



## **MIND POISE**

Performance and Wellbeing

Stress Management, Performing Under  
Pressure and Mental Health Program

## FOREWORD



Being able to perform consistently in an increasingly dynamic and ever-changing world is a challenge which is all too often being left to chance. In recent times, COVID-19 has taken employee welfare out of the shadows and into the spotlight. However, in order to ensure organisations are able to maximise resources, boost revenue and outperform competitors, it is vital for the welfare of their workforce to remain in the spotlight and be enhanced further. Doing so will facilitate teams made up of business-based athletes, who are able to thrive under pressure and produce consistent performance in the face of adversity.

Mind Poise endeavours to provide organisations, both large and small, with the tools to make this ideal a reality. Through education and consultation on Stress Management, Performing Under Pressure and Mental Health Literacy, employees will develop the foundations from which they can grow into professionals who enjoy their work, are motivated to perform and have robust confidence for any situation.

Flourishing employees lead to a flourishing organisation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Roberts". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line underneath.

**Michael Roberts CPsychol**

*Founder and Consultant*

Mind Poise



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The  
British  
Psychological  
Society

Chartered Psychologist

## Introduction

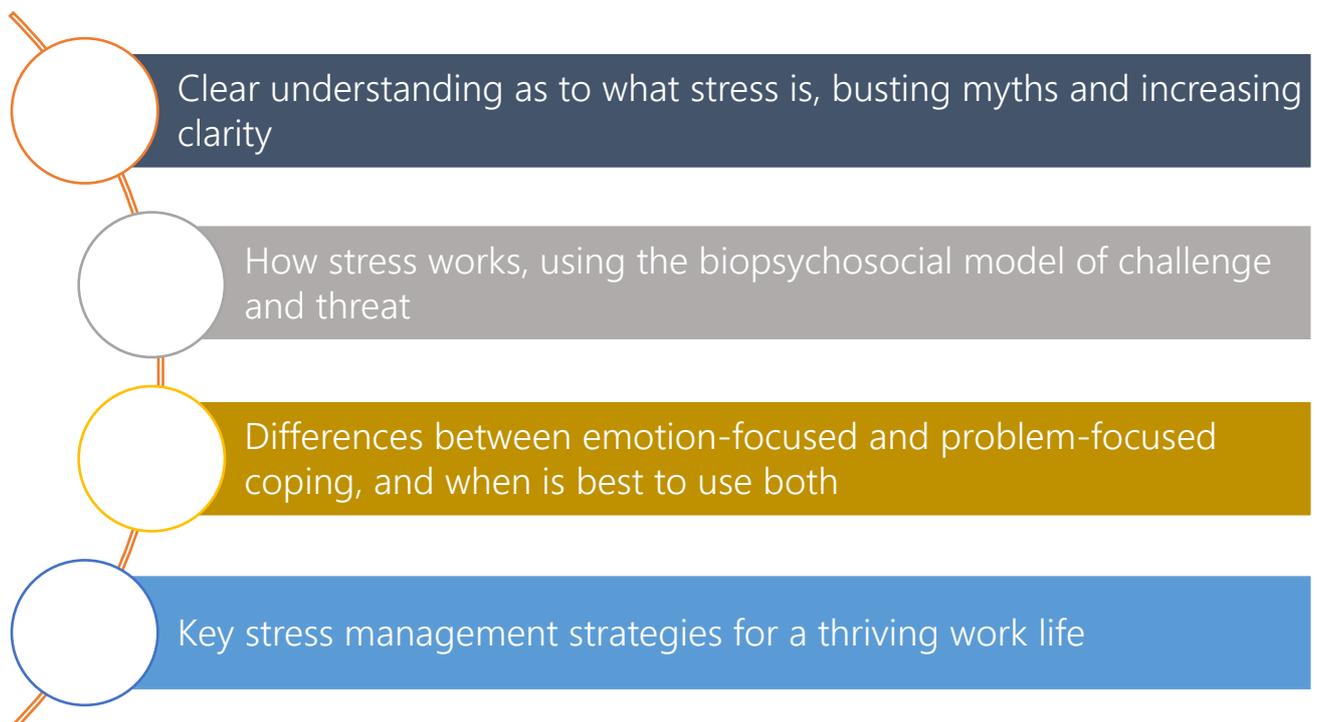
Stress is a complex and dynamic concept. Undesirable levels of stress have been found to affect overall performance of organisations within various industries<sup>i</sup>. Therefore, in order for organisations to use resources effectively, how stress is managed must be a fundamental strategy consideration. There is no single level of stress that is optimal for all people, and although it is linked with absenteeism, high turnover, compensation and insurance claims, positively appraised stress can help managers thrive and create greater revenue<sup>ii</sup>. Thus, the goal is not to eliminate stress, but to help employees develop a more useful relationship with it in order to both feel energised to work and capable of performing consistently.

