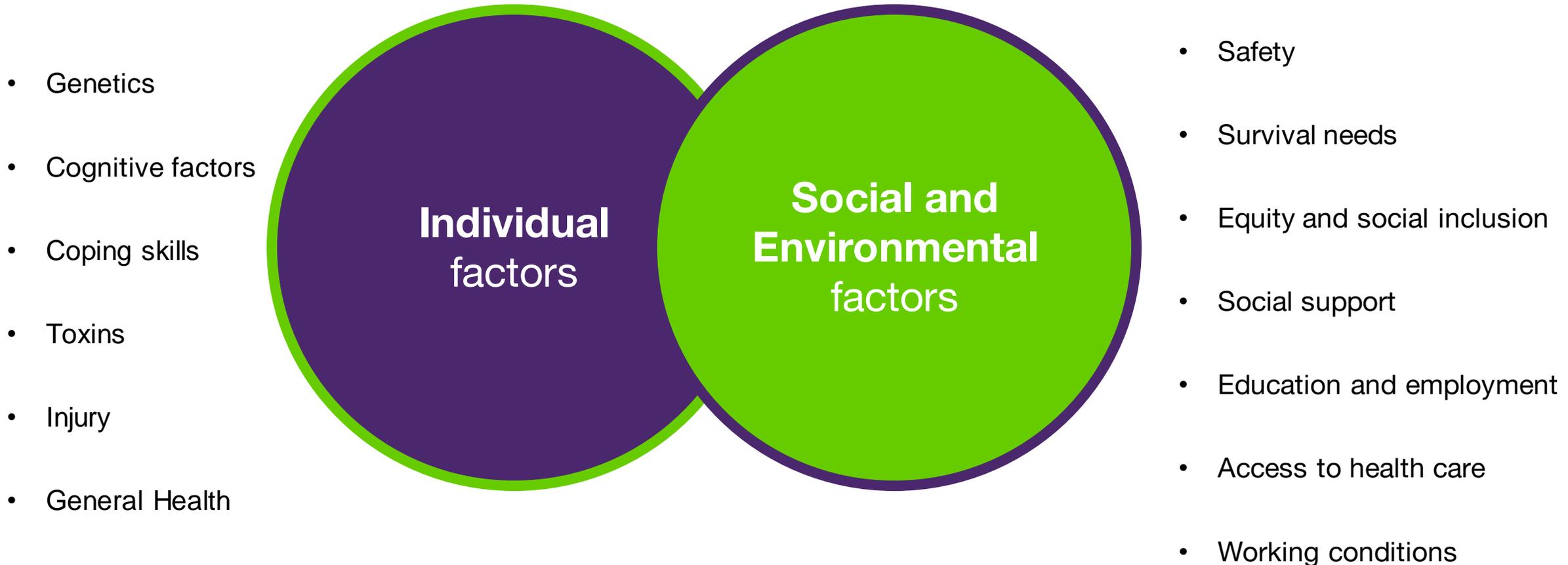Our collective mental health has changed therefore the mitigation effort needs to increase

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Mental health risk is driven by **both individual and social factors**

- Genetics
- Cognitive factors
- Coping skills
- Toxins
- Injury
- General Health

Individual factors

Social and Environmental factors

- Safety
- Survival needs
- Equity and social inclusion
- Social support
- Education and employment
- Access to health care
- Working conditions

Five **manager behaviours/traits** correlate with the wellbeing of teams, work productivity and discretionary effort

Charismatic
vs Uninspiring.

Autonomous
vs Dependent.

Team oriented
vs Individually motivated.

Inclusive
vs Autocratic.

Humane
vs Unsupportive/hostile.

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Nine indicators of **workplace culture indicators** correlate with worker mental health

Positive indicators.

Collaborative vs Competitive.	**Motivating** vs Un-motivating.	**Innovative** vs Stagnant.
Inclusive vs Cliquish.	**Flexible** vs Inflexible.	**Relaxed** vs Hard-driving.
Safe vs Unsafe.	**Respectful** vs Disrespectful.	**Supportive** vs Uncaring/Hostile.

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Those working in **cultures with negative indicators**

2x Symptoms of **burnout**.

