Hansa Pankhania

7 Pillars of Organisational Wellbeing

A Cutting-edge Strategy for Success

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A CUTTING-EDGE STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hansa Pankhania is the Founder of AUM WELLBEING CONSULTANCY.

She is immensely proud of her job as an **Author, Executive Coach and Speaker**, and cherishes the opportunity to support the world in managing the stress and anxiety that is prevalent in society today. Her passion is to pass on powerful, natural stress relief techniques to Managers, Adults and Children to prevent mental health issues and enable healthy and happy living.

In her Corporate role, she is an **expert in Manager and Corporate Wellbeing and Resilience,** having worked in this field for the past 25 years and offered **coaching and consultancy to over 300 companies, countless managers, and employees**.

Her mission is to **help companies save money lost through stressful situations and develop mindful, conscious and trusting workplace environments to maximise potential and profits**.

She has published 7 books on this topic, including a series of **'Stress to Success' books**. Her **memoir 'Best of Three Worlds'** talks about the values, experiences, mindfulness principles and practices that have **helped her to deal with the stressful times in her life and sustain wellbeing, resilience and purpose.** The lessons learned and practises she adopts are from **Kenya, India and England, three countries from which her ancestors originate.**

Her latest series of CHAKRAJI children's books uses **imaginative story telling helping children to manage stress using natural interventions**.

She has a national and international team of affiliates who are committed to promoting individual wellbeing as well as helping to develop mindful, compassionate, thriving workplace cultures.

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We need fresh and cutting-edge perspectives on wellbeing at work, so that your employees are bursting with health, happiness and bouncing with energy. A workplace that is aligned to their true purpose so that they cannot wait to begin work each week.

This book outlines your first steps, processes, framework and strategy that will ensure conscious wellbeing is firmly embedded in your business culture, keeping you ahead of the game.

As a leader and manager remember to pose this question regularly to your employees:

'What do you need to optimise your wellbeing and flourish in our organisation?'

INTRODUCTION

WELLBEING NEEDS TO BE EMBEDDED INTO YOUR ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE. A culture which is open and supportive, where your employees feel valued and free to have regular conversations about mental health and wellbeing. It is about creating a wellbeing culture rather than a single point of contact for counselling or one-off training on Mental Health First Aid. A culture where there is openness, trust, and support on all aspects of the role. A culture where your workers feel aligned to the purpose and vision of your company and feel excited and inspired in their role. A role which enables personal, professional, business and planetary growth.

Your business will benefit from having a strategic approach to wellbeing, where support is built in at different stages, from prevention to fast diagnosis, treatment, and longer-term support which is easily accessible and free from stigma. It is not a one size fits all model, but one that meets the holistic bespoke requirements of each of your employees. The right toolkit of services which is comprehensive, interoperable and sustainable.

I strongly believe that wellbeing needs to be addressed from source, using a holistic approach rather than as a treatment of single stressful events.

Wellbeing is not about ticking boxes and putting the plaster on issues of stress and burn out in your organisation. It is the extent to which you and your team keep yourselves in balance and energised by the work you do, the people you spend time with and the way you live your life. It is about how positive and empowered you and your team feels, before, during and after work.

Wellbeing has always been a vital and integral part of working life, whether you have been fully conscious of it or not. There was undoubtedly a time where staff health, both mental and physical, was not a key priority for many employers and so the more negative impacts were keenly felt; falling engagement, low productivity and lack of motivation amongst staff. Whilst some employers were seen to acknowledge the connection between happy, healthy employees and higher productivity and loyalty; many employers had not yet made this connection.

There are an infinite number of contributors that can impact adversely on your wellbeing, and just as many that can enhance it. A lack of job satisfaction may be caused by many issues, such as pay, job design or workplace bullying. Front line managers cannot control all these issues, but they can do a lot to trigger the 'feel good' factor that helps to motivate and engage staff.

The Macleod Review on employee engagement, published in July 2009, has revealed how this 'feel good' factor is strongly influenced by:

- leaders who help employees see where they fit into the broader organisational vision
- effective line managers who respect, develop and reward their staff
- consultation that values the voice of employees and listens to their views and concerns
- relationships based on trust and shared values

When you, as a senior leader in your company, commit to staff welfare and wellbeing, and approach this with compassion and mindfulness, your reputation will be boosted and there will be plenty of other rewards. An ethical, compassionate work culture propels employee and organisational wellbeing as well as achieving team and organisational peak performance.

If your employees have a sense of belonging and feel looked after by your company on a physical, mental and spiritual level they are more likely to be more loyal and go that extra mile for your company.

The world of work is constantly changing and without the right people practices it can negatively impact your bottom line. The reality is, we are all human and exist outside of the workplace, so to engage employees you have to recognize their holistic humanity and listen to their needs. When you spend 40+ hours a week working; every second counts. Refining your focus on employee engagement is the first step toward building a more humane and ultimately more productive, resilient and sustainable workplace.

When I started work as a wellbeing trainer and consultant twenty-five years ago, it was difficult to use the words 'love, compassion, mindfulness, spiritual' in the corporate world. Profits and performance were the operative words. I believe it is time to love our employees, managers, role, workspace and equipment and everything related to work. To perform every task mindfully and inject compassion into operations and strategies. It is time to raise individual and collective corporate consciousness to stay ahead of the game.

With the wellbeing projects I have carried out I can now see that we have come far in our approach to wellbeing, and that's something to be grateful for. I wish to see more companies who realise that it is crucial to create conscious, safe, inclusive environments where team members are encouraged to speak up and ask for help when it's needed. Where there is a much greater understanding of the role a holistic approach can play, and recognise that wellbeing comes in various forms, from mental and emotional, physical, financial, spiritual and planetary health.

It is time to put the heart and soul back into the corporate world so that it is collaborative, compassionate and creative, where wealth is produced by ethical means not just for the company but for the greater good, providing opportunities to contribute to social and sustainable objectives.

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1 THE 7 PILLARS OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING

Building a holistic, compassionate and sustainable wellbeing culture begins with engaging and understanding your worker as,

'the whole person with their intersection with the planet'.

When you as a manager become familiar with the individual and organisational characteristics under the 7 pillars, you will get to know your employees and their needs better, making them feel included, supported and empowered.

