# BRAVE Leadership:
## Advanced certificate program in workplace mental health and wellbeing

## Module 1: The BRAVE Leader

Participant guide

# Contents

# Program overview

The BRAVE Leadership program takes a systems approach to promoting workplace mental health and wellbeing in these times of change and uncertainty. Leaders build their BRAVE Leadership toolkit with skills and practices for proactively cultivating wellbeing at the individual level, within teams, and in the wider organizational context.
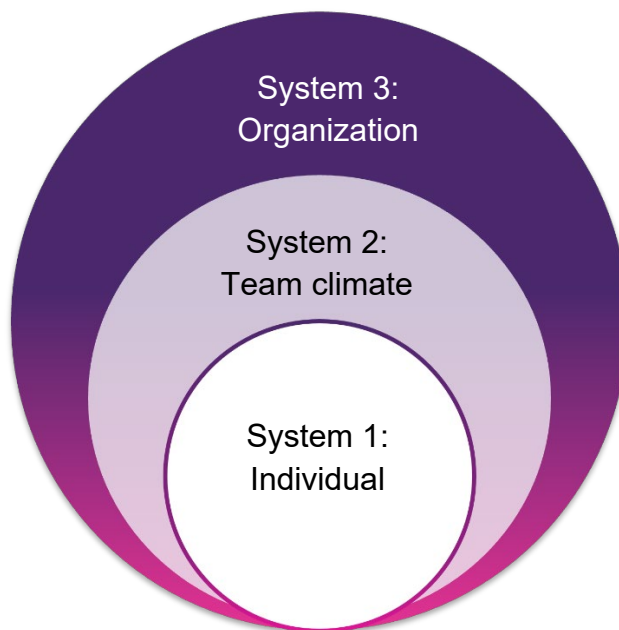


## Program structure

- **Module 1 classroom:** The BRAVE Leader – Mental health & wellbeing at the individual level (Half-day instructor-led workshop)
- **Module 2 classroom:** The team climate – Cultivating conditions for wellbeing within the team (Half-day instructor-led workshop)
- **Module 3 classroom:** The ecosystem of organizational wellbeing (Half-day instructor-led workshop)
- **Module 4 online:** eLearning review, exam & certificate



| Module 1: The BRAVE Leader | Module 2: The Team Climate | Module 3: The Organization | Module 4: eLearning Exam Certificate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Classroom | Classroom | Classroom | Online |
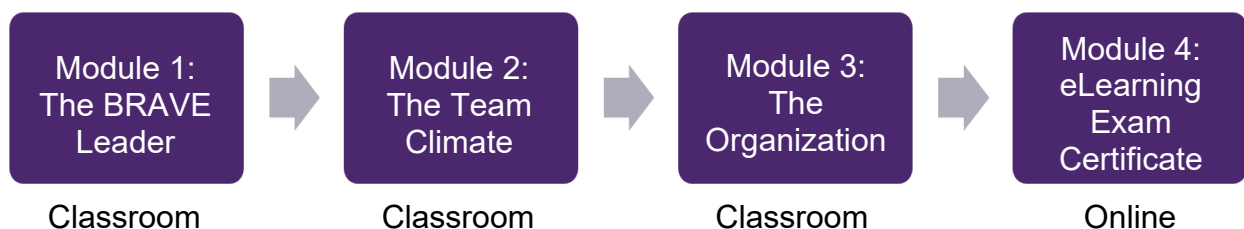
# Key program concepts

## Definition of mental health

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

- World Health Organization

## BRAVE Leadership



BRAVE leaders are:

- **B**old: BRAVE leaders have the courage to act according to values & business needs

- **R**egulated: BRAVE leaders manage their own feelings, thoughts, and behaviours

- **A**gile: BRAVE leaders think and behave flexibly in times of intense emotions or crisis situations

- **V**ulnerable: BRAVE leaders admit to not having all the answers, acknowledge their mistakes, share appropriately, and ask for help when needed