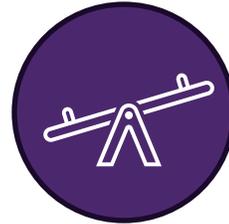**2x** As likely to feel **unsettled/nervous**.

2x Have **concerns with alcohol**.

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Both mental health risk management and wellbeing are **increasingly significant for business**

Risk management accountability

Supports business sustainability:
- Reputation
- Health, disability, legal costs
- ESG – Environment, social and governance investment factors
- Emerging legislation

Wellbeing investment

Supports business success:
- Innovation
- Customer service
- Collaboration
- Discretionary effort
- Essential to managing AI driven work changes

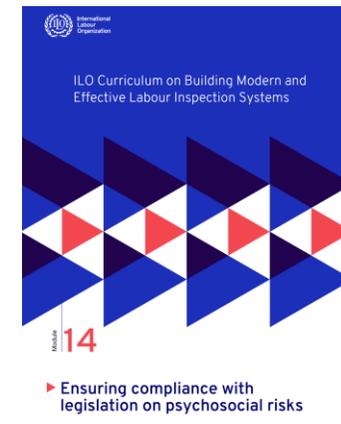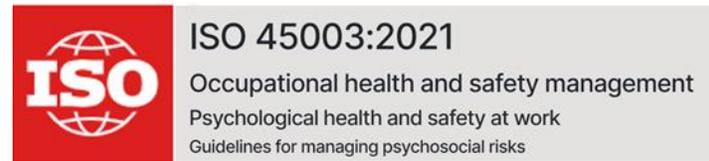# **Psychological health and safety requirements** are on par with physical health and safety requirements

Prescribes how employers must identify and manage hazards and risks to workers' psychological health and safety.
The prevention plan must be in writing, be specific about risks, controls and the processes used to arrive at the plan

Psychological Health and Safety Planned Inspectional Initiative focuses on risk identification and prevention.
It goes beyond bullying and harassment obligations to promote broader issues impacting psychological safety and mental well-being in the workplace.

Workplace Strategy Index for Mental Health (WSI-MH)

A self-assessment tool for organizations.

- Informed by **leading practices**
  - ISO-45003, the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, ILO, WHO, etc

- **Benchmarks** against region, industry and organizational size

- Overall score plus **scores in each of four pillars**
  1. Compliance to basic risk management.
  2. Foundational (reactive) actions and resources.
  3. Programming that can positively (proactively) impact mental health.
  4. Cultural integration.

- Suggested **next steps**

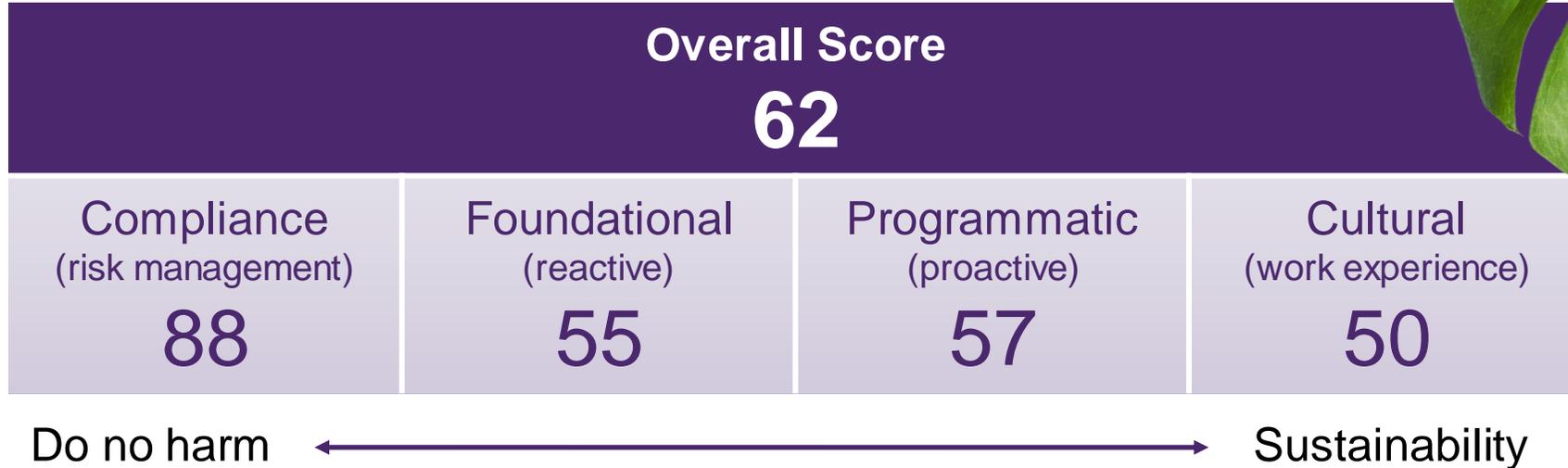
Workplace Strategy Index for mental health report.

