



International
Wellbeing Insights
People, Culture & Wellbeing

STRESS AWARENESS MONTH



#BeTheChange

#BETHECHANGE

MARS



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WELCOME

This year's Stress Awareness Month takes place against a backdrop of significant and sustained change. Across the region, associates are navigating the impact of conflict, economic and social uncertainty, and evolving business demands. At the same time, the Kellanova integration is introducing new structures, priorities, and ways of working across teams.

While change is essential for growth and progress, sustained pressure can affect how we think, feel, and perform. It can challenge our sense of clarity, control, and overall wellbeing. Recognising this is a critical first step in responding effectively.

This handbook has been developed to support you in understanding how change and pressure may be affecting you, both personally and professionally. It provides practical guidance to help you build awareness, strengthen resilience, and maintain performance during periods of uncertainty.

You are encouraged to use this resource to reflect, identify early signs of strain, and take proactive steps to support your wellbeing. Small, consistent actions can make a meaningful difference over time.

At Mars, we are committed to supporting our associates. This handbook is part of that commitment, helping to ensure that you feel equipped, supported, and able to navigate change with confidence.



WHAT'S THE FIRST THOUGHT THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD 'CHANGE'?

When people hear the word “change,” their first reaction is often instinctive:

Threat: “I can’t handle this”

Challenge: “I can deal with this”

What shapes that reaction is self-efficacy, your belief in your ability to cope and take action.

When **self-efficacy** is **low**, change feels overwhelming and out of your control. When it's **high**, the same situation feels manageable, even if it's difficult.

The situation may be the same, but your belief changes your experience of it.

A simple way to shift this is to ask: “What’s one thing I can do next?”

That small step moves you from feeling stuck to taking action, and that's where confidence begins to grow.



THE IMPACT OF CHANGE

73% of employees going through change report moderate to high stress.
So if you feel it, you're not alone and there's nothing "wrong" with you.
Stress is a normal response.

What's interesting is this: awareness of stress has increased, but the levels haven't really gone down.

So why isn't recognising stress enough to reduce it?

Because awareness doesn't always lead to action.
Knowing you're stressed is one thing. Knowing what to do with it is another.

If nothing changes in how we respond, the experience stays the same.

WHAT'S YOUR USUAL REACTION WHEN THINGS CHANGE SUDDENLY?

DO YOU TEND TO PAUSE AND RESPOND, OR REACT ON AUTOPILOT?

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS YOU FEEL MORE IN CONTROL WHEN THINGS FEEL UNCERTAIN?

WHY DOES CHANGE FEEL DIFFICULT?

Change often feels difficult not just because of what's happening, but because of how it affects our sense of control, certainty, and confidence.

When things shift, it's normal to question yourself.

“Can I handle this?”

“Do I know what to do?”

This is where self-efficacy comes in. The more confident you feel in your ability to deal with change, the more manageable it becomes.

Take a moment to reflect:

How confident do you feel managing the changes in your life right now?

Now think back to a time when you handled a big change well.

What helped you succeed?

Was it support from others?

Past experience?

Breaking things down into small steps?

Whatever your answer, those strengths are still available to you.

