

Lead With Power


Handbook



Contents Page

- 2 *International Wellbeing Insights*
- 3 *Who Are We?*
- 4 *What is Stress Awareness Month?*
- 5 *The Bridge Analogy*
- 6 *What's On Your Bridge?*
- 7 *UPR- Love, Compassion and Empathy*
- 10 *UPR- Extending UPR Towards Others*
- 11 *UPR- W.A.I.T. Model*
- 13 *UPR- Extending UPR Towards Oneself*
- 16 *UPR- Creating Non-Judgmental Spaces*
- 17 *#LeadWithLove*
- 18 *Find Out More*



International Wellbeing Insights



About Us

We have been dedicated to driving meaningful, universal change since 2003. Our passionate approach focuses on reducing stress, improving mental health, and fostering workplace wellbeing.

What We Do

As the research and consultancy arm of The Stress Management Society—an independent, non-political, and impartial NGO, we provide data-driven insights and strategic guidance to organisations worldwide.

Our Impact

With a global reach across multiple continents, we are trusted partners to some of the world's largest and most influential organisations. Backed by over two decades of expertise, rigorous research, and real-world results, we have a proven track record of transforming workplace cultures and driving sustainable wellbeing strategies.

→ 2003

International Wellbeing Insights Ltd is founded

→ 17m

People reached during Stress Awareness Month 2023

→ 107

have delivered services in 107 countries around the world

→ 1000s

Happy clients worldwide

Who Are We?

Big ideas, inspiring stories, robust ethics and strong principles and a values-driven approach have been at the heart of our organisation since our inception.

We believe that wellbeing isn't just a perk—it's the foundation of a thriving, high- performing, and sustainable workplace. Our mission is simple but powerful: to empower organisations and individuals to take control of their wellbeing, creating cultures where people don't just survive but truly thrive. We've been at the forefront of workplace wellbeing since 2003, helping organisations worldwide build happier, healthier, and more resilient teams. But we're not here to tick boxes or promote one-off initiatives, we're here to drive meaningful, lasting change.

Our mission is to maximise physical, mental, emotional and social health as well as improve relationships, performance, productivity, creativity, morale, recruitment & retention by creating a resilient workforce and equipping them to cope with change and adversity.





What Is Stress Awareness Month?

Stress Awareness Month is our campaign held every April to raise awareness of the causes and impact of stress. It encourages open conversations and practical steps to support mental and emotional wellbeing.

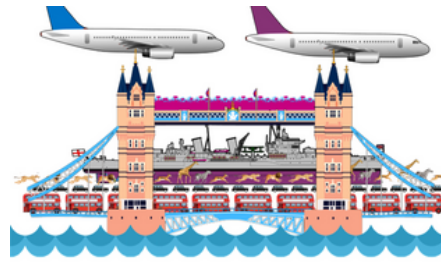
Our theme this year is #LeadWithLove is a powerful call to action rooted in the principles of Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR). This theme encourages us to approach ourselves and others with kindness, compassion, and acceptance, no matter the challenges we face.

In today's world, where stress often thrives in the midst of conflict, tension, and division, we believe that love is the universal force capable of shifting the narrative. By choosing love as our starting point, we embrace empathy, prioritise understanding, and create positive change in every interaction.

Whether it's extending a gesture of kindness to someone nearby, offering support to global communities, or simply practicing self-love, even the smallest acts of love can spark powerful waves of positivity that ripple outward.

#LeadWithLove

The Bridge Analogy



The Health & Safety Executive defines stress as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them’.

This links very closely to one of our definitions of stress; a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that:

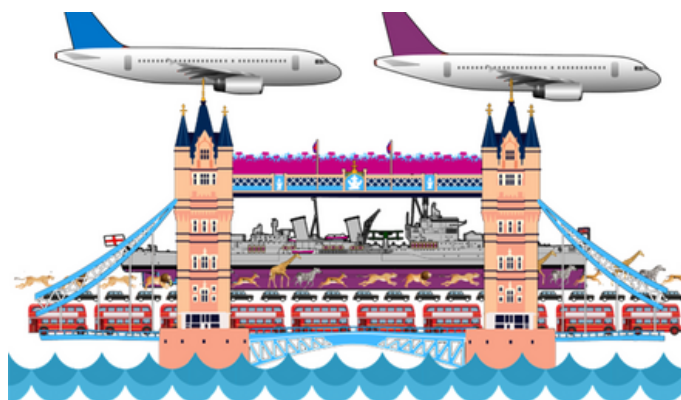
“DEMANDS EXCEED THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESOURCES THE INDIVIDUAL IS ABLE TO MOBILISE.”

