



MENTAL HEALTH FORUM: AWARENESS

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DR NATASHA WILKS



- Bachelor of Veterinary Science, UQ, 1999
- Worked predominantly in small animal practice in Australia and the UK
- Diploma of Coaching, 2007
- Created High Performance Vets, 2011
- Social and Emotional Intelligence Certified Coach, 2014
- Passionate about the application of coaching, neuroscience and positive psychology

Helping Veterinarians overcome the common challenges in practice and thrive in their career



IN THIS SESSION

- What is Mental Illness Costing You?
- ROI on Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Definitions
- Mentally Healthy Workplace
- Risks & Protective Factors
- Workplace Stress
- Signs of Anxiety & Depression

How much is mental ill health **costing your business?**

Mental illness costs the Australian economy over \$11 billion per year in lost productivity.

The estimated total employer cost for depression in the workplace is \$8,025 per affected individual per year.



Up to **1 in 6**
of the working population
are currently experiencing
a mental illness

Source: Black Dog Institute



Stressed, exhausted, disengaged, absenteeism, presenteeism, reduced productivity

The case for **investing in mental health and wellbeing** is compelling



Research shows that the majority of mental illness seen in the workforce is treatable, and possibly even preventable.

Establishing a mentally healthy workplace increases productivity, reduces turnover, reduces costs incurred from absenteeism, presenteeism and worker compensation claims. Your organisation attracts and maintains talent, becoming an employer of choice.

Moving beyond a risk management approach to a focus on mental health and wellbeing becomes a lever to improve organisational performance.

