

byrne·dean | LIANS Conference November 2023

Looking after you



Richard Martin

The plan for today

A bit about me

A moment to
reflect

A focus on stress

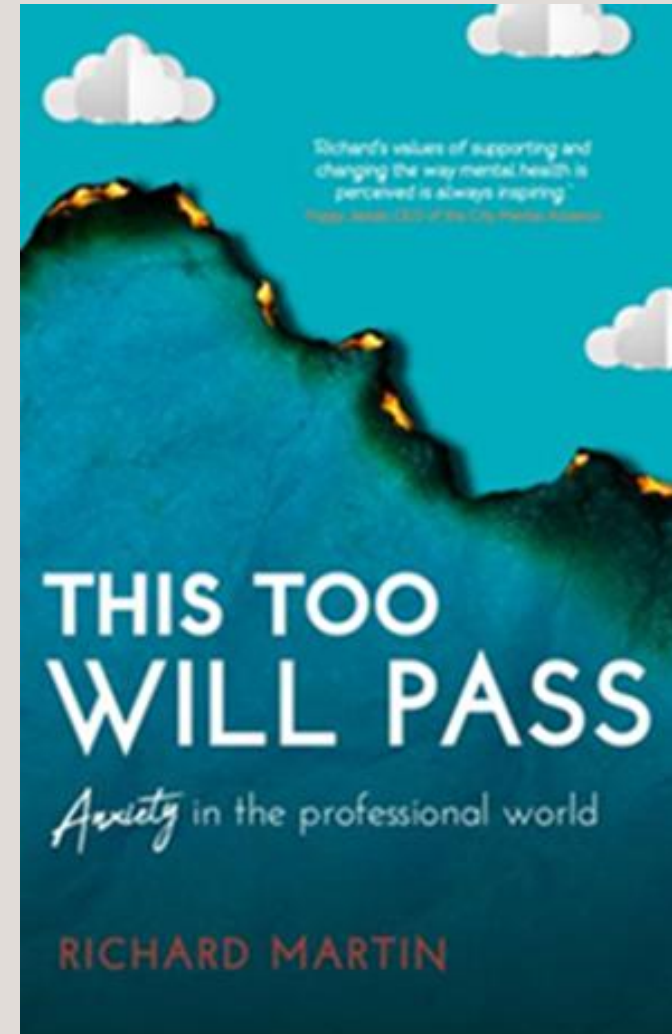
How we can
manage our own
stress

How can we help
each other – an
introduction to MBC

Questions and
reflections

And if you are triggered by anything in this session, please don't leave without checking in with me or someone else

A bit about me...



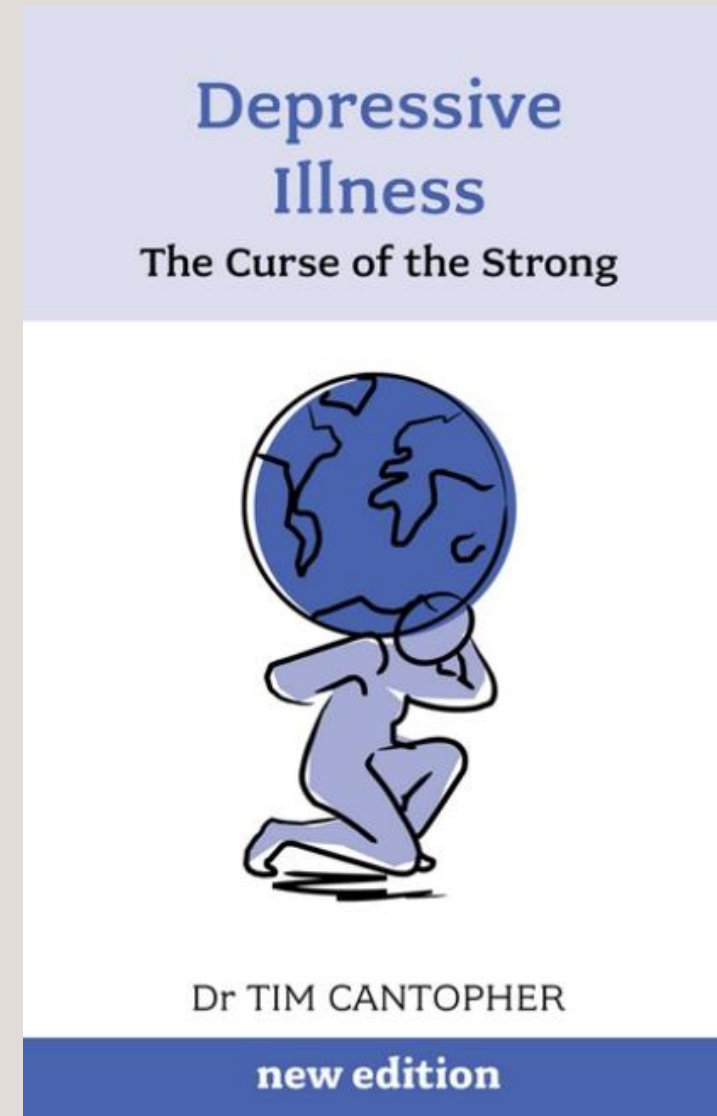
Richard's values of supporting and
changing the way mental health is
perceived is always inspiring.
Poppy Jackson, CEO of the City Mental Alliance

