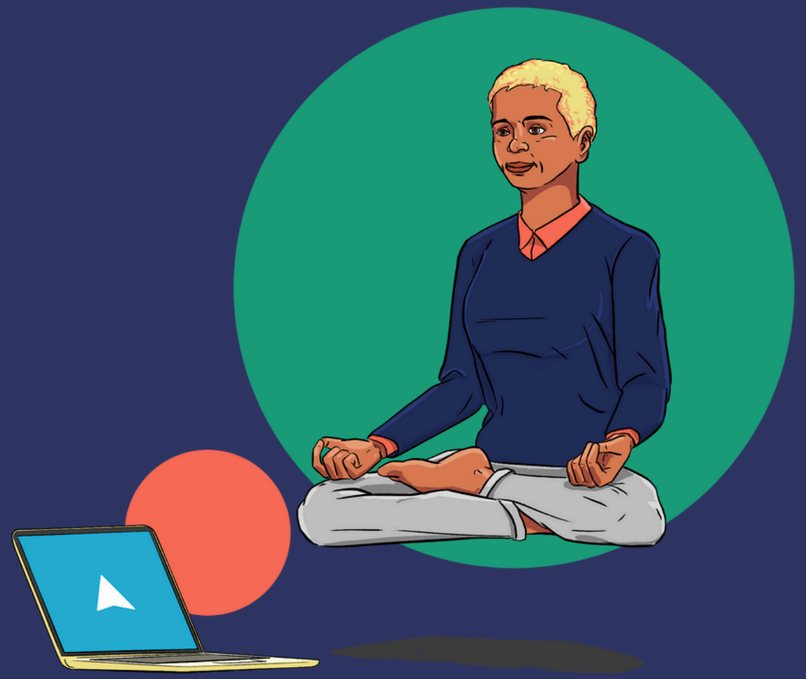
Managing workplace mental and physical wellbeing

Adam Harris

Health & Wellbeing Coach



The content of this presentation is proprietary and confidential information of Terryberry.
It is not intended to be distributed to any third party without the written consent of Terryberry.

What we will cover today

- The current impact of stress and anxiety on individuals and organizations
- What causes stress and how it affects performance, retention and culture
- The 4-step wellbeing toolkit for individuals, managers and HR teams
- How to create a supportive environment and shift team culture
- Practical strategies for daily wellbeing, team resilience and sustainable balance
- Personal and organizational actions you can take next

Stress and anxiety - impact on work

- 84% of U.S. workers experienced at least one mental health challenge in the past year
- 52% reported feeling burned out due to their job in the past year
- 33% noticed their productivity suffered because of their mental health
- 74% of employees report negative mental health at work
- Only 38% of employees feel comfortable using their company’s mental health services
- $4,000 to $20,683 is the estimated annual cost per disengaged employee due to burnout and disengagement

Common causes of life or work-related stress

- Workload - tight deadlines, too much work or too much pressure or responsibility
- Lack of managerial support
- Organizational changes at work
- Violence and bullying
- Role uncertainty

- Big life events outside of work impacting general individual wellbeing
- Worry about finances
- Personality - people with certain personality types more prone to anxiety disorders
- Other mental or physical health problems

These stressors don’t just affect individual wellbeing, they directly influence absenteeism, engagement and turnover.

Physical symptoms of anxiety

These physical symptoms often result in higher absenteeism and increased use of sick leave. They also affect presenteeism, where employees show up but underperform due to chronic stress:

- Churning feeling in the stomach
- Feeling light-headed or dizzy
- Pins and needles
- Feeling restless or unable to sit still
- Headaches, backache or other aches and pains
- Faster, higher rate of breathing
- Increased or irregular heartbeat
- Sweating or hot flushes

Physical symptoms of anxiety cont.

- Changes in your sleep pattern
- Grinding your teeth, especially at night
- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Needing the toilet more or less often
- Changes in your sex drive
- Having panic attacks

Pyschological symptoms of anxiety

Recognizing these signs early helps not just the individual, but the entire team. HR and managers should be trained to spot cognitive overload and encourage open, stigma-free conversations.