Prepared for: ABC Inc.

Index completed by: John Smith
Index completed on: Wednesday, February 22, 2023

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There is opportunity to **align further to leading practices**

Overall Score
62

Compliance (risk management)	Foundational (reactive)	Programmatic (proactive)	Cultural (work experience)
88	55	57	50

Do no harm ←————————————→ Sustainability

0-49 Developing
50-79 On track
80-100 Leading

51% of organizations aspire to the **leading.**

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You can not improve what you do not measure

360-degree measurement has at least three lens

The health and wellbeing of workers	Policy, practices and programs	The impact of interventions
A clear measure of worker health and wellbeing that: - You can track over time - Is sensitive to the full range of wellbeing and ill-health - Is validated - Assesses employee experiences at work Example: **The Mental Health Index for your workplace**	A measure of your infrastructure in risk management and wellbeing - You can track change over time - Assesses your actions relative for practices that are known to be effective - Is specific enough to drive actions Examples: **The Workplace Strategy Index for Mental Health**; ISO, ILO, the National Standard	A model of measures to assess interventions - **Process measures** such a program use and service - **Impact measures**, assessing the change that results from the intervention - **Insights for continuous improvement**, which assess both qualitive and quantitative data for opportunities **Must** be set up before the program starts

Key Point:

Employers can not ignore accountabilities for psychological health and safety – ongoing assessment is essential

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Knowing when to step-in is clearer than you might think

- Has there been a change in behaviour?

- Are you concerned?

- Is the intensity/or lack of intensity of responses unusual?

- Have relationship deteriorated?

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When someone else is in distress, **step-in, listen and show empathy**

- Be human

- Show care

- Be specific about what you see

- Resist quick fixes

- Support the next step

There are **some risks** with some common responses?

- You deciding how to protect the employee from stress

- Not listening – "the birthday party story"

- Pushing the quick fix

- Becoming the manager / therapist

- Gossiping

- Doing nothing

For **high performers**, some behaviour change may get ignored when work and attendance continues

- Increased **perfectionism**
- Overly **driven**
- Increased need for methodical approaches / **inflexible**
- Relentlessly **critical**
- May unknowingly create tension for others

- Over-reliance on **temporary coping** strategies (e.g. alcohol, gambling)
- Irritability; **quick to anger**
- Low level constant **sadness**
- Increased **isolation**
- Need for **constant activity**
- May continue to overachieve **work**

