



Boosting your psychological wellbeing webinar

NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute
in partnership with Genos International Pty Ltd

education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-leadership-institute

About Genos

We help professionals improve emotional intelligence in order to enhance their impact, influence and resilience.

Our programs use highly practical and scientifically proven methods, executed by facilitators who are both skilled teachers and experienced professionals.

People who have been through our programs feel better at work, facilitate productive environments, and make others feel more valued, cared for and respected. Our vision is to enhance personal and interpersonal skills at work and in doing so, help organisations optimise their performance.

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ENHANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

We are hearing a lot about how to protect ourselves and manage our physical health during the COVID-19 virus. What we aren't hearing much about is how to manage our psychological health during this time. But we are seeing the impact of it. People are panic buying various goods and demonstrating other behaviours that come with feeling anxious and fearful of what might happen.

Research has shown that situations like the one we are facing with COVID-19 elevates levels of fear, anxiety and stress. It can also cause a greater daily experience of negative emotions. This, in turn, causes our thinking to be narrowed, our perspective to be limited and a greater preponderance of reactionary behaviour. We become more easily defensive or aggressive in our responses, more problem-focused and we more readily forget the bigger picture. While we witness it happening around us, we don't like to think it's happening to us. But it most likely is, just unconsciously, and in the long term it is detrimental to your psychological well-being and health.

This program has been designed to help you manage the psychological effects the virus is having on ourselves and others. It will provide you with practical tools and techniques that you can implement to help boost your psychological well-being, be a positive influence in the community and generally cope with the COVID-19 environment.

Psychological well-being is best defined as part of a diverse and interconnected component of wellness that includes mental, physical and social well-being.

In this session we will:

- Explore what psychological well-being is,
- Assess what strategies we are currently using to maintain and enhance our psychological well-being, and
- Identify some things you can start or stop doing to enhance your psychological well-being.

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES

These are often grouped into the four areas shown below. The most effective strategies are those that become a way of life, and which are applied proactively in your day-to-day activities, rather than something done reactively.



THINKING STRATEGIES – one of the most effective ways of managing emotions is to think about emotions from different perspectives. For example, exploring the benefits and consequences of them, causes of them and different ways of responding to them.



PHYSIOLOGICAL STRATEGIES – our physiology can have an impact on the way we feel and manage stress. Changing our physiology through exercise, diet, sleep and other activities can help us manage emotions more effectively and build our resilience.



RELATIONSHIP STRATEGIES – connecting and sharing with others provides us with the opportunity to express and explore our feelings and get someone else's input or support for them. Expressing how we feel can help us manage our emotions.



ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES – factors external to us can impact how we feel at work, such as deadlines, our workload, and the environment we are working in. Changing our conditions and/or our working environment can help improve the way we feel as well as our resilience.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING QUIZ

The quiz below will help you identify which well-being strategies you are currently using more and less of. Simply answer True or False to each question. If a question does not give you all the information you would like, try to respond in a way that best represents what you would most likely do. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The key is to be as honest as you can.

T	F	#	QUESTION
		1	When dealing with stressful situations I tend to stop, reflect and think through the causes of the stress to help me feel differently.
		2	I exercise regularly (at least 20 minutes most days).
		3	I have someone at work who I catch up with regularly to reflect on how things are going.
		4	I work eight hours or less a couple of days per week.
		5	I engage in meditation a few times a week.
		6	I am careful about my diet (e.g., eating regularly, moderately and with good nutrition in mind).
		7	When someone bothers or frustrates me, I engage that person in discussion about it as quickly as I can.
		8	I take 45 minutes or more for lunch with someone once or twice a week.
		9	Once or twice a year I set myself achievable goals to help improve myself.
		10	Most days of the week I get the amount of sleep I need (e.g., eight hours).
		11	I regularly seek feedback from colleagues on how I interact with them.
		12	I work in different environments to help me manage my mood or stress.
		13	I set boundaries for myself at work (like how much time I spend on email) and stick to them.
		14	I mix up my activities at work so that I am sitting, standing and walking around regularly.
		15	I regularly attend events with peers in my industry (e.g., webinars, conferences, learning events).
		16	I could withstand a change in my financial circumstances.

Use the scoring key below to identify which resilience strategies you are currently using more and less of. Tick a circle for each question that you answered as “true” in the quiz. It is possible to score highly in all four techniques.

THINKING		PHYSIOLOGY		RELATIONSHIP		ENVIRONMENTAL	
<input type="radio"/>	1 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	2 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	3 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	4 (T)
<input type="radio"/>	5 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	6 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	7 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	8 (T)
<input type="radio"/>	9 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	10 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	11 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	12 (T)
<input type="radio"/>	13 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	14 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	15 (T)	<input type="radio"/>	16 (T)

What strategies are you using?



What new strategies could you adopt and role-model?



What might be the benefits for you?



