The Flourishing University
Staff well-being in higher education

Sally Rose

**Psychotherapist. Staff Counsellor. Mindfulness Teacher
s.rose@leeds.ac.uk**

TO BE WELL AND WORK WELL

Workplace policy context

Work is positive contributor to wellbeing and workplaces have an important role to play (DWP. Dame Carol Black, 2008).

The workplace is a setting for action for health and wellbeing (WHO. 2010).
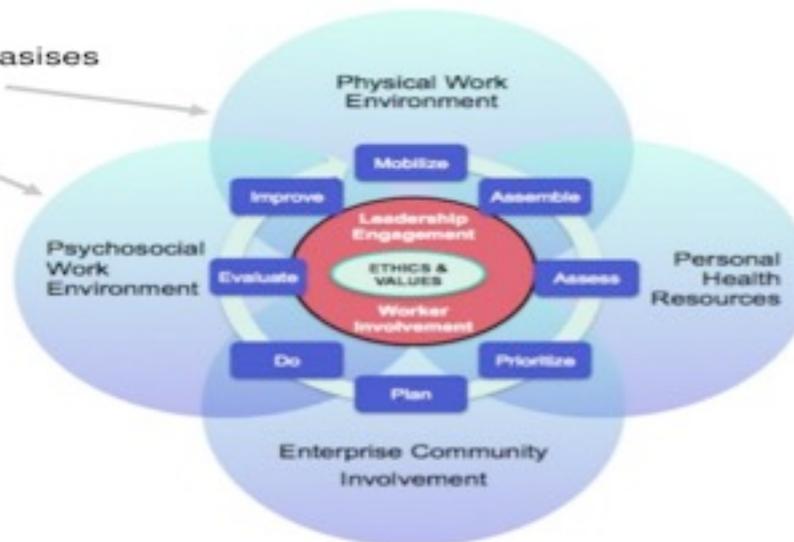
Three levels for consideration, of responsibility and for intervening

- Primary – organisational level
- Secondary – psychosocial environment – preventative individual and group
- Tertiary – treat symptoms - individual and group

Models:

From: demands/control (Karusak, 1979)
To: demands and resources model for considering individual stress, wellbeing and engagement. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Burnout   Positive engagement & fulfilment
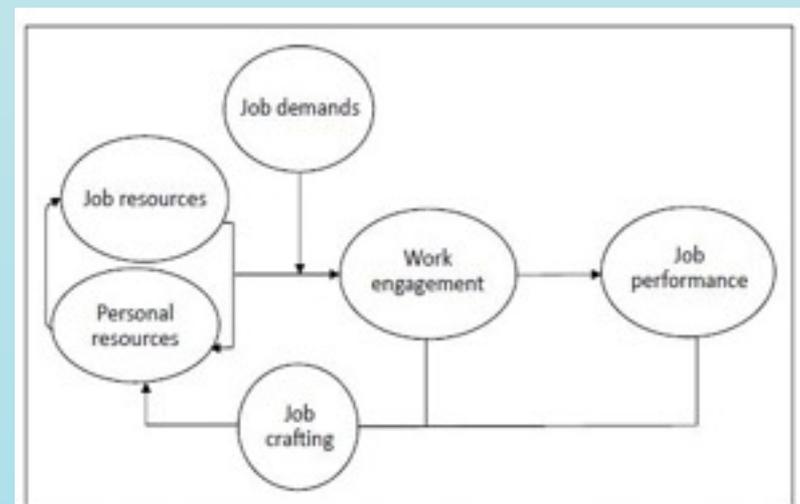
Source: Bakker, A.B. (2011). An evidence-based model of work engagement. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 20*(4), 265–269

FIGURE 1: The job demands-resources model of work engagement.

Higher education workforce
External and internal culture

- Neo-liberal economic policy and culture in HE Sector market needs dominate (student numbers, ratings, research output)- competition - doing more with less - dehumanisation – erosion of opportunities for collegiality and support – individual wellbeing 'externalised' as no market value

- Intrinsically motivated /driven – critical mind-set (self and others) – perfectionism/intolerance, competitive sense of self embedded in role – and self-esteem in performance.

Higher Education research

Demands Stressors

Workloads – no let up – no time to think, rest or recover
Reduced autonomy - Poor management - increased

Resources
Academic environment
Autonomy - stimulation – variety commitment - satisfaction – skill

utilisation
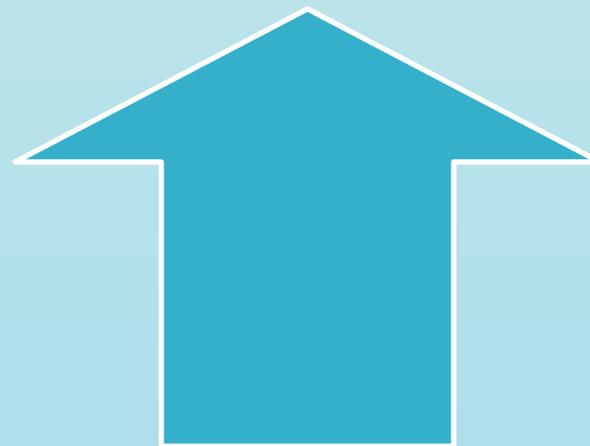
What is being done?

