

Restore
Reconnect
Reinvigorate



There is no such thing as work life balance. There is just life.

More and more individuals and organisations now recognise that. The workplace experience should be positive; with feelings of pride, excitement, motivation, and inspiration.

But there is also uncertainty, anxiety, overwhelm and fatigue.

Maintaining a healthy team is not only an ethical priority for organisations but has also been shown to reduce costs, sickness, accidents and absenteeism, whilst improving profitability, turnover, and staff retention. Although investing in technical and professional training goes some way to supporting retention, in order to avoid frequent and prolonged absence, and to improve communication and team working, we must also invest in the emotional resilience of our people.

At ThinkWarrior we have over fifteen years of experience delivering a personal development and resilience training programme that enables individuals to make sustainable changes to behaviour. By enhancing emotional intelligence, increasing personal resilience, and empowerment, individuals are better able to handle stress, manage conflict, and find perspective. They are able to react more favourably to adverse situations, focusing on and achieving both work and home priorities.

Stress at Work, Work Life Balance and Burnout

In 2019 the World Health Organisation recognised burnout as an occupational phenomenon resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

In a 2021 survey by Deloitte of 1000 people:

91%

say that unmanageable stress or frustration impacts the quality of their work



83%

say burnout can negatively impact personal relationships



77%

say they have experienced burnout at their current job



The CiPD Health & Wellbeing at Work 2022 report confirms that stress continues to be one of the main causes of short and long term absence; nearly four fifths (79%) of respondents report some stress related absence in their organisation over the last year, and this figure rises to 90% of large organisations (with more than 250 employees).

When stress goes unmanaged individuals may start to feel physical and mental exhaustion, cynicism, a loss of sense of purpose, and detachment from work life and personal life. Workplace performance rapidly declines, meaning simple tasks take longer to complete.



“Working as part of a specialist team I always felt I needed to do more, be more than the others in the team. I always compared myself to others and found myself wanting. I’d been promoted relatively quickly compared to my peers and questioned my ability versus their on the ground experience. At one point I found myself leading a project in a team that included people who had originally taught me the job and my internal questioning of and search for validation of my ability went into overdrive. My stress levels escalated, I wasn’t sleeping properly, I started to have physical symptoms of anxiety, including panic attacks. I wasn’t paying any attention to my physical health, working crazy hours; I stopped exercising and I was drinking way too much. My attention span was being impacted and I was on a very short fuse. I took some holiday and at the end of it I couldn’t face going back into work. I felt completely out of control of and like everything was happening to me and I had no say. Eventually I was signed off work by my GP.

Through the programme I began to understand where my motivation lay and I was able to address what was getting in the way of it. I was able to make small but consistent changes to my approach not only to work but also to my home life. It felt like a shift at a fundamental level, this wasn’t about quick fix faddy changes. I felt like the fog had cleared.

My focus has come back and I am much better able to balance what I need to do, what I have to do and what I want to do. I’m really clear on my values, what’s important to me and what my non-negotiables are. Because of this I recognise when things are getting out of my control and I’m able to reset myself. I don’t get to the stage where I am stressed and overwhelmed. I’ve now set some goals for my future and am seeking out training that will enhance my career.”



Restoring confidence and motivation, overcoming Imposter Syndrome


When a feeling of self-doubt becomes pervasive Impostor Syndrome has crept in.

This feeling is rarely a realistic self-assessment of inadequacy, rather an overwhelming sense of unworthiness and inability. For an individual struggling with Imposter Syndrome they will feel that they cannot afford to make even the smallest mistakes. They may work excessively hard and take on too many projects in order to avoid being seen as a fraud.

Alternatively they might isolate themselves from their co-workers to ensure they won't be "found out". Inevitably stress and anxiety feature heavily for anyone struggling with Imposter Syndrome, which

is a problem for them and for their employer. Unmanaged stress and anxiety directly impacts wellbeing. Unchecked this can increase the chance of more acute mental health issues.

Individuals with Imposter Syndrome may feel isolated impacting their interpersonal relationships and the overall success of teams; their propensity for perfectionism means they won't delegate and they may have unrealistic standards for themselves and others, leading to discord. Because sufferers are scared of failure they are less likely to seek out innovation and seize opportunity.



“When I signed up to attend the programme I had an overwhelming feeling that I’d been promoted above my delivery capacity. Every time I walked into a meeting I felt like I was going to get caught out and shown up as a fraud. It had got so bad I was questioning whether I wanted to remain in my career. I felt discombobulated and confused and this was adversely affecting my performance at work, my commitment to my career and I felt disconnected from my family and home life. When I was at work I felt guilty, I wasn’t at home with my young family, and when I was at home I made excuses to get away and back to work. I’d completely lost my way and didn’t know how to get back, or even if that was the answer.