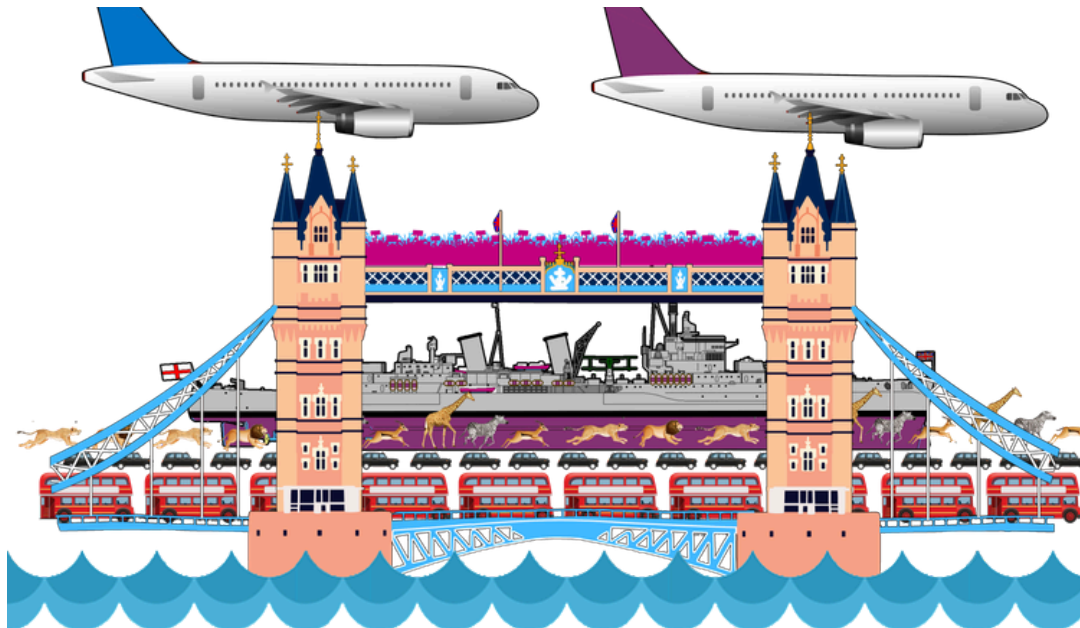
Change may feel uncertain, but your ability to respond is something you can build on.

Think of a time you handled a big change well. What helped you succeed?

How confident are you in managing the changes happening now?

Source: Centre for Mental Health, WHO, Gallup

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 and poor wellbeing; a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that:

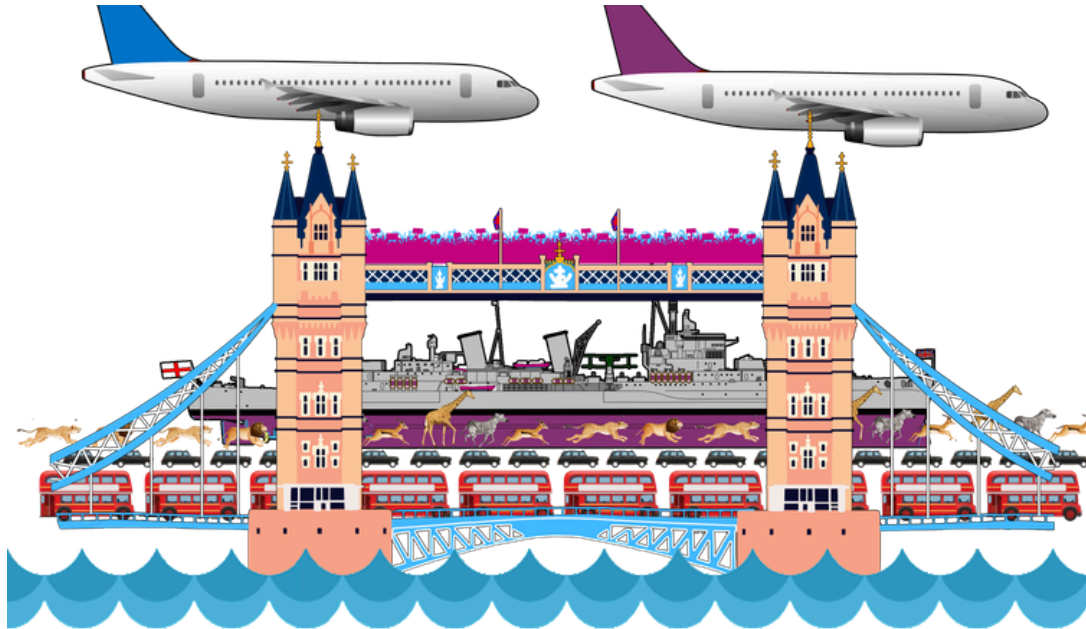
“DEMANDS EXCEED THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESOURCES THE INDIVIDUAL IS ABLE TO MOBILISE.”