- **E**ngaged: BRAVE leaders direct energy and attention into productive action

# BRAVE Leadership toolkit
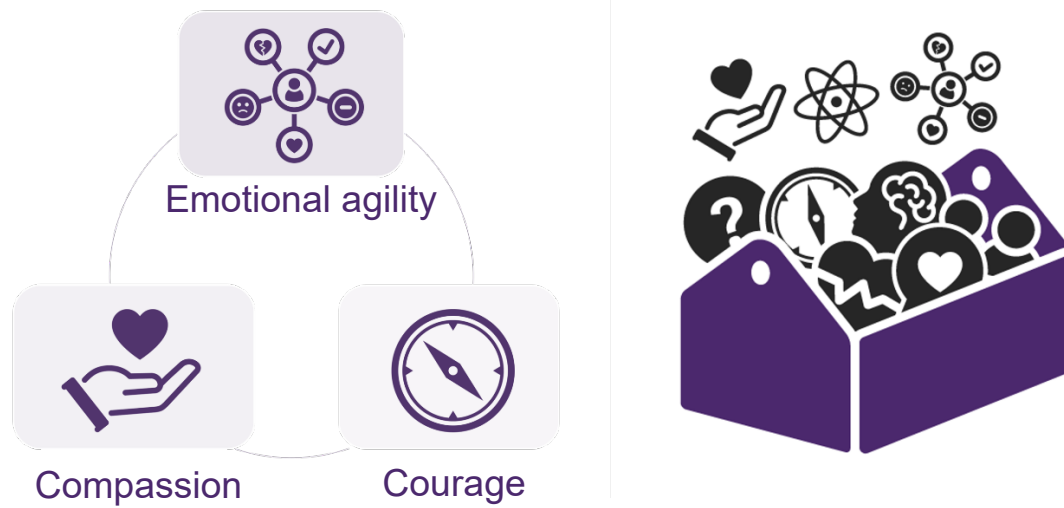


BRAVE leaders need to acquire skills in three areas:

- Toolkit #1: Emotional agility
- Toolkit #2: Compassion
- Toolkit #3: Courage

Each toolkit has specific skills and practices explored throughout the program:

| Toolkit | Skills |
|---------|--------|
| Emotional agility | Awareness - Curiosity - Regulation |
| Compassion | Empathy - Validation - Support |
| Courage | Values - Courageous action - Courageous communication |
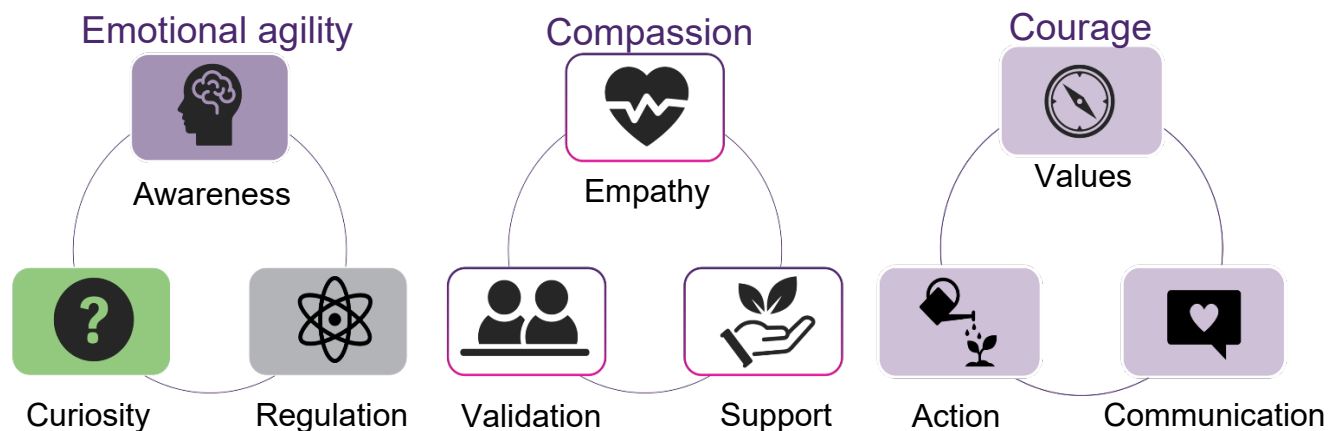
# 1: Mental health, wellbeing & BRAVE Leadership at work

## 21st century context: VUCA[1]

| Volatility | Uncertainty | Complexity | Ambiguity |
|---|---|---|---|

What are the characteristics of a VUCA context?

- Volatility: Increase in speed and amount of change
- Uncertainty: Lack of predictability about current and future events and outcomes
- Complexity: Multiple things are happening and affecting each other in ways that are difficult to predict and understand
- Ambiguity: Things are unclear and have mixed meanings or can be interpreted in different ways

What are some of the impacts of living in a VUCA period of heightened change?

On team members

On leaders

On organizations

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[1] VUCA first coined by Bennis & Nanus (1985)

**Living in a VUCA world:** We are living in a period of heightened complexity and challenges in all areas of human life: social, ecological, economic and health crises, among others. Complex situations and crises can create challenges to mental health and wellbeing. But crises do not only have negative impacts on us. They also create opportunities to pull together with others, to be innovative, and to take leadership in new ways.

What challenges have you and your team faced in recent months/years? How have you risen to those challenges?

## 21st century leadership: From reactionary to BRAVE leadership

To adapt and thrive in VUCA contexts, we need a shift from reactionary to BRAVE ways of living and working.