I wanted to get an understanding of why I was feeling lost in my job and my life; I wanted to understand what I wanted from life, reconnect

with my career. I wanted to feel that it was all for something rather than just marking time, getting through each day with no real enjoyment or excitement.

I felt as though my problem had started out as a very small one that had been building over a number of years. The programme came at just the right time. I wasn’t sure what the course was going to do for me and I didn’t expect the change to be as intense or immediate.

I now realise where my strengths lie and am more confident in myself. I feel lighter, energised and better able to embrace challenges going forward. I have regained control of my emotions and my self esteem. I have real clarity on where I am going in my career.”



Enhancing Emotional Intelligence, Improving Communication, Resolving Conflict

A variety of factors can lead to conflict in the workplace:

a clash of personalities, differences in personal and professional values, competitive pressure or poor communication. There is a recognised link between conflict and resilience. Where resilience is low conflicts are more likely to arise and escalate or adversely impact on individuals. It is more difficult for individuals to fully engage in the efforts necessary to resolve conflict in these situations. Stress and anxiety increase, resilience falls and the wellbeing of the individual, the team, and the organisation can quickly deteriorate.

By improving self-awareness and enhancing emotional intelligence individuals are better able to improve the way they interact with colleagues and understand how to better manage and resolve interpersonal workplace conflicts and disputes.



“I first heard about the programme when I was going through a really difficult time in my personal life. I felt like I was on high alert all the time and this was spilling over into my work. My job was busy and because of the pandemic we were working from home and I felt like I couldn't escape. I felt under huge pressure and I was at breaking point. Every conversation felt like a criticism whether it was my partner, my boss or my colleagues. I felt like I was under siege.

I spoke to my doctor who suggested medication for my anxiety and to help me sleep, but that didn't feel like the answer. I asked about counselling but was told there was a really long waiting list and anyway I probably wasn't acute enough to warrant it.

I spoke to an old work colleague and they suggested the programme. They said it was more about understanding my responses and making changes to my behaviour than digging into what had happened over the last couple of years.

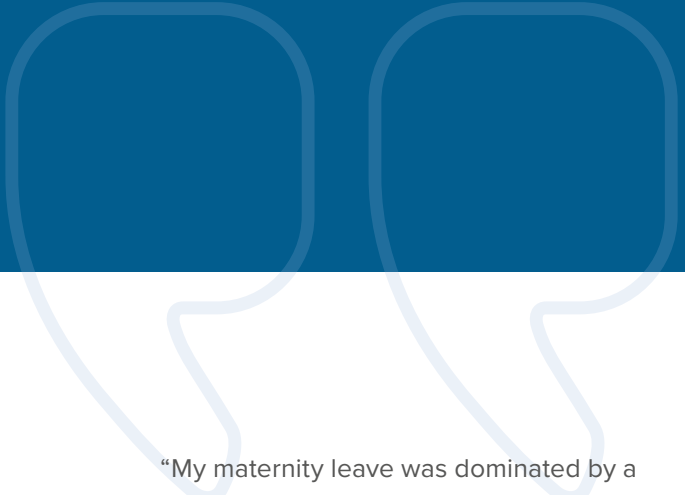
I am completely gobsmacked at how much I have learnt. Within a short week I developed the strategies to respond to situations with calm and clarity, rather than anger and emotion. On reflection I had reached "burnout" and I honestly don't know where I would've ended up had I not gone on this course. I now have renewed energy, focus and insight. I have set goals for the first time in my life, rather than "floating" and I am more purposeful.”



Return to Work

Whether an individual's return to work follows a planned or unplanned period of absence, workplace policies offer practical solutions around training needs, flexible work practices or workplace adjustments.

But additionally, there may also be an emotional impact for the individual. If it goes unrecognised or unchecked it may adversely affect their resilience and reintegration. By recognising and acknowledging old behaviour patterns, addressing perceived changes in values, and clarifying expectations, individuals are better able to create a personal action plan that helps to redefine their purpose. This in turn improves confidence and motivation.



“My maternity leave was dominated by a feeling of dread about returning to work. My role is high pressured, physically, mentally and emotionally and the impact of having a baby made me question whether I could go back into that job.

My anxiety levels were really high and I recognised that some of my behaviours were getting out of control. I went to see my GP and was referred for some sessions of CBT which helped with practical coping strategies. But the self-doubt was still there.

The programme helped me to challenge my narrative and change the old one. I was able to go back into work with a fresh mindset I wasn't

the weak link in the team, in fact my experience has led to the creation of a proper programme for all returnees when they come back into the workplace.

Six months after my return from maternity leave I am clear on what is important to me in both my work and personal life. I have been able to seek out a new role within the organisation that brings this into alignment where in the past those values had been in conflict. I now have better work/life balance. I have also taken the plunge and successfully applied for promotion. Addressing my limiting beliefs really made me push myself.”







ThinkWarrior
FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR RESILIENCE

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