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.

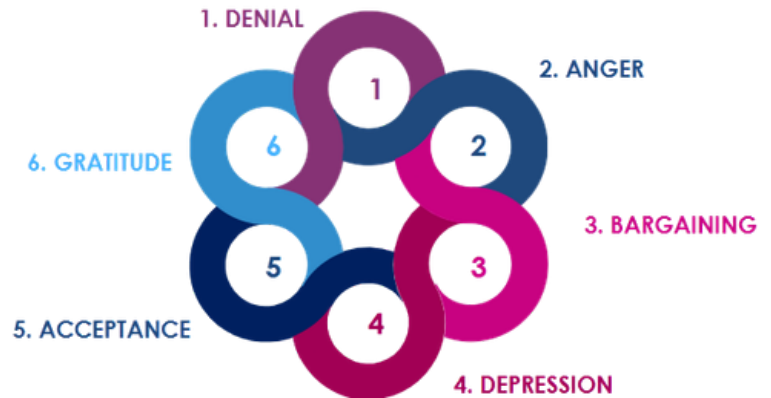
WHAT'S ON YOUR BRIDGE?



1. 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.

2. What are the signs and symptoms that you display when your bridge is bowing and buckling? Take a moment to think about what that means for your bridge.

THE CHANGE KNOT



DENIAL

Individuals struggle to acknowledge the need for change, often avoiding the reality of the situation. This reaction stems from a desire to maintain the status quo and resist disruption.

ANGER

When the reality of change begins to set in, frustration and anger may arise. These emotions can be directed at themselves, others, or the circumstances, as individuals grapple with feelings of helplessness or unfairness.

BARGAINING

Individuals attempt to regain control or negotiate their way out of change. They may look for compromises or ways to delay or minimise the impact of the change.

DEPRESSION

As the weight of change becomes unavoidable, feelings of sadness, overwhelm, or hopelessness may emerge. This stage reflects the emotional processing of what has been lost or altered.

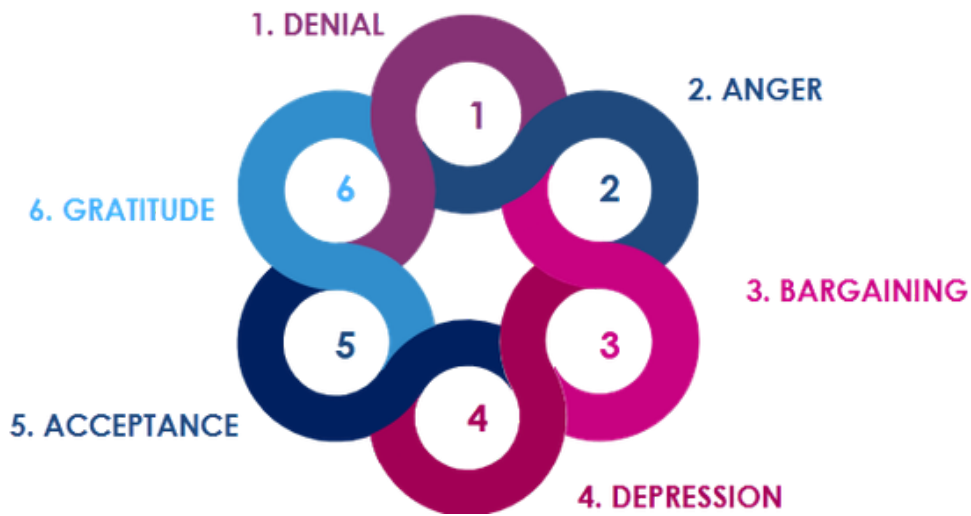
ACCEPTANCE

Individuals begin to come to terms with the change. They shift their focus towards adapting and finding ways to move forward, embracing the new reality.

GRATITUDE

Individuals not only accept the change but also recognise its value. They may feel thankful for the growth, lessons, or opportunities that the change has brought into their lives.

