Mastering Resilience

MANAGER GUIDE

Wraw®

Introduction

Wraw is founded on the 5 Pillars of Resilience, a validated and evidence-based model, offering a holistic view of five key elements that support wellbeing:

ENERGY   Sustaining and renewing physical energy to have the capacity to keep going through challenging times.

FUTURE FOCUS   Having a clear sense of purpose and direction to help to move forwards without getting stuck or feeling held back.

INNER DRIVE   Sustaining self-belief when times get tough, displaying confidence, motivation and perseverance.

FLEXIBLE THINKING   Having an open and optimistic mindset, enabling a positive and adaptive response to change and challenges.

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS   Building open and trusting relationships, and being willing to call on these for help and support if facing a challenge.

We hope you enjoy working through the exercises and reflections in the Energy Toolkit. There is a Toolkit for each of the 5 Pillars.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

The manager is a key driver in creating a positive healthy working environment that nurtures wellbeing and resilience for teams.

By role-modelling resilient behaviours themselves, demonstrating good work-life integration, strong working relationships and a healthy lifestyle, they will lead and champion resilience and wellbeing.

The ability to proactively manage resilience is a feature of a healthy, productive and engaged workforce. When a team member feels supported by his or her line manager, they will feel more committed to the wider organisation. The benefits for the manager are manifold: better attendance, reduced staff turnover and a team that responds positively and effectively to the many and varied challenges that they face as they work together to meet the demands of a normal working week.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

The key to managing resilience and supporting optimum performance within your team is understanding how pressure may be influencing performance. In many ways, pressure can enhance performance. It can foster drive, focus and motivation. However, too much pressure, for too long, can do the exact opposite. This can have a very marked, negative impact on performance.

As a manager, it is important to build an understanding of how both you and your team are experiencing pressure. The diagram below helps to explain this:

Source: The Wellbeing Project (Europe) Ltd
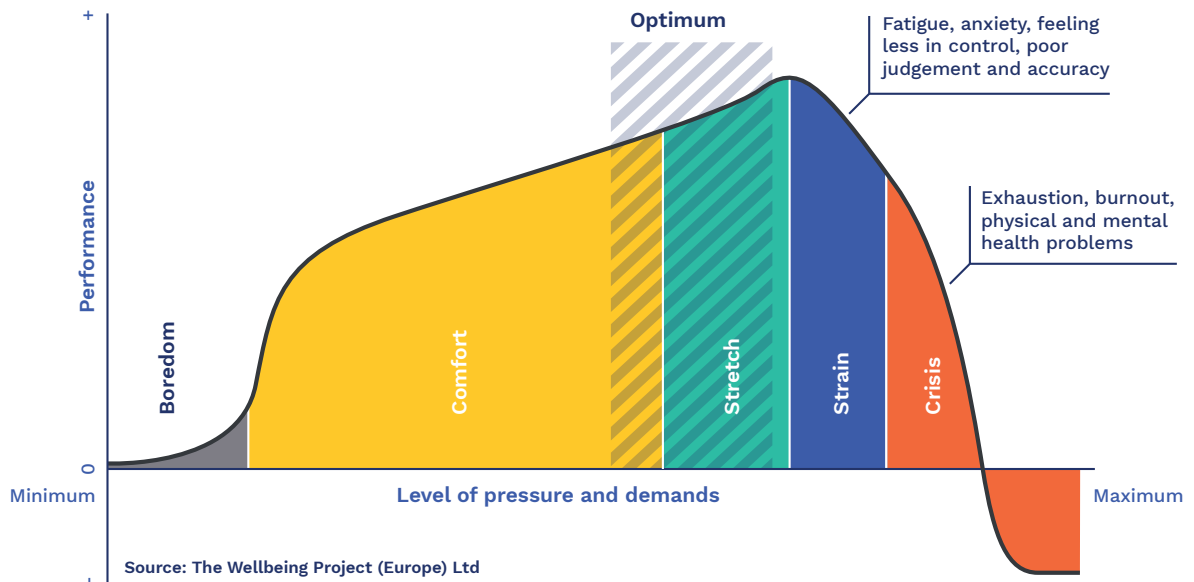
Boredom

When operating in this space, without deadlines or targets, team members may feel undervalued, have little sense of purpose, appear unenthusiastic, slow and lethargic. This can also be where a team member may 'sit' if they have fallen off the end of the curve.

Comfort

In this space, team members are mainly doing what they know how to do and are presented with no great challenge. For some, this is an ideal place to operate. However, others may find it unstimulating and not enough of a stretch. As the name suggests, the comfort zone is just that – the level of performance, while acceptable, is not generally at its best.