- Feeling tense, nervous or unable to relax
- Having a sense of dread about the future
- Feeling like the world is speeding up or slowing down
- Feeling like other people can see you're anxious and are looking at you
- Feeling like you can't stop worrying, or that bad things will happen if you stop worrying
- Worrying about anxiety itself, for example worrying about when panic attacks might happen

Pyschological symptoms of anxiety

- Wanting lots of reassurance from other people or worrying that people are angry or upset with you
- Worrying that you're losing touch with reality
- Low mood and depression
- **Rumination** – thinking a lot about bad experiences, or thinking over a situation again and again
- **Depersonalization** – a type of dissociation where you feel disconnected from your mind or body, or like you are a character that you are watching in a film
- **Derealization** – another type of dissociation where you feel disconnected from the world around you, or like the world isn't real

Personal wellbeing & organizational outcomes

When employees experience better mental wellbeing, the benefits are twofold, enhancing personal resilience and organizational performance.

- **Individual outcomes**
  - Greater emotional resilience to manage work and life demands
  - Fewer stress-related illnesses and absences
  - Stronger interpersonal relationships at work
- **Organizational impact**
  - Higher employee engagement and retention
  - Improved team communication and morale
  - More consistent performance under pressure
  - Reduction in healthcare costs and lost productivity

Mental health as a strategic advantage

Employees with strong mental wellbeing contribute significantly to business performance:

Performance gains

- Sharper focus and sustained attention on tasks
- Creative thinking and innovation in solving problems
- Stronger decision-making, even under pressure
- Fewer errors, improved quality and better outcomes

Risk reduction

- Lower absenteeism and presenteeism
- More consistent productivity across teams
- Reduced risk of burnout, turnover and disengagement

Brownout & burnout - hidden costs to the business

Brownout is the precursor to burnout - employees may still be “showing up,” but they’re mentally checked out.

- They feel chronically tired or emotionally flat
- Motivation and enthusiasm have dropped noticeably
- Productivity is steady but lacks creativity or initiative
- They disengage from collaboration or problem-solving
- Tasks get done, but with minimal energy or care
- They avoid extra responsibilities or new challenges
- Small setbacks feel disproportionately frustrating

Brownout drains productivity quietly and increases the risk of turnover if not addressed early.

Brownout & burnout – hidden costs to the business

Burnout is a state of complete physical or mental exhaustion:

- Caused by chronic overwork, poor boundaries or constant pressure
- Leads to absenteeism, medical leave or resignation
- Recovery takes weeks or even months, causing high costs to replace and reintegrate

Organizational consequences:

- Increased turnover and recruitment costs
- Team disruption and decreased morale
- Long-term loss of knowledge and skills

Four Step Approach For Managing Your Mental And Physical Wellbeing

Step 1
Identify The Barriers To Managing Stress And Anxiety

Identify barriers to managing stress and anxiety

Stressors are often systemic - not just personal.

HR teams and managers must recognize and address:

- **Organizational causes**: unrealistic deadlines, poor role clarity, toxic dynamics
- **Managerial blind spots:** lack of emotional check-ins, support or flexibility
- **Policy gaps**: no Employee Assistance Program access, unclear expectations, limited autonomy

Audit your culture: Use pulse surveys, 1:1s or anonymous feedback to uncover where stress is being created.

Look for patterns in absenteeism, turnover or underperformance, it often signals upstream wellbeing issues.

Common barriers and their organizational impacts

Heavy workload:

- Leads to chronic fatigue, burnout and decreased productivity. Often results in presenteeism - employees are at work but underperforming

Lack of managerial support:

- Causes feelings of isolation, anxiety and disengagement. Employees in this environment are more likely to leave or “quiet quit”

Unclear roles or expectations:

- Creates confusion, rework and frustration. Contributes to team tension and increased error rates

No psychological safety:

- When employees don’t feel safe speaking up, issues go unresolved. This erodes trust and damages team culture over time

Which barriers do you feel are most common in your organization?

