

# W Faces of Workplace WELLNESS

## Wellness Competency Teachings

*– Making wellness easy!*

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# Publisher's corner



Welcome to 2022. This year we continue our focus on the wellness of the professionals and leaders in our workforce, not just here in North America. We will continue to aim for a global focus to pull us out of our own little worlds.

I want to welcome and introduce you to our new Editor, my husband and friend Misan Odidison. This year will mark 30 years as partners and friends. Misan has been my closet editor for most of my career. He has always been able to find things my professional editors missed and I'm excited that he is coming out and joining me as the editor for *Faces of Workplace Wellness magazine*, and I cannot be happier.

This Winter issue is focused on the Wellness Competencies we must develop to maintain our personal and professional goals. In this issue and subsequent issues in 2022, we will focus on three wellness competencies to see how we can unpack and build up our wellness in these areas.

Each month of the year, we teach a wellness competency that we expand on with our network of wellness champions at the Global Workplace Wellness Community of Practice.

In January, we will explore Integrity as a wellness competency. We will examine personal and

professional integrity and identify ways to build integrity in practice, activities, and mindset. We will also tie it back to the Spiritual Wellness dimension to gain a deeper understanding of how integrity can impact our spiritual and overall health and well-being.

In February, we will be teaching the competency of Responsible Communication. We will explore the concept, practice and activity of responsible communication and tie it back to our Social Wellness and overall well-being to optimize our health and wellness.

In March, we will be exploring the meaning of Self-Mastery as a competency; the concept, practice, and activities and will work to tie this back to the Emotional Wellness dimension.

You can take part in the monthly community of practice session by registering on our website here: <http://globalworkplacewellnesssummit.com>

Join us as a guest or as a member to gain access to the more in-depth training and conversations.

Let's explore the wellness competencies and how they can help us optimize our wellness in 2022.

*Joyce Odidison*  
**Publisher**

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# Editor's Corner

- Winter 2022

Welcome to the Winter Issue of *Faces of Workplace Wellness*.

I am excited to step into the role as Editor of this magazine after having spent many hours unofficially editing. You could say that I am officially coming out of the closet.

I have spent 25 years in the field of Law Enforcement and will be celebrating 26 years in this line of work in June of 2022. In my experience, many of the issues that I have attended to in my career would have been eliminated if the wellness competencies we will be discussing over the next several issues were widely taught and adhered to.

As we go into 2022, we will be expounding on the wellness competencies and observing how they align with wellness in all the dimensions. We will be bringing you some great pieces from professionals in the field who are working tirelessly to help us adhere to the wellness competencies we will be learning and discussing.

We will be exploring Spiritual Wellness and Integrity in January, Social Wellness and Responsible Communication in February, and Self-Mastery and Emotional Wellness in March.

Remember this is a magazine that focuses on employees' needs and interests. Most of our contributors are writing from their own perspectives as employees and some as employees turned practitioners.

I wish you all that is good and well in 2022 and look forward to selecting the best and most impactful pieces to share with you in this and upcoming issues of *Faces of Workplace Wellness* magazine.

Don't forget to share your thoughts and comments with us and if you have an article that contributes to health and wellness, please share it with us.

To Your Wellness,

*Misan Odidison*

# WHAT ARE WELLNESS COMPETENCIES?

BEST WORKPLACE

1. Skill - your ability to perform a task or routine well
2. Knowledge - your ability to apply your knowledge and experience to perform a task smoothly with a high level of confidence.
3. Attribute - your personal strength and character that lends to the execution of the task giving it your unique touch.

Have you ever referred to someone as competent at something? Let's think... How did that person become competent? Were they born with their current competency level? If not, how did they acquire it? How do they sustain their competency level, and can they lose their competent edge?

The word competency describes the quality or state of being competent, able, or skilled to do certain task well or above average.

## Elements of Competencies

According to the [University of Victoria](#), a competency has three elements:

Competencies are also measurable, observable, performed, and transferrable. We can measure how well we are by assessing how well things are going for us in the various life dimensions.

Once we develop wellness competencies the benefits are transferred to how well we feel, behave, act, and perform. It is commonly known that employees who are unwell are less likely to perform well.

# UNVEILING!

## THE WIS<sup>®</sup> WELLNESS METHOD

**An Inclusive Wellness Competency Teaching and Coaching Framework**

*By Joyce Odidison, MA. PCC, CTPD.*

*Join Joyce Odidison, Coach Trainer, Author of Six books, and Founder of the Global Workplace Wellness Summit and Coach Velocity School of Coaching*

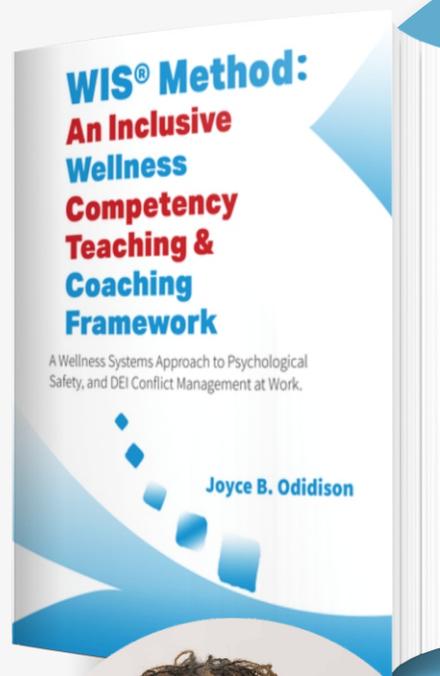
## WELLNESS TEACHING

### **Wellness Competency Mindset Coaching**

is a specialized niche area offering a comprehensive framework for life and workplace wellness coaching.

Practitioners and coaches trained in this area are equipped to coach wellness habits, patterns, and mindset issues to effectively develop and improve wellness and competencies.

**Contact Joyce to book a Wellness Teaching or Conversation**  
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Below are the nine wellness competencies we have identified as seen below.



## How We Develop Competencies

We develop competencies by observation, coaching, mentoring, and feedback. This is a good thing because we are always growing, learning, and improving our wellness.

Since wellness is dynamic, it is necessary for us to improve, adapt how we execute these competencies in our lives to maintain wellness.

When preparing for a job interview and later the actual job, it is important that we assess our skill level for performing the job well. Similarly, by assessing your wellness levels, you can identify gaps and improve where necessary to optimize your wellness.

*“The benefits of thinking of wellness from a competency framework is that it reminds us that improvement and execution are key to great results”.*

Too often wellness is forgotten about until we feel sick, someone around us gets sick, or dies. As we delve into the concept of wellness competencies, we will explore and examine the micro-improvement strategies that must be employed to optimize and maintain our health and wellness.

## Competencies Promote Improvement

The notion of competencies inspires growth and development in the mind of people. When we discuss wellness competencies, people naturally expect to measure and improve their wellness. The concept denotes activity. Too often we discuss wellness as something we have or lack.

With competencies, we are changing the mindset, allowing for dialogue and conversations around wellness and well-being.

## Aligning Wellness Dimensions to Competencies

The dimensions of wellness were inspired by questions about who we are and what makes us do well. Later, more insight give rise to questions about how we can improve how well we are to maintain and optimize wellness.

Research revealed that the wellness competencies each work to develop a life dimension and support development in all the life dimensions. This has led to the creation of the wellness competency teaching framework that covers the competency alignment and monthly wellness focus.

This alignment provides yet another way to become more in tuned with the micro-improvement strategies and steps necessary for staying well.