The International Wellbeing Insights uses ‘The Bridge’ analogy to approach the topic of mental health, wellbeing and stress. When a Bridge is carrying too much weight, it will eventually collapse. It is possible to see the warning signs before this happens, ‘The Bridge’ would bow, buckle and creak.

The same principle can be applied to human beings, with excessive demands and challenges placed on our bridges. There may be early warning signs. However stress can creep up on some of us, resulting in an unexpected breakdown.

‘The Bridge’ analogy can also be applied to a team or organisation as a whole by looking for more general signs such as team deadlines not being met or a decrease in team morale.

What's On Your Bridge?



We don't have a Work Bridge and Personal Bridge, it all goes to the same place and we tend to carry it around with us.

Take a moment to think about what is on YOUR Bridge.

What are the signs and symptoms that you display when YOUR Bridge IS bowing and buckling?

UPR- Love, Compassion and Empathy

Step 1: Think of Someone

Picture a person known for causing harm – someone like Adolf Hitler.

If you felt deep hatred towards them, would they be affected? No. They wouldn't know. So, who carries that emotion? You do.

Negative emotions live in you, raising stress and harming your health.

Step 2: Flip It

Now imagine feeling compassion instead. Would they feel that? No. But again, you would.

Compassion brings calm, reduces stress, and supports your wellbeing.

Real Leaders Who Chose Love





Unconditional Positive Regard



Love Compassion Empathy

What emotions are you holding onto right now that might be harming you more than anyone else?



What would it look like to release that and choose peace for your own wellbeing?



UPR- Extending UPR To Others

Why bother asking a question that is almost guaranteed to have no new information? That's why the question, "How are you? " is in need of a drastic makeover.

When asking "How are you?" 99% of the time, what is the response?... "Alright."

Sometimes the respondent doesn't even answer, they simply bounce the question back.

Let's think about asking better questions, particularly in a way that shows you are genuinely asking about the person's life. Or better yet, in a way that shows genuine care and leads to new information that can inspire positive action.

Some of these questions might be:

- "What's on your bridge?"
- "How's your bridge?"
- "What's your current state of mind?"
- "What are you looking forward to this week?"
- "What is going well this week?"



Unconditional Positive Regard



Extending UPR Towards Others

What are some examples of a more productive question than 'How are you?'

How does asking better questions help you practice UPR?

UPR- W.A.I.T. Model



Extending UPR Towards Others- W.A.I.T.

Why
Am
Ii
Talking

The WAIT model (Why Am I Talking) is a mindfulness-based communication tool that can transform how individuals interact by cultivating greater self-awareness and intentional speech. It encourages people to pause before speaking and evaluate their motivations, ensuring their contributions are meaningful and appropriate for the situation. This approach can improve the quality of conversations, minimise misunderstandings, and foster active listening.

Key Aspects of the WAIT Model:

- 1. Purpose:** Ask yourself: What do I want to achieve by speaking? This ensures your communication has a clear goal, whether it's to inform, clarify, support, or express an opinion.
- 2. Relevance:** Consider: Is my contribution relevant to the topic or helpful to the discussion? This helps keep conversations focused and avoids unnecessary tangents.
- 3. Value:** Reflect: Does my input add value, or am I speaking out of habit, ego, or discomfort with silence? This promotes meaningful exchanges instead of filler or redundant comments.

Unconditional Positive Regard

W.A.I.T. Model

Case Study: A team meeting at work

The manager is discussing strategies to improve productivity. A colleague begins explaining an idea that they've clearly thought through but may not yet be fully formed. You feel the urge to interject with your thoughts. Instead of immediately speaking, you apply the WAIT model:

1. Why am I talking?: Am I clarifying what the speaker has said? Am I contributing something new or building on their idea? Or am I interrupting because I feel the need to assert my opinion?

2. Purpose: You realise your primary purpose should be to add value to the discussion rather than competing to share your viewpoint.

3. Relevance and Value: You decide to wait for the speaker to finish and, if appropriate, frame your response as a constructive addition, such as: "I really like your point about improving processes. Building on that, what if we also streamlined how we handle task delegation? That might save us additional time."