THIS TOO WILL PASS

Anxiety in the professional world

RICHARD MARTIN

**The book I wished I
had read earlier...**



IBA 2021 Mental Wellbeing in the legal profession report



Discrepancy in Wellbeing Index scores

61 - Ages 55-59

56 - Men

52 - Cause for concern

51 - Average global score for lawyers

47 - Women

47 - Ethnic minority

45 - With disability

43 - Ages 23-29

Based on WHO-5 Mental Wellbeing Index

Three factors in play?:

- Who we are
- What we do
- The environment or culture in which we do it

Stigma:

41% would not discuss wellbeing issues with employer for fear of impact on career

An MBC white paper

**Raising the bar:
Addressing the
state of mental
health in the
legal sector**



What have we all been having to deal with?

Take a moment to reflect on and acknowledge all we have had to manage these last 3 years

Fear for health and the health of loved ones – possibly illness and bereavement. Home schooling, care of other dependents

Overnight, a revolution in the way we work, imposed upon us, and then dragging on, with no holidays and no respite

Isolation and uncertainty, deprived of the supports we would normally depend upon

War in Ukraine, and now the Middle East

Inflation, fear of recession, perhaps concern over our own job security, the implications of AI

The usual (and perhaps increased) demands of work and life in general

We are better off naming our fears and worries rather than ignoring, suppressing or numbing them

What is burnout?