We use the monthly wellness competency alignment here to help organizations employ and integrate wellness into all aspects of their organization to foster a culture of wellness and promote well-being at work.

See the wellness competency alignment monthly teaching wheel below:



## Commitment to Wellness Improvement

As we stay committed to improving these wellness competencies, we aim to learn more about ourselves and our unique paths to optimal wellness. The universe holds an abundance of information yet untapped that we can discover to optimize how we can live and work optimally in these stressful times. To learn more about the wellness competency teaching, for your workplace or organization, contact us at [www.interpersonalwellness.com](http://www.interpersonalwellness.com)

**JANUARY  
2022**



# **SPIRITUAL WELLNESS & INTEGRITY**

**WELLNESS COMPETENCY TEACHING  
ALIGNMENT**

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# Integrity is an Important Psychological Safety Element and Expression of Spiritual Wellness and Well-Being at Work



## What Is Integrity?

If you research the word 'integrity', it is defined as a quality of honesty and strong moral principles; meaning it is a trait, something that one exudes. As a competency, integrity must be something one holds as a value they want to practice and maintain in all circumstances.

In January 2013, the Canadian Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace was launched. One of the standards is **Organizational Culture**, described "as the degree to which a work culture is characterized by trust, honesty, and fairness."

Over the nine years that we have had these standards in Canada, trust, honesty and fairness is still absent as part of the workplace culture in many organizations. As a Conflict Analyst addressing diversity conflicts and interpersonal challenges, I encounter a lack of integrity daily. This has prompted me to develop interpersonal wellness competencies. One of these competencies is integrity.

We can explore integrity from several angles: personal integrity, professional integrity, and corporate integrity. It can be argued that personal and professional integrity align but there are instances where they show up differently.

Corporate integrity is experienced in the culture, actions, and practices of the organization, as well as in the value statement, policies, and procedures.

Corporate integrity is much more than having the word integrity in the value statement. The practice of integrity reminds us to engage in self-exploration to affirm what we believe in, where our moral compass is pointed, and to what we hold allegiance to. Doing this allows us to practice integrity in the big and little things. Often the little things are what get us out of alignment with our values and off the path we intended.

As you focus on building integrity as a competency, make a list of things that matter to you, the things you want to align with. Be known for the principles you want to adhere to in the big things and small things too.

Too often we share these terms without providing an opportunity for practice. This is why I have created the [Global Workplace Wellness Community of Practice](#) to offer weekly inspiration and wellness conversations to help develop these competencies as part of our everyday repertoire.

We also host the [Clubhouse Wellness System](#) show where you can be part of the conversation on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 pm CST.

## What is Spiritual Wellness?

The topic of spiritual wellness is an important aspect of well-being that often generates a range of responses. Not everyone is in tune with their spiritual self. Interestingly, the breath of life that we all have been fortunate to enjoy is a constant ever-presence of our spiritual life, but this is often ignored until our lives are threatened.

***“To acknowledge breath is to acknowledge the spiritual part of us that often gets neglected. Our breath is the most spiritual element of us, without which we would not be alive.”***

Spiritual wellness is essential for us to stay well. Everything we do, touch, think, eat or watch impacts our spirit self. The spirit self is the unseen and undefined part of us that often gets trampled, dismissed, and often not fed.

Our self-esteem, purpose, values, sense of self, hope, trust, and faith are all part of the spirit self. Ever since the existence of man we have tried to manage our spirit self with drugs, food, sex, religion, addictions, and fanaticisms. So many of us walk around with spiritual selves that are wounded, hurt and unattended thus we go through life angry, broken, and unwell.

Spiritual wellness is necessary for us to be well emotionally, socially, physically, and interpersonally. We cannot be optimally well without working on the spiritual dimension of our lives.

During the month of January, we explored integrity as an expression of spiritual wellness. This allowed us to explore topics like trust, purpose, and values, going deep to discover new micro-improvement strategies to help us arrive at optimal spiritual wellness. In this section of the magazine, we will present tips, strategies, and thoughts from practitioners to help you explore this dimension. Hope you enjoy them.

Join us for the conversations and the opportunity to engage and build these competencies to reduce discrimination, harassment, and oppression of people globally.

To Your Wellness,

Joyce

Professionals from around the  
Globe working together to heal the  
wounds of the past build  
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seat to attend the **5<sup>th</sup>** **ANNUAL**  
**SUMMIT**

and explore ways to build back smarter.



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**Winnipeg, Canada**

# Seven Transformational Keys to a Spiritual Wellness, Diversity, Inclusion, and High Performance in 2022



**By Alex Ihama, Global Strategist, Executive Coach,  
Professional Speaker and Author**

If we are going to thrive through 2022, it is going to require a new way of thinking and even of being.

It is going to require a set of keys that are bound to elevate our mindset and strengthen our unity and diversity, as a people, as humanity – for, indeed, together, we are stronger.

To achieve even greater heights despite the significant challenges that await us in 2022, here are the Seven Transformational Keys to a Magnificent 2022.

## **KEY #1 - LET US FOCUS ON OUR PURPOSE**

As we enter a New Year 2022, let us be determined beyond a reasonable doubt to fulfill our purpose in life, willing to take a stand even against ourselves for the principles you so strongly believe in.

As I wrote in my book, [Welcome to Greatness](#), don't confuse what you do for a living with what you were created to do. The first is your profession and the second is your purpose.

Greatness is when you eventually align your profession with your purpose – when what you do for a living is what you were created to do.

## **KEY #2 - LET US ALWAYS HAVE PURE INTENTION**

Let us be more determined to protect ourselves against pride and prejudice by always questioning our motives about everything we think, say, or do.

Always think of how things benefit others first which will help to purify your intentions and motives and ensure the advancement of humanity.

Everyone has natural prejudicial tendencies, and we can be quick to want to protect our pride, reputation, and territory. We can be quick to be defensive which could gradually become offensive.

This makes this key quite critical to everything else because what we think, say, and do without a pure intention will sooner or later backfire and end up costing us more in the long run.

## **KEY #3 - LET US STRIVE TO BE MORE COMPASSIONATE**

Let us be extraordinarily kind with ourselves and everyone else in our thoughts, words, and actions. Kindness is beyond giving money if you have none, but even more so, a word of encouragement to those around you and a pat on the back of those helping to advance your vision.

## **KEY #4 - LET US GRADUALLY INCREASE YOUR HUMILITY**

If you must be a judge in any circumstances, let it be to judge yourself first and only while leaving the motives of other people to God and their consciences.

Think highly of yourself but not higher than how you think of others. You may be richer and even smarter, but certainly not the richest or smartest.

As I wrote in my book, [The Mystique of Leadership](#), “Humility is not just a leadership trait, but humility, by definition is leadership. So is integrity and authenticity. Without these, leadership is ineffective.”

## **KEY #5 - LET US MAKE TIME FOR OURSELVES**

For the sake of your health and wealth, strive to live a balanced life and ensure to be generous with all that you are and have. To hard workers like me, our health is our wealth; if we fall sick due to exhaustion, we have not been wise enough.

Eat right, work right, exercise frequently and sleep well.

Why not book yourself for a 30-minute walk outside your home and office every day?

Why not create a strategy to ensure you cater to your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs as frequently as required?

The coronavirus may have claimed millions of lives, but the rate of suicide is at an all-time high because of significantly rising mental health challenges.

## **KEY #6 - LET US BE MORE GRATEFUL ABOUT EVERYTHING**

Gratitude is the greatest cure for moods and maladies in life.