### What characterizes reactionary leadership?

- The age of the "quick fix" – a bias toward immediate solutions rather than investigating underlying causes and systemic changes
- Energy and attention focussed on reacting to immediate urgencies
- Habitual ways of working that are not sustainable because they can erode mental health and wellbeing

### What characterizes BRAVE leadership?

- The age of understanding, deliberation and intention – slowing down to approach challenges in ways that support mental health and wellbeing while also improving business outcomes
- The recognition that sustainable change is a process that requires sustained learning and engagement for which there is no shortcut or simple checklist
- Recognizing the importance of diversity and the complexity of human experience for cultivating wellbeing on our teams and in our organizations

## Characteristics of BRAVE leadership

BRAVE leaders are:

| Characteristic | Description | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **B**old | BRAVE leaders have the courage to act according to values and business needs | Having the courage to face the "tough stuff" thoughtfully |
| **R**egulated | BRAVE leaders manage their own feelings, thoughts and behaviours | Self-regulating in order to show up fully at work |
| **A**gile | BRAVE leaders think and behave flexibly in times of intense emotions or crisis situations | Being flexible to allow for more possibilities and respond adaptively under pressure |
| **V**ulnerable | BRAVE leaders admit to not having all the answers, acknowledge their mistakes, share appropriately, and ask for help when needed | Demonstrating vulnerability as the foundation for establishing trust and creating psychological safety |
| **E**ngaged | BRAVE leaders direct energy and attention into productive action | Serving as conduits of information, energy, and support in the organization to nurture change |

**Reflection:** Think about a recent challenging event or crisis, minor or major, you have faced as a leader. In what aspects would you say you performed well? Which aspects did you struggle with?

# Reflection exercise: Your leadership BRAVEry

When facing workplace challenges, consider your own response as a leader in the areas of BRAVE leadership.

| Area | Question | Your notes |
|---|---|---|
| Bold | In difficult situations, are you able to take courageous action and respond? | |
| Regulated | How much work does it take to regulate your own emotions and reactions? Are you able to? | |
| Agile | In what ways do you become rigid or chaotic under pressure? Are you able to be flexible? | |
| Vulnerable | Are you, as a leader, comfortable to admit when you don't have the answers, and to ask for help from your team? | |
| Engaged | As a leader, are you able to direct your energy towards productive action to solve challenges, or do you find yourself stuck in the same patterns? | |

# 2: Your BRAVE Leadership toolkit

## Introduction to your BRAVE Leadership toolkit

Emotional agility

Compassion    Courage

What does it take to respond to our VUCA world as a leader? What skills are needed to promote mental health and wellbeing in the workplace now and in the future?

BRAVE leaders need to acquire skills in three areas:

Emotional agility:

- The capacity to understand and work with emotions
- The ability to self-regulate and support the emotional regulation of others

Compassion:

- Understanding and respecting the psychobiology of human nature
- Being attuned to and validating the experience of others and offering supportive actions

Courage:

- Making values- and purpose-based decisions that support wellbeing and business objectives
- Aligning your communication and actions with your leadership values

# BRAVE Leadership toolkit #1: Emotional agility

## What is emotional agility?

Reflection:

- What do you think is meant by emotional agility? What are some examples?
- How do you feel about emotions at work? Your own? Others?
- How are emotions perceived in your workplace culture?

**Definition:** Emotional agility is about working with, instead of against, our emotions.

## Why is it important to focus so much on emotions in the workplace?

- Human beings are emotional by design: it is a natural part of who we are
- Working adaptively with emotions can nurture individual & collective resilience
- Emotions are a source of information
- Emotions can feed reactionary leadership, or support responsive leadership: we can work with, or be hijacked by, emotions

What examples of <u>effective or ineffective</u> coping mechanisms have you seen at work?

Some common maladaptive coping mechanisms that can erode mental health and wellbeing in organizations include:

- Avoidance or minimization
- Intellectualization or over rationalization
- False positivity
- Cultures of stoicism
- Emotional suppression

## Emotional agility in action

What does emotional agility look like?

- Recognizing and acknowledging our emotions and learning from them.
- Employing techniques to support emotional awareness and regulation to move out of reactive mode.
- Not forcing ourselves to do something or respond in the moment when we have big emotions.
- Taking time out to calm down before speaking or acting.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

By exploring and practicing the three components of emotional agility, you can start to build your BRAVE Leadership toolkit to work adaptively with emotions at work.

Awareness

Curiosity     Regulation
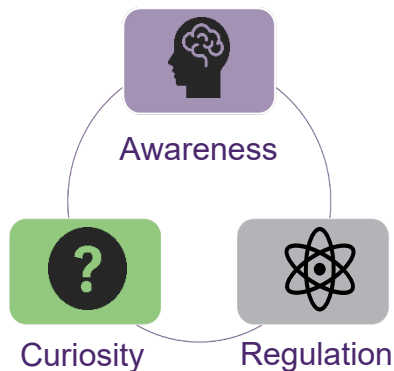
Emotional agility Toolkit:

1. Awareness - identifying and naming emotions
2. Curiosity - being curious about what they are saying
3. Regulation - managing emotional energy

## Emotional agility toolkit skill #1: Awareness

**Definition: Emotions**

"Emotions are physiologically based states that occur in response to what's happening in our environment. These states trigger cascades of shooting electrical impulses that impact your organs, nervous system, oxygen levels in your brain and virtually every other system in your body. These electrical impulses activate or deactivate powerful chemicals, neurotransmitters, that play an integral role in managing your attention, how you think, feel, and behave. Every decision you have ever made, everything you have ever learned has involved an emotion. Emotions are everywhere, all the time, so let's explore, accept, and learn from them!" – Dr. Tatijana Busic, Clinical Psychologist