THE CHANGE KNOT



WHICH STAGE OF THE CHANGE KNOT DO YOU FIND YOURSELF GETTING STUCK IN MOST OFTEN, AND WHY

WHAT PERSONAL STRENGTHS OR STRATEGIES HAVE HELPED YOU MOVE FROM ONE STAGE TO THE NEXT IN PAST EXPERIENCES OF CHANGE?

THE CHANGE MODEL



COMFORT ZONE

The starting point – a place of safety and familiarity, but with little room for growth.

Example: Sticking to tasks you know well at work because they feel easy and safe, even though you're no longer challenged.

FEAR ZONE

The stage where change begins, often bringing feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, and uncertainty.

Example: Being asked to give a presentation for the first time and feeling anxious, doubting your ability, or worrying about what others will think.

LEARNING ZONE

The sweet spot where manageable anxiety pushes us to adapt, develop new skills, and embrace growth.

Example: Delivering that presentation, realising you can handle it, learning new skills, and gaining confidence to take on bigger opportunities.

PANIC ZONE

When change becomes overwhelming or too fast, leading to heightened stress, panic, and burnout.

Example: Being asked to present to a large audience with no preparation time, leaving you overwhelmed, panicked, and unable to perform at your best.

THE CHANGE MODEL- REFLECTION EXERCISE

What can you do to get into your comfort zone?



What do you experience when in this zone?



What skills or strengths have you developed in the past when you embraced change?



Reflect on a moment where change felt overwhelming. What pushed you there?



CHANGE

Understanding change is a crucial step toward personal and professional growth. Embracing change can improve our adaptability, resilience, and problem-solving abilities, helping us navigate challenges with confidence and clarity.

This survey will guide you through a series of reflective questions to explore how you perceive and respond to change in various aspects of your life and work.

The goal of this exercise is not to assign a score or benchmark, but to encourage self-awareness and identify areas where you can develop habits or strategies to navigate change more effectively.

ASSESS YOUR ABILITY TO CHANGE	AGREE	DISAGREE
ARE YOU OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES?	Y	N
DO YOU REGULARLY REFLECT ON YOUR BEHAVIORS AND HABITS?	Y	N
CAN YOU EASILY ADAPT TO UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS? DO YOU SET PERSONAL GOALS FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT?	Y	N
HAVE YOU SUCCESSFULLY MADE POSITIVE CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE BEFORE?	Y	N
ARE YOU WILLING TO STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE?	Y	N
DO YOU SEEK FEEDBACK FROM OTHERS ON YOUR BEHAVIOR?	Y	N
CAN YOU MAINTAIN MOTIVATION WHEN FACING OBSTACLES?	Y	N
DO YOU HAVE A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR MAKING CHANGES?	Y	N
ARE YOU PATIENT WITH YOURSELF DURING THE CHANGE PROCESS?	Y	N
CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE REASONS WHY YOU WANT TO CHANGE?	Y	N
ARE YOU WILLING TO SEEK HELP OR RESOURCES WHEN NEEDED?	Y	N
DO YOU CELEBRATE SMALL VICTORIES IN YOUR CHANGE JOURNEY?	Y	N
TOTAL		

WHY ARE YOU FINDING IT HARD TO CHANGE

When the general public were asked to complete the sentence

“WHY AM I STRUGGLING WITH CHANGE?...”

The most popular answers are

1. FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

Change often involves stepping into uncharted territory, which can be intimidating. The uncertainty about outcomes or how to adapt can create anxiety and resistance, making it challenging to embrace change.

2. IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE

Change disrupts familiar routines and comfort zones, pushing individuals to adapt to new situations that may feel awkward, stressful, or unfamiliar. This discomfort can act as a deterrent to fully committing to change.

3. MY PAST

Past experiences, especially failures or negative outcomes from previous attempts at change, can create self-doubt or a reluctance to try again. Emotional baggage or learned behaviors can also make moving forward more difficult.

4. LOSING CONTROL

Change often requires giving up a sense of control over familiar processes or outcomes. This perceived loss of control can lead to resistance, as individuals fear they may not be able to manage the new circumstances effectively.