It can be overwhelming to start to think about all the different ways your business affects people and the planet and frustrating to figure out which issues to tackle first.

It may help to begin to familiarise yourself with the breakdown below, then to integrate these into your own life as the first steps in your journey.

1.1 MENTAL PILLAR

Individual

- Experiences positive emotions: confident, curious, amazed, amused, excited, inspired, satisfied, engaged – whatever positive emotions they feel in a working day, even momentarily, will contribute to better wellbeing.
- Is in the present moment - not dwelling on the past, wishing that things today were as good as they were then, or focusing on the future whilst fearing what might happen.
- Has tools and processes that enables them to adopt more positive thought processes. Can think clearly and make stable sustained decisions.
- Is in tune with day-to-day emotions where helpful feelings are expressed freely and unhelpful emotions have a healthy outlet.
- Has resilience to effectively respond to varying levels of challenges and remain calm in a crisis.
- Awareness to know when support is needed and confidence to ask for help.

Organisation

- Environment where employees feel safe and able to be themselves.
- People have the freedom to safely express themselves and communicate openly without fear.
- Takes proactive measures to support mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Provides support when people are facing challenges.
- Praises and rewards, the leaders know the value of a genuine 'well done' or 'thank you' from a colleague or manager.
- Generates positive energy, boost morale and strengthen relationships especially at times of crisis.
- Platform for colleagues to come together and share their happy news and achievements.
- Creates spaces for celebration and encouraging peer-to-peer gratitude and appreciation.

1.2   SOCIAL PILLAR

Individual

- Feels meaningful connections with their teams, leaders and managers, to gain a higher likelihood of experiencing wellbeing.
- Has a strong sense of belonging and able to contribute to the groups and feels part of them.
- There is time to stay connected through acts of kindness and compassion.
- Appreciates and respects both the diversity and similarities with others.

Organisation

- Provides well matched roles that builds on individual strengths.
- Supports individuals to be their whole selves at work.
- Company culture of togetherness and trust.
- Fosters transparent communication enabling and promoting collaboration and knowledge.
- Creates opportunities for connection and relationship building for a safe and supportive working space.
- Sees the power of collectivism, of unity and of belonging to the 'we' of the business.
- Sees the importance of having one team, one vision and one purpose driving the whole workforce through the good times and the turbulent times.
- Is welcoming and accessible to people from diverse backgrounds, including ones with physical or mental disabilities.
- Includes charitable giving in budget plans.

1.3   FINANCIAL PILLAR

Individual

- Is confident about asserting own value and financial return for work role.
- Has skills and resources to effectively manage own finances.
- Ability to financially plan and cope with financial pressures and challenges.
- Confidence to seek help on financial matters.

Organisation

- Is breaking the mould to balance pay ratios between lowest paid and highest paid employees.
- Recognises that most people experience financial stress from time to time and provides education to manage finances.
- Builds a culture where there is no stigma, provides support and tools to effectively build financial resilience for their employees.

1.4   PHYSICAL PILLAR

Individual

- Awareness that body is the vehicle through which you achieve your mission and vision in life.
- Awareness that body is centre for physical pleasure and feeling.
- Listens to body daily for the signs of imbalance.
- Less use of caffeine and other stimulates, alcohol or other drugs to help switch off at the end of the day.
- Aware of healthy natural alternatives.

- Has techniques to release tension from physical body.
- Has insight to the correlation between the body, the mind and the emotions.
- Productive and can complete daily realistic tasks.
- Physically well and thriving and has energy to be on the move regularly.
- Understands the importance of physical wellness and has an established routine of regular exercise, robust nutrition, rest and sleep.

Organisation

- Allocates reasonable workloads.
- Provides uncluttered healthy working practices.
- Provides unpolluted adequate workstations.
- Enables flexibility for people to manage their fitness.
- Provides regular breaks, access to nature and fresh air.

1.5   TECHNICAL PILLAR

Individual

- Feels in control of the technology in a way that it complements their work.
- Does not feel overwhelmed or distracted by it.
- Has regular breaks from screen usage.
- Confidence to switch off from technology outside of work hours.
- Understands that technological systems impact on relationships, wellbeing and sleep.
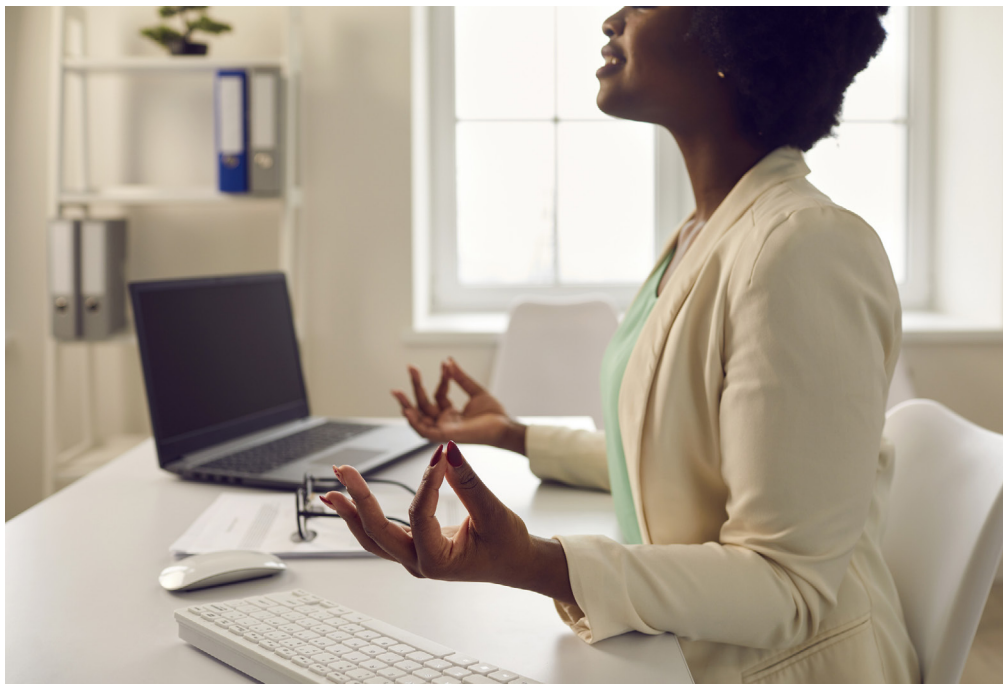
Organisation

- Does regular reviews of technical and digital processes for efficiency.
- Has a healthy digital culture which suits the business and is respectful of others.
- Has systems where technology improves efficiency and wellbeing.
- Ensures awareness of health risks and pitfalls of over-reliance on technology.