### Identifying emotions

Emotions create sensations in the body. Paying attention to the physical sensations associated with our emotions can help us identify them. This is important self-knowledge to enhance our emotional agility.

| Sensation(s) | Observe your own emotions |
|---|---|
| Energy levels | Is your energy high, or low? |
| Muscle tension | Are your muscles tense or relaxed? |
| Heart rate | Is your heart racing, or beating steadily? |
| Respiration | Is your breathing shallow or deep? |
| Temperature | Are you feeling hot, flushed, or cold? |
| Perspiration | Are you sweaty, clammy, or dry? |
| Gut response | Do you feel a knot in your stomach? Is it doing flips? |

**Reflection situation 1:** Think about a recent situation in which you felt very agitated or triggered. Recall the situation: what was happening? What were you thinking? Now, what are you noticing in your body as you recall the situation?

**Reflection situation 2:** Now, think about a recent situation in which you felt good, more at peace or happily excited. Recall the situation: what was happening? What were you thinking? Now, what are you noticing in your body as you recall the situation?

In each of these situations, which of the most common core emotions did you feel? Match the sensations with the emotions you experienced:

## Reflection situation 1: Agitated

| Emotion | My experience and sensations |
|---|---|
| Joy | |
| Love | |
| Fear | |
| Anger | |
| Sadness | |
| Surprise | |
| Guilt | |
| Shame | |

## Reflection situation 2: At ease

| Emotion | My experience and sensations |
|---|---|
| Joy | |
| Love | |
| Fear | |
| Anger | |
| Sadness | |
| Surprise | |
| Guilt | |
| Shame | |

## Emotional agility toolkit skill #2: Curiosity

What am I thinking?

| Type of thinking | Characteristics | Reframe |
|---|---|---|
| Binary thinking | All or nothing; win or lose; right or wrong | Continuum thinking: What else is possible? Third option? Different views? |
| Deficit thinking | Focusing on what's missing, or from a point of weakness | Explore possibilities, limitations, priorities, options available |
| Tunnel vision | Seeing things from only one perspective | Explore from different angles and seek diverse perspectives |

### Getting curious

Identify and interrupt thinking patterns by getting curious about what you are thinking and why, and then cultivate agility by exploring ways to reframe the thought patterns.

Examples:

| Statement | Type of thinking | Reframe |
|---|---|---|
| "We don't have enough staff to complete all the projects! This will never get done." | Deficit thinking | |
| "I didn't get my point across in that presentation the way I wanted to. I'll never be able to influence the committee!" | Binary thinking | |
| "I don't know why they can't see the problems this is going to have for operations!" | Tunnel vision | |

## Emotional agility toolkit skill #3: Regulation

What does emotional regulation entail?

- Managing one's emotional energy
- Employing tools to create space and balance when one is emotionally activated
- Before proceeding into action: STOP!



**S**top: Don't do or say anything when you are in a reactive, emotionally activated state.

**T**ake a step back and breathe, deeply!  Get a glass of water or do something that helps you to pause.

**O**bserve: Check in with yourself and go through the first steps of the Emotional Agility Toolkit, becoming aware of what is happening in your emotions and body, and cultivating curiosity. Ask yourself:

- What emotion(s) are you experiencing? What are you feeling?
- How does this emotion direct your attention? What are you thinking?
- How does this emotion determine your path? What is your action impulse?
- What is going on with others?

**P**roceed mindfully: Take time to align your action to your values and your goals. Is action aligned with how you want to navigate the situation? How do you want to show up?

## Emotional regulation tools

### Paced breathing:

Example: Box breathing activity: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts, and hold for 4 counts.

### Progressive muscle relaxation:

Example: Tense and hold muscles in different parts of the body, and then release.

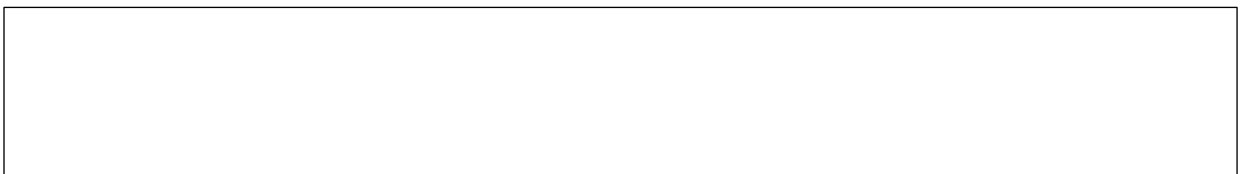### Mindfulness practice:

Example: Bring your attention inward, notice sensations or thoughts and observe them without judgment. Offer yourself compassion and understanding.

### Focusing on an external object or sensation:

Example: Direct your attention to a specific object or sensation, such the texture of an object in your hands or a photo of a place that makes you feel grounded and happy.