Therefore, in all things, give thanks, for it enhances relationships, opens hidden doors, paves way for great opportunities, rids the soul of evil, heals pain, cures maladies, builds your legacy and even attracts favours and blessings from God.

The truth of the matter is that your level of happiness is in direct proportion to that of your gratitude.

## **KEY #7 - LET US FOSTER INCLUSIVE DIVERSITY**

Of what essence is it to eat the same food every day, listen to the same songs, read the same books, wear the same clothes, and think, say, and do the same things every day?

Diversity is what makes us function well, and therefore, we must become intentional about including those who look, think, talk, and feel different into our circle of influence.

We must not just settle for not being racist, but become a vocal, committed and determined anti-racist.

We must not just settle for engaging racialized people but become open to seeing and thinking things differently, inclusively, cohesively, and holistically.

## **LET US BE WISE, HUMBLE AND SPIRITUAL**

Above all else, let us guard our heart diligently, as well as our faith in God, our family, and our legacy.

People may break our hearts or disappoint and even betray us, but our hearts must never become bitter, angry, and hateful. A loving heart, I have learned over the years, heals the soul.

Everything flows from the heart – love and hate, brilliance and mediocrity, passion or mundanity, courage and fear, everything. What is your heart filled with?



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In 2022, let us watch what we watch, what we listen to and what we celebrate and tolerate.

As we proceed into the New Year, hopeful to be blessed by it and with it, let us be determined, more than ever, to remain a blessing to others.

Let us commit to keep standing up for the oppressed, depressed – for the minoritized, marginalized and racialized, without objecting to or obstructing the greatness of other people in our quest for greatness.

2022 is not going to be easier but we can become stronger.

Together, we can stand and speak up for righteousness and justice.

Together, we can advance the cause for social justice – for the peace and prosperity of everyone.

May God help us all to live life to the fullest in 2022, to foster an unwavering willingness to do whatever is necessary to be a beacon of hope for others, to be committed to being and remain the light of the world and salt of the earth and eventually, to leave a legacy of hope.

## ABOUT ALEX IHAMA



Alex Ihama is one of Canada's foremost speakers and consultants on leadership effectiveness, strategic management, peak performance, and the enhancement of competitive advantage through a framework on Inclusive Diversity & Workplace Equity.

He is an executive coach, professional speaker, and bestselling author with over two decades of experience working for and with Fortune 500 companies to execute projects and programs valued at over a billion US dollars.

Alex is also a global strategist who helps organizations to make and save millions of (US) dollars, tips, tools, and techniques that increases brand equity, strengthen value proposition, empower those in positions of authority, elevates the mindset of staff, transforms corporate culture, reengineers processes and reduces operational cost.

He is the President/CEO of the International School of Greatness and the Executive Director of the Canadian Congress on Inclusive Diversity & Workplace Equity; and resides in Shelburne, Ontario, Canada, with his wife and children.

For more information, visit [www.alexihama.com](http://www.alexihama.com).

**FEBRUARY  
2022**



# **SOCIAL WELLNESS & RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION**

**WELLNESS COMPETENCY TEACHING  
ALIGNMENT**

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# RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION PROMOTES SOCIAL WELLNESS AND GOOD COMMUNICATIONS AT WORK

## Is your communication responsible?

Responsible Communication (RC) goes much further than what we expect in effective communication.

RC is the art of communicating for well-being. It should effectively communicate care, concern, generosity, inclusion, respect, and must not cause harm.

RC as a competency allows us to build positive social connections with others.

As you go through your workday, explore ways to enhance your responsible communication competency.

Remember, we are not born with all the competencies we need to manage our lives well. Each day we must learn new ideas, thoughts, habits, and inspiration to improve the competencies to live and work optimally well.

As you develop RC, you will realize changes in your relationships and in your social connections and overall social wellness.

As you improve RC as a competency, here are some key improvements you can expect to see in your social connectedness and wellness.



1. Your networking ability will increase. You will attract more people positively.
2. You will be more hospitable. You will show generosity and kindness to others naturally.
3. You will communicate more clearly. This will show up as fewer misunderstandings, easier to get your messages across to others.
4. You will communicate care and concern. This will cause others to feel good in your company and reduce unnecessary friction.
5. Your communication will be inclusive. You will express yourself in a way that allows others to feel understood and valued by minimizing acronyms and jargons that could make it difficult for others without the same ingroup knowledge to understand you.
6. You will communicate respectfully. You will be more attentive to your words and how they could be perceived by the listener. This takes a deeper level of self-mastery. You will strive to communicate respect and will not demean, name call, or belittle others who think differently.
7. Your communication will not cause harm. You will become adept at speaking healing and uplifting words, taking care to consider your words and the possibility that it might be interpreted differently from your intent. You will do the responsible thing and apologize or explain your intent and make amends to reduce any hurt or misunderstanding to not cause harm.

Interestingly, these competency alignment steps do not happen immediately. We grow into higher levels of competency through micro improvement strategies and practice.

As we become aware of these strategies, it is in our best interest to begin practicing them and

modifying our actions with micro actions.

The wellness benefits of doing this is less stress. Most of our ill health is due from stress and most of that is unnecessary misunderstandings, callous actions, disrespect, and angry outbursts.

By developing RC, you will have better, less taxing social connections, with you spending less time mending fences and more time engaging positively with your co-workers, leaders, employees, and support network.

This will also benefit you at home as it will become part of how you communicate with everyone in life and work.

It is never too late to reduce your incidence of stressful interactions. Sometimes the problem lies in you developing RC as a wellness competency.

To learn more about the **Responsible Communication** micro-improvement coaching strategies, contact our team at [www.interpersonalwellness.com](http://www.interpersonalwellness.com)

We have many certified Coaches and Facilitators who can help you build the social wellness meter in your workplace, offer wellness competency teaching, and provide group and interpersonal skills coaching.

Joyce

# Inclusive Workplace Wellness Facilitator Certificate

**BE PART OF AN ELITE TEAM**



## Help Develop The Inclusive Wellness Workplace of the Future

As the world of work changes, more employees are searching for meaning and purpose at work. An inclusive workplace wellness culture is one that promotes the whole person wellness throughout the employee life cycle, and drives high performance for employees and teams.

## Become An Inclusive Workplace Wellness Facilitator

- Learn to facilitate the wellness competency mindset teachings
- Understand the Wellness Improvement System® concept
- Learn to incorporate well-being through the employee life cycle
- Learn to build inclusive and holistic wellness plans for employees and teams
- Learn how to turnaround wellness deficit cultures to inclusive wellness
- Learn to maneuver leadership, gender issues, biases, and psychological safety at work
- Explore the intersection between illness, recovery, resilience, and successful return to work
- Explore the challenges of grief, caregiving, and high performance at work

**Join the free February 24, 2022 orientation at 2:00 pm EST**  
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# Social Connection Tips to Reduce Loneliness and Isolation and Boost Performance

By The Wellness Works Canada Team: Eve Olson and Victoria Grainger [www.wellnessworkscanada.ca](http://www.wellnessworkscanada.ca)

## Benefits of Social Connection

Social connection is one of the most important aspects of well-being and it has been shown to have [many benefits](#) including:

- A 50% increased chance of longevity
- Stronger immune system
- Ability to recover from disease faster
- Lower levels of anxiety and depression
- Higher self esteem, greater empathy
- Increase in collective intelligence in the

workplace

- Enhanced teamwork
- [Burnout prevention](#)

Many of these benefits can influence and improve an individual's performance at work. For example, lower levels of anxiety and depression positively affect an individual's ability to do their work. Preventing, mitigating, and dealing with burnout is especially important considering that up to [84% of the working population has experienced burnout in 2020](#).