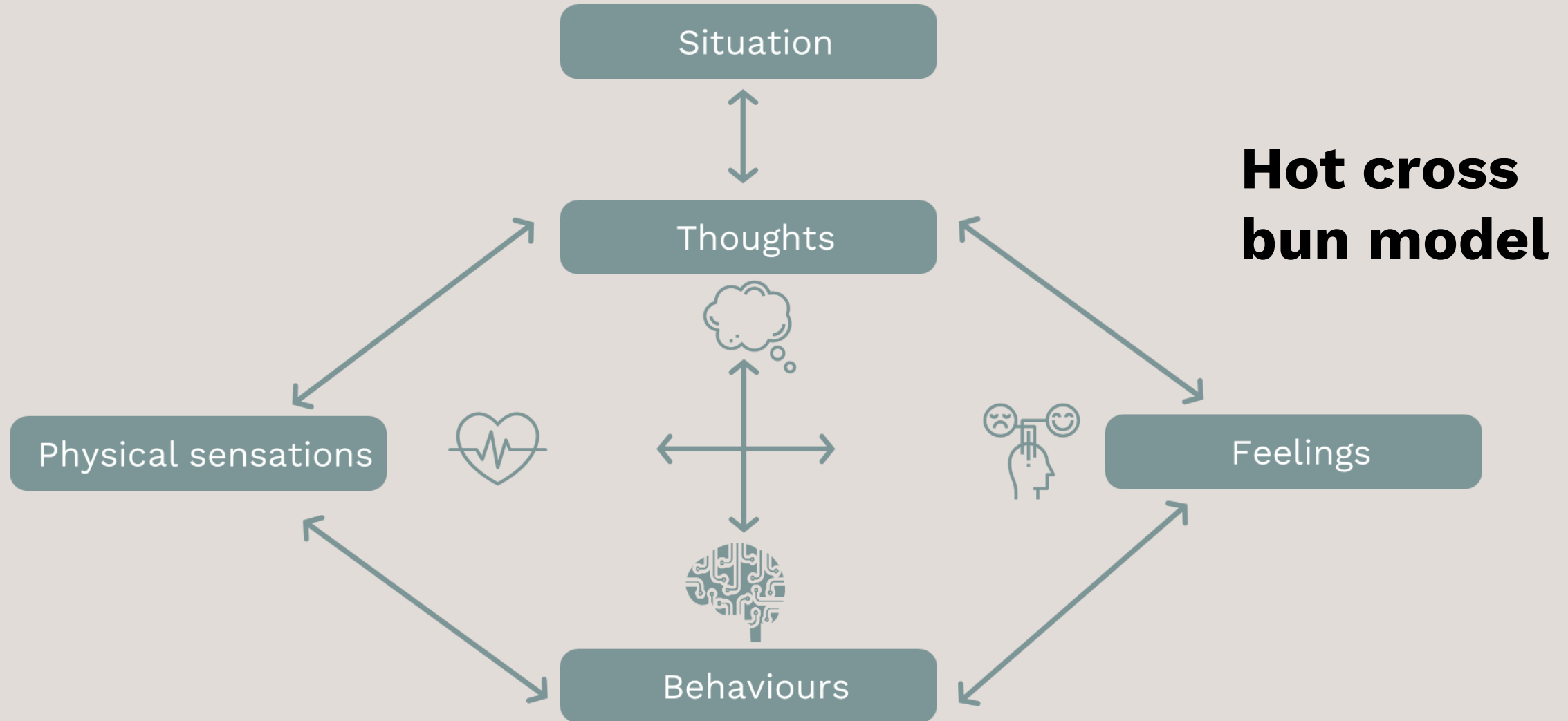


A “syndrome” that results from “chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed,” World Health Organization’s International Disease Classification (ICD-11 2019)

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.
- Increased mental distance, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job.
- Reduced professional efficacy.

- A syndrome, a phenomenon not an illness itself.
- A reaction to an environment or system, often persistent stress.
- Often resulting in a range of illnesses.

What's stress about?



A working definition of stress

...the state of mind we get into, the perception, when we think that we cannot cope, that more is being asked of me than I can do, that the demands on me are exceeding my resources...

What stress can do to us

Increased risk of anxiety problems, depression, psychosis, burn out and personality disorders

