

Transitioning through COVID: an HR professional's toolkit

45-minute presentation with 15 minutes of Q&A

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30+ Years of experience



Co-creator Mental Fitness Index (MFI)



Co-creator Psychologically Health and Safe Facilitator Certification



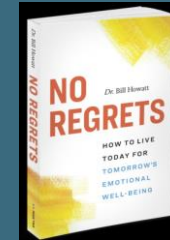
Contributor



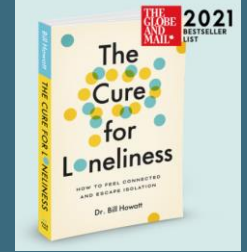
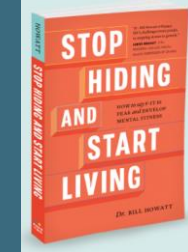
Certificate Psychologically Safe Leadership

Certified Management Essentials (CME)

Mental Fitness and Pathway to Coping



Coming soon



Author of over 500 articles and over 50 books
Audiobook: The Cure for Loneliness

Founder and CEO

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Roles:

- CSA OHS Standards Steering Committee Member
- Chair of CSA Standard Z1008: Management of Substance Related Impairment in the Workplace.
- Co-creator Psychologically Safe Workplace Awards
- Former Chief Research Workforce Productivity, CBOC
- Former Chief of Research and Development, Life Works
- Co-creator Globe and Mail Employee Recommended Workplace Award

Workplace Research:

- Canada Pandemic Pulse Check: COVID-19's Impact on Canadians' Mental Health with the Mental Health Commission of Canada
- Moving to Action: Implementing the Workplace Safety & Prevention Services' Mental Harm Prevention Roadmap
- Canada Standards Association Investigating employers' practices in response to COVID-19 for safeguarding employees' psychological health and safety in the workplace.

Learning Objectives

- ❑ **Insights** – Providing insights into how we respond under stress.
- ❑ **Understanding** – How we can recharge to support ourselves and others.
- ❑ **Managing** – Managing burnout and instilling hope for the future
- ❑ **Supporting** – Assisting leaders with difficult conversations



Goal: Provide insights on the brain, how we respond and how to recharge. While also showcasing what the future world of work will look like and what steps should be taken to succeed.

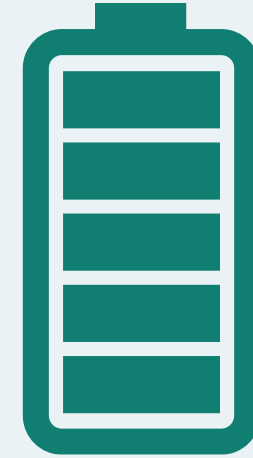
A conceptual illustration showing four stylized human figures climbing a bar chart with five bars of increasing height. The figures are connected by a blue rope, suggesting teamwork and overcoming challenges. The background includes a sun, birds, and a landscape with trees and hills.

Understanding our responses to stress and what to do about it

Caveman brain vs. executive brain



- Paleomammalian brain
- Built for survival
- Functions automatically and unconsciously



- Frontal lobe
- Controls behavior
- Like a battery

Our brains dealing with COVID-19



Our caveman brain's
are on fire.



Our frontal lobe
battery is empty.