## Ways to Prevent Loneliness at Work

Since loneliness is a feeling, and one's perception of that feeling can be influenced there is a correlation to [burnout](#). Burnout can greatly influence an employee's ability to work effectively. There are many ways to prevent feelings of loneliness and isolation at work.

- Identify employees needs
- Conduct weekly check-ins (this can be done through conversation to gauge if someone is feeling lonely)
- Determine what you can do as a leader to provide support through conversation with employees or by asking in an anonymous survey
- Make mental health a focus
- If someone is feeling lonely, there is a possibility they may also be depressed or anxious
- Address loneliness to reduce burnout by providing frequent opportunities for colleagues to connect over online coffee breaks, lunches or team get togethers
- Host educational sessions and provide employees with resources
- Promote a [psychologically safe environment](#) by being vulnerable and encouraging your team to speak up
- Foster social connection (this will be discussed in the next section)

## Fostering Social Connection at Work

[Work relationships](#) are very important as employees spend most of their days working. Work relationships can also impact employee performance, stress, and happiness.

A work culture that values connection to the purpose of the organization and between employees will result in employees who are invested in their work relationships. There are great ways to also [foster social connection](#) in the workplace.

- Create a social spot in the workplace where employees can chat and connect (or a channel on Microsoft Teams, Slack, or any other online collaboration tool)
- Host short team building events once a month
- Connect departments through events and challenges
- Encourage employees to take lunch and coffee breaks together (even online)
- Shorten meetings to 50 minutes and schedule virtual 'hallway' talks between meetings
- Build on your [recognition program to foster connection](#) by including Thank you Thursday's where peers recognize peers every Thursday
  - Support psychological safety as a leader
  - Be vulnerable and authentic to make it easier for colleagues to do the same
  - Be curious
  - Listen to understand not respond
  - Practice empathy
  - Encourage employees to speak up and contribute without fear of judgement
  - Be non-judgemental

**MARCH  
2022**



# **EMOTIONAL WELLNESS & SELF MASTERY**

**WELLNESS COMPETENCY TEACHING  
ALIGNMENT**

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# Self-Mastery Drives Emotional Wellness

**H**ave you heard the word 'self-mastery' from time to time but seldom ponder what it means and how it can help us stay well in our lives and relationships?

Let's explore the concept and see how it applies to our wellness. If you research the word self-mastery, it is defined as the ability to take control of your feelings, urges, and circumstances. Some describe it as mastering your body. I think it is to master your mind, emotions, thoughts, body, and feelings.

It is the ability to be self-aware of your thoughts and feelings and determine how to express them. Of course, this is easier said than done.

I am a thinker. I love to think about things and stretch my mind. I love new information, ideas, and experiences. I learned some time ago that I needed to taper the new feelings and excitement so I can adjust and find the right place for them in my already packed life.

Attaining self-mastery seems to lose its appeal when people find out it means to take full responsibility for their thoughts and actions. Self-mastery eradicates blame. There's no hiding with self-mastery.

You may be wondering if it is possible to attain self-mastery on its own. I think not. Self-mastery comes because of growth. We cannot grow in one area without expanding in others. Check your hips and waistline the next time you put on weight. You will notice that your thighs and buttocks will also grow a bit too. The same way, when you grow spiritually it will impact your social, emotional, interpersonal, and social well-being. This is why we teach the interconnectedness of the wellness dimensions of life.

## Emotional wellness

Attaining self-mastery allows for emotional wellness. It means your emotions are no longer being abused, misguided, tossed about. It means that you always accept responsibility for your emotional state. Emotional wellness means that you are aware of your experiences and can choose the right emotion you would like to express in each given situation. It means that you can also invite certain emotional experiences and regulate your responses as desired.

Emotional wellness also means that we are aware of and embrace all our emotions, not seeing any as bad but rather as experiences we are having based on what we have encountered. It prevents us from labelling emotions as bad. Enabling us to recognize all emotions as experiences, even those often-considered taboo such as:

- Resentment
- Guilt
- Pessimism
- Passive aggressiveness
- Shame
- Anger
- Fear

What we do about the emotions and feelings we have is what determines if they are good or bad. As we grow in self-awareness, we will also grow in our ability to become aware of and understand our emotional experiences and what they are teaching us about ourselves, and each other.

Emotional wellness helps us to develop self-mastery as a competency. Thus, we remain in control of our responses, no matter the stimuli. We embrace our feelings as messengers and learning experiences that are teaching us new ways to experience our lives and each other.

We then realize that the way we interpretation our emotions greatly impact how we respond to what we are feeling. As we improve in self-mastery, we will develop a higher level of emotional well-being. We can develop self-mastery as a competency through observation, practice, coaching, and feedback.

During the month of March, we will explore the wellness competency teachings on self-mastery. Join us to learn more at <https://globalworkplacewellness.com/>

*Joyce*

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# It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year (Except When It's Not)

**By:** Carrie Burd, CDR®, CDR®, WCMC, APHRM

If you're among the 92% of Canadians who celebrate Christmas in a religious or secular way, or the 75% who decided to take time off at the end of December, you may be surprised to find yourself in a bit of a slump right now. There's a name for this phenomenon: it's called Post-Vacation Depression or, more simply, the post-holiday blues. You may notice you're feeling more irritable or fatigued than normal; experiencing low mood or heightened feelings of sadness or loneliness; or having difficulty sleeping, concentrating or getting (and staying) motivated. These feelings will typically last a few days or more.

These negative post-holiday feelings are known to have a compounding effect though on the 1 in 5 Canadians who are experiencing a mental illness or addiction problem and the 15% experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder - a form of seasonal depression that lasts about 40% of the year and can be worse for those living in the northern hemisphere. According to the American Psychiatric Association, this translates into a heightened period of vulnerability in January and February, which are the typically most difficult months of the year.

While it's completely normal to feel a sense of letdown after a

vacation (no matter how long or pleasant it was) - in fact, nearly 1 in 2 of us will feel this way - it's important to be vigilant about your moods and take positive steps to protect your mental health, especially during the pandemic. It's worth noting that if you or someone you know is experiencing persistent or worsening symptoms of depression, anxiety or substance use disorder, it may be time to consult with a family doctor or therapist; and, if there are thoughts of self-harm or suicide, to seek immediate professional help.

## Emotional Well-being

The key components of emotional well-being - which include the ability to produce positive emotions, moods, thoughts, and feelings, and adapt when confronted with adversity and stressful situations - are largely related to the concept of self-management and an important contributor to mental well-being. Emotional well-being is also one of nine life dimensions aligned to the wellness improvement system® and integral to achieving overall wellness. The following are 8 traits of emotional health:

- Expressing feelings in a healthy way.
- Engaging in activities that are mentally and emotionally healthy.
- Preventing and managing emotional stress and anxiety in healthy ways.
- Using self-control and impulse-control strategies to promote health.
- Getting help for troublesome thoughts, feelings or actions for oneself and others.
- Showing acceptance of differences in others.
- Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Practicing habits that promote mental and emotional well-being.

And the following are 8 signs that you may be struggling with your emotional well-being:

- You feel drained all the time or have less energy than usual.
- You're either sleeping too much or too little.
- Your performance at work is beginning to suffer.
- Taking care of your hygiene and personal health feels like too much.
- You find that you're eating too much or too little.
- You're often anxious or irritated with loved ones.