1.6   SPIRITUAL PILLAR

Individual

- Work role and personal values are aligned.
- Performs meaningful work.
- Some of the tasks that are performed clearly and positively contribute to the greater good.
- Demonstrates humanitarian values of love, respect, compassion and kindness.
- Gives gratitude and engages in some form of service to others.
- Regularly sets aside and understands the importance for solitude.
- Is inspired to connect with nature in new and exciting ways to uplift health.
- Contributes positively to environmental issues.
- Socialises outdoors, whether it's for sport, a walk or a picnic.

Organisational

- Provides a space for solitude and universal spiritual practice.
- Encourages discussion and debate on spiritual health.
- Engages in corporate social responsibility.
- Has a culture of mindful practices.
- Gives time out for employees to do voluntary charitable work.

1.7   PLANETARY PILLAR

Individual

- Is conscious about less plastic use and recycling.
- Saving energy by turning off lights when not in use.
- Switches to renewable energy provider.
- Uses LED lighting.
- Installs taps, flushes and shower eco heads that reduce water wastage.
- Uses eco and natural based cleaning products.
- Uses care to reduce microplastics being released into waste.
- Does not waste food.

Organisation

- Integrates sustainable strategies, products and services that do not harm the planet but contribute to reducing the carbon footprint.
- Business to business carried out with companies that provide eco-friendly products.
- Awareness of the environmental and social impacts of your business.
- Has prominent signs raising awareness of how chemical use in water drainage systems can have a detrimental effect for wildlife.
- Use of paper towels made from 100% recycled materials and recyclable or compostable after use.
- To future proof demands from companies looking for products and companies who make a positive impact on people and planet, whether that is 'green' business, vegan and cruelty free, socially responsible or climate friendly.
- Works towards customers' desire to reduce footprint on the world whilst maintaining the quality of products and customer experience.
- Balances price, planet and performance by switching to more sustainable operating models and eco credentials.
- Is honest and transparent about the challenges and journey towards running ethical operations and a purpose led business.

I hope the breakdown of the elements of each pillar has raised your awareness and helped you to identify areas of development and considerations. Perhaps you are already familiar with the common ones such as the physical, mental and technical and the others will prompt you to broaden your wellbeing strategy. As you involve wellbeing champions and/or other enthusiasts from your organisation you can continue to develop the lists, ideas and actions under the 7 pillars.

2 THE FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS FOR HOLISTIC WELLBEING

I shall begin by saying that it is never too late to start your journey. Showing support for your employees' wellbeing at any stage has multiple benefits, such as reducing employee turnover, absenteeism and presenteeism. Here is a framework which will help you to make a start in building your strategy.

2.1 FRAMEWORK TO BUILD YOUR STRATEGY

- Understand the components of the 7-pillar holistic model.
- Carry out risk/wellbeing survey to identify wellbeing gaps.
- Make a start with small project.
- Run a pilot.
- Review and amend.
- Develop and expand.

Many of the companies I am working with at present, have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) as the only outlet for staff support. Simply having an Employee Assistance Programme for your employees demonstrates a one-size-fits-all approach to wellbeing. Appropriate support is needed depending on the company hierarchy and the needs of the individuals in line with the 7 pillars.

EAPs are saying that "about 30% of people they are escalating to therapy don't need it – they need different resources." Therefore, having an interconnected web of resources means that individuals will be able to find the appropriate support for their unique needs.

Eugene Farrell, Mental Health Consulting Lead, AXA Health and Chair of the Employee Assistance programme Association (EAPA) said,

"EAPs are now seeing links to lots of other service providers rather than being seen as a standalone for every employer. You can't just send everybody that comes to you to counselling. If you're assessing people properly, they should be going to an appropriate tool or support area."

2.2   PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR WELLBEING STRATEGY

As a leader, if you're not sure how to begin your journey towards building a comprehensive culture of wellbeing, the following process is a good starting point. It integrates the framework above and ensures wellbeing is embedded into the organisational culture.

Stage 1 – **Consideration**

Your organisation may have some basic mental health and wellbeing offerings in place, such as an EAP; consider the first steps to starting to understand the need and value of doing more. Consider if these measures enable safe, open conversations about mental health and wellbeing. If not, ensure this is taken into account as you develop your strategy.

Stage 2 – **Addition**

Explore other services that will enhance an open and safe environment to meet the needs of your workers and add to the package. This is done in an 'organic' fashion, so services do not necessarily have to be joined up at this stage.

Stage 3 – **Review**

Start to understand and recognise the value and need for a joined-up 'systematic' approach to your offerings and carry out a review of what you have in place so far.

Stage 4 – **Framework**

As an outcome of the review, create a framework that forms the foundations of your wellbeing strategy. Use this framework to identify gaps and review current wellbeing services to build a fully integrated, holistic programme.

Stage 5 – **Implementation**

Begin to implement the changes and relevant additional services, creating a joined-up system of support services that will foster a compassionate and eco- friendly company culture.

From here on, continually review processes and services to ensure they are the most suitable and effective for your employees and continue to work towards a caring and psychological safe business culture.

"Think about strategy, what you want to get out of it and how it's going to work for employees," said Eugene Farrell, Mental Health Consulting Lead at AXA and Chairperson at EAPA UK. "Don't just do it to them."

Having a fully formed idea of what your goals are, and how you can achieve them, will help to drive your approach.

3   MANAGERS AND LEADERS AS KEY ROLE MODELS

As a leader of culture change you will be aware that wellbeing efforts cannot be managed just by Human Resources and that you have a crucial role in this transformation.

Aim to be a key role model as manager and leader in your organisation. For that you firstly need to be comfortable having discussions about mental wellbeing at work and recognise you will often be the first port of call when an employee has a wellbeing issue.