Cardiovascular problems, heart attacks and strokes

Obesity and eating disorders

Gastrointestinal problems

Skin and hair problems, acne, psoriasis, eczema and permanent hair loss

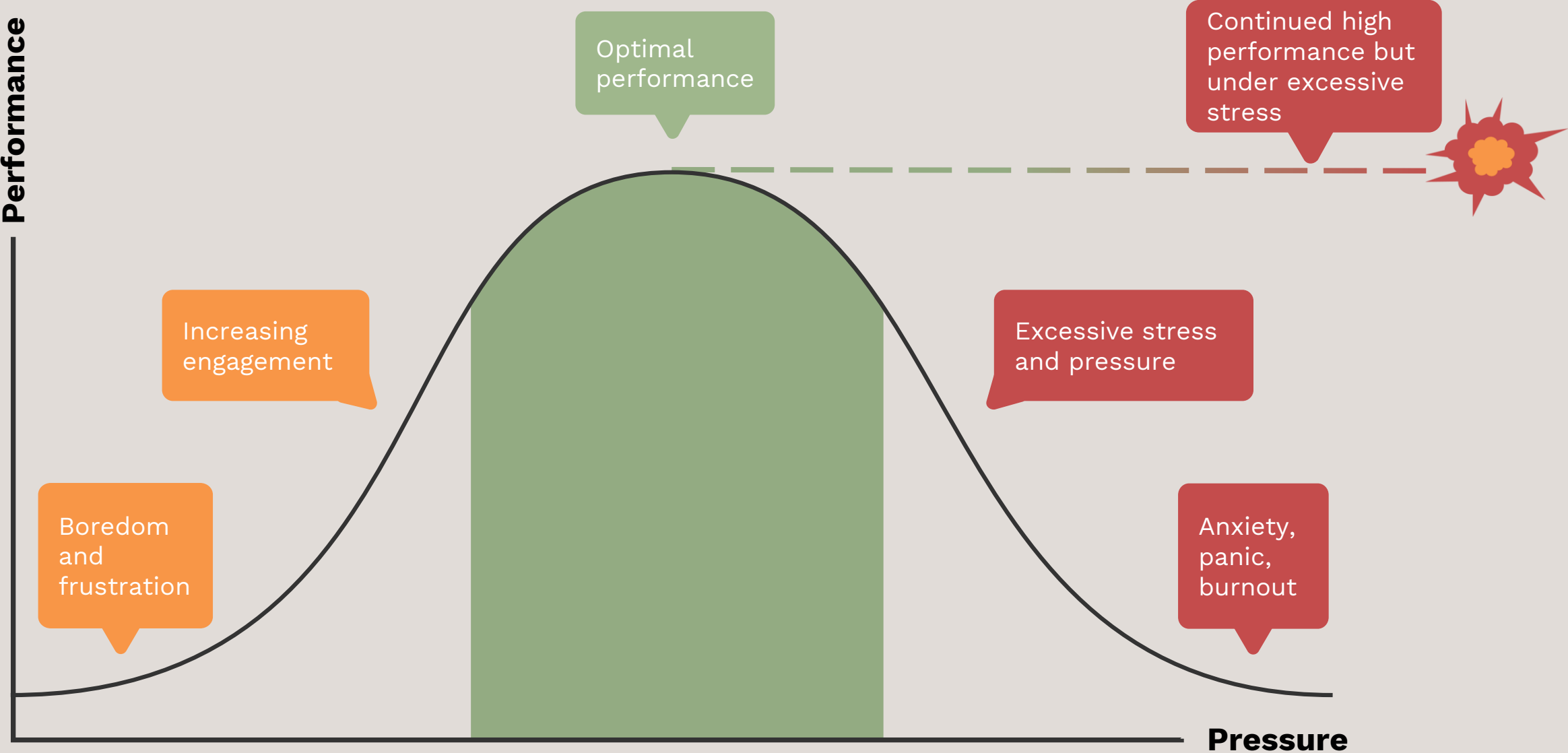
Menstrual problems

Sexual problems, impotence, premature ejaculation

And then the impact on our thinking and judgment eg ethical decision making

We weren't built, and haven't evolved, for how we live these days

The stress curve



Our FEAR kicks in – causing anxiety

What physical changes do you notice when stressed or anxious?

These were designed for a different purpose

Now it is often our thoughts and beliefs causing our stress

Chicken or the egg – because negative thoughts are more common when the fight or flight response kicks in

Physical signs that something may be wrong

Hyperventilation or short of breath

choking

change in sleep

shaking

sweating

dizzy

loss of bowel/ bladder control

dry mouth

tingling

nausea

muscle aches and pains

Changes in eating habits

headaches

rapid heartbeat/ palpitations

restlessness

Aches and pains

Change in
menstrual patterns

Lack of energy

Change in
appearance

Weight change

Loss of libido

Emotional and cognitive signs

indecisiveness

impatience

confusion

on edge

pessimism

nervous

repetitive unpleasant thoughts

hopeless

flat

tired

mind racing or blank

Poor concentration and memory

vivid dreams

irritability

guilt

sad

helpless

restlessness

anger

excessive fear and worry

anxious

Mood swings

Behavioral signs something may be wrong

distress in
social
situations

anger

self neglect

crying

urges to
escape,
scream,
lash out

avoidance

loss of
motivation

Key to this is
noticing
change. Not
their usual
self

Useful ways to manage early signs

Focus on:

- Demands
- Control
- Relationships
- Support
- Role clarity
- Change

Creating boundaries around work start and finish times, switch off and put devices away

Building in breaks, and also working offline with fewer distractions and more focus

Clear prioritisation – regular supervision and effective workload management

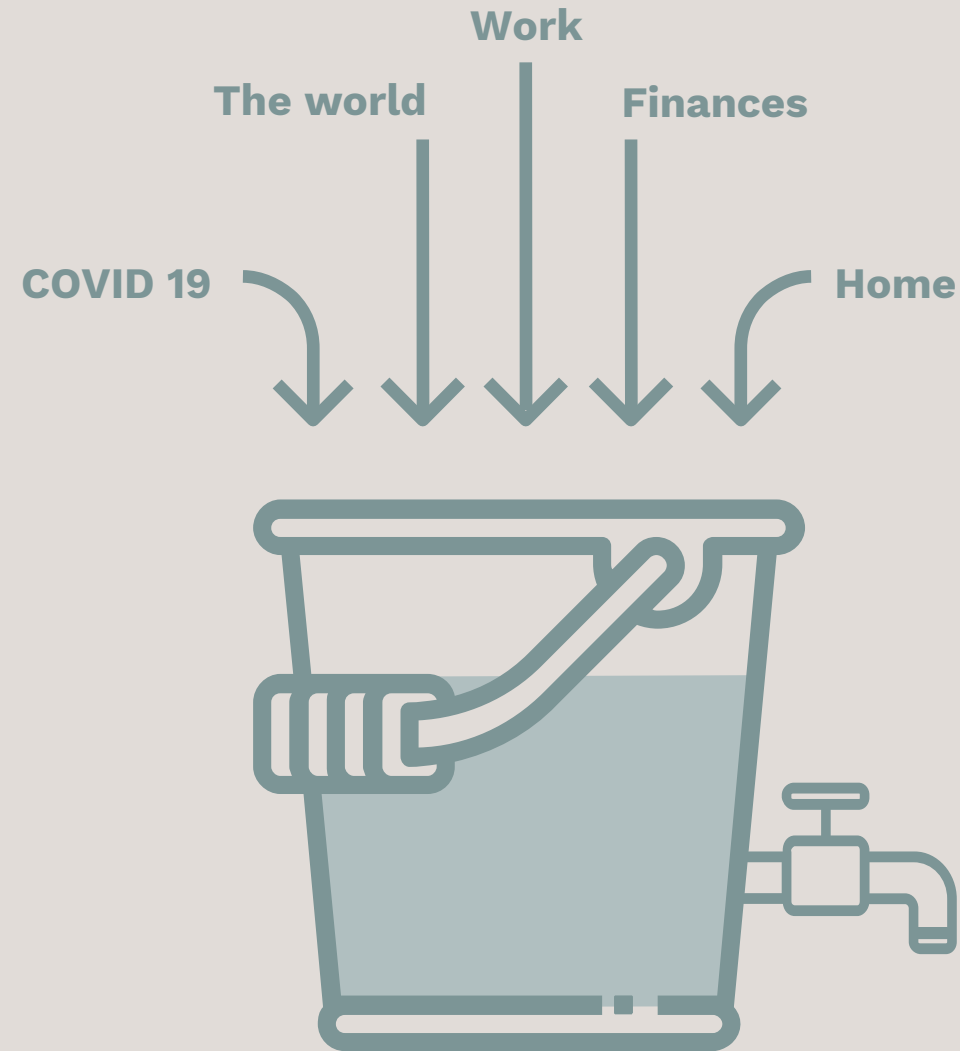
Workflow efficiency – get rid of the stuff that impedes or distracts – deal with irritations