- You have symptoms of stress like high blood pressure or heart palpitations.
- Your confidence or self-esteem is affected.

## 10-Point Self-Care Plan

While there are quick fixes for some of our most common holiday stressors - which include over-spending, work interference, and coming home to an untidy house, a mountain of laundry, and an empty fridge - bolstering your mental and emotional well-being over the longer term requires a more holistic solution.

The following is a snapshot of the 10-Point Self-Care Plan I've developed for my coaching clients and can be used to support their long-term wellness goals and effectively deal with short term, uncomplicated malaise.

- **Sleep:** Sleep and mood are closely connected, so aim for 7-9 hours of sleep/ night.
- **Sustenance:** Food and hydration choices affect mood, motivation and concentration.
- **Sunlight:** Spending 15 minutes outdoors everyday boosts "happy hormone" levels.
- **Sport:** Exercise (of any kind) for 30 minutes a day has both brain and body benefits.
- **Support:** Social connection improves immunity, emotional regulation and mental health.
- **Spirituality:** Focusing on acceptance, hope, meaning, purpose, and forgiveness.
- **Service:** Volunteering improves mood and increases overall life satisfaction.
- **Stress:** Chronic, unmanaged stress negatively affects brains and bodies.
- **Substance:** Abuse of substances can trigger or worsen mental illness or symptoms.
- **Screens:** More than 1 hour/day of screen time affects mental health and sleep.

## Setting Yourself Up for Success

To experience success with the plan, it's helpful to clarify goals, create enabling conditions, and look for opportunities to stack new habits on existing habits or established routines. For example, as part of my 2022 resolutions, I've committed to increasing my self-care by joining the Great Canadian Running Challenge – recently renamed My Time - My Fitness to be more inclusive of varying levels of ability and qualifying activity. To set myself up for success I've done the following:

- Set a goal of 1,000 km – which I've broken into smaller daily, monthly and quarterly goals.
- Placed my workout clothes, shoes and water bottle nightly at the foot of my bed.
- Joined their leaderboard and Facebook group for accountability and a sense of community.
- Pre-ordered the medal to help visualize and incent my success (can't open before 1,000 km).
- Determined our usual dog walking route, done every day, would get me to 75% of my goal.

Pursuing this one “Sport” goal (depending on execution) also has the potential to deliver benefits related to five other points in my personal 10-Point Plan. For me, that's a powerful motivator!

So, how are you feeling about the state of your mental and emotional well-being right now? Are there any areas you'd like to focus on? What's one small step you could take right now that would get you closer to your goal? What or who would help you to be successful? What would that success look like? How will you hold yourself accountable? How will you celebrate your win? Let me know if this article resonated with your holiday experience.



Carrie Burd is the Founder & Principal of a virtual-first consulting and coaching firm specializing in strategic HR, diversity, equity, inclusion, and workplace wellness. She brings extensive experience advising executives, coaching leaders, mentoring talent, and partnering across functional lines and in multiple sectors to design and deliver strategies, policies, programs and training that help drive results, improve the employee experience, and build healthy workplace cultures. Carrie is a Certified Diversity Professional, Certified Diversity Recruiter, Certified Workplace Wellness Coach and regulated HR professional affiliated with Niagara Institute, Interpersonal Wellness Systems Inc., and Diversity Think Tank. For more information about her services or to book a discovery call, visit [www.carrieburdconsulting.com](http://www.carrieburdconsulting.com)

# Financial Wellness Statistics



The Global Wellness economy is valued at **\$4.5 trillion**



The Workplace Wellness economy is valued at **\$66 billion**



There are approximately **3.2 billion** workers around the world

Less than 10% of the employees around the globe have access to workplace wellness services and support.



Employee's health and wellness is decreasing annually as chronic diseases, work related injuries, mental health and stress related illnesses rise.

Access to workplace wellness services are concentrated in North America and Europe.



The economic burden for mental illness in Canada is estimated at **\$51 billion** per year

Personal wellness spend is estimated to grow annually by **5-10%**



Lost productivity in South Africa can be equated to **280 million** days, which is an estimated 18,8 days per employee, per year.

**75%** of employees believe that wellness is important and **42%** consider it a top priority



Each week, approximately **500,000** employed Canadians are unable to work due to mental health problems.

Covid19 is geared to push Canada's health spend to over **\$300 billion**



Brazil health spend is **64.6** compared the United States health spend **50.01**



”

It's up to you today to start making healthy choices. Not choices that are just healthy for your body, but healthy for your mind.

— - STEVE MARABOLI

# TIPS TO BOLSTER HAPPINESS AT WORK

**By Henna Sharma, Happiness Coach**

**A**re you feeling stressed and disconnected from colleagues because of the pandemic, worried about the future of work?

Don't let physical limitations, lack of sleep, irritability, or melancholy hamper your happiness in your career.

Here are some key things which can help build a better work-life integration and joy at work:

**1. Communicate:** Listen with thoughtful attention, not just rushing to provide solution but to connect and encourage sharing. Involve yourself – not just with ears, but eyes and heart too. Even on a screen we can build that connection by looking into the eyes, modulating our tone and turning off distractions. Authentic connections will help break the barriers to communication.

Share your vulnerability by expressing what you are doing to manage stress. Give your real-life examples at work and at home, for example one of the leaders shared with the team how he is struggling to make a conversation with his teenage son, whereas someone shared about keeping the phone out of the bedroom at night or taking therapy sessions. Don't underestimate the positive impact that your story can create on others.





**2. Pause:** A pause gives you an opportunity to stop, reflect, before you respond instead of a rushed reaction. Become aware of the words you speak, pause, and take a breath before you respond in a meeting or during conversations.

**3. Define Boundaries:** Pre-covid we had a structure to our day. Working from home has diluted that to the extent that some people log in at work sitting on the bed or right after waking up. Designing our day will help create work-life boundaries; like getting dressed, showering, or having a ritual as we end the day. Switching off from work and doing an activity like walking will help the mind to differentiate between online and offline hours. The structure and routine will help you save mental energy.

**4. Training and Coaching sessions:** It's more important than ever to talk about uncertainties, stress, work life balance and wellness aspects at work and home. There are trainers, coaches and facilitators available for every budget. Find what works for you and your organization. Offer trainings, programs, resources to deal with stress, build resilience and work life balance.

### **Prioritize your health, prioritize your well-being, and prioritize your happiness!**

*You matter, your health and happiness matters.*

Happiness is required to maintain the cohesion between better communication as we adapt to unprecedented challenges. Make happiness our number one priority in the new normal, use the time at home/work constructively and use this opportunity to turn adversity into a positive happy challenge.