Recognise that as a manager you are the influencer, catalyst and gatekeeper and you play a distinct and crucial role in creating a healthy workplace and improving employee engagement.

Cultivating trust is an essential part of wellbeing in any organisation, and central to this is for colleagues to maintain adult-to-adult relationships. All too often, especially between manager and team member, a parent-child dynamic can form, triggering unhelpful responses and a reticence for the team member to take responsibility. Principally, honesty is integral to communication if these relationships are to be fruitful for both parties. As a manager you need to trust individuals to know their wellbeing needs better than anyone and empower them with the flexibility to choose the conditions that will allow them to flourish.

3.1   TRAIN YOUR MANAGERS

Whilst in the process of implementing a new toolkit, train your leadership team and managers on what to look out for, when to assist, and how to signpost to what is available.

Lack of training can potentially create a rift within the team, discouraging team members from speaking up if they are struggling mentally and if their manager is not equipped to deal with any issues when they arise.

Considering that only half (51%) of CIPD surveyed professionals, train managers to support staff with mental ill-health, there is a clear need for leaders to take accountability for their teams' wellbeing – not just their productivity. Wellbeing leaders who are committed to developing a holistic health culture should ideally be involved in designing management training programmes too.

Factor management capability into your organisational culture when creating your wellbeing framework. To get wider engagement with wellbeing, spend time coaching leadership teams on how to relay your message so that it comes from them, not from you. Line manager capability is critical as there are plenty of 'accidental managers' creating or exacerbating stressful work environments for their teams.

Struggling employees are far more likely to speak up when managers are empathetic and approachable. These abilities should be considered when recruiting for managerial positions. This could prevent longer-term and more serious stress and ill health issues and associated costs.

3.2   LISTEN TO DIRECT FEEDBACK FROM EMPLOYEES

As well as training managers to spot the issues through their day-to-day activities, you can also carry out wellbeing, happiness and related companywide surveys regularly to gather information on where and what support is needed.

Surveys will help you to understand what kind of wellbeing support your employees are looking for, how needs vary across the organisation and what you can implement that will help them most. Gain regular feedback on what is working and what can be improved, so you are able to be agile and responsive.

3.3   USE DATA

Make use of data to prove that your programme is working and to give lead indicators – for instance around what users are engaging with. Data will also help you to work out if you can pull back on some offerings that are less relevant now. If you base your wellbeing decisions and investments on data and need, it gives you a licence to operate and helps to justify the introduction of new services. It also helps you to say "no" to requests that you know will not be useful.

Try to avoid following rigorous frameworks to the letter, as this may mean that you disregard other, perhaps more valuable, insights gleaned from your team and Human Resources data when creating your toolkit.

Explore your offerings too. If you, as the wellbeing leader, are finding it difficult to navigate the solutions that you have on offer, it is highly likely that your employees will also find it hard to engage with them. In this case, get help to validate your employee data and open more areas for discussion with senior stakeholders.

3.4   DELEGATE TO INFLUENCERS

It is inclusive and cost effective to enlist the help of wellbeing influencers, highly passionate and motivated employees, to push the wellbeing agenda forward and provide meaningful support. These wellbeing enthusiasts would be on the frontline, listening to employees' concerns and needs, and responding at speed with innovative, often low-cost, support mechanisms and communication channels.

Enrol wellbeing ambassadors and champions to think creatively and quickly roll out new initiatives and campaigns to help bridge connections, share knowledge and raise awareness on different wellbeing issues. Some examples are 'It's OK not to be OK campaign, a 'Be Kind' initiative that involves the sharing of personal stories among employees, mindfulness lunch and learn sessions, videos and podcasts on the company intranet on healthy eating and exercise, walking meetings, share nature platforms or monthly bring a vegetarian dish lunches.

Your organisation's ability to reap the benefits of its investment in this area will be undermined if either management group is not fully on board.

As well as raising awareness of your own mental health needs and adopting a holistic approach, it is imperative to engage all tiers of management into this process. Ensure they are confident and have the capability to apply the 7 pillars as well as the ability to encourage open discussions about stress and mental health.

It is important that they are fully trained for developing an all-inclusive wellbeing culture, right from the point of recruitment to all aspects of organisational operations.

4 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WELLBEING IN AN ORGANISATION?

An integrated wellbeing culture cannot be achieved just by your senior leadership team taking a lead, or by your middle managers trying to bring about a culture change, or by workers on the ground demanding better mental health care. Your wellbeing strategy can only work if employer and employees take equal responsibility towards an inclusive culture.

You can turn the tide and make considerable savings and enhance the reputation of your organisation by sharing the responsibility with your workforce.

4.1 LARGE ORGANISATIONS

Cascading wellbeing operations in a large organisation is best done by getting buy-in from a senior manager who can champion the pledge for employee wellbeing. You can assign this responsibility to one department, or a steering group formed from several key sections such as Human Resources, Occupational Health, Health and Safety and Training and Development.

Ensure that this is followed up by wellbeing champions and influencers across the company who communicate the importance of holistic health through paying attention to what people need at a local level and helping to fulfil bespoke needs. Your aim is to empower employees to take responsibility for their own wellbeing as well as supporting others around them to do the same in a compassionate trusting environment.

A Corporate Wellbeing and Stress Management Consultant can assist in providing guidance and devising bespoke interventions for managers and employees.

4.2 SMALL ORGANISATIONS

In a small to medium enterprise (SME) you start with making a commitment as a manager in addressing your own wellbeing, by being aware of the indicators of stress and integrating simple short holistic measures in your daily routine. By maintaining open and compassionate relationships across your company, you will observe and be able to highlight the hotspots and individuals who need support. You can do this by being vigilant as you go about everyday tasks and including wellbeing and mental health as a regular agenda in meetings.

Involve your team and work in partnership with them. Make it a priority, build the confidence to have the conversations where you can assess the risks and put in reasonable measures that support the individuals concerned. Delegate responsibility for different wellbeing initiatives and formulate shared goals for employee wellbeing.