Be honest with yourself and those around you – learn the art of saying no, or, at least, not yet

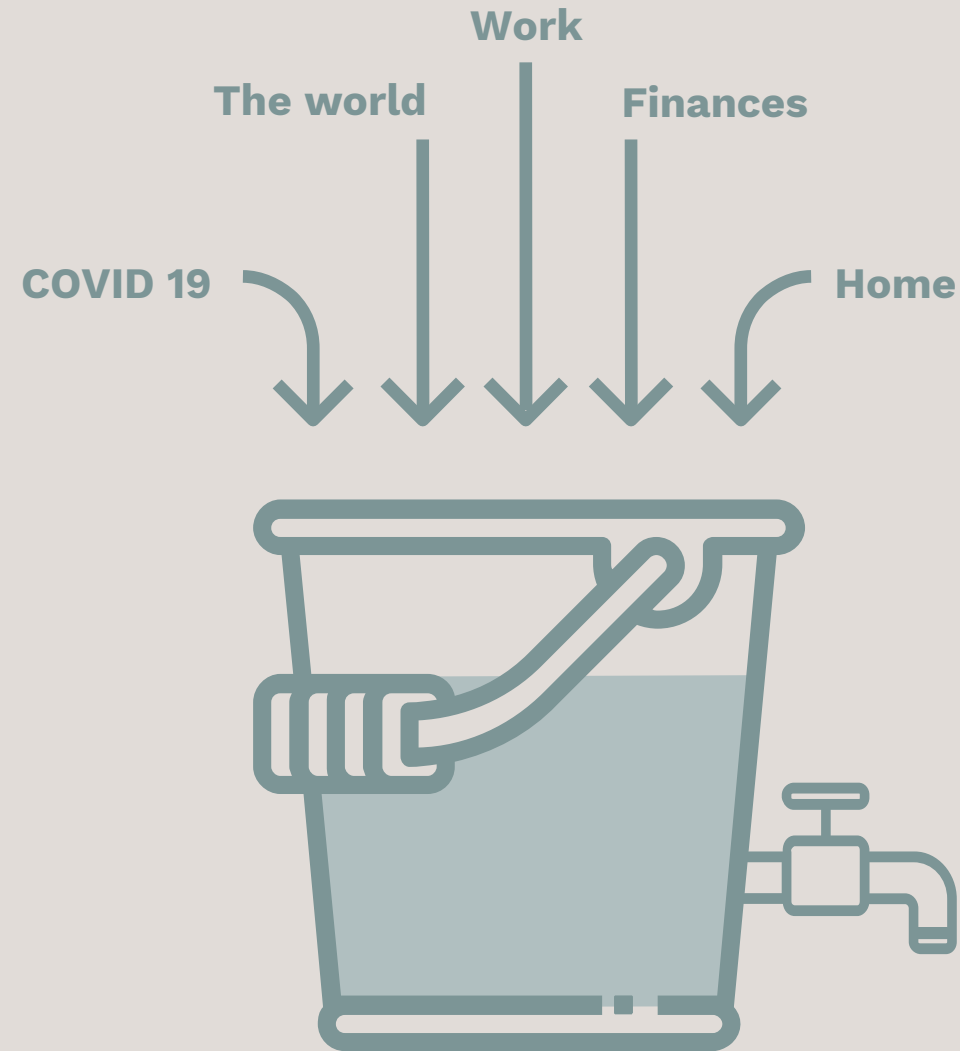
Collaboration – who else can help – reducing isolated working habits

