

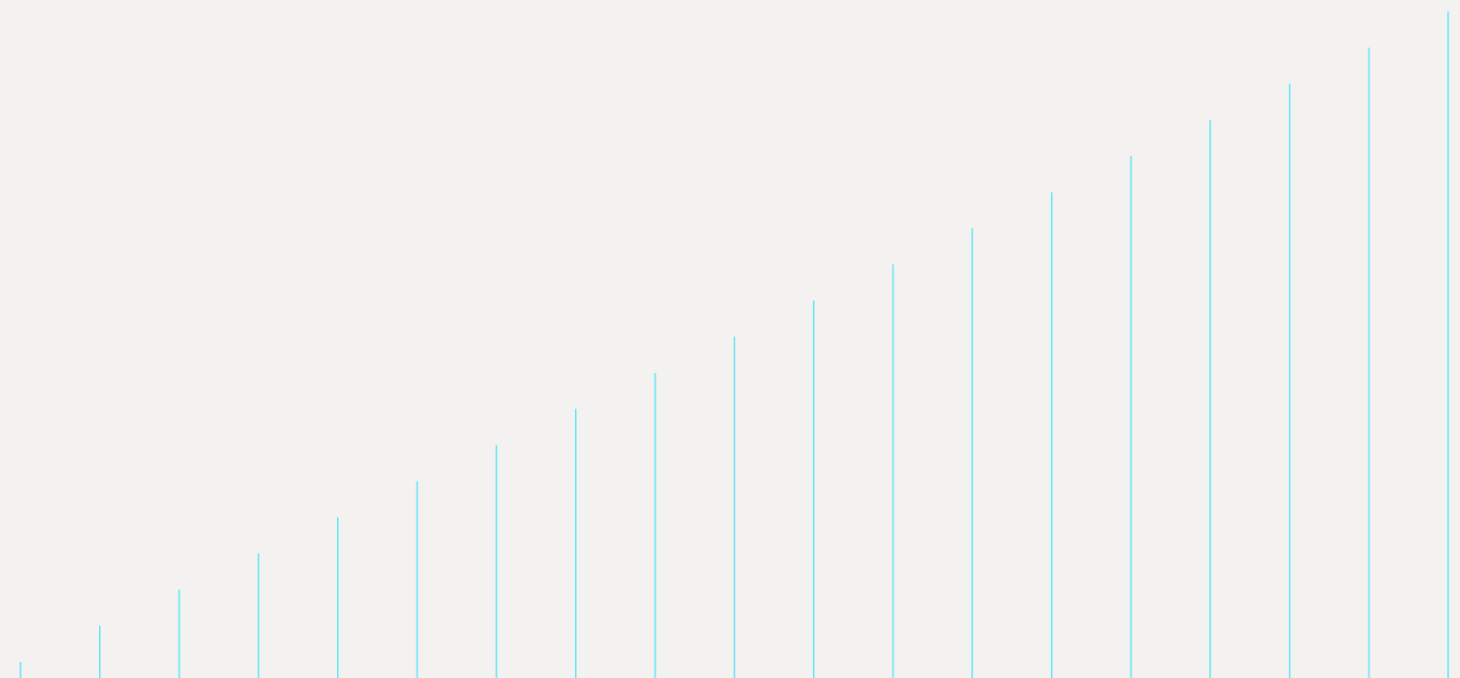


THE SJA CHALLENGE //

Changing the narrative on mental health:  
Developing emotional wellbeing strategies

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Complete





# ‘Mental Health’ interventions in 4D

There are four dimensions to addressing mental health.

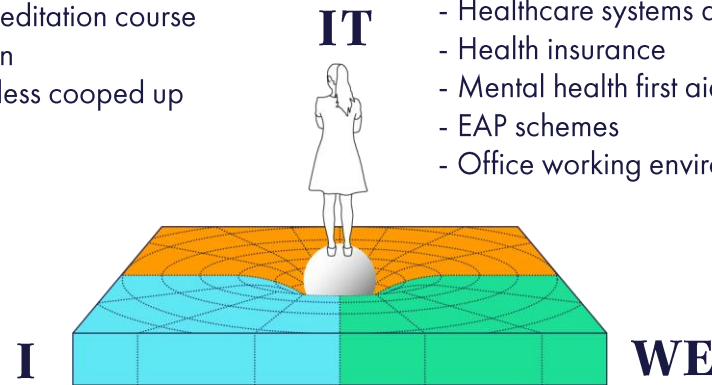
Our life exists in three dimensions. Most people are predominantly aware of the objective rational world of doing. This dimension includes all our individual and collective actions; the interpersonal world of relating; and the subjective inner world of being. Mental health initiatives tend to be confined to the IT world of doing. But any initiative in the objective world will only make a difference if it impacts our inner world and changes how we feel. Likewise the benefit of supporting others is based on the inner qualities of that support rather than the fact that someone is there. Thus people can feel lonely in a crowd but if the interaction creates a sense of safety or connection then it can make a real difference to our emotional wellbeing.