“Pandemic brain” is a real thing



Stress impairs

Return to office anxiety

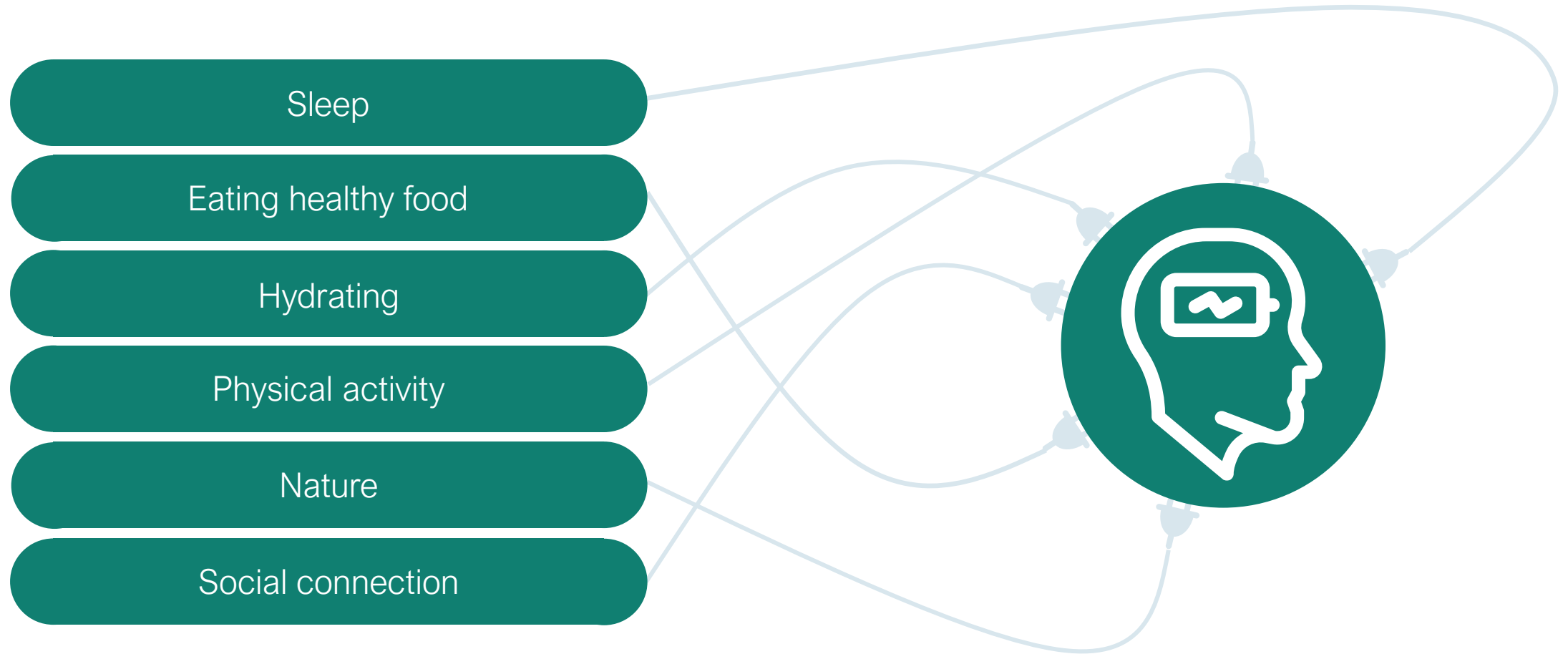


Caveman brain's
don't forget threats.



"I know" vs "I still
feel"

Recharging activities



Individual differences
Notice what makes you smile.

Charge your battery first!



Put on your own
oxygen mask
before helping
those around you.

A conceptual illustration serves as the background for the slide. It depicts a series of blue vertical bars of increasing height, resembling a bar chart. Several stylized human figures are shown climbing these bars, connected by a blue rope. The scene is set against a light blue sky with a bright yellow sun and two white birds. In the foreground, there are green hills and stylized trees in shades of green and purple. A semi-transparent grey horizontal band is placed across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

Managing burnout and instilling hope for the future

Languishing

**sense of stagnation and
emptiness**

joyless, aimless

stuck



Burnout

Emotional exhaustion

Cynicism

Reduced efficacy



**The antidote to
burnout isn't rest.**

The antidote to burnout isn't rest.

Re-igniting a sense of meaning and purpose.

Reconnecting

Re-integrating our experiences

Recharge



Re-igniting Meaning and Purpose - Values



What is your heart's deepest desire for how you want to behave as a human being?



What kind of person do you want to be?



What or who really matters?

Exploring your values during the crisis

What do I want to stand for during this crisis?

What kind of leader do I want to be?

How do I want to look after my physical and emotional health?

How would I want to be remembered after this crisis is over?



Values become our compass



In uncertainty, we can use values to guide our decisions.

Life decisions

Pandemic decisions

Motivate difficult behaviours
(return to office)



Values are expressed through behaviour



Integrating our experiences

Living through this will impact us,
what do you want to take from it?

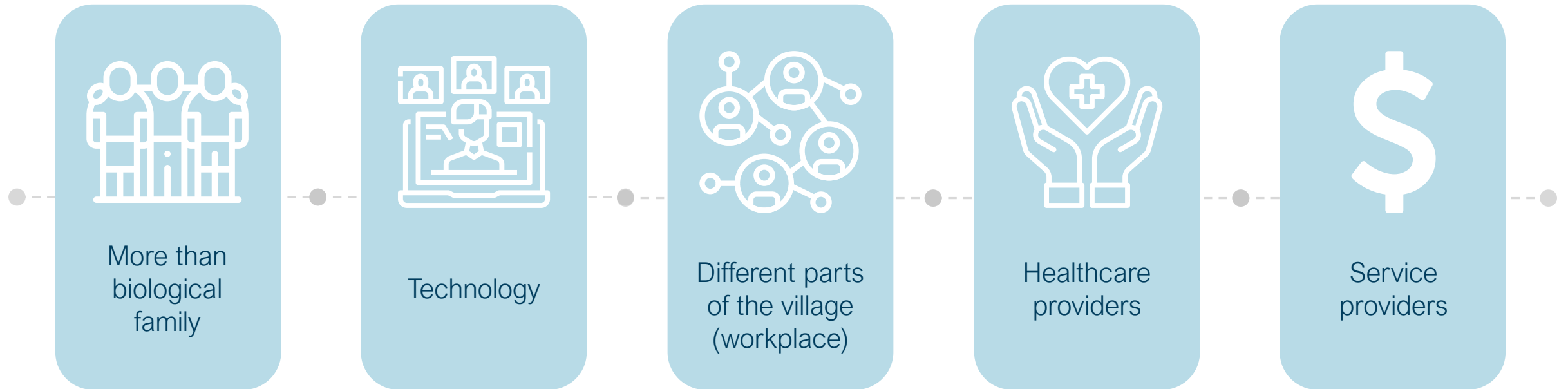
Plan for a future (values not goals).

