

SilverCloud®  
by Amwell®

  
make a difference  
workplace culture / mental health / wellbeing

# A Compassionate Approach

Managing anxiety and creating a healthy work-life balance

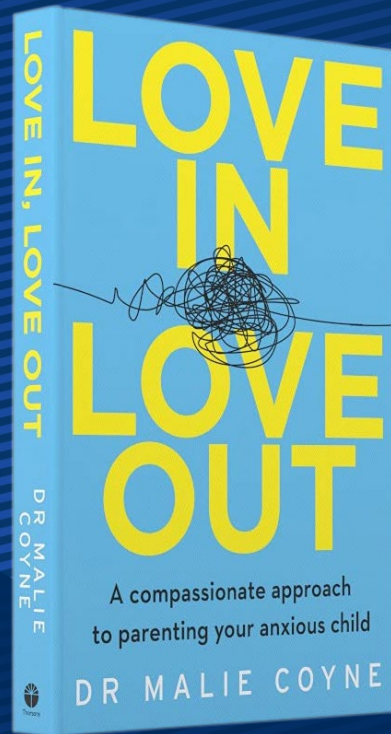
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11<sup>th</sup> May, 2023



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I try to answer some of your questions!

# What is anxiety?

## Is it normal?



**Anxiety =**



**Over-estimated**  
Likelihood of harm



**Under-estimated**  
Ability to cope

# Causes of Anxiety

15%

## of People

Have a more 'anxious' temperament



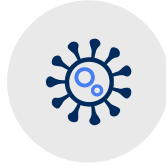
## Work/Life balance

The challenge of balancing different commitments



## It's contagious

You feel more anxious around anxious people



## COVID-19

A society wide existential threat for 3 years



## Traumatic events

Traumatic events or 'anxiety triggers' growing up



## Your Brain

Your threat focused brain, focused on Results rather than Process

# Emotional Regulation Systems

Paul Gilbert's evolutionary model proposes that human beings switch between three systems to manage their emotions.

Each system is associated with different brain regions and different brain chemistry.

Distress is caused by imbalance between the systems, often associated with under-development of the soothing system.