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- *Learn to coach to build community at work.*
- *Develop your ability to foster thriving teams at work.*

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and are happy to work for**

**Learn to lead Inclusive wellness at work!**

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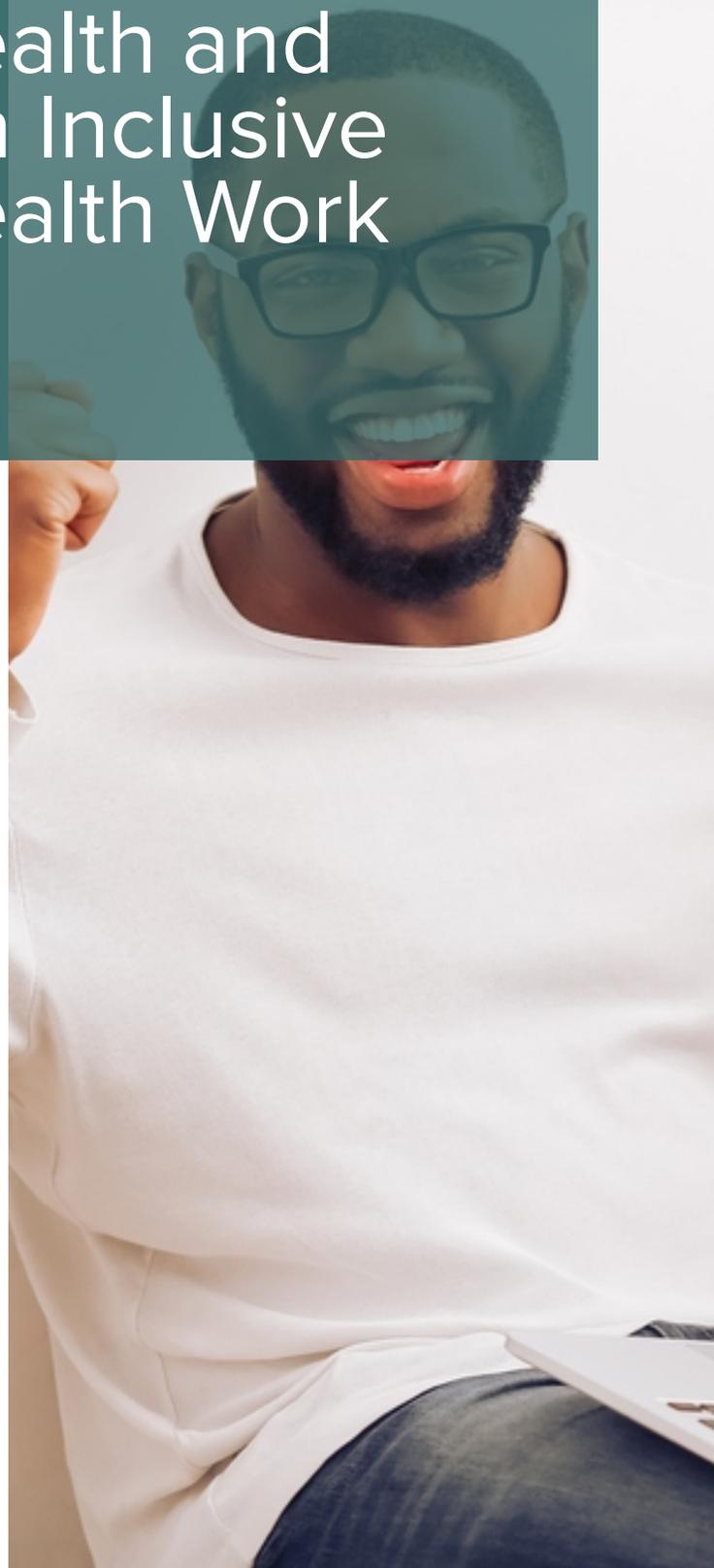
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# Diverse Mental Health and The Creation of an Inclusive Diverse Mental Health Work Culture

In the past, mental health, well-being and wellness have been regarded as separate issues, when in fact these issues are closely linked. We see that women, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), members of the LGBTQ+ community, those with a disability, from a different ethnic background, religion, class, economic status and the older population experience higher rates of mental health problems in comparison to their counterparts and other groups. This is significantly influenced by the negative bias and damaging behaviour perpetrated through racism, sexism, other isms, discrimination, violent attacks, threats, abuse, exclusion, inequity, injustice, and mistreatment.

***“If we want to create environments where everyone has the opportunity to be well and mentally healthy, then the detrimental aspects related to diversity, equity and inclusion need to be fully acknowledged and adequately addressed. For those who live this every day, the necessity and reality are clear”.***



Understanding the connection and effectively addressing the issues which are related to mental health and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), enables the creation of healthier and safer environments, engaged communities, productive systems and more inclusive work cultures.

There are no quick and easy solutions here. The fact is working to change negative cultural attitudes and behaviour towards mental health, women, and people from diverse backgrounds, is a tough reality. These perspectives and behaviours have been formed through an enduring cultural and historical progression, which is deeply ingrained from childhood and has consequently become psychologically embedded in our reactions and mindset, as well as reflected in societal dynamics and established within institutional structures.

## Creation of an Inclusive Diverse Mental Health Work Culture: Five Essential Stages

Seeking to create a meaningful inclusive Diverse Mental Health work culture involves a major and profound transformation and time investment. Let's explore these five essential stages:

1. **Recognition** | Recognizing and understanding the complex issues related to positive diverse mental health, well-being and wellness is vital in setting the framework and foundation on which to build strong and lasting change. Enacting “Good “or effective leadership involves empathy, diverse representation, and inclusion.
2. **Acknowledgement** | Acknowledgment of the stigma, as well as the detrimental societal factors, which impact mental health, well-being and wellness are necessary for gaining insight and bringing about meaningful progress. As is the acceptance in taking relevant responsibility, being held accountable and playing our part in the perpetuation and changing of existing work environments.
3. **Address** | Important here is actively identifying and tackling the difficult issues related to mental health and DEI. This involves appropriate investment along with establishing transparent, measurable, and meaningful actions, attitudes, and structures. All of which need to be effective in dealing constructively with the relevant factors and bringing about desired workplace outcomes.
4. **Creation** | For any real and consistent strides forward, ideological and practical strategies around Diverse Mental Health structures need to be formed. Working together with relevant and experienced thought leaders, professionals, organizations, employees, and stakeholders, is therefore vital in creating the conditions, which can make this a reality.
5. **Transformation** | Transformation takes place in the realization of a powerful, fundamental, and long-lasting work culture change, in which flexible structures and dynamics are tailored to meet the needs of a diverse and inclusive workforce in an equitable manner. Such a work culture will provide safety and support, allowing opportunity for professional and personal growth along with positive physical and mental health, well-being, and wellness for all.

***“It is clear that moving forward will require genuine commitment, investment, and courage in addressing the long-standing and harmfully challenging issues related to mental health, diversity, representation, inclusion, and equity”.***

## **Effective Leadership for the Creation of an Inclusive Diverse Mental Health Work Culture**

Flowing into our ears is a profusion of diverse perspectives on what constitutes “good” leadership and the ideal workplace culture, in which businesses can be diverse, representative, inclusive, and equitable, and foster people, who are mentally and physically well, to function at their healthiest and most productive level.

During the on-going Covid-19 Pandemic, we have witnessed constructive workplace cultures and what we can call “Good” or Effective Leadership, from those who have responded to the pressing issues and have acted in the best interests of their employees and stakeholders, as well as those who have fallen short.

“Good” and effective leaders, who foster people and environments in functioning at their healthiest and most productive level have been:

- Empathic: listening and seeking to understand their people’s experience and needs.
- Genuinely caring and giving their best to provide appropriate and adequate support.
- Able to acknowledge and recognise the detrimental impact of the adverse factors related to the Covid-19 Pandemic and to social justice issues, such as the Me-Too movement and Black Lives Matter (BLM), as well as their own failings.
- Role models, in expressing their willing voice, in promoting and taking meaningful action, to create a constructive mental health culture, which works towards being diverse, inclusive, and equitable.
- Willing to challenge the status quo and confront the long-standing difficult issues related to mental health and DEI.
- Committed to ensuring that these issues are an active and permanent priority in their vision and agenda.