# BRAVE Leadership toolkit #2: Compassion

Compassion has three primary components:

Empathy

Validation　　　Support
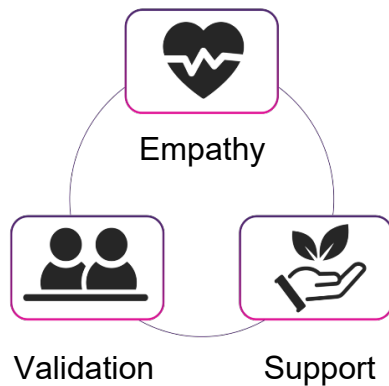
| Components of compassion | Description |
|---|---|
| Empathy | Being attuned to the experience of others, understanding feelings that are present, and gently acknowledging them with kindness and concern. |
| Validation | Acknowledge that the experience is real and don't judge it. |
| Support | Follow up by providing comfort and/or supportive actions. |

## Self-compassion: A keystone of BRAVE leadership

Compassion for others starts with self-compassion: giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others.

What would you say to a friend who is having a difficult time?

Empathy: "I see/hear that you're struggling and you're not alone."

Validation: "I recognize how difficult this is for you."

Support: "What would help you in this moment? I am here to support you."

## Reflection exercise: Building your self-compassion toolkit

Just as you would for a team member or loved one, you can practice self-compassion with words and actions. Note down some thoughts on what you can say and do to cultivate self-compassion when you are struggling.
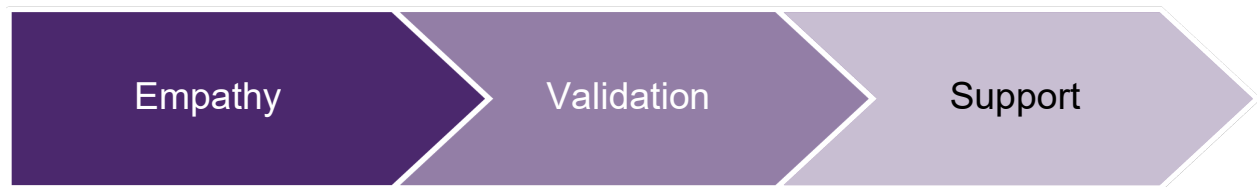
| Empathy | Validation | Support |

| Questions | What I can say to myself? |
| --- | --- |
| As a leader, what could you say to yourself to be kind and gently acknowledge when you are struggling? | |
| How can you remind yourself that having difficulties is a common and normal human experience and that you are not alone? | |
| How can you explore your needs and seek support? | |
| What actions can you take to better prioritize your own needs and self-care in the workplace? | |

# 3: Mental health and wellbeing from a systems perspective

## What is a living system?

A systems approach to mental health and wellbeing recognizes that every living system:

- Is made up of smaller, interconnected systems
- Interacts with its environment
- Is part of a larger, more complex system

Systems theory recognizes that no individual exists in isolation.
Every living being is shaped and influenced by many factors and relationships.

A systems approach helps us to understand the uniqueness of each individual, and the influence of social relationships and the wider environmental context on individual and collective mental health and wellbeing.
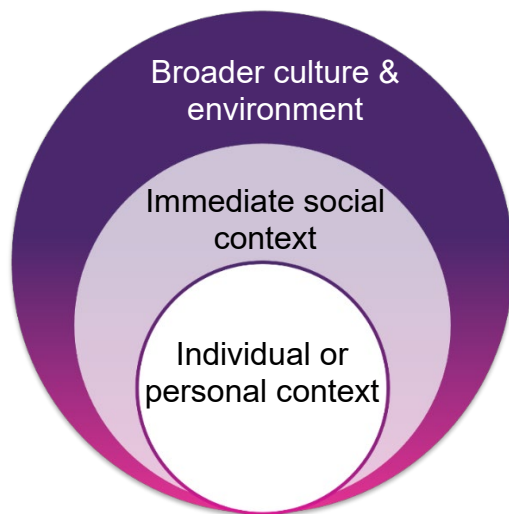
# Humans as living systems: the biopsychosocial model of mental health
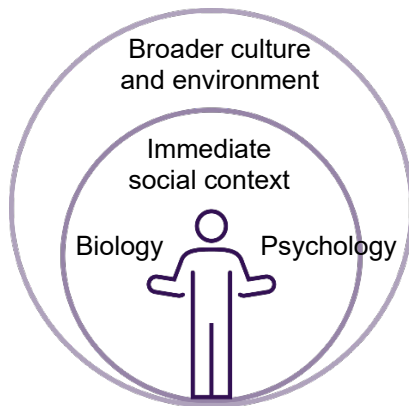


The biopsychosocial model of mental health is a systems' approach that looks at the interrelationship between the biological, psychological, and social factors that influence an individual's mental health and wellbeing.

Biological factors:
- Genetics, hormones
- Drugs/alcohol/substance use
- Toxins, neurochemistry
- Physical health/exercise/diet
- Injury, stressors

Psychological factors:
- Emotions
- Beliefs/attitudes/perception
- Coping skills and resilience
- Emotional intelligence
- Self-esteem

Immediate social context:
- Family circumstances
- Socio-economic status
- Exposure to trauma
- Workplace factors

Broader culture & environment:
- Societal culture
- Geo-political and world events
- Economic conditions

## The quality of systems' impacts: Additive and depleting factors

| Systems' Impacts | What they do |
|---|---|
| Additive factors | Things that feed us: providing energy, information or resources that support adaptive functioning |
| Depleting factors | Things that starve us: draining energy, information, or materials in ways that erode our wellbeing |

## Reflection activity: Additive and depleting factors

Additive factors:
- Provide energy, information or resources needed to support adaptive functioning.
- Serve as a buffer against depleting effects.