## INDIVIDUAL ACTION

- Social distancing, mask wearing, hygiene
- Online exercise, yoga or meditation course
- Sleep quality, good nutrition
- Travelling less, getting out, less cooped up
- Health Apps, medication

## COLLECTIVE ACTIONS (FAMILY OR COMPANY)

- Consolidating finances (family or business)
- Healthcare systems and policies at work
- Health insurance
- Mental health first aiders, mental health initiatives at work
- EAP schemes
- Office working environment, regular breaks



## PERSONAL: HOW I THINK AND FEEL

- Energy management
- Emotional awareness, literacy and self-regulation
- Develop a sense of purpose and meaning
- Quality of thinking

## CULTURAL: HOW WE THINK AND FEEL

- Levels of compassion and kindness in community (prosociality)
- Levels of truth and openness in community
- Quality of support at home, work & in community (networks)
- Depth of trust, strength of relationship bonds

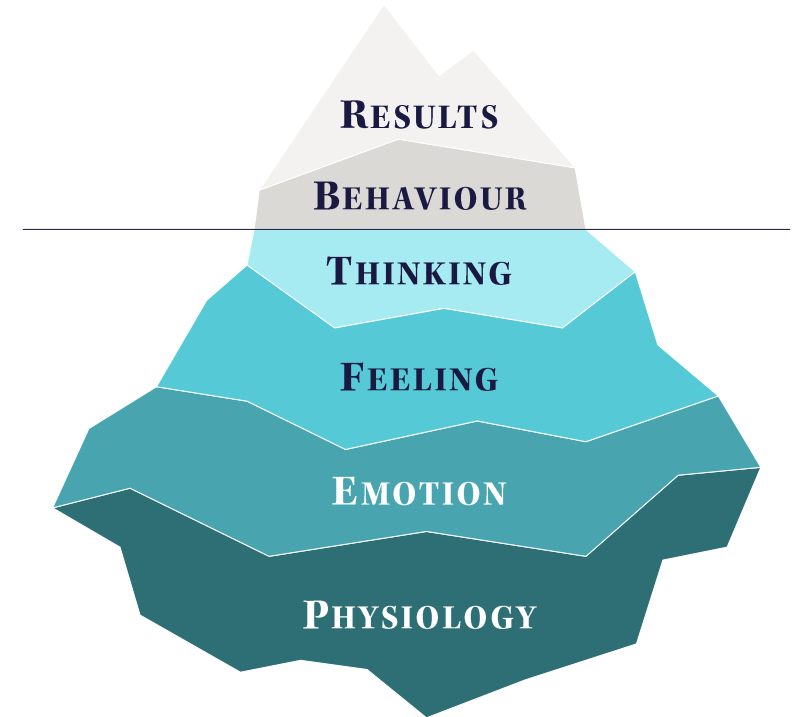


# Mental health is not mental and its not health

There are multiple levels to the human system and we should not collapse the bottom levels into 'mental'.

There is a great tendency to ignore the bottom three levels of the human system and consider emotions and feelings as simply a subset of thinking. But emotions and feelings are not thoughts, . They are a completely different phenomena. Most people who are told they have a mental health problems have normal mental functioning. Their thinking processes are fine. So why do we consider them 'mental'? It is stigmatising and unhelpful. It forces us top set up a whole programme of activity to deal with the stigma of calling the problem 'mental', it is not. Similarly, it is considered a 'health' problem when really it is a development problem. If people have not been properly trained or educated to manage their emotions then emotional turbulence can lead to negative health consequences. But turbulence doesn't mean there are any health problem.

We believe that we must now change the narrative on mental health. There are mental health disorders like schizophrenia, but most of what gets lumped under the label 'mental health' is actually emotional wellbeing. Changing the narrative enables us to develop the skills people need to be well. These developmental skill are, for example, emotional awareness, emotional literacy and emotional self-regulation. People need help, and guidance to gain control over their emotions and learn to live their lives in more positive emotional states. The issue is largely developmental not health.