What has the pandemic taught you
is really important?

Recognize values expression might
“look” different.



Reconnecting: invest in your village



Don't solve problems alone: Use your village

The background is a light blue isometric illustration of a modern office. It features several white floating platforms on a blue grid floor. On these platforms, people are working: one person stands at a tall desk with a monitor; another sits at a desk with a laptop; a third person stands next to a desk with a laptop and a tablet; a fourth person sits at a desk with a laptop; and a fifth person sits on a low stool next to a small table with a plant. A large building with a radio tower on top is visible on the left. The text "Supporting leaders: Having difficult conversations" is overlaid in a dark blue banner across the middle.

Supporting leaders: Having difficult conversations

Organizational causes of burnout

- Unsustainable workloads
- Perceived lack of control (employees feel like they are stuck in their roles; or that they have no input into the company's deadlines, strategic goals, or project timelines)
- Insufficient rewards for effort
- Lack of a supporting community
- Lack of fairness (for example, systemic inequities affecting women and racial minorities)
- Mismatched values and skills (i.e. overqualified workers who feel lucky to have a job at all during the economic recession linked to the pandemic)

Google's Aristotle Project

This research project examined what makes effective teams

Team effectiveness was measured by

- Executive evaluation
- Team leader evaluation
- Team member evaluation
- Sales performance against quarterly quota

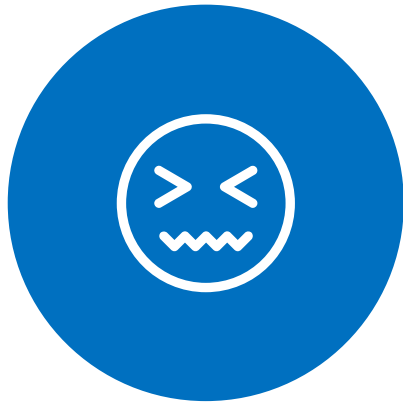


The key finding was it is less about who is on the team and more about how the team works together.

Five Factors that most influenced team effectiveness



Psychological safety



**IT'S OKAY TO NOT
BE OKAY**

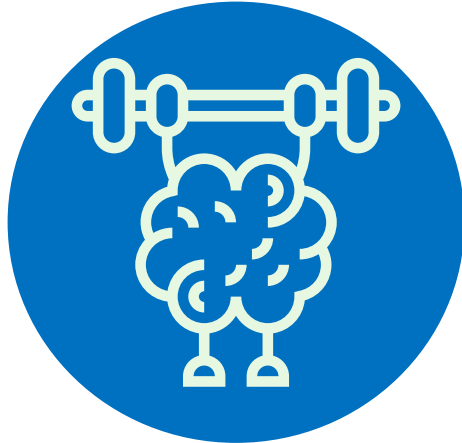


**IT'S OKAY TO MAKE
MISTAKES**



**IT'S OKAY TO SPEAK
UP/DISAGREE**

Role as a people leader



Role Model
Behaviours



Recognize Signs



Duty to Inquire

Role model behaviours



Charge your
battery first



Share your
common humanity
(e.g., if the decision
is above you)



Listen rather than
problem solve

Recognize the signs

Intrapersonal Signs

- Isolation from others
- Absent or late more frequently
- Conflict with coworkers
- Missed deadlines
- Loss of confidence
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Reduced ability to concentrate

Interpersonal Signs

- Avoidance
- Uncharacteristic behaviours
- Irritability
- Pessimism
- Withdrawal or reduced participation
- Difficulty making decisions



Focus on CHANGE in BEHAVIOURS

Duty to Inquire



Normalize the
discussion



Know your
role




Validate. Period.



Empower
employees

How can we apply this to managing hybrid workforce



The hybrid working model is a location-flexible arrangement, allowing employees to combine onsite and offsite work as they and their employers see fit.



The four basic variants of a hybrid arrangement are:

At-will

Split-week

Shift work

Week by week

Current trends in employees working remotely and in hybrid models

- ▶ 26 million Americans – 16% of **total workforce** now work remotely
- ▶ 42% of 1,000 UK-based employees are working according to a **hybrid** framework
- ▶ 63% of Canadians are **enjoying** their current work-from-home arrangement
- ▶ 48% of those working from **home only** felt they were productive.*



Benefits of hybrid models

Hybrid work arrangements increased **job satisfaction**, **performance**, and **feelings of commitment** to an organization. Employees also felt **less work stress** or exhaustion.



Risks of hybrid models

Those working remotely also faced **social isolation**, fewer opportunities for information sharing and **blurred lines** between work and personal life.



Hybrid model



Normalize the
discussion



Build a village



Fairness in
opportunity (work
processes at any
locations



Empower
employees



www.howatthr.com

Thank you!