Diarising pleasurable activities, get fresh air and sunlight, plan holidays

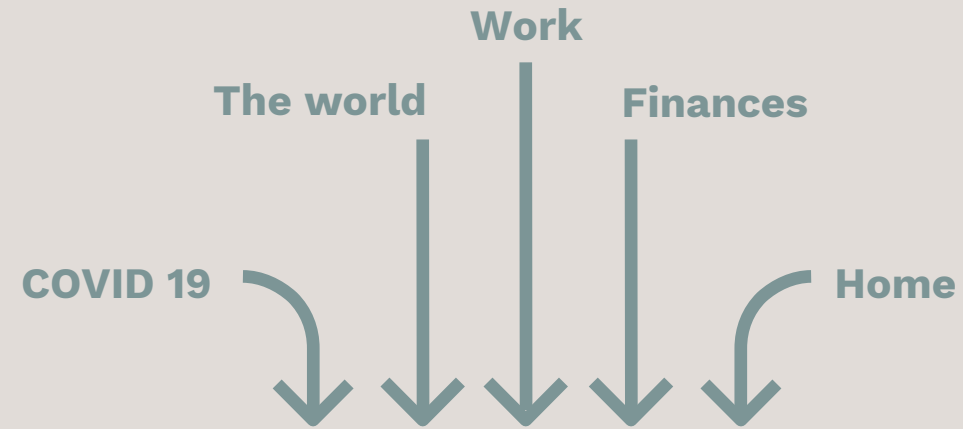
A simple tool – our stress bucket



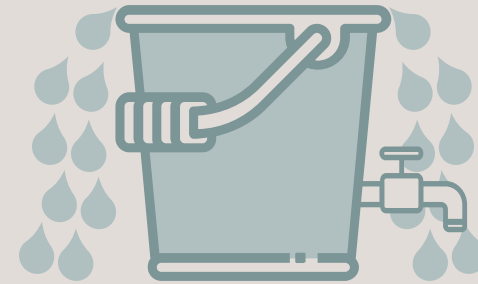
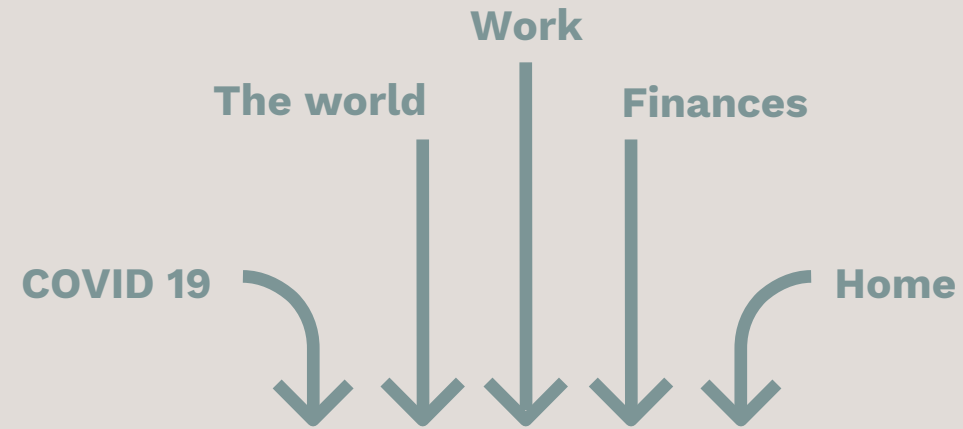
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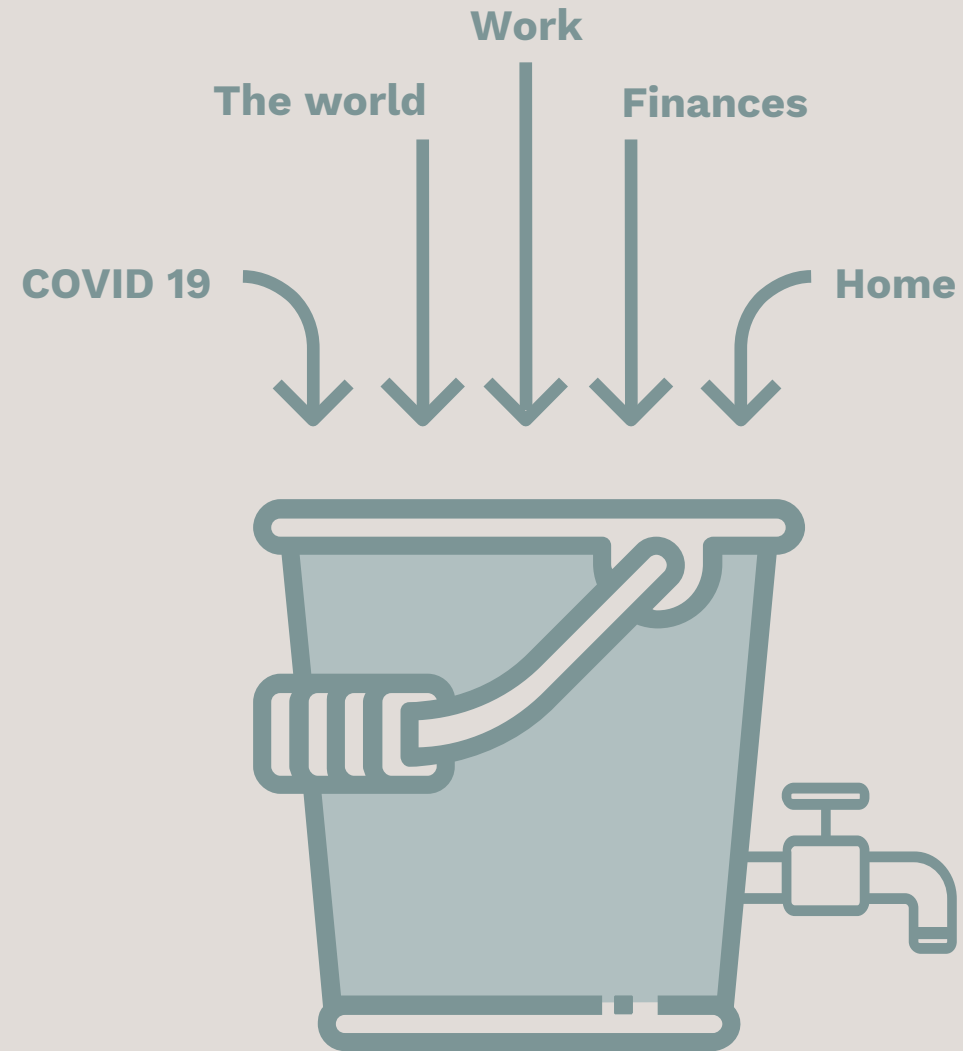
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A simple tool – our stress bucket



A simple tool – our stress bucket



Five ways to wellbeing

From the centre for wellbeing at the
New Economics Foundation



What sort of things cause us stress – what fills your bucket?



“... there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

Hamlet – Act II scene ii

How we think

**But we aren't
always able to be
this logical - our
feelings will often
intervene**

Activating event



Beliefs



Consequences

Some negative automatic thinking patterns might have kicked in

Notice those that you recognise in your thinking as we go through them



Just because I think something
does not make it true

Lose sense of objectivity

Talk things through with others

Write them down

What would you advise a friend?

Adopt the “observing-self”



Working through our worries

Stop,
breathe
and
think

Do I have any
real evidence to
support what I
am thinking or
fearing?

Can I do
anything about
it?

If I can, what is
it?

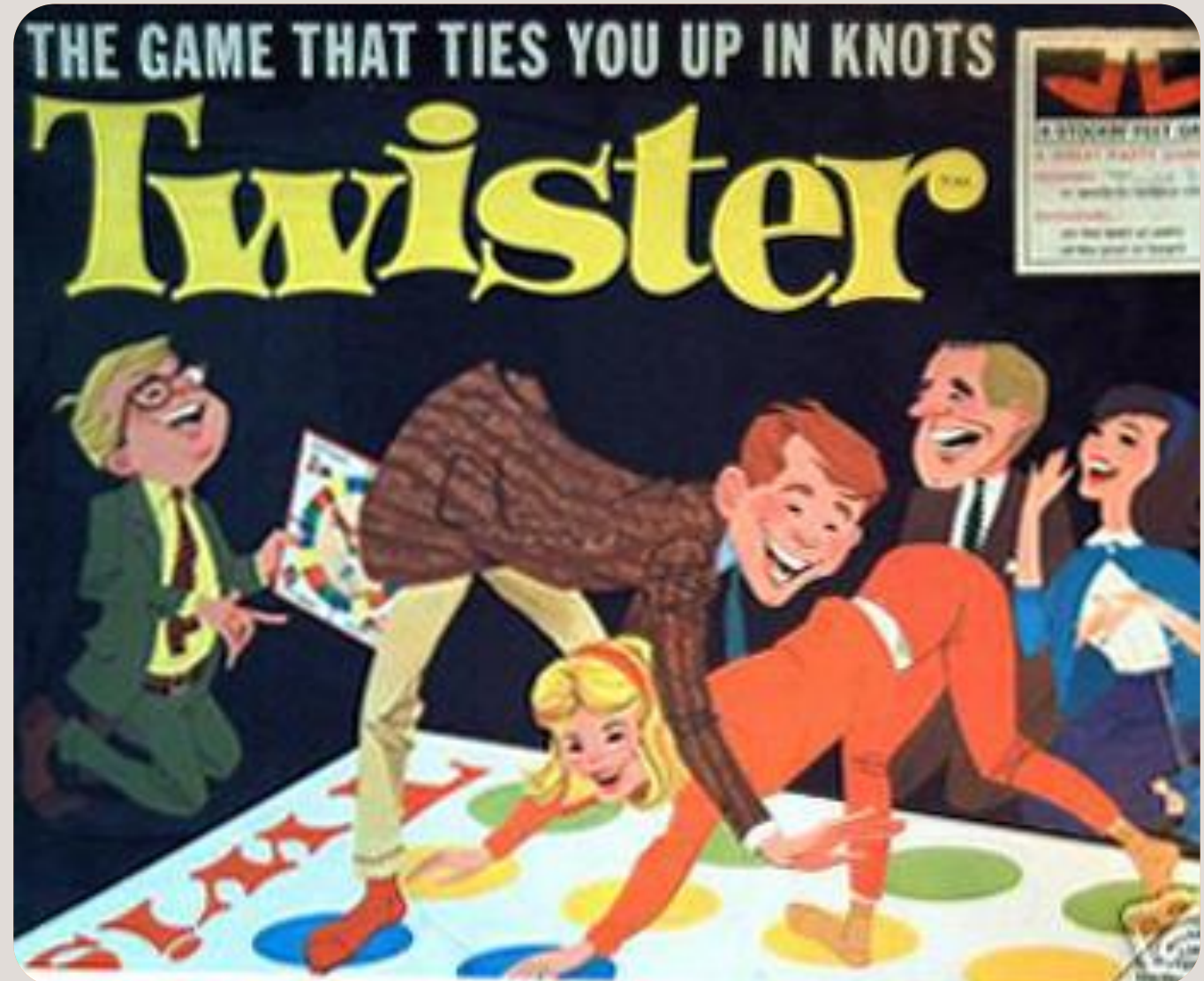
What's the
most urgent or
important?

Who can help?

What can I best
do or stop doing
to help myself?

What can we be doing to help each other?

**Does it
sometimes feel a
bit like this?**



A starting point

When we are stressed,
our brains don't work
very well



Openness and respect



Smart meetings and emailing



Respecting rest periods



Mindful delegation



Openness and respect

Building trust and effective communication

- Discussing upfront with my colleagues, clients and contacts their preferred method of communication and clarifying any relevant implications of an individual's working patterns.
- Treating internal colleagues and external contacts with the appropriate level of respect and courtesy.
- Asking for and providing feedback to others on a regular basis.

In a world where we can be anything, be thoughtful

be brave.

Smart meetings and communications

Adhering to smart meeting and communication guidance

- Being respectful of others' time by planning meetings properly (considering who needs to attend / giving appropriate notice / setting clear agendas and objectives) and avoiding last minute cancellations.
- Unless otherwise necessary, allowing people to join meetings by the method they deem suitable, providing video and call-in details as default on meeting invites to allow everyone to participate regardless of their physical location.
- Running meetings effectively, including:
 - (a) allowing contribution from participants regardless of location; and
 - (b) considering how different people process information and make decisions.
- Avoiding over-use of email and instant chat and avoiding copying people into messages that they don't need to receive.
- Where multiple communication media are used, agreeing how each is expected to be used and allowing people to log out for periods to enable focussed attention.
- Making use of subject lines in messages and ensuring these are reflective of the message's content.

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Respecting rest periods

Consideration given to the need to switch off

- Where support is required outside of someone's core working hours, giving them options for when that could be (early morning or evening / weekend).
- When sending emails outside of business hours, being clear in the title whether it needs to be read / actioned promptly or considering sending pre-timed emails (so emails are not received late at night and at weekends).
- Including working hours / availability as part of my email signature, so people are aware of each others' working patterns.
- Respecting people's right to take annual leave without the expectation of them checking emails / being on call, and role modelling the same behaviour myself where possible.

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Mindful delegation

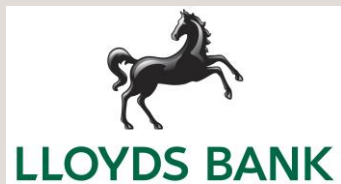
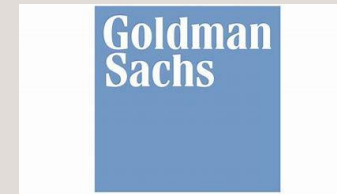
Implementing a best practice approach to collaboration, instruction and delegation

- Respecting the need to provide sufficient context and information for a piece of work, ideally including the purpose and ultimate recipient.
- When instructing on a task, negotiating rather than imposing a deadline, being transparent where possible on the wider timetable, and promptly communicating timing changes which impact others.
- When being instructed on a task, being confident to flag when a deadline is unrealistic and / or unachievable.

In a world where we can be anything, be thoughtful

be brave.

130+ members worldwide





What lawyers might learn from horses

In his words...

Change doesn't happen,
change won't happen, while
we sit around waiting for the
right person, or the right
time. We are the people we
have been waiting for. We
are the change.



**Three things that you
will take away and
act on, today,
tomorrow and next
week?**

Any questions?
What's on your mind?

And if you have been triggered by anything in
this session, please don't leave without
checking in with me or someone else

Creating kinder, fairer, more productive workplaces.

byrnedeane.com



Richard Martin
richard.martin@byrnedeane.com

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