Everybody at work, in a large or small organisation, irrespective of their seniority are responsible for creating a thriving and vibrant wellbeing culture. In larger organisations there is emphasis on joint working and collaboration, as well as clear communication processes between departments. It is key to sustain open and trusting relationships, gather wellbeing data and work in partnership across all tiers for a successful outcome.
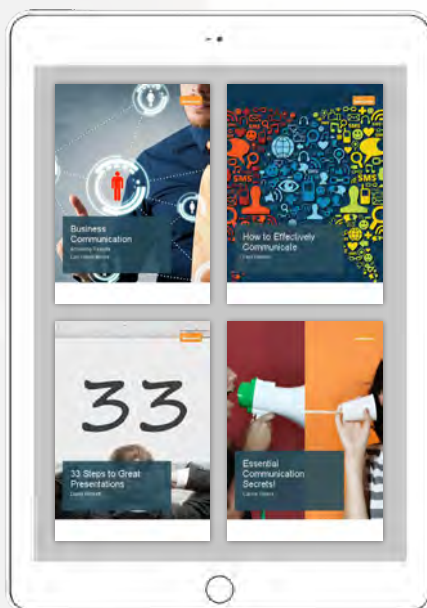
5 LEGAL, BUSINESS AND GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR WELLBEING

As a company leader, you may be inclined to introduce the 7 pillars within your wellbeing strategy for just moral and ethical reasons. However, there is a strong legal and business case for doing so. In addition, the introduction of the international standards ISO 45003 - Occupational health and safety management in 2021, adds more social and sustainable obligations on the employer.

5.1 LEGAL AND BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

The Equality Act 2010

The term 'mental impairment' is intended to cover a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning, which includes stress and anxiety.

Work-related stress might amount to a disability, therefore affording an employee protection from discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination in employment in respect of disability. Disability is defined as,

'a person (P) has a disability if P has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

To determine whether a disability exists, one should answer four essential questions:

1. Does the person have a physical or mental impairment?
2. Does that impairment have an adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities?
3. Is that effect substantial?
4. Is that effect long-term?

Not addressing work related stress and mental health issues effectively can amount to discriminatory practice under this law.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

In addition to The Equality Act, under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers have a legal duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable to protect the welfare of their employees. This includes taking steps to make sure they do not suffer stress related illnesses because of their work. Similarly, employees have a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others while at work.

Under Civil Law employers owe a duty of care to their employees, which extends to their mental health. A series of cases (case law) has set the precedence in common law for the negligence of duty of care at work. The first one was: Walker v Northumberland County Council in April 1996.

John Walker, a senior social worker for Northumberland County Council, accepted £175,000 in compensation. This was for the two nervous breakdowns he suffered because of the stress of an impossible workload. The High Court ruled in November 1994 that:

- The stress was foreseeable because it was caused by work and the employers were aware of the consequential risks to his health.
- The stress was preventable because effective action to alter the work and reduce the workload could have been taken.
- The employer had a duty to provide their employee with a reasonable safe system of work.

An employer has a 'duty of care' towards their employees which involves addressing mental health/stress issues.

Employers can deliver on the duty of care, protecting employees from stress related ill health by doing a physical and psychological risk assessment and acting on it. If your company has five or more employees, you are required by law to write the risk assessment down and follow up with an action care plan. If you have fewer than five employees, you do not have to write anything down but it is useful to do this so you can review it later, for example if something changes. Any paperwork you produce should help you communicate and manage the physical and psychological risks in your business. For most people this does not need to be a big exercise – just note the main points about the significant risks and what you decided to do to manage and mitigate those risks.

The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) UK, have done a lot of work and written guidance for employers to apply this duty of care. The basics are:

Managers should be able to identify indicators of stress and adhere to the management standards in addressing this where stress is a reason for sick absence or is identified through other channels.

I have been asked many times as to what happens if you as a manager, neglect your duty of care. At its best, you would incur:

- heavy costs in low productivity.
- sickness absences.
- breakdown in relations.
- low morale.
- loss of trust and goodwill.
- loss of reputation.

These would have many other ripple implications in the short and long term, such as staff absences, recruitment and training costs for new employees and so on. Your employee or another, can report the lack of duty of care to The Health and Safety Executive, who can issue an IMPROVEMENT NOTICE when it comes to their attention that your legal duty of care is being neglected.

At its worst, an employee can take legal action for negligence of duty of care and claim compensation.

I have already mentioned the precedent of this with the 1996 John Walker case of which many others have followed. The courts would consider if the stress was foreseeable, preventable and if the employee was provided a reasonable safe system of work.

My team is often called in to support an organisation in the event of a threat from one of the above. The main purpose of this book is to prevent this from happening and to encourage organisations to take on a proactive strategy which would prevent these serious consequences. In our experience, this has been particularly difficult for a manager when the employee is supported by their trade union through any of these three processes. It should also be noted that most major trade unions are passionate about supporting employees who have been adversely affected by the negligence of the duty of care at work.

5.2   GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR WELLBEING

The international standard ISO 45003 **Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks** was launched in the summer of 2021 in Canada. These standards include holistic and sustainability factors and not just the management of stress and mental health issues as per previous mandates.

Psychosocial risks in the ISO 450003 include:

1. Psychological Support
2. Organisational Culture
3. Clear Leadership and Expectations
4. Civility and Respect
5. Psychological Competencies and Requirements
6. Growth & Development
7. Recognition and Reward
8. Involvement and Influence
9. Workload Management
10. Engagement
11. Balance
12. Psychological Protection
13. Protection of Physical Safety

More information on the above criteria is available via this link https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/about/about-psychosocial-factors

Health and wellbeing initiatives may come at a time when cost reduction is a major concern for many organisations. Investment decisions should be driven by the understanding that improved health and wellbeing can generate significant employee productivity benefits, due to higher levels of engagement, empowerment, trust and loyalty, rather than funding initiatives solely on a legal necessity.

6   CASE STUDY

Are you a John or a Jessy in your workplace?

This case study is not an in-depth journey through academic theories on psychological risk, psychological support and organisational culture. Instead, let me tell you the story of John and Jessy to help highlight and personify the pertinent organisational issues that I have been discussing in this book so far.

John

The following story is based on true events.