Stretch

Team members in this space are generally stepping up the pace - they may be learning something new or pushing themselves to perform more and be more productive. Some team members may enjoy the challenge that this brings. For others this may soon start to feel uncomfortable and they may be keen to get back to 'comfort'. The comfort zone may offer a temporary window of valuable recovery for them.
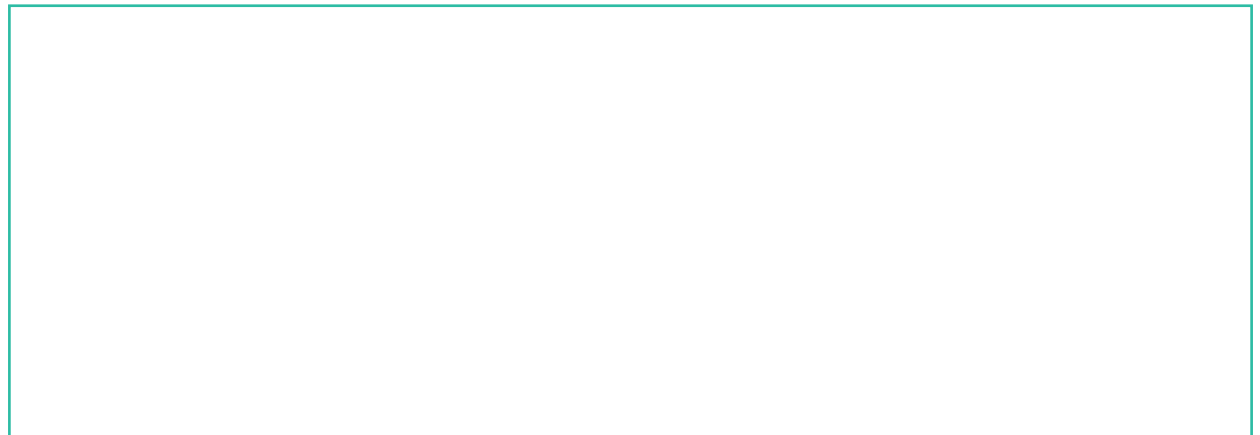
Strain

The line between stretch and strain can be a fine one and can be influenced by both the length of time in stretch and the nature and pace of the challenges faced when there. There are some inherent dangers to spending too long in 'stretch'. An increasing or cumulative number of challenges and stressors may mean that team members feel less able to cope. If the signs of strain are caught early enough, a team member can pull themselves back and be less likely to fall into crisis.

Crisis

At this point a team member may sense a lack of control and feel completely exhausted. In extreme cases, this can lead to burnout, sometimes breakdown or depression. A bias towards negative thinking may be coupled with a general withdrawal from friends/family/colleagues. Sickness may result in absence. When the balance tips and a team member plunges into crisis, their performance crashes as they have neither the energy nor the focus to keep moving forward.

Where would you place yourself and your team on the Pressure Performance Curve?

What does this mean for your overall team resilience?

Managers who look to support resilience appreciate the importance of understanding pressure and how this is experienced within their team. This insight allows them to put the right support in place to ensure their team can respond effectively to the challenges they face.

CREATING INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING

Managers and their teams benefit from working together to review how they are responding to current pressures.

Team members will look to their manager to set an example of how to support their own personal resilience. For this reason, we recommend that you spend some time reflecting on and working on your own development.

As their manager, you are ideally placed to role-model resilience-building behaviours which will allow your team to respond effectively to challenge or setback.

USING THE TOOLKITS TO SUPPORT YOUR TEAM

The Wraw Toolkits offer a good starting point for discussions around how to support greater resilience. We have listed below some ideas on how you might draw on some of the content in each Toolkit:

Pillar 1 – Energy

The Energy Pillar is the foundation stone for overall resilience, so it is important that you encourage your team to take steps to ensure this Pillar in particular remains strong. The nature of modern life can mean that this Pillar is under sustained pressure: a more sedentary lifestyle, irregular breaks and eating patterns and long working hours can all contribute to stress.

The Energy Pillar draws on four main areas:

- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Healthy consumption
- Boundaries

All of these can be impacted by the demands and pressures of work.

What steps can you discuss and consider as a team to better manage any pressure in this area?

Pillar 2 – Future Focus

Future focus enables us to see beyond the here and now and this is particularly important for a team which may feel under pressure. Stress can breed negative thinking, causing a team to feel 'stuck' in a particular situation.