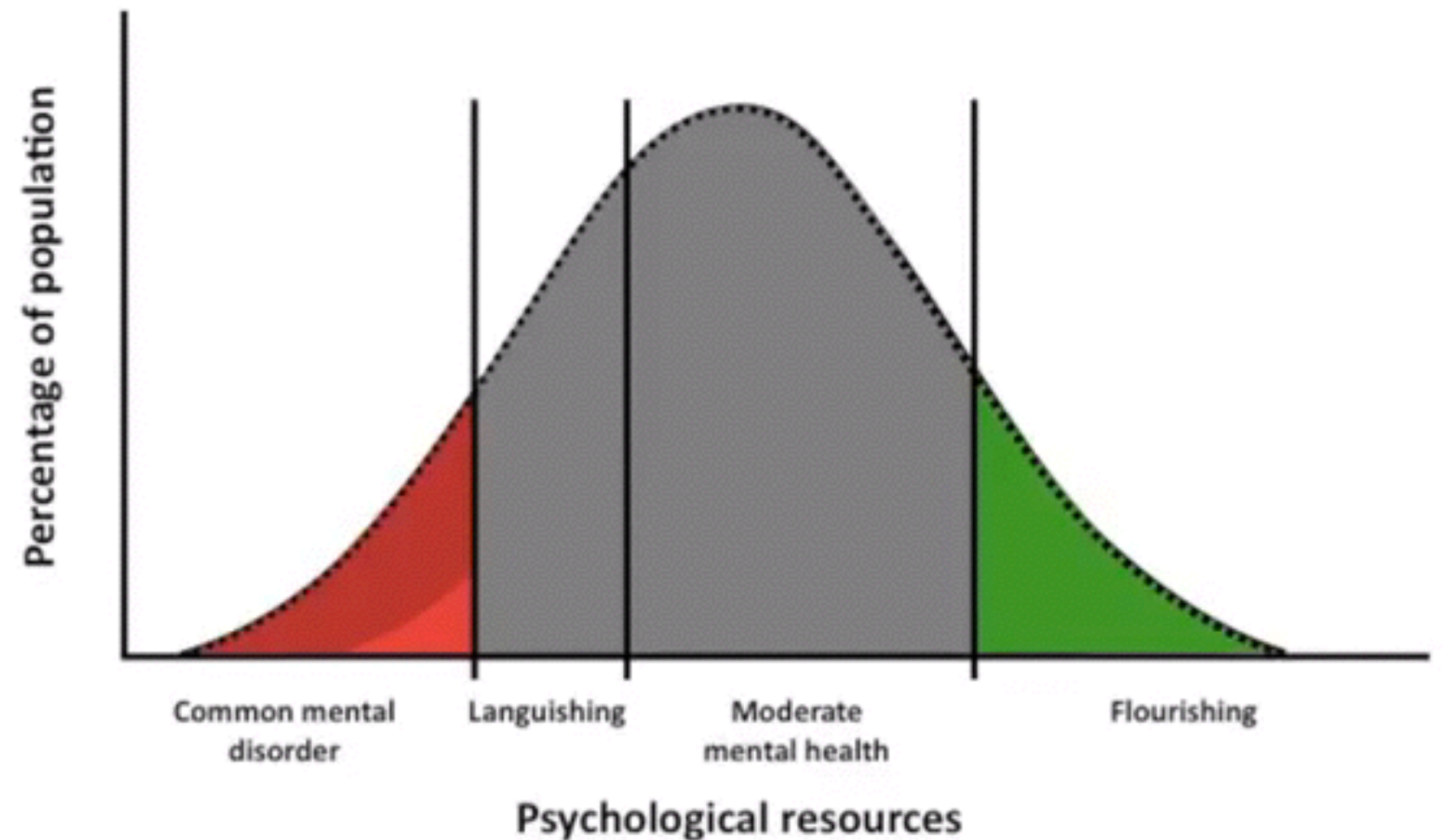
Source: Black Dog Institute

The Mental Health Spectrum

Felicia Huppert

Complete mental health is a combination of

- high emotional wellbeing,
- high psychological wellbeing
- high social wellbeing
- low mental illness



Definitions

- **Mental Health** - WHO definition: is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.
- Mental health is not an absence of mental illness but a state of wellbeing
- **Mental health disorder/Mental Illness** is characterised by the presence of symptoms to the extent in which they disrupt an individual's ability to function across different areas of life including managing relationships and maintaining work.
- **Mental health issues** suggests an individual may be symptomatic but not yet have a clinical disorder or illness

Source: Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014

What Defines a Mentally Healthy Workplace?

Where risk factors are acknowledged and appropriate action taken to minimise their potential negative impact on an individual's mental health