John works in social care. He has been experiencing signs of burnout for a while, but his manager does not notice this. Instead, more work is piled on him. Eventually, he has a nervous breakdown and is forced to stay off work on long term sick leave. On his return, no action is taken regarding his excessive workload. Instead, because other colleagues are away on holiday and sick leave, the pressure on him increases even more. His manager has not had the relevant training in holistic organisational wellbeing and his workplace does not have a culture where it is easy to talk about these issues. He tries to convey his struggles to his manager, but because of the manager's lack of awareness and capability, nothing happens.

Eventually, John has another nervous breakdown, resulting in another long-term sick absence.

He contacts his union for support. He is then made aware that there is a legal duty of care that his employers have towards him, but this has been neglected for quite some time. The union helps him to legally sue his employer for neglect of duty of care and accept £175,000, a hefty sum, in compensation. This is the case of John Walker v Northumberland County Council in 1996, as mentioned in Chapter 5.

The High Court ruled that:

- The stress or psychological risk was *foreseeable* because it was caused by work and the employers were aware of the consequential risks to his health.
- The stress was *preventable* because effective action to alter the work and reduce the workload could have been taken.
- The employer had a duty to provide his employee with a reasonable safe system of work.

Since then, there have been many other similar cases.

Jessy

Jessy works for a large marketing firm. Her colleague Mateo is ill and has not been at work for eight weeks. Jessy has to take on his workload, not knowing when her colleague may return. The first month is okay, but now after eight weeks Jessy is feeling the strain. Her manager, Jeremiah, notices she has been looking weary and withdrawn for the last few weeks. Jeremiah has had training in managing psychological risk and building a holistic wellbeing culture in organisations, so is able to spot the signs at an early stage and follow the guidelines from his training.

He calls her in for a private meeting at a time and place where they will not be interrupted. He talks to her in a caring and compassionate manner, enabling her to open up. She shares that she is struggling with the additional workload and in addition, she is having to care for her elderly mother and is worried about finances.

Jeremiah asks her,

'What do you need to flourish in our organisation and optimise your wellbeing?'

He refers to his training guidance and carries out a formal stress risk assessment. Together they come up with a plan of reasonable adjustments that will help Jessy to maintain her usual efficient standard of work.

Jeremiah delegates some of Jessy's work to other team members. He also suggests flexible working hours, including two days working from home, so Jessy can juggle work and care of her mother. He now knows Mateo is going to be ill for quite some time, so discusses the option of hiring a temp with his senior manager until the situation is resolved. He signposts Jessy to the counselling and financial support services.

In the next team meeting, as usual, he encourages his team to be open about any issues of psychological risk, wellbeing, financial, technical or climate change issues so they can address these early and avoid serious long-term consequences. He shares his own experience of having anxiety as a teenager and being ignorant about environmental issues.

Jeremiah leads a discussion on how the team can support each other and invites the team to draw up a strategy for this. They explore options such as a buddy system, regular breaks in nature, walking meetings, meat free Mondays, meeting free Wednesday afternoons and so on. One team member says that mindfulness helps him and he volunteers to run regular sessions during lunch time. They discuss cutting down plastic use, energy saving and recycling options. Jeremiah reminds the team of the provision of annual two days' time off from work for voluntary services. The team discuss the local options available for this.

The team agrees to keeping these discussions as a permanent agenda item for all future team meetings. They commit to creating a workplace where there is emotional connection between team and manager and work towards creating a culture where workers feel safe and cared for in their surroundings.

As this process has been ongoing for several years, the result is that workers are taking risks and admitting to problems and mistakes. A culture of fear and blame is absent and the employees are happy and look forward to coming to work. They feel cared for, valued and included. Their senior manager says they are creative, innovative, efficient and willing to go that extra mile to demonstrate loyalty to their company.

The summary, in an organisation with positive holistic wellbeing culture:

- Difficult situations at work are addressed effectively.
- There is a sense of community at work.
- Culture allows workers to talk openly about love and compassion.
- Employees and management trust one another.
- Workplace is inclusive of persons with diverse backgrounds and points of view.
- Employees feel pride and commitment to their organisation.
- Employees take equal responsibility in maintaining a healthy holistic wellbeing culture and strategy.

CONCLUSION

In the duration of twenty-five years in the corporate wellbeing industry I have observed that workplace mental health and wellbeing has tended to move in trends. First it was in-house counselling services, then Employment Assistance Programmes(EAPs), then stress and resilience training and then mental health first aid. I believe none of these takes a holistic approach as they do not integrate elements for a safe, compassionate and eco-friendly coherent culture.

Rather than spending a considerable share of your budget, by allocating resources in the hope people will use them, a more inclusive and strategic approach addressing deeper cultural issues reaps better rewards. Contemporary wellbeing is not a 'one size fits all' model. It is tailored to both the individual and organisation and permeates through to all the layers of a company's culture.

Legal considerations can generate potential benefits of investing in health initiatives in the workplace. However, the more you become aware of the societal and planetary responsibility that organisations have and the visibility you get by taking wellbeing seriously, the more successful you will be in attracting the best talent in the future.

I understand that thinking about taking the first steps can be quite daunting, overwhelming and confusing. I have a lot of managers that I am coaching at present who are in this situation.

To help inspire a culture of holistic health, you must first address your own physical, mental and spiritual health. If tending to your own wellbeing is not a priority, nor will it be for those whom you manage. After addressing your own wellbeing, take the first step with your team. It could be five minutes chatting to a member of staff who you have observed has been stressed because of recent changes. Then include wellbeing chats as a permanent agenda into your next team meeting and begin to introduce initiatives to address issues as they emerge.

My top tips there on would be to integrate this process in your everyday activities - for example team meetings, one to one appraisals, recruitment, planning platforms and so on. Also, be vigilant for the signs of stress, as you go along your day-to-day work. A manager that I am coaching at present is working in partnership and delegating to others in his team so think about how you may do this too. Identify wellbeing initiatives based on the 7 pillars that you can initiate in collaboration with your team.

You may find the following structure helpful in taking the process forward:

- Offer training to raise understanding of the components of the 7 pillars wellbeing model.
- Carry out risk/wellbeing survey to identify areas of need.
- Include your team in the initiatives.
- Make a start with a small project.
- Run more pilots.
- Review and amend.
- Develop and expand as you progress.