By pausing and reflecting, you ensure your comment aligns with the discussion and moves it forward. The WAIT model prevented you from interrupting or derailing the conversation.



UPR- Extending UPR Towards Oneself

Mental Health Evaluation Exercise

1. What does mental health mean to you?

2. When you have poor mental health- what is the cause?

3. How does it affect you?

Mentally?

Emotionally?

Physically?

4. How often does it affect you?

5. How have you been dealing with it until now?

6. How could you deal with it?



Unconditional Positive Regard



Extending UPR Towards Oneself

Think of a time at work when something didn't go as planned. Maybe it was a project that didn't meet expectations, despite your best efforts.

What thoughts come up if you're being self-critical?

What would a self-compassionate response look like?

Your inner voice shapes your stress levels, your confidence and how you bounce back from setbacks.

If that voice is harsh or overly critical, it can drain your energy and make it harder to move forward. But when you respond to yourself with compassion – especially in moments of struggle – you're creating space for growth, not excuses. You're saying: "It's okay to be human."

Self-compassion isn't soft. It's a quiet kind of courage.

It gives you the strength to learn, adapt and keep going without tearing yourself down in the process.

Unconditional Positive Regard

Extending UPR Towards Oneself

This is about the importance of what is and what is not acceptable to both parties, determining what this relationship actually is. In this role, it is important to set boundaries to protect yourself, as well as the individual. There are three boundaries that we want you to explore:

Personal Boundaries

Organisational Boundaries

What your own boundaries are

Checked that they align with organisation values for example

Personal Boundaries	Organisational Boundaries
DO	DO
Be aware of your own mental health and take steps to keep wellbeing in check	Support employees in work-life balance
Be open-minded	Provide relevant training and coaching that is adequate and timely
Talk to someone for support	Be aware of organisational processes, policies and procedures
Maintain a good work-life balance	Be aware of the boundaries of confidentiality e.g., safeguarding
Avoid oversharing personal information unless relevant and comfortable to do so	Be supportive and understanding
Accept it's okay to say 'not right now'	Displaying empathy and compassion
Be able to say 'no' where appropriate	Make yourself familiar with support resources e.g., EAP or Occ Health
DON'T	DON'T
Take it home and over-analyse	Take on organisation's responsibilities
Take it personally or make it personal	Go against the organisation's procedures
Allow others experiences to trigger yours	Give advice, guidance or counselling
Feel responsible for others or feel guilty if you were unable to help them resolve their issues	Don't compromise your own boundaries

UPR- Creating Non-Judgmental Spaces

Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR) is about valuing people (yourself included) without judgment. It means recognising that everyone has worth, no matter the situation.

In practice, this looks like:

- **Asking better, more curious questions**
- **Listening with empathy**
- **Pausing before reacting**
- **Accepting differences with openness**

In a workplace, UPR creates a culture where people feel safe to speak honestly, without fear of being criticised or dismissed. It encourages trust, respect and connection, even during stressful times.

But UPR isn't just about how we treat others. It's also how we treat ourselves.

That same kindness, patience and acceptance? You deserve it too.

When we lead this way, with compassion, intention, and curiosity, we don't just reduce stress. We help each other grow. We call it leading with purpose, or leading with love. Because creating spaces where people feel seen and safe isn't soft. It's powerful.

#LeadWithLove



Unconditional Positive Regard reminds us that every person is worthy of kindness, compassion and understanding, including ourselves.

By choosing to lead with love, we create spaces where people feel safe, heard and valued. It's not about being perfect or avoiding hard conversations. It's about showing up with curiosity instead of judgment, empathy instead of assumption, and care instead of criticism.

This way of leading—of living—starts with small moments: a better question, a deeper breath, a kinder inner voice. It's these choices that shape the culture around us.

So, whether you're leading a team, supporting a colleague, or simply navigating your day, remember this:

When we lead with love, we lead with strength. And when we choose compassion, we all grow.



Find Out More



If you'd like to find out more ways in which you can get involved and #LeadWithLove visit our website below to access free resources available this Stress Awareness Month

Stress Awareness Month Resources: .

<https://www.stress.org.uk/stress-awareness-month-2025-resource-page/>



For more information or to book a workshop or a free, no-obligation consultation, see

www.wellbeing.work or

call 0203 142 8659 or

email info@stress.org.uk.



If you would like more information about stress and how to manage it

visit www.stress.org.uk