PERSONAL REFLECTION

When change happens, we often react before we've had time to think. Noticing that reaction is the first step.

When you feel that response, what is one small action that helps you regain a sense of control?

Now take a moment to reflect more broadly:

What situations during change do you find most challenging?

How do you usually respond?

What strengths or skills have helped you adapt in the past?

Think of a change you handled well.

What mindset, support, or actions made the difference?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

How could you apply those same strengths to what you're facing now?

Where might you benefit from more support or resources?

How capable do you feel of adapting to new situations right now?

30 DAY CHALLENGE

JOIN THE TEAMS CHANNEL, SHARE YOUR 30-DAY CHALLENGE PROGRESS, AND GET A CHANCE TO WIN PRIZES



- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Smile at a stranger today | List three things you love | Celebrate someone else's achievement | Hold a door for someone | Take a guilt-free break |
| Compliment a friend | One thing you like about yourself | Send a thank-you message | Ask someone how they're feeling | Compliment a stranger |
| Offer help without being asked | Write down one personal win | Reach out to an old friend | Do one act of generosity | Pause, take three deep breaths |
| Notice something beautiful around you | Journal one thing you learned | Take five minutes to meditate | Express gratitude to a colleague, friend or family | Give a genuine smile today |
| Say "no" to one stressor | Try one new healthy habit | Listen fully to someone today | Ask for help | Offer encouragement without comparison |
| Spread a kind word | Reflect on one small success | Do one random act of kindness | Do one act of Self-care | Ask "what can I do next?" |

MARS WORKPLACE RESOURCES

Mental Health Champions

https://mydrive.ffmpeg.com/personal/asha_rodrigues_effem_com/Documents/Health%20&%20Wellness/Mental%20Health%20First%20Aider-AAP%20Ambassador/AAP%20Details-MEA/Coping%20in%20Global%20Crisis/Mental%20Health%20MEA%20Champions%20-2026-site%20wise%20-%203Mar2026.pdf

Find your local Associate Assistance Program provider

<https://team.ffmpeg.com/sites/AAP>

Homepage | Mars – Workplace Options

<https://helpwhereyouare.com>

MEA Ombudsman - Gabor

https://mydrive.ffmpeg.com/personal/asha_rodrigues_effem_com/Documents/Health%20&%20Wellness/Mental%20Health%20First%20Aider-AAP%20Ambassador/AAP%20Details-MEA/Coping%20in%20Global%20Crisis/DIGITAL_Ombudsman%20Brochure%20March%202025_Gabor.pdf

Global Guardian App – to receive timely travel alerts & get support when needed

https://mydrive.ffmpeg.com/personal/asha_rodrigues_effem_com/Documents/Health%20&%20Wellness/Mental%20Health%20First%20Aider-AAP%20Ambassador/AAP%20Details-MEA/Coping%20in%20Global%20Crisis/GG%20Traveler%20User%20Guide%20-%20Mars%20SSO%20-%202024.pdf

Global Be Well Together Site

<https://my.mars.com/sites/associate-health-and-wellbeing/SitePage/197127/home>

Mars Energy Management

<https://my.mars.com/sites/associate-health-wellbeing/SitePage/12439187/energize-your-day>

Associate Health & Wellbeing - Mental health (mars.com)

<https://my.mars.com/sites/mental-health/SitePage/12437341/mental-health-matters>

LinkedIn Learning

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning>

Leading Through Change | Learning Hub - Home - Better Together

<https://team.ffmpeg.com/sites/ChangeLeadershipHub>

ACCESS TO THE MEA AAP SERVICE APP, BALANCY



Access to the MEA AAP service app, Balancy:

Access your **iConnectYou** – your one stop shop for AAP services



Passcodes to access Balancy:

Egypt:	160107
Kenya:	179201
Saudi:	160189
South Africa:	160214
UAE:	160212

Additional ways to access the AAP services:

Simply go to the website and enter the Company Code Mars

<https://global.helpwhereyouare.com/>



Our Associate Assistant Program (AAP) is a Global program that provides free and confidential short-term counselling, referrals and follow-up services to Associates and their family members who have personal and/or work-related concerns. In MEA, Workplace Options is our AAP service provider.