Make mental health and wellbeing support a top priority by having a whole host of resources in place. The key for you as a wellbeing champion is to ensure that these tools are fit for purpose and work together to provide a holistic offering, creating effective and bespoke support for all employees.

For you as a leader to properly support people's wellbeing at work, all 7 pillars must be considered. As well as supporting people to stay physically well, using digital technology in a healthy way, minimising financial stress, keeping people connected and supporting mental, spiritual and planetary health are all crucial to overall wellness. Using these pillars as a guide will ensure a comprehensive approach to individual employee wellbeing as well as a happy and healthy organisational culture.

Your wellbeing can be dramatically affected if even one of these areas is unsupported and, by extension, your organisational wellbeing and resilience can be affected too. Whilst you take lead in your organisation and play a vital role in supporting this, it is imperative that your individual workers take, and are enabled to take, ultimate responsibility for their own wellbeing. Delegating tasks through the management tiers and to enthusiastic employees can be more effective than a 'top down' approach where people are told what to do.

As a leader and manager remember to afford autonomy and pose this question regularly to your employees:

'What do you need to optimise your wellbeing and flourish in our organisation?'

The aim is to turn the culture of your company around so that there is no stigma attached to having mental health, stress, financial and spiritual related conversations. A culture where employees feel safe and comfortable about not being okay in their work and home lives. However, this can only happen if the same behaviour is modelled by you and all other managers across all tiers and integrated in regular structures and procedures. This undertaking will gradually foster your employees' sense of being cared for, which will escalate engagement and effectiveness.

The most successful manager-employee relationships are those considered to be a partnership, based on mutual respect, trust, open and reciprocal dialogue with a shared responsibility for results. Working in partnership requires regularly discussing how things are going for your workers, agreeing expectations and goals and discussing feedback in a supportive and loving manner.

Some final points-

- Take a strategic approach to holistic health, starting with an understanding of your employees' key issues through deep analysis of all available data sources.
- Regularly review the data to determine whether the strategy is having the desired impact and take an agile approach to making changes.
- Provide training to line managers specifically on the 7 pillars of holistic corporate wellbeing.
- Build in support at different stages of health – from prevention to fast diagnosis, treatment, and longer-term support.
- Create an open and supportive culture where issues can be dealt with early on.
- Create a plan to build better relationships amongst colleagues, as part of a social wellbeing strategy.
- Ensure employees feel valued, recognised for their efforts, and have opportunities to learn and grow.
- Set out expectations for effective people management to ensure all employees have regular conversations about mental health and wellbeing with their manager.
- Regularly communicate any benefits you offer which can provide support, encouraging proactive utilisation.
- Increase employees' knowledge on managing wellbeing and building their resilience, as well as providing digital, financial, spiritual and planetary resources.
- Make it personal and relevant, use storytelling to bring benefits and services to life.
- Focus on the benefits - talk about the 'why' not just the 'what'.

There is a paradigm shift towards 'conscious wellbeing', where leaders in organisations take a progressive approach, working together with their team to create the healthy culture, whilst delivering on their purpose and enabling growth both for individuals in terms of development and for the business as a whole.

To be aligned to the collective consciousness you must have social responsibility and purpose. In this paradigm shift, the businesses that will survive are the ones that work ethically and sustainably. The businesses that drive hard sales just for profit may not survive as they are working against the collective consciousness. Shareholders will begin to demand a code of practice tied up with ethical governance. It would be expected that senior managers will

mingle with workers on the ground and share their pain as well their gain. Therefore, business leaders will benefit from using consultants and mentors who provide guidance with ethical dilemmas and not just business advise aimed at profit at the cost of the planet.

Twenty-five years' experience in this industry tells me that managers who take time to know and understand the skills and values of their team members, engage in mindful practice and who demonstrate the qualities of a 'conscious' leader are likely to build strong, high performing teams. Happy, healthy, and loyal employees are more productive which will increase output and profits. Not only that, your reputation as an individual manager and that of your organisation will also be enhanced.

The changes you make at present may give you an edge in the marketplace, but long term, the shift to social and planetary responsibility will be mandated across all industries. The change is happening whether you choose to resist it or join in the flow of it. You can be ahead of the game by taking those first steps now.

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OTHER BOOKS BY HANSA PANKHANIA- PUBLISHED BY BOOKBOON

TOTAL WELLBEING - FROM STRESS TO SUCCESS - A DYNAMIC PROGRAMME FOR MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

Do you want to excel your wellbeing, prevent stress and enjoy an energetic, enriching life at home and at work?

Wellbeing is the opposite of being in a stressed state. When you are stressed, your body, mind and soul are impacted by this negative energy which affects your physical and mental health.

This book takes you on a journey where you will find time, prevent stress and all the consequences associated with that state and help you to optimise your wellbeing so that you are bursting with energy, creativity and happiness.

As you integrate these simple natural techniques into your daily life, this programme will help you:

- Find time and space for your wellbeing despite having a busy routine
- Learn cost free, powerful, natural coping techniques
- Integrate practical, easy wellbeing exercises to do in the office or at home
- Accelerate concentration and focus
- Enrich communication and relationships
- Sustain healthy work life boundaries
- Propel resilience and a sense of relaxation
- Boost creativity and productivity

The tools in this book *can be used during everyday activities*, and throughout your lifetime to maintain a calm, productive, fulfilling and meaningful life.

WEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH - A MANAGER'S GUIDE TO OPTIMISING BOTH

This book will help you save money, increase productivity and profits, as well as create a happy, healthy and high performing culture in your organisation.

Many organisations are unaware of the actual costs of stress to their business and of the dramatic savings that can be made by effectively managing stress at work at an early stage.

As a manager you need to be comfortable having discussions about mental health and recognise you will often be the first port of call when a colleague wants to raise an issue.

Within your management role you may overlook the fact that the health and wealth of your company is in your hands. Overwhelming evidence supports that healthy and happy workers are more productive, resilient, and innovative.

Is the wealth of your organisation slipping through your fingers? This book will ensure that does not happen.