- Reduce Risk Factors
- Increase Protective Factors

Source: Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014

Factors Contributing to a Mentally Healthy Workplace

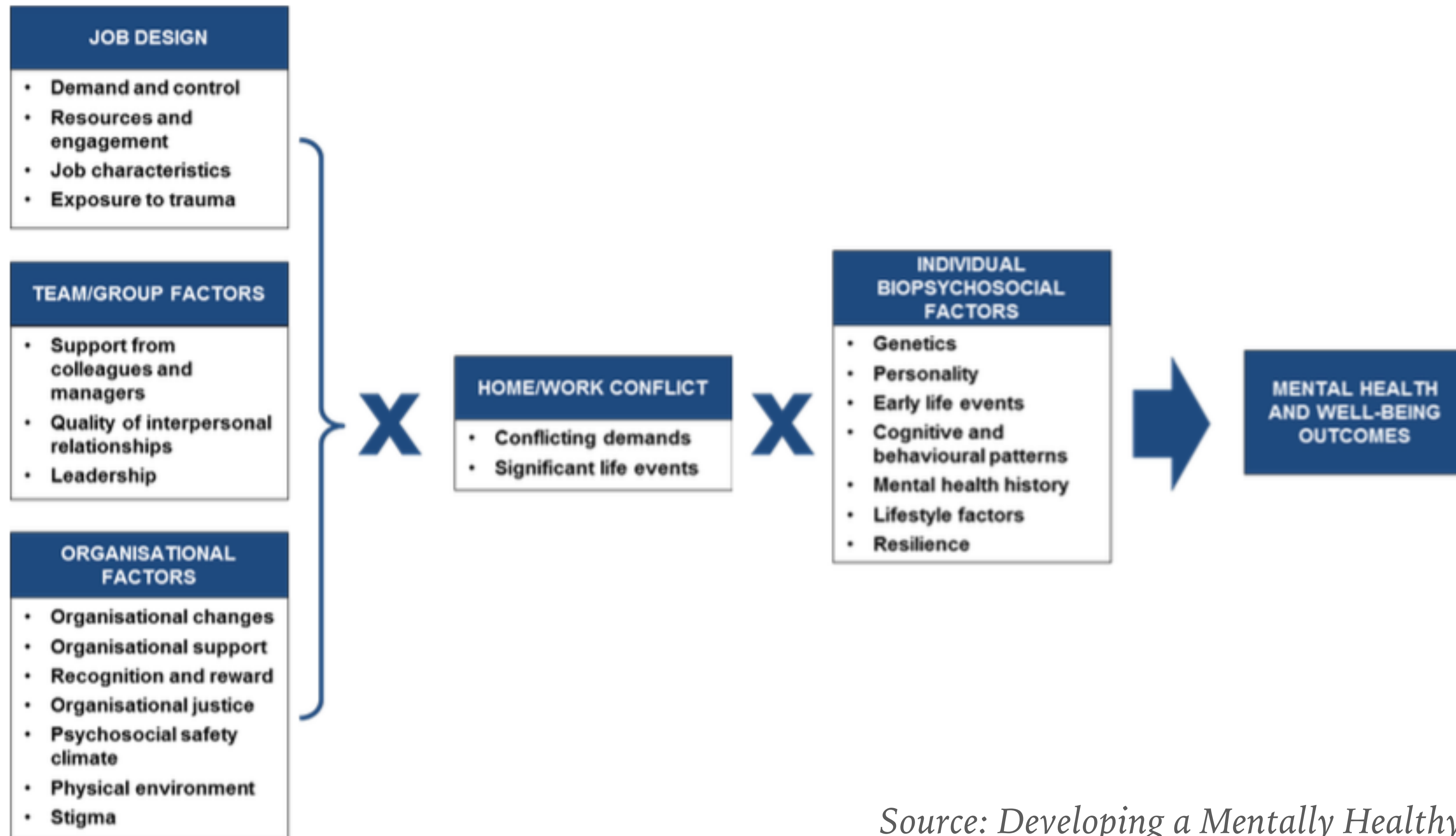
These are both RISK and PROTECTIVE factors:

- Job Design
- Team/Group Factors
- Organisational Factors
- Home/Work Conflict
- Individual Factors

You cannot isolate and address just ONE area

Source: Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014

Factors Contributing to a Mentally Healthy Workplace



Source: *Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace*, 2014

1. Job Design

The way in which the job is designed may influence Mental Health

- **Demand and Control** - physical, emotional & cognitive demands associated
RISK FACTOR: High emotional and Cognitive demands
Jobs with high demands & low control are 'high strain'
 - **Job Characteristics** - skill variety, task identity, significance and autonomy & feedback are associated with a higher level of wellbeing
- ** External pressure to perform is more strongly linked to anxiety
** Low control is strongly related to depression or dissatisfaction

JOB DESIGN
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand and control• Resources and engagement• Job characteristics• Exposure to trauma

Source: *Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014*

1. Job Design

The way in which the job is designed may influence Mental Health

- **Resources and Engagement** - providing employees with sufficient resources to perform their work, increases engagement.

Providing high quality feedback, variety & learning opportunities increases engagement

- **Exposure to Trauma** - risk factor is exposure to traumatic events
Occupations with regular exposure are associated with an increased risk of a variety of mental health problems, including depression, acute stress disorder and PTSD

JOB DESIGN
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand and control• Resources and engagement• Job characteristics• Exposure to trauma

2. Team/Group Factors

The 3 team factors:

- **Level of support received from colleagues & managers**
High psychological demands and low social support were the strongest and most consistent factors associated with increased risk of depression
- **The quality of interpersonal relationships** - interpersonal conflict is the most frequently reported source of workplace problems and workplace stress
- **Manager training and leadership** - play a key leadership role in the welfare of their staff. Transformational leadership is key & being able to trust managers that early help seeking does not result in employment loss.

TEAM/GROUP FACTORS

- **Support from colleagues and managers**
- **Quality of interpersonal relationships**
- **Leadership**

Source: Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014

3. Organisational Factors

Systems or norms affecting the organisation and processes that are implemented across the entire business:

- **Recognition and Rewarding work** - if the work reward does not match the effort made is strongly associated with increased risk of common mental disorders such as depression, anxiety and adjustment disorder.
Your organisation's culture and climate may impact employee mental health.
- **Organisational Climate** - beliefs about the organisations procedures & practices are expected, rewarded and supported
- **Psychosocial Safety Climate** - the perception of an appropriate balance between concern with employees' mental health and their productivity
- **Physical Environment** - poor environmental conditions have been associated with mood changes, sleep patterns, energy levels, anxiety and depression
- **Stigma in the Workplace** - any stigma is likely to make individual reluctant to discuss any symptoms

ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

- **Organisational changes**
- **Organisational support**
- **Recognition and reward**
- **Organisational justice**
- **Psychosocial safety climate**
- **Physical environment**
- **Stigma**

Source: *Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014*

4. Home/Work Conflict

Non-work factors also contribute and impact performance at work:

- Marital distress
- Abuse and violence
- Dependent children or older family members
- Financial strain
- Daily hassles

When demands at home impact or spill over to work, this has an exacerbating effect on depression and anxiety

Source: Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014

HOME/WORK CONFLICT

- **Conflicting demands**
- **Significant life events**

5. Individual Factors

There are a range of biological, psychological and social factors which will determine each individual's risk of developing mental illness.

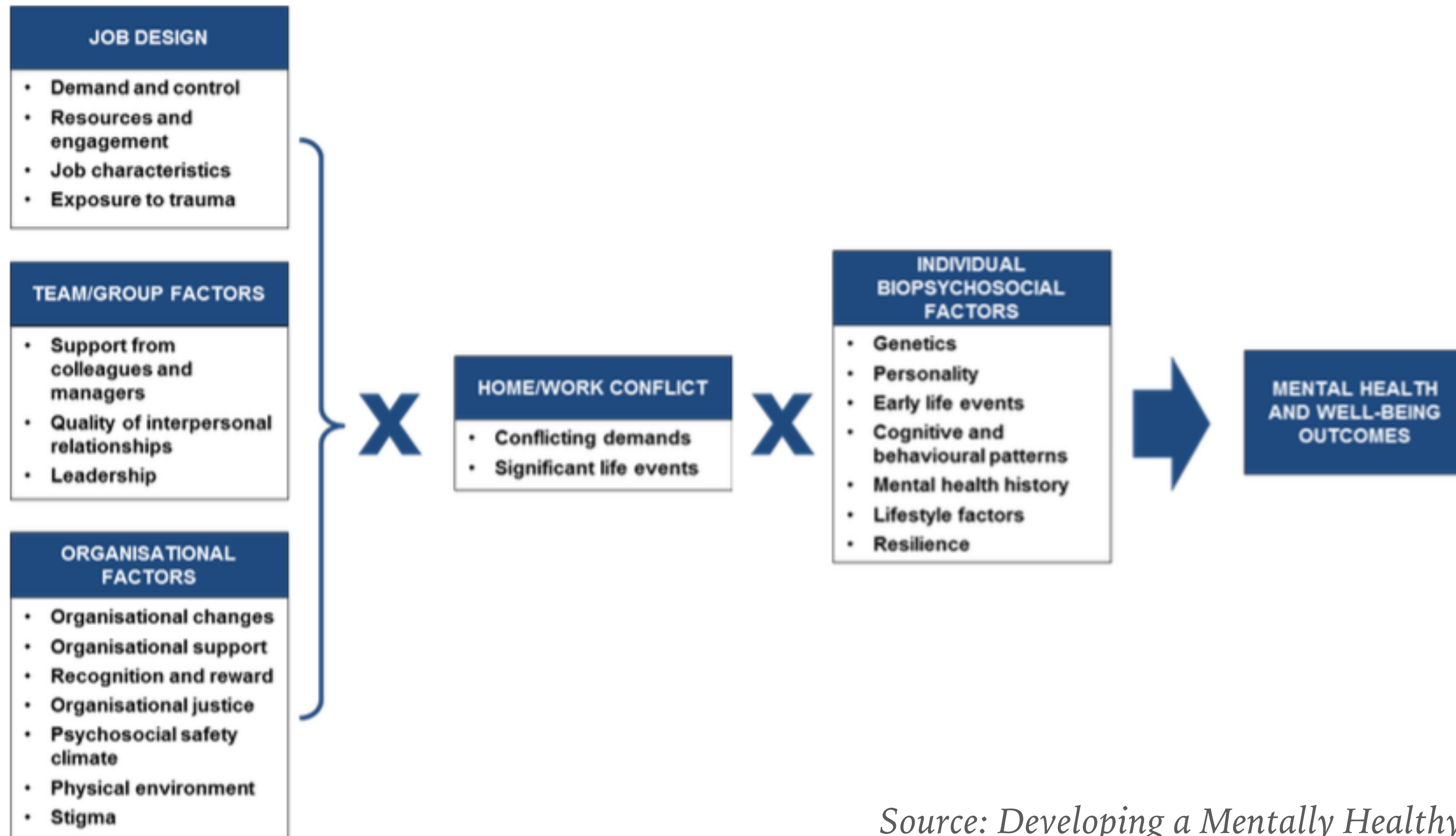
- Individual's genetic makeup
- Early life events
- Personality
- Cognitive and behaviour patterns
- Prior mental health problems
- Neurobiological changes
- Resilience - resilience training seeks to modify the responses to stressful situations in order to reduce the risk of adverse outcomes

INDIVIDUAL BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS

- Genetics
- Personality
- Early life events
- Cognitive and behavioural patterns
- Mental health history
- Lifestyle factors
- Resilience

Source: Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace, 2014

Factors Contributing to a Mentally Healthy Workplace



Source: *Developing a Mentally Healthy Workplace*, 2014

What is work-related stress?

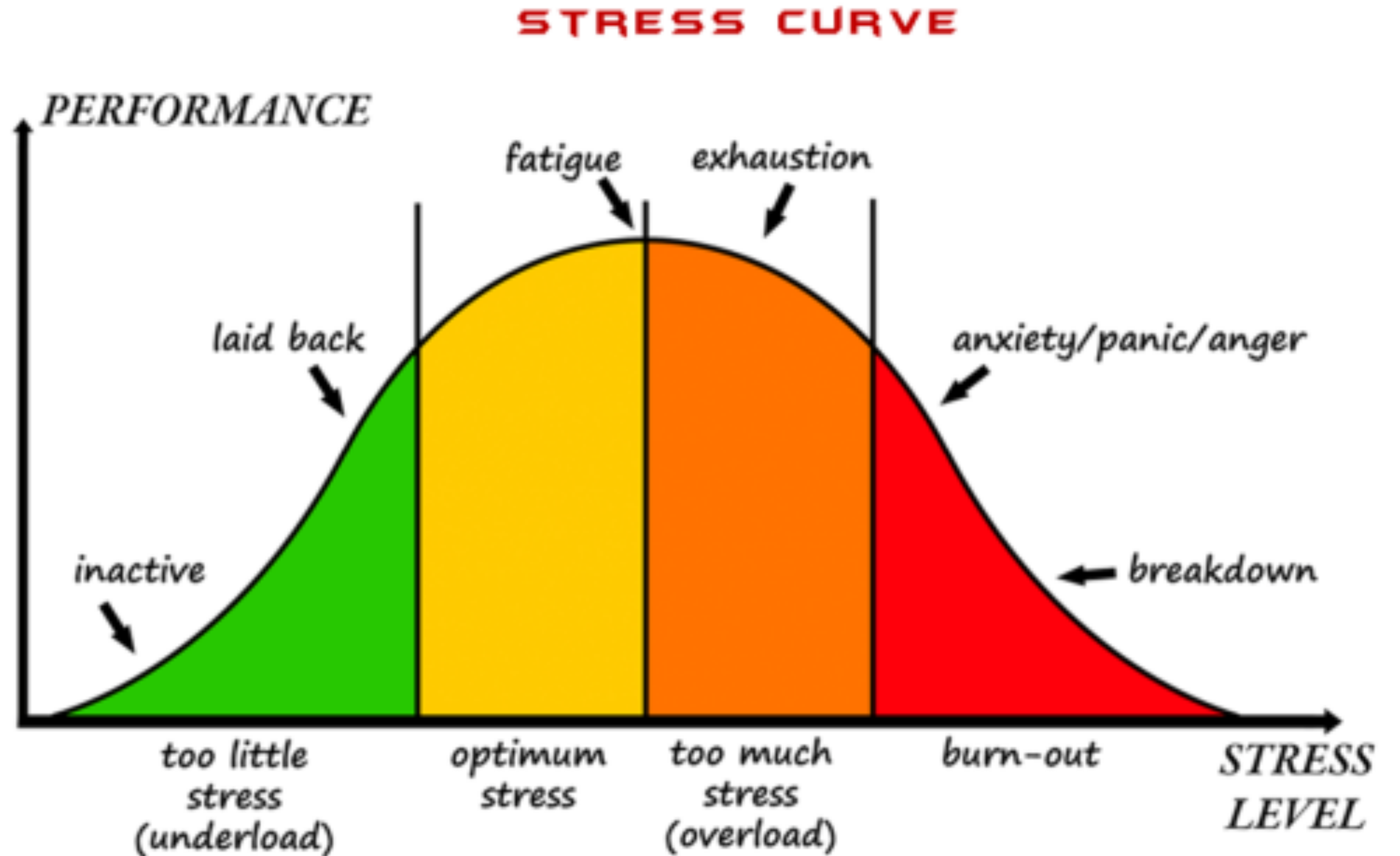
Stress describes the feelings and tension that someone may experience in response to pressures or demands placed upon them. Stress is a normal part of life and can help motivate people to complete a task or find new and creative ways to approach a problem.

Stress can be experienced in all aspects of life, and work is no exception. Work-related stress (or 'job stress') occurs when someone feels that the demands of their role are greater than their abilities, skills or coping strategies. Prolonged or excessive job stress can be a risk factor for developing a mental health condition, such as anxiety or depression.

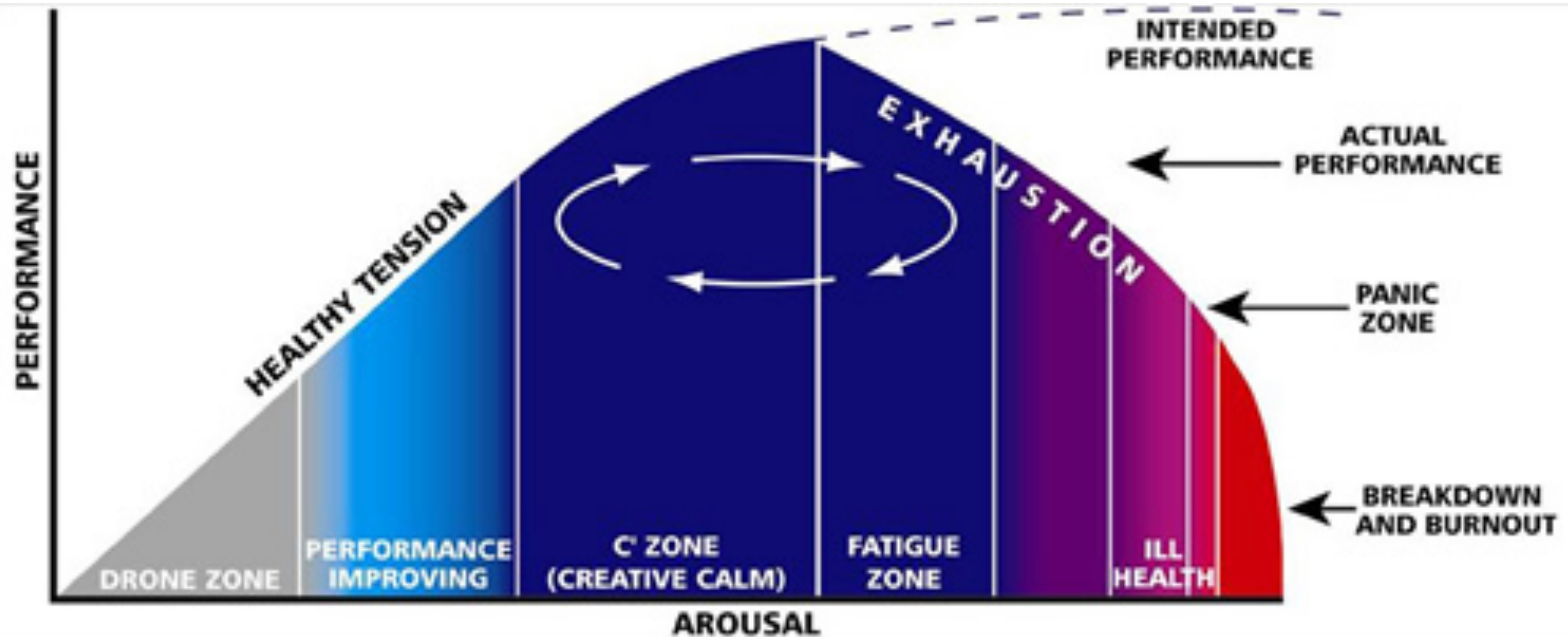
Source: Heads up

Stress Performance Curve

Stress
Where challenge exceeds
the skill or capacity



Stress Performance Curve



Common symptoms of depression

People with depression usually experience symptoms for more than two weeks across at least three of the following categories:

FEELINGS

- overwhelmed
- guilty
- getting angry or frustrated easily
- lacking in confidence
- unhappy, miserable or sad
- indecisive
- disappointed.

THOUGHTS

- “I’m a failure”
- “It’s my fault”
- “Nothing good ever happens to me”
- “I’m worthless”
- “Life’s not worth living”
- “People would be better off without me.”

BEHAVIOUR

- turning up to work late
- finding it hard to meet reasonable deadlines
- withdrawing from colleagues
- relying on alcohol and sedatives
- taking excessive sick leave
- having difficulty concentrating or managing multiple demands.

PHYSICAL

- constantly tired
- feeling sick and run-down
- having headaches and muscle pains
- sleep problems
- loss or change of appetite
- experiencing significant weight loss or gain.

Common symptoms of anxiety

The signs of anxiety often develop gradually and can be hard to identify. There are many kinds of anxiety conditions, each with their own specific symptoms, including generalised anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder, specific phobias or social phobia.



FEELINGS

- becoming overwhelmed or upset easily
- uncontrollable fear or worry
- constantly tense, nervous or on edge
- uncontrollable or overwhelming panic.

THOUGHTS

- “I’m going crazy”
- “I can’t control myself”
- “I’m about to die”
- “People are judging me”
- having upsetting dreams or flashbacks of a traumatic event
- finding it hard to stop worrying
- unwanted or intrusive thoughts.

BEHAVIOUR

- avoiding certain workplace activities, such as meetings
- urges to perform certain rituals in a bid to relieve anxiety
- not being assertive (e.g. avoiding eye contact)
- difficulty making decisions
- appearing restless, tense and on edge
- being startled easily.

PHYSICAL

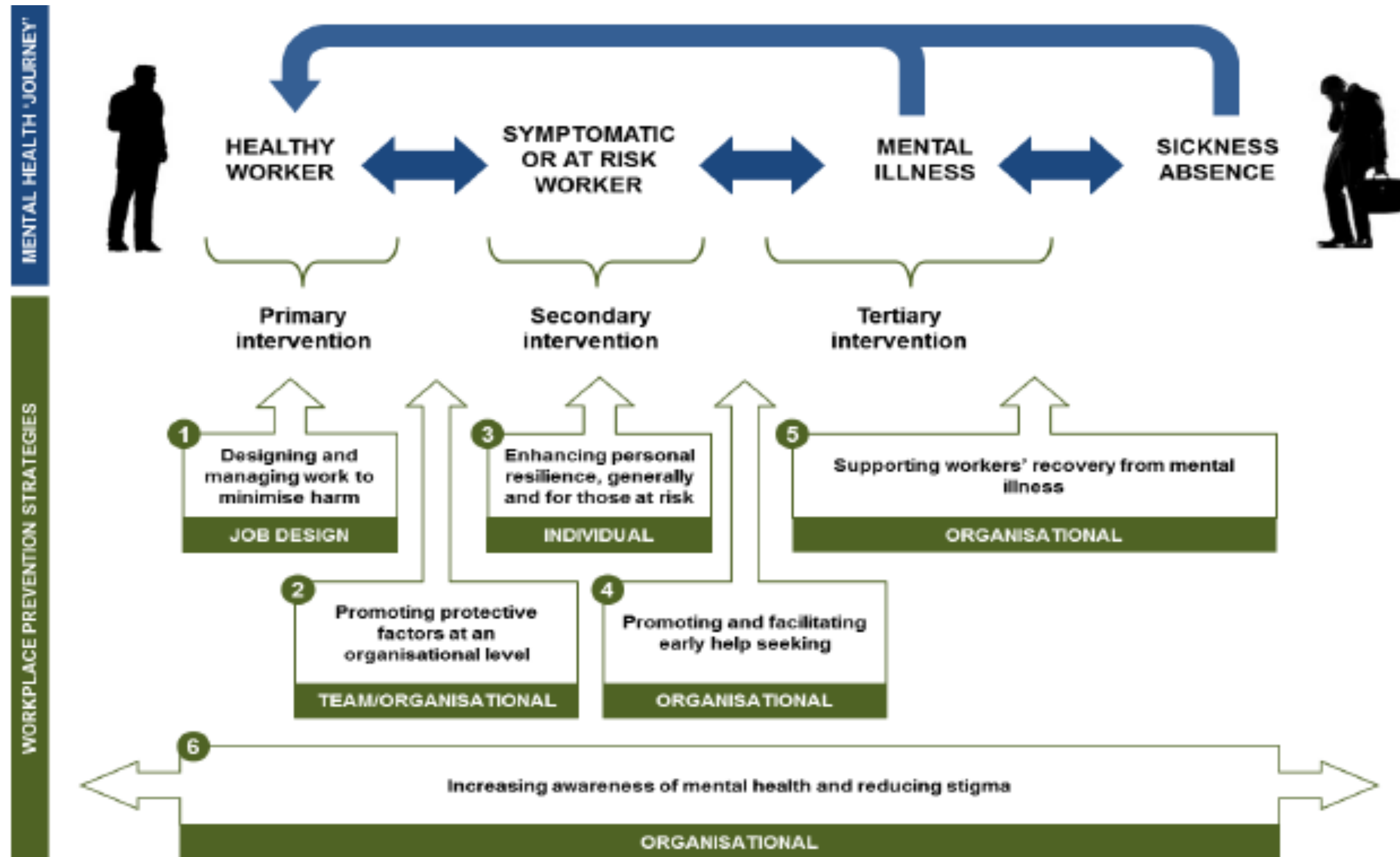
- increased heart rate/racing heart
- shortness of breath
- vomiting, nausea or stomach pain
- muscle tension and pain (e.g. sore back or jaw)
- feeling detached from physical self or surroundings
- having trouble sleeping
- sweating, shaking or dizzy
- difficulty concentrating.

What Causes Work Related Stress

- Unreasonable Work Demands - physical, emotional and mental
- Poor support
- Role Conflict
- Poorly Managed Relationships
- Low Level of Recognition or Reward
- Poorly Managed Change
- Organisational Justice
- Industry Specific Issue
- Bullying and Harassment
- Discrimination

Source: Heads up

6 Key Domains to a Mentally Healthy Workplace





NEXT STEP



QUESTIONS