As manager, you can help your team to become 'unstuck' and prioritise what's important. Drawing on the exercises in this Toolkit, create some shared team goals. Once you have identified what these are, draw on the technique of **Imaginary Hindsight** to 'route-map' how to achieve these goals.

| Current reality	The steps we will take to make this happen	Our future focus
e.g. Several team members feel overwhelmed. e.g. Lack of clarity about roles.	e.g. Review roles in the team to clarify for each individual e.g. Use team whiteboard or shared drive to publish goals, show task allocation and track progress e.g. Weekly 1-1s with manager to check in on progress and any obstacles	e.g. Our workload planning and allocation process feels fair and is visible to all

Pillar 3 – Inner Drive

Inner Drive plays an important role in resilience because it ensures you and your team are confident in your ability to face setback and challenge. Feeling positive and optimistic about the future helps create a solutions-focused mindset.

A good place to start is to complete a strengths inventory within the team – in other words, consider what you are already doing well or are good at as a team.

Consider 3 things the team already do well:

Strength	Example

Now, linking back to the previous exercise, consider how these strengths can be leveraged to help you achieve your future focus.
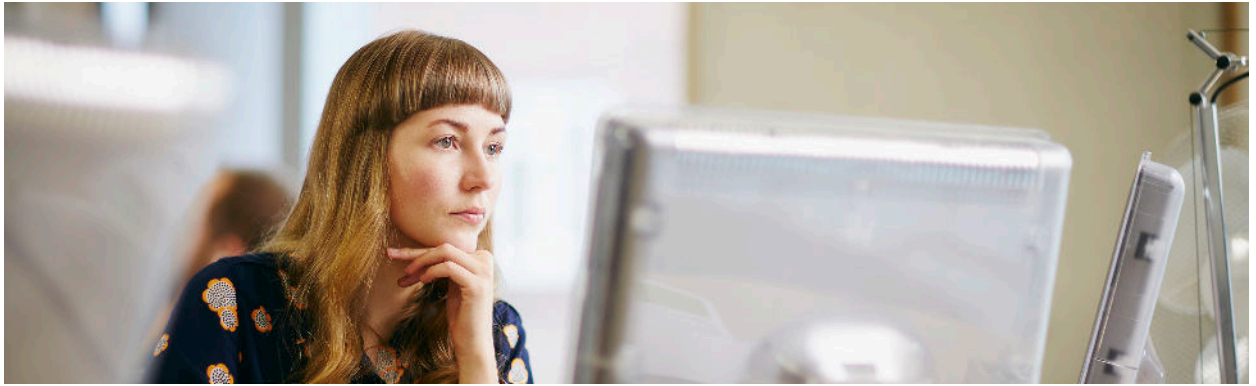
Pillar 4 – Flexible Thinking

Flexible thinking allows us to see things from different perspectives. Over time, a team can develop a pattern of 'group-think', where a certain opinion is formed in relation to a particular situation they face.

As a manager, it is important to regularly consider and challenge how the team are thinking and behaving. Can a situation be viewed from another angle? Is 'group-think' skewing perspective?

By deliberately considering a particular problem or challenge from different perspectives, you can encourage team members to be more open to alternative possibilities.

This process of reframing is described in the Toolkit. Key questions you might ask are:

- How might another department view this challenge?
- How important is this challenge in relation to our role in the organisation?
- How big a deal will this be in a week/month/year?
- When/why/how might this challenge actually be a good thing?

Pillar 5 – Strong Relationships

Strong, constructive and positive relationships oil the wheels of the workplace. They allow different teams and individuals to work well together. The many demands of the workplace can put relationships between different teams under pressure.

When communication and understanding across teams starts to fail, productivity and resilience can be eroded. As manager, you are ideally placed to monitor inter-team relationships to ensure they are effective and constructive.

On occasion, a 'rub' between your and another team may emerge. At times like these, it can help to work with your team to 'Put Yourself in The Other Team's Shoes'. **Consider:**

- What are the main goals of Team X?
- What are their biggest challenges, stressors and demands?
- What's important to them?
- What are their key strengths?
- What is their preferred working style?

The process of working through these questions will highlight how well you and your colleagues know this team. In the process, you may well discover that there are few differences between you. Everyone is simply trying to do their job to support the goals of the wider organisation.

This shift in thinking may well be the first step in ensuring you are working towards maintaining a positive and constructive relationship with the other team.