SUCCESS OVER STRESS AT WORK - FIVE INSPIRATIONAL SHORT STORIES
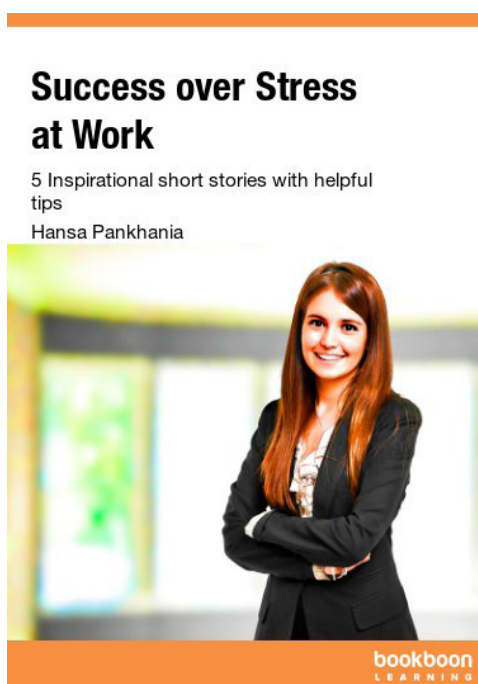
This collection of workplace short stories is written from experience and inspired by our clients. The stories are based on real life scenarios and interventions which will resonate with many of you and give you tips and techniques to help you overcome common, as well as complex, workplace issues. The combination of which makes an interesting and exciting read.

The areas covered by the book are:

Resilience Building - Discover expert techniques that will enable you to thrive during difficult challenging times.

Change Management - Learn how to derive positive outcomes from difficult change.

Anger Management - Avoid letting your anger compromise your relationships and career.

Stress Management - Learn how to overcome stressful situations and avoid a break down.

Mediation - Find out how to resolve conflict in the workplace.

Real life situations and real life interventions, written with first-hand knowledge, packed full of advice on how to overcome stress and perform at your peak despite challenges. Each story is accompanied by a commentary, full of expert guidance and tips.

FROM STRESS TO MORE SUCCESS - INSPIRATIONAL STORIES FOR MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

Hansa shares simple, powerful techniques that will help you to live a stress-free and successful life. You will also learn to optimise effectiveness and productivity at work. Demonstrated through artful storytelling, these techniques are a unique blend of Eastern and Western influences and philosophies.

Is this familiar to you?

- Struggling with multiple and conflicting demands
- Not aware of your managers legal duty of care towards you
- Someone bullying you at work
- Lacking in communication skills
- Looking for coping strategies for a hectic life

The solutions are there for you in this book. Within the stories, you will find simple, powerful techniques to help you live a stress-free, healthy and successful life, both at work and at home.

As a bonus, you will also learn corporate interventions that will accelerate performance and productivity in your business.


COPING IN A CRISIS
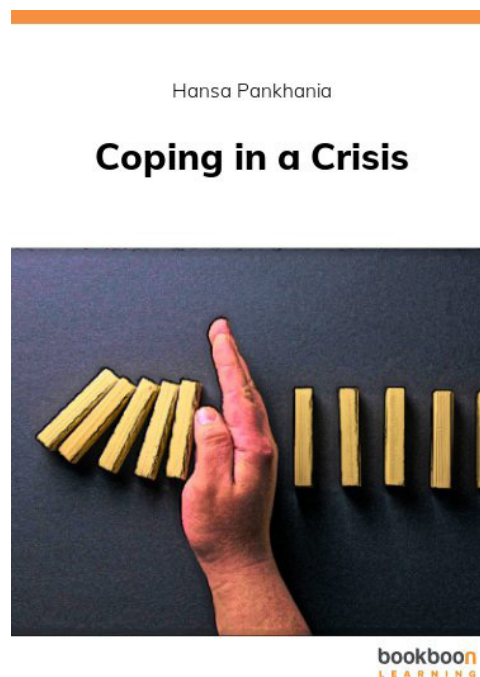
In this book you will learn how to overcome a crisis regardless of how minor or major this challenge is in your life. You will gather the essential life skills that will help you to come out the other end as a stronger, wiser, more resilient person. You will have the confidence to deal with the stresses and anxiety of future challenges and pass the coping strategies to your loved ones

Hansa's aim is that at the end of this challenging journey, we emerge as more compassionate, positive, heathy and happy individuals. It is possible to feel calm and grounded despite the chaos in the world. The insights you gain from this book and the simple practices that you can integrate into your busy life, will help you to feel less threatened by challenges, make better choices and gain clarity of the next steps on your life path.

This is your toolbox for the rest of your life and a legacy that you can pass on to others.

THE HEART AND SOUL OF WELLBEING- A FRESH AND UNIQUE APPROACH TO OPTIMUM WELLBEING
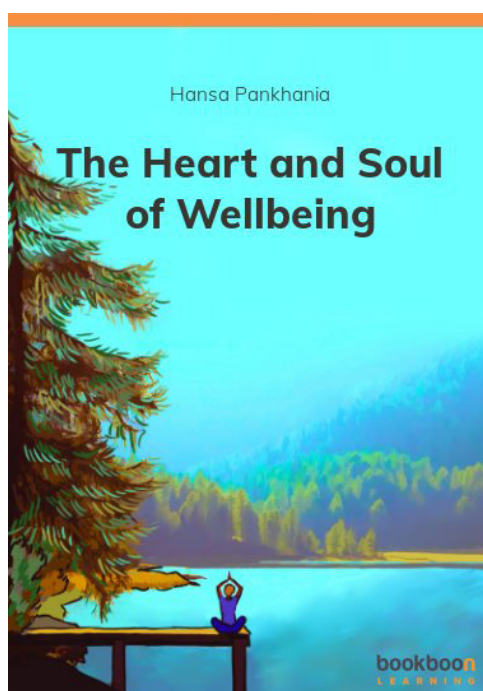
As you integrate these simple natural techniques into your daily life, the guidance in this book will help you:

- Learn cost free, powerful, natural coping techniques
- Integrate practical, easy wellbeing exercises in your busy routine
- Accelerate concentration and focus
- Enrich communication and relationships
- Propel resilience and a sense of relaxation
- Boost creativity and productivity

Powerful cutting-edge natural wellbeing tips that can be easily integrated into a busy daily routine to boost wellbeing, enrich work life and relationships.