PROACTIVE TECHNIQUES



THINKING

- Creating boundaries
- Reducing the amount of news, you watch/listen too
- Gratitude reflections
- Diarising 'think'/reflection time
- Perspective taking, and generally balancing what you read

NOTES:



PHYSICAL

- Sleeping better
- Drinking less alcohol and caffeine
- Eating more nutritious whole foods
- Exercise – something most days
- Mindfulness meditation (Smiling Mind)

NOTES:





RELATIONSHIPS

- Relationship improvement (goal setting & actions)
- Staying connected with people, structure regular check in times
- Having virtual breaks with colleagues, regular virtual interactions or small group gatherings
- Leaning into conflict/difficult conversations

NOTES:



ENVIRONMENTAL

- Wash your hands more regularly and avoid touching your face
- Structuring email and call times
- Doing something you love in the outdoors
- Cleaning surfaces regularly
- Separate your work space from other areas

NOTES:



DEMONSTRATING EMPATHY

We are all biologically equipped to 'be' empathetic and 'demonstrate' empathy. It's not something we need to develop within ourselves. To better be at demonstrating empathy we need to re-learn how to engage our biology to do so. At work and other contexts, a number of things can get in the way from engaging our capacity for empathy. These include but are not limited to:

- Being distracted by tasks or issues, which can result in a lack of 'presence' and listening.
- Judgement. The longer we live the more developed our personality, views and beliefs become. Developments in these areas can cause us to listen to what's being said in judgemental ways, whether consciously or without awareness.
- Contexts like task-oriented work and/or being under time pressure to get things done.

One way of engaging your biology to demonstrate Empathy is through the practice of mindfully listening to others.

MINDFUL LISTENING

To be present and demonstrate empathy try engaging in mindful listening exercises like that described below:

- Use a Purposeful Pause to help get relaxed and put you in the best mindset for meeting with someone. Sit upright on a chair and put your feet flat on the ground. Take 6 deep breaths where you exhale for twice the amount of time you inhale. For e.g., inhale for 2 seconds and exhale for 4. While you are doing this pay attention to the sensations in your bottom and feet, the feelings. Keep your attention to the sensations of the contact your bottom and feet have on the chair and floor.
- After your Purposeful Pause set an intention to be empathetic. Simply engage in self-talk, like for example "my intention for this meeting is to be present, to hear and feel what my partner has to say, and to connect to it emotionally".
- As you meet with the person demonstrate mindful listening where you focus your attention on the speaker and what is being said. If your mind wanders off into thoughts about a response or reaction to what is being said simply observe this and bring your attention back to listening.
- Also 'observe and reserve' the urge to do all the socially appropriate things like nodding, asking questions, or making certain facial expressions.
- Observe these things coming up in your mind and just let them be there while you keep paying attention to listening, to what is being said.
- This is a mindfulness meditation exercise where the object of attention is listening to what the speaker is saying and feeling, constantly bring your attention back to what is being said.

CALL TO ACTION



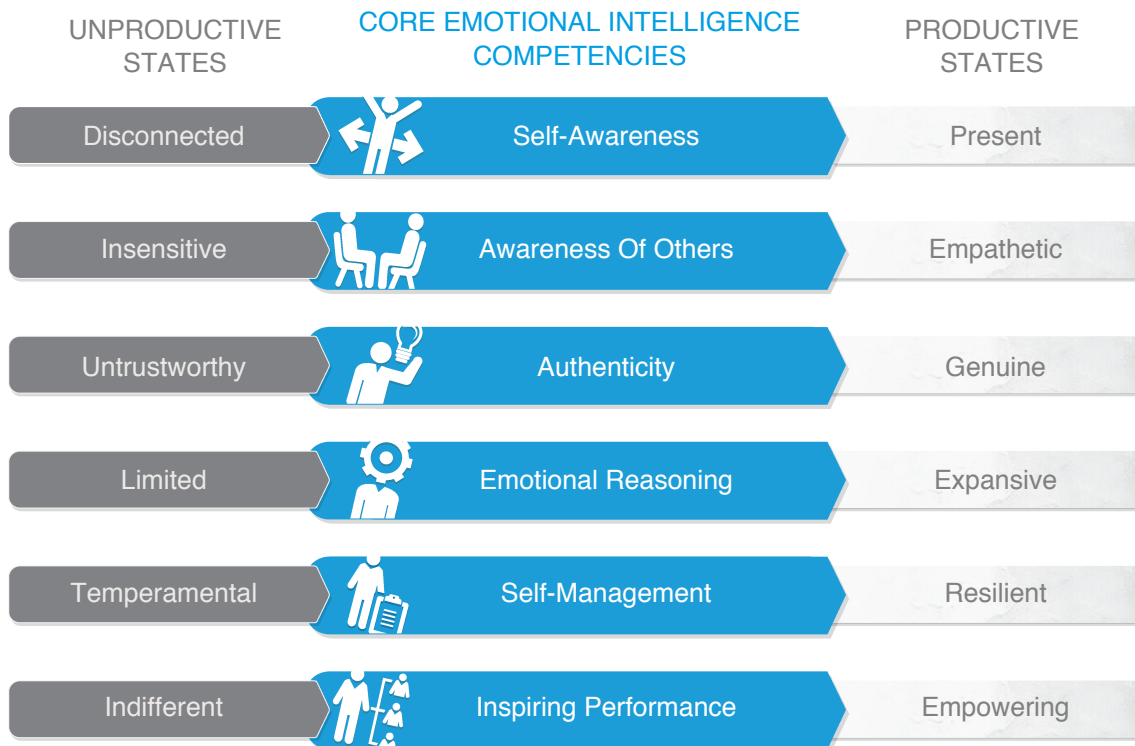
What stood out for you personally today?







What might you be able to do differently at work or home with the concepts explored?



What outcomes might arise?



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