Depleting factors:
- Drain energy, information or materials.
- Provide unhealthy or toxic energy, information or materials.

Reflection: What examples can you think of in your life, or at work, of additive or depleting factors that are contributing positively and/or negatively to your wellbeing?

| Areas: | Additive factors | Depleting factors |
|---|---|---|
| Work | | |
| Family | | |
| Friendships | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Home | | |
| Volunteer activities | | |
| Sports/exercise | | |
| | | |
| | | |

# Worksheet: Ophelia's context

## Background: Ophelia's story

- Ophelia is a middle manager working in a fast-paced organization that has been experiencing significant challenges the past few years.

- Ophelia was born and raised in a small town, and she is the only female manager in her company that belongs to a visible racialized group.

- A few years ago, she lost her spouse after a long illness.

- She experienced a period of depression after that. She took some time off for recovery and after getting mental health support, she returned to her usual exceptional performance at work and was promoted.

- Outside work, Ophelia is struggling with the challenges of raising a family of two kids on her own, while also caring for her elderly aunt.

- At work, her team has been under immense pressure to perform despite the intense challenges of the work landscape brought by the VUCA world context.
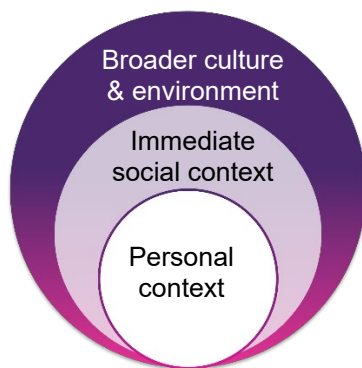


**Activity:** What factors may be impacting Ophelia's wellbeing at each system level?

- System 1: Individual or personal context
- System 2: Immediate social context
- System 3: Broader culture and environment

Consider both the ways in which these could be:
- Depleting factors
- Additive factors
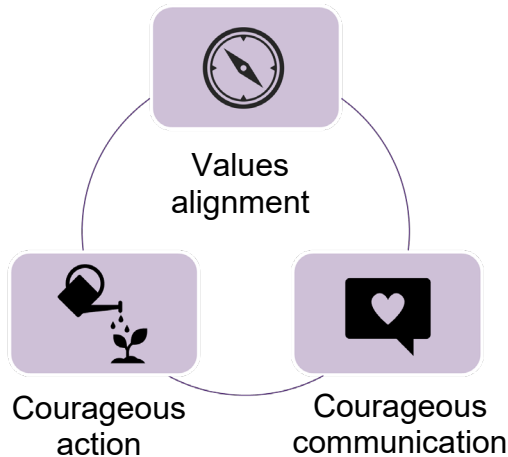
## Explore: Ophelia's context

| System Level: | Additive factors: | Depleting factors: |
|---|---|---|
| System 1: Personal or individual context | | |
| System 2: Immediate social context | | |
| System 3: Broader culture and environment | | |

# 4: Courageous & values-based leadership

## BRAVE Leadership toolkit #3: Courage



Addressing workplace practices that deplete mental health and wellbeing requires courageous leadership. This requires the willingness to start with oneself, which is the foundation for demonstrating courage in relationship with others.

Courage as a leadership tool at the individual level includes:

- Courageous action
- Values alignment
- Courageous communication

## Bias, stigma and courageous mental health leadership

In order to take courageous action in workplace mental health leadership, it is important to cultivate self-awareness of biases and stigma that erode mental health and wellbeing.

### What is bias?

Mental shortcut, or patterned way of thinking that predisposes or influences us towards/away from one thing, person or group compared to another.

### What is stigma?

Negative, rigid beliefs and assumptions about people and human experience (prejudice) that can result in harmful behaviours towards people (discrimination).

Stigma around mental health challenges is encoded into our thoughts and beliefs and we are often unaware of all the assumptions behind the judgments we make.

Biases can be adaptive because:
- They help us make split second decisions in a crisis
- They help us make sense of our experiences and organize them into memories

Biases can be problematic because:
- They can distort the information we pay attention to
- They prevent us from considering different and varied perspectives
- Can lead us to exclude based on fear, or make decisions based on comfort instead of consideration
- They can result in stigma and discrimination

## Individual experiences of stigma and discrimination

Broader culture & environment

Immediate social context

Experiencing stigma or discrimination is a depleting factor for mental health. It can impact people in all aspects of their lives. It can be experienced at work, and within the broader cultural environment. Most people have more than one characteristic that can result in experiences of bias, stigma, and discrimination, including:

- Race or ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Age
- Sex or gender identity
- Mental health status
- Country of origin
- Religious affiliation