| Symptom                               | Potential Impact                                   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Insomnia                              | Poor concentration, leading to repeat errors       |
| Difficulties learning and remembering | Forgetting information, impacting client relations |
| Significant mood swings               | Client or colleague friction                       |
| Problems communicating                | Not divulging key information to a manager         |
| Difficulties making decisions         | Indecision, leading to lower confidence and errors |
| Neck ache and back pain               | Inability to train, effecting mood and self-esteem |
| Increased smoking or alcohol use      | Absenteeism and deteriorating health               |

Fig 1. Table illustrating symptoms of poor stress management and initial impact, which could well be exacerbated further:  
<https://www.welcoa.org/blog/benefits-stress-management-employees/>

## What does stress management look like?

Stress generally occurs when we perceive the demands of a situation to outweigh our perceived resources. Through online education, employees will be able to learn the below, increasing resources and creating a strong basis for effective management of stress:



## Why not just look at stress management?

Being able to manage stress is an important skill, helping employees reduce or eradicate some of the aforementioned symptoms in Figure 1. However, in order for employees to perform close to or at their best on a consistent basis, a focus on the skills that directly impact performance is absolutely vital. These include:

Breathing techniques to handle pressure situations and get back on task. Learning such skills prevents costly delays between a stressful moment and getting back to work

Relationship management, both internally and externally. This might range from handling workload with a manager, to dealing with nerves prior to an important client pitch

Ability to prioritise work when experiencing stress. Pressure and other work-based challenges can make this process seem almost impossible at times

Effective action planning and reflecting skills, allowing employees to feel more in control of their work and to learn from successes and mistakes

## Mental Health Literacy – what is it?

According to research conducted in 2015, up to 61% of working adults find it difficult to understand health and wellbeing information, affecting their ability to manage long term conditions and make informed choices about their health and wellbeing<sup>iii</sup>. It is likely clear by now the impact this may well have on work productivity and performance. By providing mental health literacy education, employees will:

Better understand what mental health and mental illness is

Learn about the symptoms of anxiety and depression, and what this looks like at work

How to signpost and refer mental health issues at work, for both oneself and others

Put cracks in stigma around mental illness, allowing for more psychologically safe work teams and environments

## Implementation and Costs

XpertHR’s 14th annual survey into sickness absence rates and costs suggests absenteeism cost the UK economy £18 billion in 2019. Employers with more than 1000 employees had a median sickness absence rate of 8.0 days, with estimated costs per employee around £568. However, this is unlikely to be an accurate measurement of the overall cost of sickness absence – 42% of employers said they did not know if their absence cost data was accurate or not, and only 16% believe it is very accurate<sup>iv</sup>. With evidence building that stress, performance and mental health interventions directly impact both absenteeism<sup>v</sup> and performance<sup>vi</sup>, it is high time for organisations to address this currently untapped resource for revenue gain.

### Implementation (duration dependent on employee numbers):

- 3 topics:
  - Stress Management
  - Performing Under Pressure
  - Mental Health Literacy

Each topic session consisting of the following:

- 60-minute to half-day sessions, numbers-dependent
- Zoom / in-person location-dependent
- Follow-up resource for referral
- Optional 1-1 consultation arranged post-session, for those wanting to help develop individual plans. Normal up-take ranging between 12-18% of attendees.

Sessions can be delivered in Spanish as well as English.