Organisational level? Not known. Training for managers – stress mental health policies

Individuals - Most higher education institutions have some form of professional support for staff

- Mostly external agency (EAP – helplines and counselling = minimal tertiary level), through Occupational Health or tagged on to student service

- Handful of dedicated psychological services for staff

- Mindfulness training – usually ad hoc not embedded in organisation

Staff Counselling and Psychological support service

- In house – embedded strategic – working on different levels

- 1-1 consultation, psychoeducation, counselling and coaching

- Group and team psychoeducation workshops – X13 Personal resilience and bespoke sessions

- Mindfulness training – 8 week courses + workshops

- Organisational partnerships and influence – HR, OH, Staff Development – procedures and training

Our guiding principles

- Working across the mental health continuum – 1 in 1

- Proactive – optimising positive health

- Psychoeducation individuals, roles and activities

- Workable Ranges model based on interpersonal neurobiology and the mindful brain. Sets out visually healthy regulated states and wellbeing and 2 different states of dysregulation that compromise presence wellbeing and functioning. An individual and organizational rationale for attending to wellbeing

Workable Ranges

Hyper arousal reactions and habits

HIGH ENERGY - Mobilisation   **CHAOS**

- **frazzled, overwhelm and panic**
- **fractured attention, racing thoughts**   **FIGHT/FLIGHT**
- **agitation, impulsive**
- **anger-rage, frazzled**
- **hyper vigilance**

Comfortable, coherent arousal = calm energy

WORKABLE RANGE - **window of tolerance and effectiveness**

Comfortable, coherent slowness = calm tiredness

Hypo arousal reactions and habits

LOW ENERGY – Immobilisation   **RIGIDITY**

- **passive, lack of feelings, numb**
- **can't think or critical or pessimistic thoughts**
- **shut down, given in, can't protest**
        FREEZE

The Healthy Mind Platter

SLEEP TIME　　PHYSICAL TIME　　FOCUS TIME

TIME-IN　　DOWNTIME　　PLAYTIME　　CONNECTING TIME

The Healthy Mind Platter for Optimal Brain Matter

Practice based evidence

Mindfulness-based interventions in organizations offer the potential to build individual and organizational resilience, engage employees and address workplace stress. A guide for how mindfulness can be used as a change management and organizational development strategy.

Appraising the implementation of mindfulness within a strategic approach to psychological health.

Conclusions

- Break the silence (Gill, 2009)

- Cross disciplinary perspectives and action

- Got to get into the organisational system as well as individual minds and work on both levels

- Need strong leading ideas about wellbeing, functioning and flourishing that staff and leaders and managers can relate to

- Create culture where the social conditions for thriving are valued and where help seeking is linked with effectiveness in role

- Take a long view and allow conditions and activities and relationships to grow

References

- Bakker, A.B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands-Resources model: State of the art. Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22, 309-328

- Black, C.M., 2008. Working for a healthier tomorrow: Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population. The Stationery Office.

- Burton, J. and World Health Organization, 2010. WHO Healthy workplace framework and model: Background and supporting literature and practices.

- Gill, R., 2009. Breaking the silence: The hidden injuries of neo-liberal academia. Secrecy and silence in the research process: Feminist reflections, pp.228-244.

- Karasek Jr, R.A., 1979. Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign. *Administrative science quarterly*, pp.285-308.

- Kinman, G., Jones, F. and Kinman, R., 2006. The Well–being of the UK Academy, 1998–2004. Quality in higher education, 12(1), pp.15-27.

- Kinman, G., 2014. Doing more with less? Work and wellbeing in academics. Somatechnics, 4(2), pp.219-235.

- Kinman, G., Jones, F. and Kinman, R., 2006. The Well–being of the UK Academy, 1998–2004. Quality in higher education, 12(1), pp.15-27.

- Rose, S. (2014). The key to keeping your balance is knowing when you've lost it. British Journal of Psychotherapy Integration,

- Rose, S. (2016). Appraising the implementation of mindfulness within a strategic approach to psychological health. In M. Chapman-Clarke, A (Ed.), Mindfulness in the Workplace: An Evidence-based Approach to Improving Well-being and Maximizing Performance. : Kogan Page11(1), 29-41.