Exploring, naming and taking ownership of biases

| Type of bias | Description | Thought pattern |
|---|---|---|
| Confirmation bias | Looking for information or data that confirms the understanding or belief we already have. | "When I want to find something, I am going to find it." |
| Fundamental attribution error | Overemphasizing situational factors when we are wrong, and underemphasizing them when another person makes an error. | "When I make a mistake, it's your fault, or the world's fault. But when you make a mistake, it's definitely your fault." |
| Status quo bias | Preference for solutions or actions that help maintain the current state and preserve a sense of certainty. | "Why do we do it that way? That's the way it is done." |
| Affinity bias | Gravitating towards people similar to ourselves in appearance, beliefs, and backgrounds. | "Oh, he's so great, we went to the same university!" |
| Out-group Homogeneity bias | The tendency to assume that members of groups we don't belong to are very similar to one another. | "X people are hard workers." |

How do these forms of bias impact the workplace? Us as leaders?

## Identifying biases in action

| Example | Why is this biased?<br><br>What would the impact be: on an individual? The team? the organization? |
|---|---|
| "They're kind of old, I knew they couldn't handle the tech needed for this job!" | |
| "She's great, but her work experience is all overseas. I am not sure she will fit into our workplace culture." | |
| "I am worried about promoting them, they took mental health leave last year." | |
| Inviting only colleagues of your same gender/race/ability etc. to go out for lunch regularly. | |
| | |
| | |

# BRAVE Leadership toolkit #3: Courageous action

## Challenging bias and stigma

BRAVE leaders work adaptively with their own emotional systems to mitigate the influence of their own biases and stigma.

## Discussion activity: Bias & stigma in the workplace

1: What impacts do biases and stigma about mental health challenges have on:

| Group | Impacts |
|---|---|
| Individuals? | |
| Teams? | |
| Organizations? | |
| Clients served? | |

2: What steps can you take as a leader to reduce biases and stigma in yourself and your organization? Record some examples of how to be proactive and responsive to stigma. Consider the ways in which multiple forms of bias can work together.

| Step | Example |
|---|---|
| Build greater awareness of mental health challenges | |
| | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Impacts of stigma related to mental illness

- Stigma prevents people from getting the treatment they need.

- People with concealable stigma are less likely to seek support than people with visible stigmatized identities.

- Stigma increases the likelihood of feelings of social isolation.

- People with concealable and/or multiple stigmatized identities can be at even greater risk.

- Stigma increases instances of bullying and harassment.

- Prevents employees from seeking the accommodations they require to flourish at work.

- Employees often fear retaliation at work for disclosing or seeking mental health support.

- People experience stigma in combination with biases related to other aspects of identity, such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender etc.

## Cues to your own stigmatizing behaviours:

- When you're judging or evaluating another person's experience.

- When you're doing more "explaining" rather than asking questions, listening, and reflecting.

- When you notice yourself fearing or avoiding certain people or certain "uncomfortable conversations."

## Courageous action: Interrupting biased thought patterns

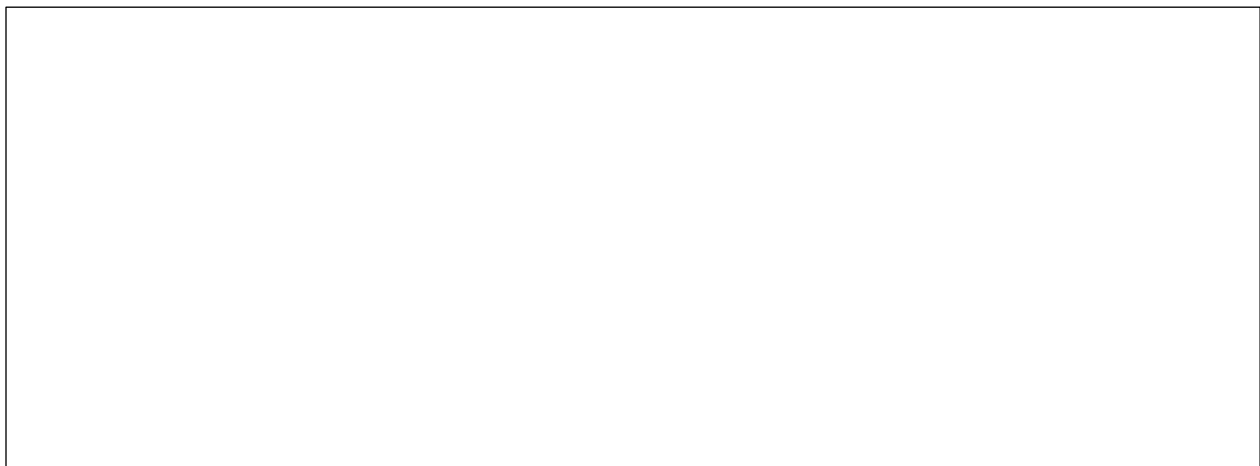1 - Cultivate awareness & acceptance. Use your emotional agility toolkit.