KEEPING THE WELLBEING CONVERSATION ALIVE

As manager, it is your role to support your team members in their efforts to bolster their personal wellbeing and resilience. As diaries fill up and the time following the initial learning elapses, the focus could easily drift away from building the skills which support real-time resilience.

There are various ways to keep the wellbeing and resilience conversation alive:

1. Use team meetings to 'check in' with the team as a group – how are they drawing on the Toolkits to develop personal resilience? What changes are they making 3, 6, 9 months on?

2. Scheduled meetings are great for round-table discussions, but regular, personal check-ins with each team member will ensure they feel valued and supported. 5-10 minutes of time on a regular basis will allow successes and concerns to be shared and discussed on a personal level.

3. Sometimes, a team member may ask to have a conversation with you relating to wellbeing. Or you may request to have one with them. It is important to create the right environment to support an open and constructive conversation. The information overleaf may help you to prepare for this.

Wellbeing Conversations
Common Issues And Concerns

I think someone on my team might be suffering with stress...

As soon as you think there might be an issue, think about how you will start the conversation and act quickly. Don't put it off. Only delay the conversation if you know of something concrete that means the issue will very soon resolve itself.

I'm not sure how to start. Are there any requirements, or things I must mention?

Every conversation will be different - use your knowledge of the person to help you judge the best approach. Don't forget that HR can also provide advice and support. We recommend that you start casually with an informal conversation, but also be clear on the facts. Be ready to talk about specific examples of changes in performance, or where their behaviour or actions might have affected team performance. Don't think you can just chat it through with no preparation – plan for the conversation and ensure you are aware of what resources and support might be helpful in this situation.

I've noticed there might be an issue, but it's not affecting their performance at work...

Make it clear that you are available to talk, but if they refuse and the problem is not affecting their own performance or anyone else's then you must be prepared to leave it alone. You must respect their privacy, even if it is a work-related issue. Don't assume they will refuse help – make sure you offer help and make it clear that you are available. Leave the offer open and continue to monitor their behaviour and performance.

I'm not comfortable having such a personal conversation...

As a manager your primary responsibility is the performance of your team, so both you (and your team) will benefit from you taking a professional interest in their wellbeing. Listen to the other person and consider the facts about their performance. Do not speculate or jump to conclusions.

What if the conversation becomes heated?

If the conversation is not going well, stop it and make arrangements for a meeting at another time. Speak with HR to gain further guidance.

What if I don't know how to solve the problem?

You're not expected to have all the answers – listen and act as a sounding board to help them make decisions or identify what the next steps should be. Don't feel that you have to take responsibility for everything or assume you have a solution. Refer them to the local resources which are available internally to support health and wellbeing. Contact your local HR for details.

What records should I keep?

If you decide on actions, or commitments about future performance together, write these down so that you both agree to them. Make sure you agree a time-frame for reviewing these and where appropriate, copy any documentation to your HR contact. Don't leave any loose notes or documentation lying around for others to see – respecting your team member's right to confidentiality will support an open and trusting dialogue.

TOP 5 TIPS FOR RESILIENT LEADERS

1. Take some time to work through the individual Toolkits and consider how you might role-model best practice behaviours to your team. Resilient leaders guide the way through their own actions, they do not simply 'point' to it.

2. Understand the role of pressure in your team. Use the Pressure Performance Curve to build a picture of resilience within your team. Does everyone always sit comfortably within the 'optimum performance' zone? What does this mean for any support your team might need?

3. Work together. The Toolkits offer a bank of exercises, tools, techniques and other resources which can help build individual resilience within your team. What sections of the different Toolkits could you choose to discuss, share and work on as a team?

4. Lead the way. Help your team to embed real-time resilience by ensuring the conversation stays alive. Build 'resilience' into your team vocabulary, check-in with team members and encourage open and transparent discussion.

5. View Wellbeing Conversations as an opportunity to ensure your team feel valued and supported as individuals. Refer to the common issues and concerns and make sure you are familiar with the internal resources which support wellbeing and resilience. If in doubt, get in touch with your local contact in HR.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The links below offer a selection of further reading and viewing, linked to the topic of resilience. They may support broader conversations around what resilience and wellbeing mean for you as individuals and as a team.

The art of Kintsugi – where signs of damage and repair add to the quality of the object:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kintsugi

Brene Brown discussing the importance of vulnerability:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzlF7o

Amy Edmondson on creating an environment that supports psychological safety:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUo1QwVcCv0

Drawing on 'radical candor' to care personally and challenge directly:
http://www.radicalcandor.com/our-approach/

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