- Fortnightly Forum:
  - 3 x 60-minute focus group sessions, each fortnight every other month, designed for more bespoke consulting tailored to the specific challenges of employees and the organisation as a whole. These sessions could entail implementation and consulting on Spotlight Profile where requested.
  - Each session followed up with 6-minute recorded video focusing on a particular strategy to support employee performance and/or wellbeing. E.g., visualisation or mindful breathing.

6-month cycle example:

| Months | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL    |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Topic  | SM  | FF  | PuP | FF  | MHL | FF  | Review |
| Weeks  | 4   | 4   | 4   | 4   | 4   | 4   | 4      |

SM – Stress Management; FF – Fortnightly Forum; PuP – Performing Under Pressure; MHL – Mental Health Literacy

Week example (8 sessions per week, based upon 28-32 sessions per topic):

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday  | Thursday | Friday   | Saturday | Sunday |
|--------|---------|--|----------|--|----------|--------|
| 1      | 2       | 3<br>Session 1 - 06:00<br>Session 2 - 07:15<br>Session 3 - 11:00<br>Session 4 - 12:15<br>Session 5 - 13:30 | 4        | 5<br>Session 6 - 15:00<br>Session 7 - 16:15<br>Session 8 - 17:30 | 6        | 7      |

*Timings dependent on region (APAC, EMEA, USA)*

### Cost:

|                                     |                        |                        |                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Organisation Size (employees)       | 500                    | 1000-1500              | >1500                  |
| Cost per employee                   |                        | -                      | -                      |
| <b>Total cost of implementation</b> | <b>To be discussed</b> | <b>To be discussed</b> | <b>To be discussed</b> |

*Estimated costs. Flexibility available to meet business needs and precise organisation numbers.*

## FAQs

How do I know the content is good quality?

Michael is a Chartered Psychologist and registered with the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). He currently works in both professional sport and business, having been a professional cricketer prior to retraining as a psychologist. He has two psychology-related Master's degrees and has undergone years of supervised training, alongside a consulting role at a City-based law firm, in order to ensure the work delivered is of the standards expected in applied psychology. Combining all of this, Michael is able to deliver a unique program which caters for the contextual demands of various industries.

How do I know the program is having an impact?

Throughout the process, feedback will be garnered through straight forward online surveys. These will provide feedback to both Michael and your company around engagement and knowledge transfer. At the end of the program, business region managers will be invited to complete a further survey to judge overall effectiveness. You are encouraged to carry out your own feedback process in order to understand potential financial impacts, both in terms of revenue and savings made through a reduction in absenteeism.

We have offices around the world – how will this be accommodated for?

Session timings will be organised at a time convenient to the region. These will be agreed in advance.

What about cultural differences?

Prior to each topic being rolled out, each region will be asked to complete a survey related to the topic. For example, in relation to stress management, employees will be asked:

1. In a typical week, how often do you feel stressed at work?
2. What are your main sources of stress?
3. To what extent do you know how stress works?
4. Are you currently engaging in any stress management strategies?
5. What would your main aim be from attending a workshop on stress management?

Answers received would then inform minor but potentially important changes to the content provided.

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### References:

<sup>i</sup> Imtiaz & Ahmad (2009); Joy (2020); Karunanithy & Ponnampalam (2013)

<sup>ii</sup> Cardon & Patel (2015)

<sup>iii</sup> Kutcher, Wei & Coniglio (2016)

<sup>iv</sup> [https://www.xperthr.co.uk/survey-analysis/absence-rates-and-costs-survey-2020/165503/?cmpid=ILC|PROF|HRPIO-2013-110-XHR\\_free\\_content\\_links|ptod\\_article&sfid=701w0000000uNMa](https://www.xperthr.co.uk/survey-analysis/absence-rates-and-costs-survey-2020/165503/?cmpid=ILC|PROF|HRPIO-2013-110-XHR_free_content_links|ptod_article&sfid=701w0000000uNMa)

<sup>v</sup> Willert, Thulstrup & Bonde (2011)

<sup>vi</sup> Adim, Ibekwe & Odunayo (2018)