Suggestions how the Associate Assistance Program (AAP) can help you:
[Mars Mental Health & Wellbeing Video](#)

<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and anxiety Substance abuse and addiction Life changes 	<p>Family & Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child and elder dependent care Domestic relationship wellbeing Grief/bereavement 	<p>Financial & Legal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal financial planning and debt management Will and trusts Legal assistance 	<p>Work & Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career coaching and planning Conflict management Line manager effectiveness

Are you worried about your finances, feeling stressed or struggling to sleep? Are you prioritizing your individual wellbeing? Contact the AAP confidentially for support.

AAP Resources

- Balancy App** - Balancy is your comprehensive hub for easy access to all your wellbeing resources. Whether at home or on the go, you can confidently utilise multiple services. Log in to explore our extensive library of resources. Choose your preferred method of support, whether it's a phone call, text or instant message, video call, or simply browsing through the self-service option.
- Aware Program** – Helps you to meaningfully engage in the present moment.. Participants will learn strategies to counteract stress, reduce distracted living, establish greater balance of body and mind, and stimulate well-being and healing. Aware consists of two parts: six (6) weekly telephonic sessions and electronic resources & supports
- Life Coaching** - Life Coaching program is designed to empower participants to navigate life transitions, maximize personal and professional potential, and achieve their goals. Delivered through six virtual (phone/video) sessions lasting three to four months. The initial session is 45 minutes, focusing on establishing vision, goals, and an action plan. Follow-up sessions are 20 minutes and occur biweekly or at intervals suited to participants
- Wellness Coaching** empowers individuals to achieve healthier lifestyles by addressing emotional, physical, and practical components of wellbeing. Delivered in six virtual (phone/video) sessions over three to four months. A 45-minute session to define a wellness vision and set actionable goals. Five 20-minute sessions focused on reviewing progress, modifying experiments, and building self-efficacy.

Access to the MEA AAP service app, Balancy:

Passcodes to access Balancy:

Egypt:	160107
Kenya:	179201
Saudi:	160189
South Africa:	160214
UAE:	160212

Additional ways to access the AAP services:

Simply go to the website and enter the Company Code Mars

<https://global.helpwhereyouare.com/>

THE 6 STEPS

DON'T FORGET TO ENCOURAGE ACTION AND CHECK-IN LATER TO SEE HOW THE PERSON IS DOING:

Step 1: Getting ready to ask

Step 2: Ask 'How Are You?'

Step 3: Ask another, more meaningful question

Step 4: Listen

Step 5: Encourage action

Step 6: Check in

★ Step 5: Encourage Action.
Find out how you can offer them support. Some good options include:

- Calling the [local Associate Assistance Program \(AAP\)](#) – a safe place for free and confidential support, referrals and counseling - 24/7, 365 days.
- Working with their doctor or mental health professional
- Speaking to the [Mars Ombudsman](#) service
- Contacting the local Associate Health & Wellbeing team that can refer to further local services available.
- Learning more on how to improve their energy and mental health on the [Global Be Well Together Page](#).

★ Step 6: Remember to check in with them at least once to see how they're doing.