You can't stop the waves,  
**but you can**  
**learn to surf.**





# The Perfect Storm

Our 'Tricky' brain, negativity  
bias & social comparison

# The Perfect Storm



## Modern Life meets our 'Tricky Brain'

Ancient brain 'circuitry' meets high-speed rapidly changing modern world



## Negativity Bias

Our survival instinct is more aware of what we don't have than what we do have ~

Over-estimation of Threat

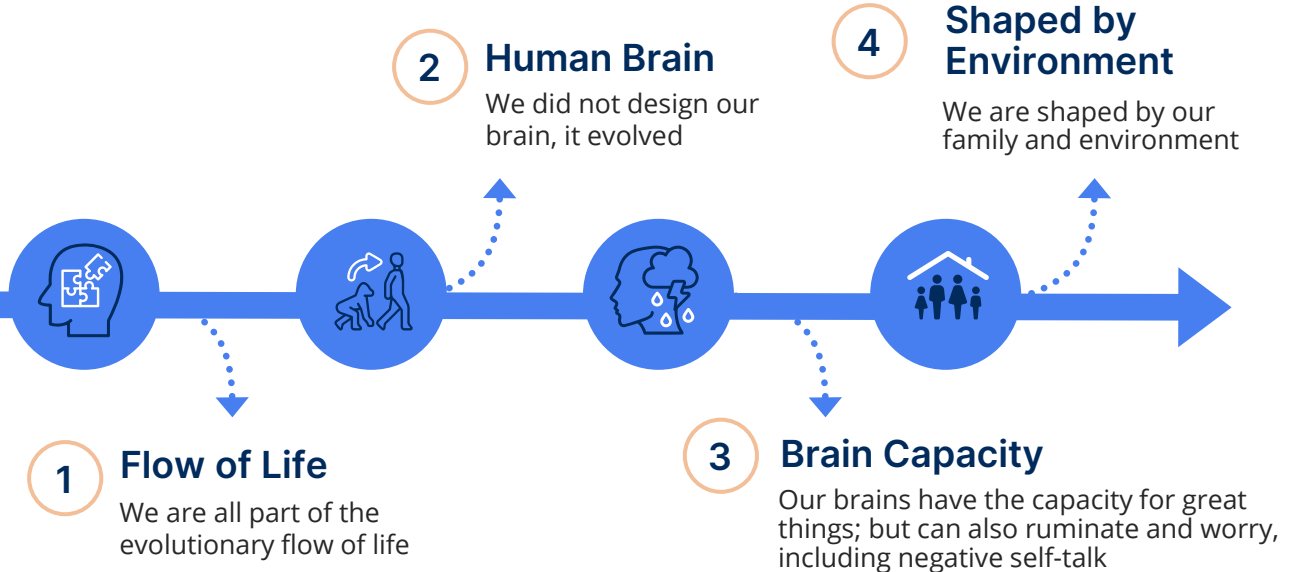


## Social Comparison Theory

How do we stack up against others



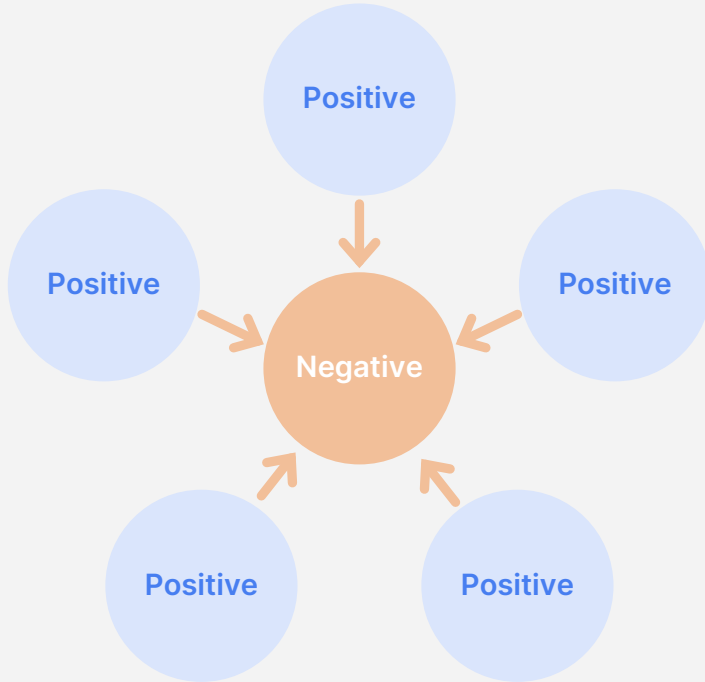
# Our 'Tricky Brains'



**Wired For Survival  
Not Happiness**

# Negativity Bias

Studies in psychology and neuroscience have shown that for every upsetting thing that happens, we need 5 positives to balance it.