2 - Interrupt patterns by asking yourself:

- What do I know for certain about this person or people? Have I made assumptions?
- Have I drawn any conclusions without knowing the full facts?
- What observations/information have I used to draw any conclusions?
- Is it based on my own thoughts?
- Have I taken the time to listen, explore, and learn about the person?
- What are my feelings telling me about my reactions and possible biases?

3 - Take BRAVE action.

- Take steps to learn and unlearn.
- Be comfortable with feeling uncomfortable.
- Act on the self-awareness you develop.
- Invest in learning.
- Listen more.
- Take responsibility for working with your biases on an ongoing basis.

What courageous actions to combat bias and stigma inside yourself will you take on your BRAVE leadership journey?

# Activity: BRAVE Leadership toolkit #3: Identifying your values

Your personal and work-related values serve as your guideposts for how you live your life; the actions you take, the decisions you make, the relationships you cultivate and nurture. They are also goals that serve to motivate and inspire you. Striving to live and act in alignment with your values is an additive factor for your mental health and wellbeing, including as a leader at work.

Activity 1: Below is a list of values related to your own personal motivators and who you are as a person. For the values below, fill in the chart to indicate whether each is:

- Very important: you consider this core and essential for you.
- Somewhat important: you appreciate the value and find it meaningful, yet it is not central to who you are.
- Not important: the value does not inspire you or is counter to a value you hold.

| Values related to motivation | Ranking |
|---|---|
| Achievement: meeting your goals | |
| Authority: influence and power | |
| Authenticity: being true to yourself | |
| Balance: having time for family, work and play | |
| Cooperation: being collaborative with others | |
| Honesty: telling the truth and knowing others are | |
| Independence: having control of my own destiny | |
| Influence: able to have an impact on others | |
| Integrity: standing up for my beliefs | |
| Kindness: being compassionate and caring | |
| Recognition: acknowledged/rewarded | |
| Respect: care and trust of self and others | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Responsibility: accountable for my obligations/actions | |
| Spirituality: living my core beliefs | |
| Wellbeing: physical/psychological/emotional health | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Activity 2:  From the list of values that you indicated as being very important to you, identify 3, 4, or 5 of the most critical or central values for you at work.

1.  _____

2.  _____

3.  _____

4.  _____

5.  _____

Choose one of those values and write down some ideas on how you can live out that value for yourself and others in the workplace.

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|  |

# Homework

Please complete these assignments to practice what you have learned and to prepare for the next session.

| Assignment 1: | Assignment 2: | Assignment 3: |
|---|---|---|
| Self-Observation | Practice: Mindfulness & self-compassion | Reflect: Values dissonance |

## Assignment 1: Self-observation

What happens when I get emotionally activated?

Notice situations in which you get emotionally activated – very excited, angry, sad etc. Pay attention to what was going on for you and record your observations below.

| Question | Reflections |
|---|---|
| What was the feeling or feelings you experienced? | |
| What did you feel in your body? What sensations did you notice? | |
| What were you wanting to do when you felt that way? | |
| What was the feeling telling you? | |

| Question | Reflections |
|---|---|
| What was the feeling or feelings you experienced? | |
| What did you feel in your body? What sensations did you notice? | |
| What were you wanting to do when you felt that way? | |
| What was the feeling telling you? | |

| Question | Reflections |
|---|---|
| What was the feeling or feelings you experienced? | |
| What did you feel in your body? What sensations did you notice? | |
| What were you wanting to do when you felt that way? | |
| What was the feeling telling you? | |

## Assignment 2: Practice emotional regulation tools

Choose one or two of the regulation tools explored and experiment with them in action when you are feeling stressed or emotionally activated. Record notes on your experiences below.

| Regulation exercises | My experience |
|---|---|
| **Paced breathing:**<br>This is the simple technique of breathing in for a count of 4, holding the breath for a count of 4, exhaling for a count of 4, and hold the breath out for a count of 4. | |
| **Progressive muscle relaxation:**<br>Actively tense, hold (5 seconds) and then release your muscles, moving from the top of the head to the feet. Can be done standing, seated, or lying down. | |
| **Mindfulness practice:**<br>Be fully present and aware of the present moment, without judgment or attachment to thoughts, emotions, or sensations. Pay attention to thoughts, feelings, and surroundings with a sense of curiosity and acceptance. | |
| **Focusing on an external object or sensation:**<br>Direct your attention to a specific object or sensation. You could have a touchstone that helps bring you a sense of calm and connection. | |

## Assignment 3: Exploring values dissonance

### Definition:
Values dissonance refers to the psychological discomfort or conflict that arises when your personal values or beliefs are inconsistent or in conflict with the values or beliefs of a culture, society, or community – including the workplace. This dissonance can lead to feelings of confusion, moral dilemma, or a sense of being out of place.

Inevitably, we won't be able to always live up to our values, or we may experience conflicts between personal values and managing other responsibilities we are accountable for. We may struggle when we experience values dissonance.

- How can you respond when you don't or can't act in alignment with your values?

- How can you use your BRAVE leadership tools of emotional regulation and self-compassion in this context to support your own wellbeing?

# Notes pages

# Notes

# Notes