EGYPT- MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS



Abdelrahman Elhefnawy



Amr Mostafa



George Wilson



Abdallah Salem



Mariam ElMagraby



Marie Mattar



Mohamed Wahby



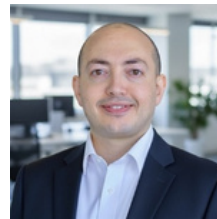
Mohamed Zohairy



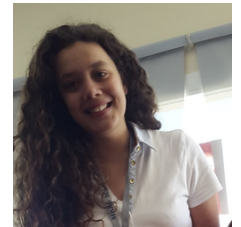
Passant Abdel Nabi



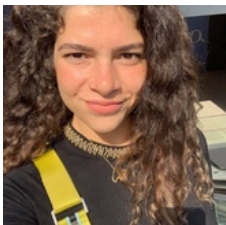
Ola Essam



Yasser Adel



Lobna Bedier



Heba Yehiah



Moudy Essam



Heba ElBazz



KENYA & SOUTH AFRICA MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS



Christine Amdany-NAI



Elizabeth Githinji-NAI



Everlyn Mahogo-NAI



Ernest Isaacs-CAP



Fred Gor-NAI



Gladys Waithira-NAI



John Kageni Kimani-NAI



Jonathan Marriott-CAP



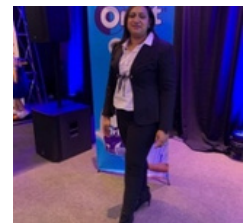
Elizabeth Kondo-NAI



Keziah Nzingo-NAI



Maureen Wandati-NAI



Saloshni Verasamy-MJO



Suraya Hamdulay-MJO



Yoli Phakathi-MJO



SAUDI ARABIA MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS



Alanoud Elrefi



Rana Halawani



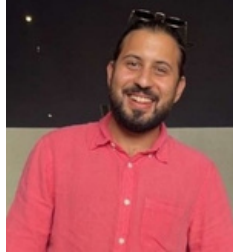
Renad Filfilan



Sally Douki



Nancy Abdelmawgood



Farid Hussein



UAE MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS



Asha Rodrigues



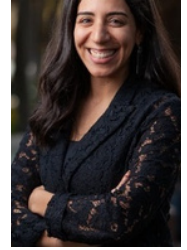
Anne Mathew



Himani Maharishi



Hadi El Araybi



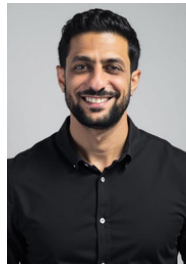
Soad Makhoul



Mihaele Alexe



Meray Aziz



Nabil Adas



Omar ElSaid



Ramy Rabie



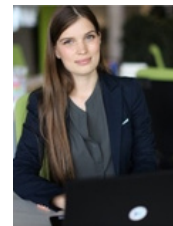
Stephanie Spears



Shivum Taank



Sooban Moin



Irina Shvetsova



Leila Naguib



ABOUT INTERNATIONAL WELLBEING INSIGHTS

At International Wellbeing Insights, we believe wellbeing is a core part of building resilient, high-performing organisations. Since 2003, we have worked with organisations around the world to strengthen mental health, wellbeing, resilience, and the capacity to respond well to change.

Our partnership with Mars reflects a shared commitment to supporting associates in a meaningful, practical, and sustainable way. Across MEA in particular, this means recognising the realities associates may be facing, including regional uncertainty, conflict, ongoing business change, and the demands that come with periods of transition such as the Kellanova integration.

Our role is to support Mars in creating the conditions for healthier conversations, earlier awareness, and more confident responses to challenge. We do this by providing evidence-based tools, practical resources, and programmes that help associates strengthen self-awareness, resilience, and everyday wellbeing.

We are not here to deliver one-off messages or tick-box initiatives. Our focus is on helping organisations embed wellbeing in a way that supports people, performance, and long-term sustainability.

Through our work with Mars, we aim to help associates across MEA feel better equipped to navigate pressure, adapt to change, and access the support available to them when it matters most.

For more information or to book a workshop or a free no-obligation consultation, see www.wellbeing.work or call +44 (0) 203 142 8659 or email info@stress.org.uk





NOTES

A large rectangular area defined by a dashed purple border, intended for taking notes.



We provide a range of services across the UK and internationally.
We are always happy to discuss how we can support you.

We look forward to supporting your wellbeing journey.

Find Us Here:
Suite S, Quay West
Salamander Quay Harefield,
Middlesex UB6 9NZ

Call Us On: Switchboard:
+44 (0) 203 142 8650

Email Us On:
info@stress.org.uk

Visit Us On:
www.stress.org.uk
www.wellbeing.work

We have supported many organisations, including:

