

# My Whole Self: Managers' toolkit



My Whole Self



# My Whole Self Managers' toolkit

**My Whole Self is Mental Health First Aid England®'s campaign for workplace culture change. We want organisations to empower employees to bring their whole self to work. By bringing together diversity and inclusion with health and wellbeing, we can drive positive transformation in workplace mental health and performance.**

At MHFA England®, we believe wellbeing and productivity fuel one another. We know teams that feel safe and connected work better together. Our people are at their most effective and creative when everybody feels psychologically safe and is seen, heard and valued. Being able to bring your whole self to work is better for wellbeing and better for business.

We understand the critical role that managers play in making this happen. Managers help build working environments that allow people to be authentic and share their whole self. They create the golden thread between an individual's objectives, the team's plan, and the business' vision and mission.

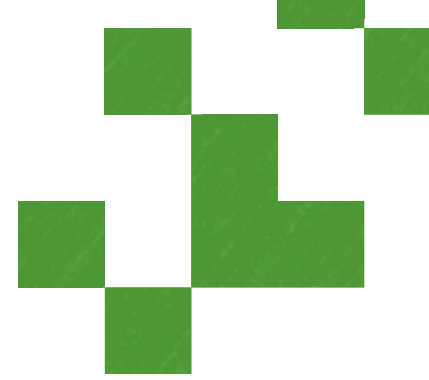
Given how much value managers deliver to organisations in building cultures that support wellbeing and performance, it is important that they have the right tools, time, and training to do the job of managing well.

This short guide is written for managers working at all levels within organisations. It sets out some principles and practices that every manager should be developing to drive positive workplace wellbeing and create workplaces where everyone is safe to bring their whole self to work. It has been designed to help managers throughout the whole employee lifecycle, giving ideas and tools to support them in their role.



**My Whole Self**

# The Chartered Management Institute (CMI)



If we are serious about the success of our organisations, we need to get serious about our people. This means giving managers what they need to succeed.

We recommend that you read the [CMI Professional Standard](#)<sup>1</sup>, which has ethical and inclusive leadership at its heart. It says that ethical and inclusive leaders:

- Act with integrity
- Champion inclusivity
- Look after the wellbeing of staff
- Commit to sustainability
- Care for the environment

## Being an effective manager

Work that is designed well is good for us, but work is only ever one part of our whole self. In both life and work, we will encounter challenges. Managers can't solve everything for everyone, but we can do our best to help our team navigate challenges. By building strong working relationships, we can provide people with purpose and satisfaction in what they achieve in work.


An effective manager will:

- Create psychologically safe, inclusive, and emotionally healthy environments
- Develop and encourage relationships of trust with and between members of their team
- Build a diverse, high performing team that find work rewarding, and are connected to the business values and strategy
- Ensure people are clear about their roles and responsibilities
- Make everyone feel they belong, ensuring they are seen, heard, and valued equally
- Support their team to perform well and promote wellbeing
- Be self-aware and look after their own wellbeing to help role model positive leadership behaviours
- Develop knowledge of where to seek and signpost to support if needed


<sup>1</sup> CMI professional standards: [managers.org.uk/education-and-learning/professional-standards/professional-standard/](https://managers.org.uk/education-and-learning/professional-standards/professional-standard/)

# My Whole Self managers' framework

The table below provides some considerations and questions for us as managers to ask at different stages of team members' journeys. To drive positive mental health, wellbeing, and performance, we must support people throughout the employee lifecycle, from their first to their last interaction with us, and everything in between.

<p><b>Recruitment</b> is your opportunity to excite candidates about your organisation and your commitment to high performance, wellbeing, and equity.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does your recruitment and interview process reflect your organisational values, and allow people to be seen, heard, and valued?</li> <li>- How can you encourage people to bring their whole self to the application and interview process?</li> <li>- Be explicit that performance and wellbeing fuel one another, and you will work in partnership with them to help them thrive</li> <li>- This is as much a selection process for them as for you, so give a realistic but positive impression of you, the organisation, and its values</li> </ul>
<p><b>On-boarding</b> is your opportunity to start building a relationship. This period lays the foundations for supporting people's performance and wellbeing. You should set the expectation that they can bring their whole self to work and will be a valued member of the team. It's also the time to demonstrate how you will support them and signpost them to any key policies or services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allocate enough time to get to know your new team member and to induct them into the organisation</li> <li>- Consider how you can demonstrate your commitment to wellbeing and equity. Have you shared key policies, or any campaigns, accreditations, or charters that you are signed up to? For example, a zero tolerance policy on harrasment, bullying, and discrimination, being a Disability Confident employer, signed up to the Menopause Charter, etc.</li> <li>- Have you made sure your new team member knows who and where to turn to if they are struggling with their mental health?</li> <li>- Discuss how you can work together to support high performance and wellbeing. Have you asked them how they perform best and their preferred ways of working and ways to receive feedback, or how they like to process or contribute ideas in 1:1s or team situations?</li> <li>- Ask where they will work best and what flexibility they may require, and explain the organisation's policy on flexible working</li> </ul>

# My Whole Self managers' framework

<p><b>Building the team</b> takes time. Every time a new member of the team joins, a new team is established. Welcoming a new person is everyone's responsibility, but as a manager you can help foster a culture that makes this happen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build enough time for the wider team to get to know their new team member</li> <li>- How will you encourage the team to get to know and learn about each other, and make sure everybody knows they have a voice and uniquely valued perspectives?</li> <li>- Do you have regular team time to discuss shared objectives and projects, as well as celebrating successes?</li> <li>- Regularly take time to reflect on how you can work as positively and purposefully as possible for your team</li> </ul>
<p><b>Setting clear objectives</b> and linking these to the team and organisation's objectives is key to success.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure there is a golden thread between the individual's objectives, team plans and the business objectives. It's your role as a manager to help people to understand it</li> <li>- Ask yourself if the workload is realistic, and how you will achieve a shared sense of vision and purpose</li> <li>- Are timeframes clear? Does everyone know what the process is if a deadline won't be met?</li> <li>- Do people know the tools they are expected to use to help them perform their role well?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regular one-to-one meetings and reviews</b> are critical. It's an opportunity to discuss wellbeing and performance and the relationship between the two.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you have a one-to-one framework that enables you to focus on the important issues, including identifying challenges, celebrating success, and giving the opportunity for feedback?</li> <li>- You can download <a href="#">MHFA England's one-to-one form</a> for a template to drive helpful one-to-one conversations</li> <li>- Consider what action you can take to remove stressors</li> <li>- An annual review process will help you to manage performance and provide more formal opportunities throughout the year to check progress</li> </ul>

# My Whole Self managers' framework

**Spotting the signs that things may not be right** is a key role for managers.




- There are many different signs that can indicate something is wrong:
  - Your colleague or one of their peers may tell you directly
  - Behaviour or appearance may change
  - Performance may change
- Consider how these signs may differ if you are working remotely or in person
- If you think things may not be right, find an appropriate time and place and check in
- The key to checking in well is to do it compassionately, with empathy, and explain why you are checking in: *'I noticed you have looked really unhappy/had your camera off the last few times we met, and that is different than usual, so I wanted to check in to see if you are ok or if there is anything you want to talk about'*
- Look at our [My Whole Self Talking Tips](#) to help you approach the conversation sensitively and confidently

**Performance and wellbeing action plans** enable you to provide high support and high challenge to people. Good action plans speak to both performance and wellbeing since they are intrinsically linked.

- Organisations often have performance and/or wellbeing action plans. We recommend integrating them into a single plan. This will make it easier for you to manage and support your people
- The plan could be used:
  - If there was a performance issue
  - If there was a wellbeing issue
  - To support someone with their return to work
  - If someone was experiencing a significant life event. For example, a bereavement or a chronic condition etc.
- Questions and prompts on the form should enable conversation about the impact of work on wellbeing and vice-versa, highlight support or adjustments needed and focus on setting work objectives and wellbeing targets
- Speak to your HR team to see what is available and recommended in your organisation

# My Whole Self managers' framework

<p><b>Signposting to support</b> is often the next step once you have identified that someone may be struggling with their wellbeing.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Are you aware of what sources of support your organisation offers employees, and do you remind your team of them regularly? For example, an employee assistance programme (EAP) or in-house counselling services</li><li>- Does your organisation have trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAiders®), and do your people know who they are and how to contact them?</li><li>- Review the specific support available for any aspects of wellbeing, such as financial wellbeing, and flag to your HR team if you think something is missing</li><li>- Consider whether you have the confidence to help someone in your team find the support they need whilst holding clear boundaries and if not, ask</li></ul>
<p><b>Looking after yourself</b> is essential if you want to support other's wellbeing. Role modelling self-care and healthy working habits will also encourage your team to develop good behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Have you considered whether you might benefit from contacting any of the support above yourself?</li><li>- You can use our <a href="#">My Whole Self MOT</a> to check in on your own wellbeing</li><li>- Don't forget to speak to your own manager if you need further support</li><li>- Ask your HR team if you need help to support your team and individuals within it</li></ul>

# My Whole Self managers' framework

## Managing absence

when a team member is physically or mentally unwell will help make their transition back to work easier.



- How will you ensure that people know about and can access the sources of support that are available when they are off work?
- Find out what the absence means for their work. It may be possible for some work to be paused, and areas may need to be picked up by others. It helps everyone when there is absolute clarity
- Do consider how you will hold your own boundaries. Whilst you should be supportive during this period, you will not be able to solve everything. Be comfortable with that
- Ask for your HR team or manager's support or guidance if you need it
- Agree how you will communicate during this period, how often and via what channels. If a person is off for a long period, you may need to revisit the agreements you made to ensure needs are being met
- Discuss and agree what you will communicate to the wider team

## Evaluating your progress

as a team and as a manager will help you celebrate success and identify issues, allowing you to develop and thrive together.

- Consider how you will collect insight on your team's wellbeing and satisfaction. For example, through staff surveys
- Ensure there are opportunities to get feedback and evaluation on your performance as a manager. For example, through your annual review process
- Have team conversations about how you can support one another's wellbeing, especially if there are times when some need more support
- Take opportunities to learn from others in your workplace and discuss how you can resolve challenges together
- As well as evaluating your own performance, take the time to feedback to your manager or workplace about any issues and things to celebrate



## Additional resources

There are lots of great resources for managers and leaders out there. We really like *Inclusion on Purpose* by Ruckika Tulshyan. This book builds on the concept of having a growth mindset and sets out a Bridge Framework for creating inclusion. By adopting this framework as a manager, you can facilitate and encourage your team to bring their whole selves to work, develop and grow understanding of inclusion and equity, and actively support the inclusion of peers:

- **B**e uncomfortable
- **R**eflect on what you don't know
- **I**nvoke feedback
- **D**efensiveness doesn't help
- **G**row from your mistakes
- **E**xpect that change takes time

In addition to the resources mentioned above, including our [My Whole Self MOT](#) and [My Whole Self: Talking Tips](#), we also have a range of other materials to help empower people to bring their whole self to work. You can find these in our My Whole Self Implementation guide. They include:

- [My Whole Self: Healthy ways of working](#)
- [My Whole Self: Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of people from racialised communities in the workplace](#)

# 29%

of managers said that more support and training from their employer would assist them in creating a team in which everyone feels safe to bring their whole self to work.\*

Our manager training – delivered by experts and supported by evidence – is designed to empower managers with practical, actionable advice and resources to drive positive transformation in workplace mental health and performance.

Learn more about our manager training courses [here](#).



‘With the right time, tools, and training managers can help create healthy and productive workplace cultures where everyone belongs, and everyone can thrive.’

**Simon Blake, Chief Executive, MHFA England.**

\*Survey shows managers are ‘out of their depth’ on mental health - MHFA England





My Whole Self