Post in the chat

Step 2

Build A Supportive Environment

Build a supportive environment

Creating a culture of wellbeing isn’t passive; it’s built through consistent and intentional action from leadership and HR.

This step focuses on the structures, policies and everyday behaviours that signal employees are supported.

When people feel safe, seen and supported at work they perform better, stay longer and speak up earlier.

Open communication is a cultural lever

Fostering a psychologically safe environment starts with how we talk about wellbeing at work.

Manager actions:

- Make wellbeing check-ins part of weekly 1:1s
- Normalize sharing stressors without judgment
- Share your own coping strategies to model openness

HR interventions:

- Train managers on mental health literacy
- Include psychological safety as part of performance feedback training
- Build feedback loops through anonymous pulse checks or engagement surveys

HR led policies that protect mental health

Strong mental health policies signal to employees that wellbeing is not optional, it's operational.

HR-Level interventions:

- **Mental health days**: Include them explicitly in PTO policies, separate from sick leave to reduce stigma
- **Flexible work models**: Offer core hours and the autonomy to manage time
- **Employee assistance programs (EAPs):** Ensure visibility and ease of access. Promote them quarterly
- **Manager guidelines**: Equip leaders with do's/don'ts for handling disclosures or stress signals
- **Mental health policy statement**: Publicly commit to psychological safety, updated annually
- **Wellbeing as a KPI**: Incorporate team wellbeing into manager performance reviews

Encourage Peer Support

Peer-driven support systems are a powerful supplement to HR policies and leadership actions.

They create daily moments of connection, safety and encouragement.

HR & manager action:

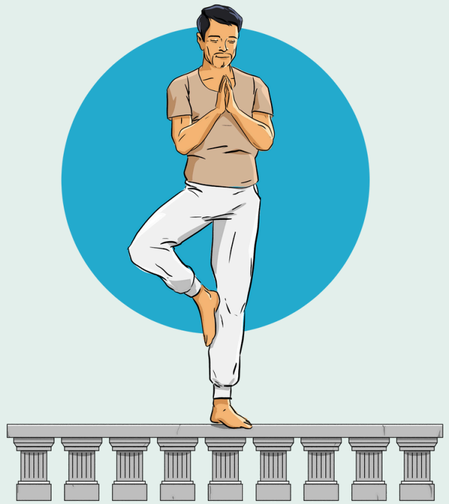
- **Wellbeing champions**: Identify and train employees to serve as mental health allies and provide visible points of contact for informal support
- **Buddy programs**: Especially effective for new starters or those returning from leave. Assign a peer for regular informal check-ins
- **Peer-led initiatives**: Empower teams to own activities (walks, journaling challenges, virtual mindfulness circles) based on their needs and interests
- **Recognition culture**: Encourage teams to shout out positive behaviour, not just performance - normalizes care and appreciation

Step 3

Set Mindfulness And Wellbeing Goals

What is mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is the mental state we achieve when we focus our mind in the moment to be fully present without being overly reactive to our thoughts or our environment
- This state of mind allows us to step away from any worries about the future or negative thoughts about the past
- Practicing mindfulness can help to boost feelings of happiness and compassion, improve sleep and reduce stress and anxiety
- Mindfulness isn’t just personal, it enhances leadership, patience and communication. Managers who model mindfulness signal to their teams that emotional regulation and mental clarity matter



How to set mindfulness & wellbeing goals

Practical actions for managers:

- **Lead by example:**
  - Share your own wellbeing goals or stress-reducing habits to normalize open dialogue
- **Co-create team wellbeing goals:**
  - Ask your team: “What’s one small wellbeing goal we could try together this month?”
- **Use rituals to embed wellbeing:**
  - Start meetings with a quick check-in or one-word mood round
  - End meetings with a grounding breath or 30 seconds of stillness
  - Block "no-meeting" time in the team calendar weekly
- **Track and review together:**
  - Include a “Wellbeing Wins” moment in team reviews
  - Check in on team wellbeing goals like you would a project milestone
- Avoid out-of-hours emails and actively encourage lunch breaks and PTO use

How to set mindfulness & wellbeing goals

For individuals:

- **Set a clear purpose**: e.g. reduce work stress, improve focus during meetings
- **Keep it measurable**: track minutes of mindfulness, frequency of breaks or sleep quality
- **Make it realistic**: start small, 5 minutes a day is enough to start to build a habit
- **Set a timeline**: e.g., practice for 2 weeks, then review the impact
- **Use tools**: reminders, Be Well app or journaling to stay accountable

Step 4

Take A Holistic Wellbeing Approach

Take a holistic approach

Work doesn’t happen in isolation from life and neither does wellbeing.

Supporting employee mental and physical health means acknowledging the full context of their lives.

Sleep, nutrition, exercise and daily routines all influence how people show up, engage and perform at work.

Why this matters organizationally:

- Poor sleep impacts decision-making and increases errors
- Poor nutrition reduces energy, focus and mood stability
- Lack of movement contributes to fatigue and disengagement
- Disrupted routines can heighten stress and erode productivity

Healthy habits that power performance

Good sleep, regular movement and healthy eating aren't just personal goals; they're critical to cognitive function, energy and resilience at work.

How workplaces can help:

- **Support rest:**
  - Avoid late-night emails or tight turnaround expectations
  - Respect boundaries around after-hours availability
- **Encourage movement:**
  - Promote walking meetings or lunchtime activity
  - Provide wellness programs
- **Improve food culture:**
  - Offer healthy options at meetings or events
  - Avoid scheduling over lunch

Work-life balance

Work-life balance is often framed as a personal responsibility, but culture, expectations and leadership behaviours deeply influence it.

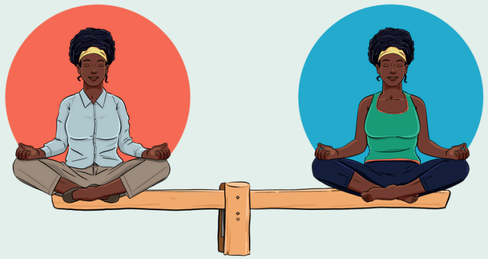
What can team and HR leaders do?

Shape a culture that respects boundaries

- Leaders model unplugging: take PTO, avoid after-hours communication
- Avoid celebrating “grind” culture or long hours as commitment

Build a structure that supports balance

- Set and protect non-meeting times (e.g. Friday afternoons)
- Encourage full use of annual leave - no guilt, no barriers
- Monitor excessive hours or weekend work and intervene early



Daily routines and transitions

- **Establish a morning routine**
  - Encourage teams to start the day with consistency. Avoid scheduling meetings first thing and allow space for people to ease into their day
- **Set goals for the day**
  - Support employees in setting and sharing daily priorities. Use check-ins or standups to bring structure and focus
- **Understand productivity phases**
  - Recognize that people work differently across the day. Allow flexibility where possible so individuals can align work with their peak performance times
- **Support the transition from work to home**
  - Help teams disconnect at the end of the day. Avoid sending late messages and encourage wrap-up routines to shift gears

What will you take forward

Two actions to make this real:

Personal commitment

- Choose one small action to support your own wellbeing this week
  - Example: Take daily screen-free breaks, try box breathing before meetings and protect your lunch hour

Team or culture impact

- Commit to one thing you'll do to support wellbeing in your team or organization
  - Example: Add wellbeing check-ins to 1:1s, review your team's workload or start a conversation about balance

What did you find most useful today?

Post in the chat

Thank you!

The content of this presentation is proprietary and confidential information of Terryberry.
It is not intended to be distributed to any third party without the written consent of Terryberry.