## Join The Global Workplace Wellness Community of Practice

***Are you a health and wellness practitioner who wants to be on the cutting edge of the new world of work?***

The Global Workplace Wellness Community of Practice is a place to learn, share and get feedback on your wellness practice, ideas, and inspirations.

Each month we cover a wellness competency teaching that inspires new learning, growth, and expansive wellness conversations.

These learnings become books, podcast, video teaching, courses, practice ideas and new research that are innovative, creative, and engaging.

Join practitioners from around the globe as we embark on defining the new world of work.

### ***Benefits of Membership***

- Gain access to the Global Workplace Wellness vault
- Collaborate with other practitioners
- Expand your wellness competency teaching repertoire
- Be the first to know of new programs
- Get free entry to beta programs
- Be the first to claim your spot on the Summit wellness committee of your choice
- Be seen and get known as a wellness practitioner

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***“Without a doubt leadership impacts culture and culture in turn impacts the status of DEI, along with mental health and well-being”.***

## **Genuine Commitment in Gaining the Edge for Businesses & People**

We have seen a growing focus on the development of more impactful organizational strategies in the creation of constructive DEI. We need to see this towards improving better mental health, well-being, wellness, as well. We see more employers seeking to establish the most attractive work cultures, through the revision of the organization’s ethos, values, mission statements, human resources and people management, practices and health and safety protocols such as customer service and internal policies and procedures.

Like with any trend, the growing interest in mental health, well-being, wellness, and DEI has attracted positive attention with the highlighting of important social issues. Enviably it has also attracted the unconstructive and at times harmful responses of Performative Allyship, tokenism, opportunism, empty gestures, broken promises, and unfulfilled commitments. These actions serve to hinder real and meaningful progress.

***“If individuals and organizations are to make significant progress, then it is clear that genuine commitment is required, such commitment must address the fundamental and long-standing social, economic, political, psychological and behavioural barriers”.***

## **Going Further than the Consideration of Culture & Difference**

Tackling the barriers, which prevent progress involves understanding the important issues related to mental health, well-being, wellness, and DEI. While consideration and incorporation of difference and cultural backgrounds are essential in meeting a person’s mental health needs, this is not the be all and end all for a fundamental and effective “Diverse Mental Health” approach.

As individuals, naturally we are different and possess our own perspective and reactions around mental health. From a person-centred viewpoint, taking this fact into account is important for understanding and identifying useful ways to respond. A culturally diverse approach to mental health allows for a system, which is more reflective, insightful, and accessible. The focus here often being the consideration and addressing of different needs and issues related to language, associated stigma, religious, and cultural beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour.

However, the consideration of cultural aspects and the difference in people's perspective on mental health do not go far or deep enough. These exist out of a wider and fundamental societal context. Their focus primarily is dealing with the symptoms of a dysfunctional culture, rather than addressing essential and underlying issues.

It is clear to see the motivation and reasoning behind what appears to be a simpler and easier route for many individuals, organizations, and businesses. However, it is equally clear to see how this approach fails to meet people's fundamental "Diverse Mental Health" needs, merely serving to gloss over the deep chasms, which exist, along with side stepping the free expression of people's lived experience.

***“The incorporation of diverse and cultural factors to mental health improvement will remain stagnant if societal status quo and work cultures are mentally harmful, or where DEI factors and injustices continually persist. Efforts to eradicate perpetuated, maintained, and long-standing detrimental attitudes, behaviours, and structures are essential in this current climate”.***



Caroline Ribeiro-Nelson is Head of Free Choices | Diverse Mental Health. She is a Diverse Mental Health Consultant, Coach & Trainer, who has been working in the fields of employee assistance and mental health & well-being for 25+ years. She can be reached at: <https://www.freechoices.co.uk/diverse-mental-health/our-diverse-mental-health-services.html>



# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Workplace Wellness Summit

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“I am amazed how it evolved into what it is today. We had been casting around for a name for an event I had suggested we hold for organizations to have deeper conversations about wellness, psychological safety and the issues that were causing burnout at work. An event that is designed by a Canadian and hosted by an American organization and would include professionals from around the globe. This gave birth to the Global Workplace Wellness Summit. I had started to notice that these issues were global issues affecting workers and employers around the world”.

**We had no idea that this could get as bad as it is now with Covid-19. It seems like just a short time ago.**

## **ABOUT THE GLOBAL WORKPLACE WELLNESS SUMMIT**

It was 2018, and I had the idea of hosting a wellness event for professionals and their organizations and shared this with my colleague Jonathan Bissell at the College of San Mateo in California. He loved the idea and offered to host the event at the beautiful CSM campus grounds in San Mateo thus, the Global Workplace Wellness Summit was birthed.

Over the past five years the event has had steady growth reaching millions of professionals around the globe and participation from more than 50 countries. We had over 2000 registrations for the 2021 virtual Summit. We are ready to transition back to a live event, pending the end of the health pandemic. As such, we are planning the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Workplace Wellness Summit** and would like you and your organization to be represented.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Workplace Wellness Summit is schedule for September 28 - 29, 2022 in the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada, Treaty No1. Territory, ancestral lands of several of Canada's Indigenous people, and birthplace of the Metis Nation.

The Summit is designed to bring together professionals to discuss, share, learn, and collaborate. Together, we will explore inclusive wellness in the new world of work, creating a fantastic opportunity to connect with diverse leaders and professionals interested in wellness.

The Summit was founded by Joyce Odidison, President & CEO of Interpersonal Wellness Services Inc. for 25 years. Joyce is a thought leader and the world's foremost expert on Interpersonal Wellness Competency Teaching. Joyce is the author of six books, a speaker, corporate trainer, and publisher of Faces of Workplace Wellness Magazine. She is a conflict analyst, certified coach, and certified training and development professional.

Joyce is a frequent TV guest expert who has been featured in print and online magazines around the world. Joyce is currently on a virtual book tour for her sixth book: An Inclusive Wellness Competency Teaching and Coach Framework. This will culminate with promotion of the Global Workplace Wellness Summit.

You can learn more about the upcoming Summit on the website, apply to speak, join a Summit committee, or apply to be a volunteer at the Summit onsite or virtual sessions. You can also apply to host a tradeshow booth or apply to be a sponsor of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Workplace Wellness Summit.

**September 28-29, 2022.**

**Join Us**

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# Your Triggers Are Your Teachers

- Sylvia Marusyk

**Y**our triggers are your teachers. Whenever you have a reaction to something; a stress reaction, a fear reaction, an anger reaction, ask yourself “what is really going on here?” Don’t just let the emotions take control. If you let your emotions rule, you build walls between yourself and others instead of bridges. Many relationships are irreparably damaged in this way. We get triggered by something that has nothing to do with the relationship, nothing to do with the co-worker in front of us, the boss who suddenly reminds you of your father, the spouse who triggers something from a previous relationship. Let yourself learn, let yourself become powerful, and let yourself have mastery over that which is controlling you, your triggers!

Sometimes we are very aware of our triggers. If I asked you this question, “what stresses you out?” How many of you can answer immediately? Many of us can. Traffic, unexpected bills, children who won’t listen, lineups, things that break when you are in the middle of using them. These are obvious. Some triggers for our stress response are so subconscious that we don’t know why we overreact to a simple question or statement.

There are some things that are universally stressful, and I don’t mean just circumstances like death, divorce, or uncontrollable weather. I mean there are categories of experiences that people find universally stressful. Gabor Mate wrote about this. Let’s review what those universal triggers of the stress response are.