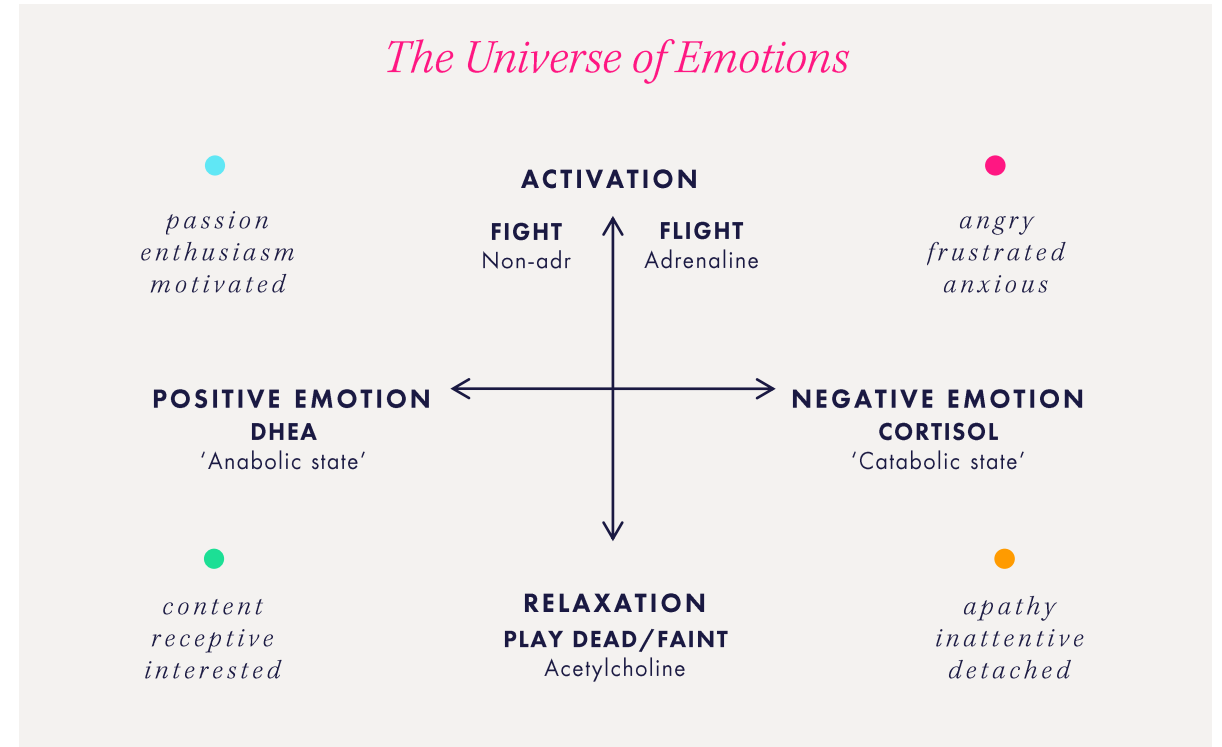
# What emotional 'planet' are you on?

Most people recognise less than twelve emotions when really there are 34,000.

In developing the ability to control how you feel the first step is to know which emotion or 'emotional planet' you are on. If you don't know which planet you are on then you are lost.

Most people are only familiar with about a dozen emotions when there are 34,000 emotions it is possible to differentiate. Emotions can be organised according to their energy profile. The higher energy emotions are associated with faster heart rates and higher levels of adrenaline. The lower energy emotions are associated with lower heart rates and more acetyl choline. They can also be differentiated by whether they are positive or negative. Positive emotions are under pinned by anabolic hormones such as DHEA. In contrast, negative emotional states are under pinned by catabolic hormones such as cortisol – the body's main stress hormone.

Once you have developed your emotional literacy it is crucial to develop navigational control so you change how you feel. Fortunately, people change how they feel all the time. For example, when our favourite music comes on the radio we become more cheerful, when we hear bad news we feel sad. But we don't change how we feel on demand. Emotional wellbeing requires us to develop the ability to change how we feel whenever we want. We need to develop the ability to move from the right hand side of the Universe to the left hand side. This can happen through the practice of rhythmic even breathing followed by emotional shifting. Living on the left hand side enables higher levels of performance and better health.





# Managing pressure and *performance*

Better pressure management will reduce the risk of mental health problems.

Leaders and managers need to be hyper aware of the amount of pressure they are putting on the people around them. This is because there is a direct relationship between pressure and performance. Too much pressure leads to impaired performance.

Unfortunately the commonest organisation response to poor performance is to increase the pressure, which often just makes things worse and pushes individuals and teams onto the "downslope". This massively increases the risk of failure.

Leaders can often enhance output simply by clarification and simplification because this will reduce pressure in the system.

Ultimately leaders need to focus on building capacity which requires an increase in strength, endurance, flexibility and resilience.