There are **two main burnout risks**

Lack of ongoing recovery

Excessive mental strain
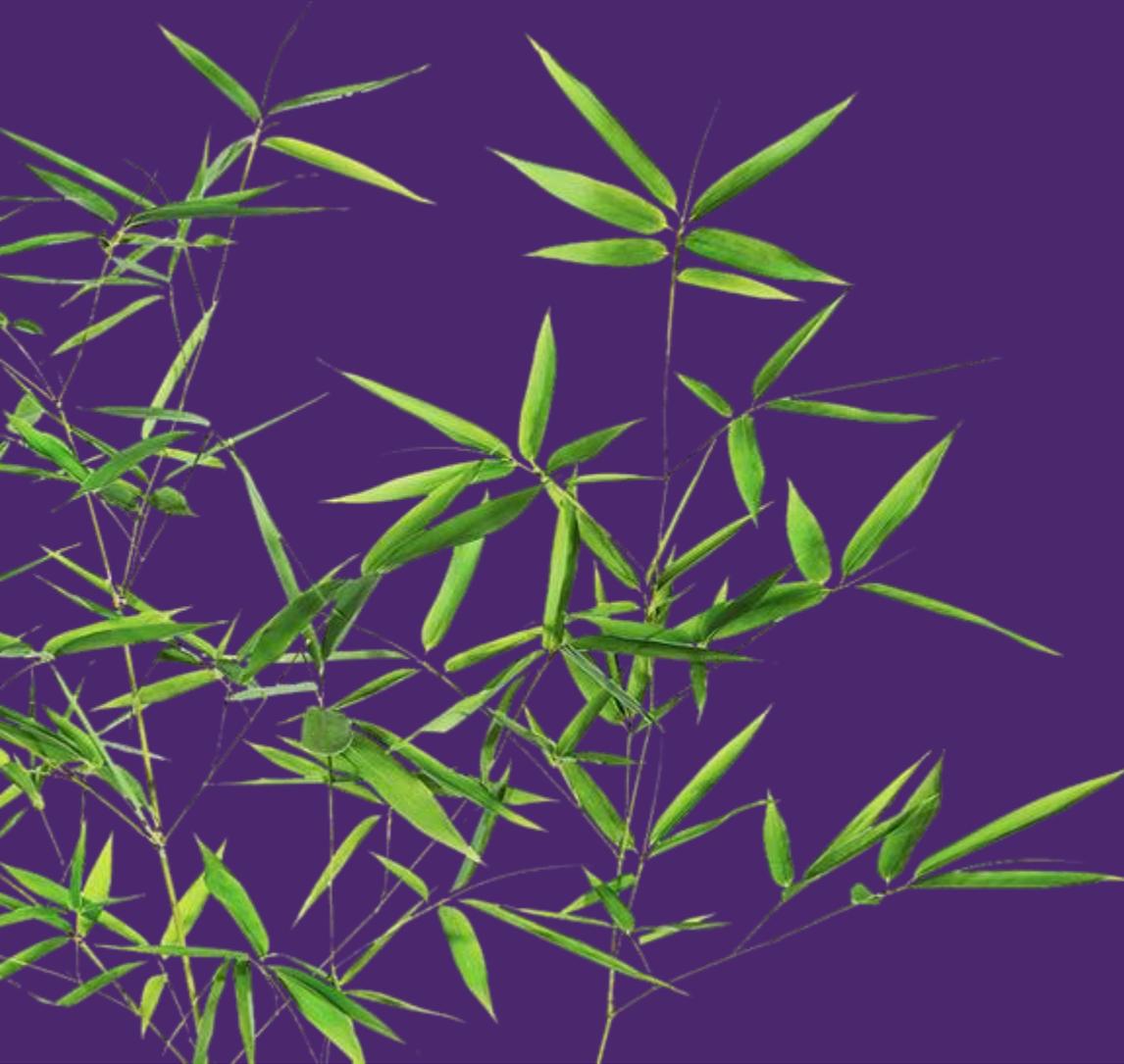
There are **two main burnout risks**

Rest alone

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Recovery

Lack of ongoing recovery

Rest is important but <u>recovery from stress is not passive</u>.

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There are **two main burnout risks**

Grit

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Resilience

Resilience is not about pushing through strain; it is the capacity to recover from strain.

Excessive mental strain

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Building resilience has **many facets**

The <u>social support</u> given and received

Your brain's <u>physical health</u>

The <u>balance of experiences</u>

<u>Learned responses</u>

34

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- Invest time in others
- Show gratitude
- Share experiences
- Reach out to others
- **Do not wait until it is "bad enough" to use EAP**

The social support given and received

Your brain's
<u>physical health</u>

- **Nutrition**
- Sleep
- Physical movement
- Manage even minor head injury
- Limit alcohol and chemicals

- **Build variety into each day**
- Pursue more positive than negative
- Attend to your financial safety net
- Seek accomplishments
- Address traumas

The balance of experiences

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- Understand your triggers
- Accept your feelings
- **Decide your responses**
- Practice any change in your pattern
- Consider CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy/Skill building)

Learned responses

Key Point:

Managers have an important role; managers multiple levels of support

Thoughts?

Try to think of at least one thing you can do for your organization or yourself