The first one is a lack of information. So, imagine a scene... Your teenage daughter comes home and says “I need a ride to Jennifer’s place and I will see you guys tomorrow”. Your daughter is 16 years old. Do you feel just a bit of anxiety about this information that you’ve been given which leaves much to be desired? Naturally you are going to begin to ask questions. If your daughter’s answers are vague, you will become more anxious and subsequently, more stressed. If this continues you may even become

angry. Your daughter may raise her voice to you and say “why are you overreacting? It’s just a sleepover at Jennifer’s!”. What is operating here is this first universal trigger of stress. When we have a lack of information it creates anxiety and stress. Under the circumstances, we react emotionally and often with anger or fear.

The second universal trigger of stress is a lack of clarity/certainty. So, imagine a scene... You are at work, your boss approaches with a policy paper in hand. He says, “we have a new policy. I’d like you to read this, sign off on it and begin implementing it with your crew immediately”. You quickly review it but see no concrete action items that need to be acted on, so you ask for more information to which he replies, “just read the policy it’s all there”, and walks away. The lack of clarity on what your next step should be creates anger, anxiety, and frustration. In other words, the stress response.

The third universal trigger of stress is a lack of control. Imagine a scene....it is the middle of a pandemic, going into the second lockdown. Your business depends on customers but because of the type of business you are in, you are closed during the lockdown. You were barely managing with your finances prior to the first lockdown, now you are in a second and you have no control over the mounting bills and the prospect of losing your business entirely. It is clear what the emotional reaction is here for this universal trigger of stress. Anger, frustration, fear become your constant companions.

So knowing these three universal triggers of stress, go back to the last time you overreacted to something. Can you do a post-mortem of the event now? Which universal trigger of stress led to your overreaction? Was there a lack of information in the conversation, a lack of clarity/certainty or did you feel you had a lack of control? It’s so much easier to see when you are removed from the event.

Now think of a situation recently where you were interacting with someone who overreacted to something you said or asked of them. Looking back, can you identify that perhaps the other person or people felt a lack of clarity, a lack of information or a lack of control in the situation? Chances are one or more of these universal triggers of stress was being triggered or tripped.

The beauty of understanding this is not just in understanding yourself better, mitigating your own stress response with awareness, or dealing with your own triggers that may previously have been subconscious to you; but this is a framework for prevention.

## **Lack of information**

The next time you overreact to someone, if you notice that what is missing is a lack of information, it is so simple to remediate! Simply tell the person you are communicating with that you require more information. Ask specific questions to help satisfy this universal trigger of stress and settle your nervous system back down. It is a sure-fire way to get you out of the stress response (unless of course the person is not forthcoming! That’s a whole other problem!).

Now let's think about how you can use this to prevent stress in the people that you are communicating with, not just yourself. Imagine a scenario where you deliver some information or a request to someone and they have an overreaction to this request. A negative reaction. Ask them, do you have enough information or is there something more I can tell you or offer to help you with? Can you imagine how quickly you could dial down that person's anger, fear or frustration? This is what I like to call bridge building, not wall building. Walls separate, bridges link!

Whenever you see a trigger in yourself or others, check quickly to see if you need more information or if you can offer them more information. This will help get everyone out of the stress response.

## **Lack of clarity/certainty**

The next time you find yourself overreacting in a negative way to something someone has asked for or said, after you've checked in to see if the missing link is information, next check to see whether things are unclear. Ask yourself, "am I clear on what is being asked of me?" If the answer is "no" or "I'm not sure", ask for clarity. Asking for clarity will immediately knock out this universal trigger for your stress response. Similarly, if you ask something of someone or share information that elicits a negative response that you are not expecting, and you've already established that it's not because of a lack of information, next ask if they need clarity. Offering clarity or certainty can help dial down the stress response of the person or people you are communicating with. Again, it's a great bridge building strategy!

## **Lack of control**

The next time you have an over-the-top negative reaction to something someone says or asks of you, once you've established that it is neither a lack of information nor clarity that is the problem, ask yourself if it's a lack of control? Do you feel like you have no or little control over what is being asked or communicated? If this is the case, simply ask for more control. For example, you may have to ask if you can control the timing.

It's clear how understanding the way these three universal triggers of stress impact us as humans is powerful in dialling down the stress response. But there is a way to level it up even further and create a powerful prevention plan for your home and family, for your coworkers and even your friends.

Let's take a look at a real-life scenario. Your young child is a picky eater, and every evening becomes a battle of wills at the dinner table. Tonight, is particularly sensitive because there is a timing issue, there is a soccer game that your son is going to be playing in and you need to be on time. Let's look at the use of these three principles to create a more peaceful evening for everyone.

The first thing is to start with lots of information; "son when the big hand gets to 12, we have to leave to go to your soccer game. All your gear is ready to go, your water bottle is filled, and your soccer clothes are clean and on your bed. As soon as you are finished eating you can go and get dressed and we will leave when the big hand gets to 12".

Try to offer more clarity. “You have lots of time to eat and it’s really important that you eat everything that’s on your plate because it will give you the energy to run fast and to be strong in kicking. As soon as you are finished, we will be leaving. But you have to be finished when this hand gets to the 12 on the clock”.

Try to give a little control. “Here are several things you could put on your hamburger; you decide which ones you want. Here are some vegetables that you could choose from, just choose one and put as many on your plate as you like”.

Can you see how providing a little information, a little clarity, and a little control might go a long way to mitigating the stress response? Of course, everyone knows a kid for whom none of the strategies would work, maybe it’s your kid in which case I’m sorry! However, for most kids, this will work, maybe with different wording. It works with adults too.

If you are planning a team meeting, family meeting or staff meeting, think about these three powerful triggers of the stress response and mitigate them the best you can. Give more information than you think is necessary, be as clear as you possibly can and give as much control to others as you can. Chances are if you still get an overreaction, a negative reaction, the person has not fully understood the information, the clarity that you’ve provided or what they have control over. This is a perfect invitation for further conversation.

The understanding and strategic use of these universal triggers of stress is one of the most helpful and powerful coping skills for managing stress that I have come across. I hope you will give this a try and see how you can mitigate not only your own stress but the stress in people around you who depend on you.

## About the Author



Sylvia Marusyk is everything you never knew you wanted in a public speaker. The owner and innovative mind behind MindBody Works; a Canadian company focusing on creating and maintaining health and wellness in the workplace, Sylvia is fun, sassy and passionate about safety & health. As an Occupational Therapist with almost 30 years of experience and expertise in the field of health and safety, she emphasizes that prevention is the key to creating happy, healthy individuals, employees and businesses. The former host of the 'Happy Hour with Sylvia!' radio show, international keynote speaker, “activational” mentor and industry expert has proven that the way we look at corporate health, safety and wellness is due for a change of perspective; and Sylvia is leading the charge. Her entertaining presentations focus on a proactive approach to building healthy lives and workplaces. Through the use of humour and her incredibly dynamic presentation style, Sylvia leaves audiences laughing, learning and going home with the tools and confidence to change their lives for the better.

# The Faces of Workplace WELLNESS

July 2021 Issue

- Global Workplace Wellness Summit
- Inclusive Wellness at Work
- A Prayer for your Workplace
- Planning a more effective workplace health program

The Faces of Workplace  
Wellness Magazine

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Interpersonal Wellness Services Inc. (IWS Inc.) is a Canadian company based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The **“Faces of Workplace Wellness”** Magazine will serve to highlight the employee experience and be circulated through IWS Inc. and the Global Workplace Wellness Summit advisory board members network and subscribers around the world.

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