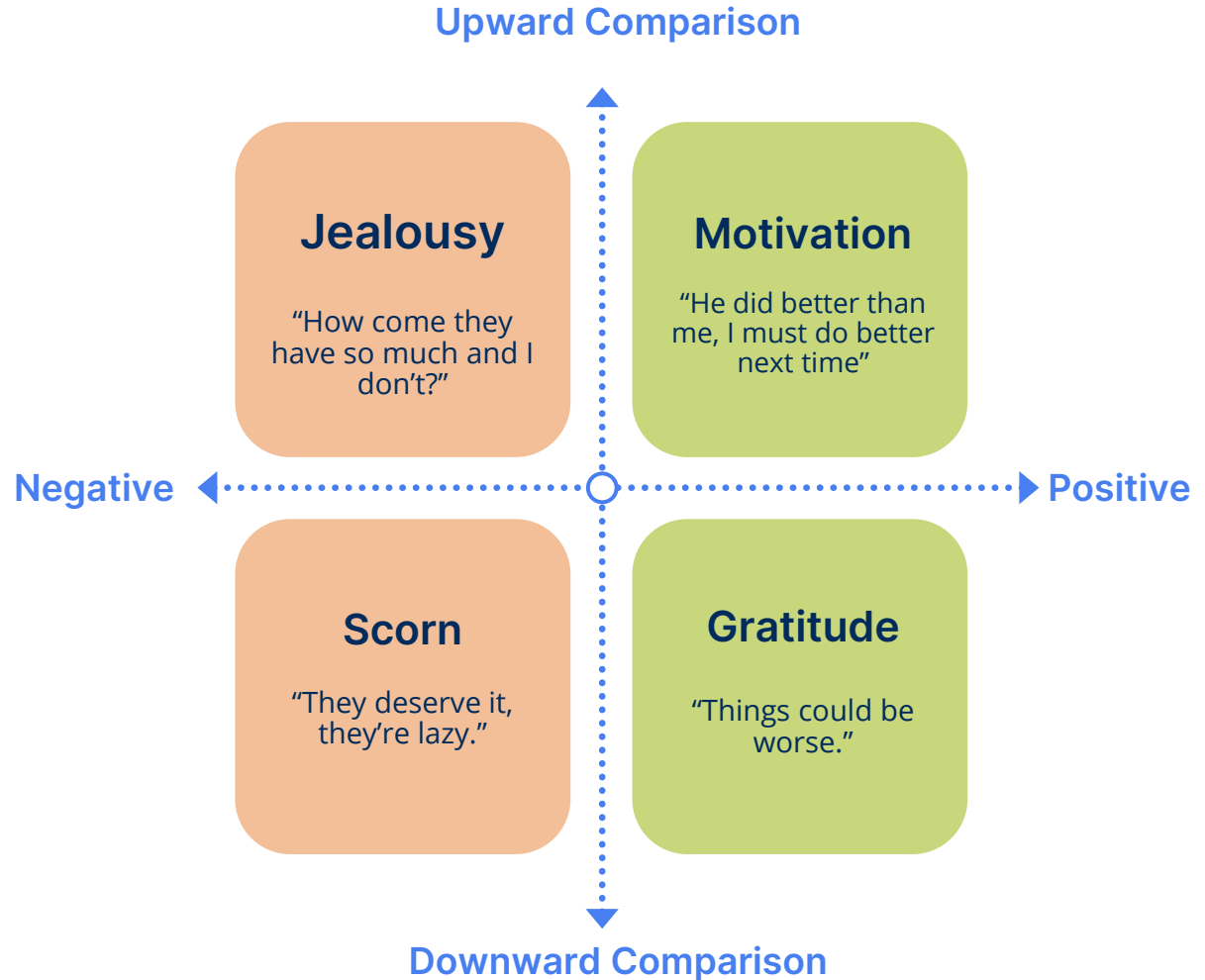
## The 'SOUND' effect

One of the best ways to lower stress levels and relax your body is to spend time with really genuine people, those you can cry and laugh with. In essence, those you can be fully 'YOU' with.



# Social Comparison Theory

First proposed by Leon Festinger in 1954, Social Comparison is a social psychology process through which people come to know themselves by evaluating their own attitudes, abilities and beliefs in comparison with others



# Self-Compassion

What is it and how to develop it.



# Self-Compassion

"Taking care of myself doesn't mean 'me first'. It means 'me too'."

L.R. Knost

# What is Self-Compassion?

**Self-Compassion activates coping; helps you to manage stress; releases feel-good chemicals; lifts mood; reduces anxiety and low mood; encourages connection.**



## **Mindfulness**

Self-compassion involves recognising when we're stressed or struggling, without being judgemental or over-reacting



## **Self-Kindness**

Being supportive and understanding towards ourselves when we're having a hard time, rather than being harshly self-critical



## **Connection / Common Humanity**

Remembering that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficulties at times. We are not alone



# VUCA

VUCA stands for **volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity**. It describes the situation of constant, unpredictable change that is now the norm in certain industries and areas of the business world.

[Read the article](#)

## Manage

We manage **THREAT** by doing, achieving and accumulating more, which creates **THREAT - toxic DRIVE loop**

## Feed

Feeding our **SOOTHING** circle enhances **healthy DRIVE** behaviours

## Trigger

VUCA conditions can trigger our **THREAT** and produce toxic **DRIVE**

## Cultivate

We can cultivate **SOOTHING** self-compassion using 3 simple practices

# So what can WE do to feel centred?

## Develop the skills

When our **Threat**, **Drive** and **Soothing** systems work well together, we feel centered. We can develop the skills to turn **Threat** off and **Soothing** on!

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## Self-compassion

Self-compassion triggers activity in our '**Soothing** brain' which soothes our **Threat** response, reduces anxiety, and restores emotional balance.

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## Cultivate our **Soothing** brain

By cultivating our **Soothing** brain we increase our resilience and the potential to thrive and succeed.



# Why are Values important?

## Alignment

Healthy Drive promotes achievement in line with your values

## Who YOU are

Your values tell the story of who YOU are, what really matters to you and where you want to go

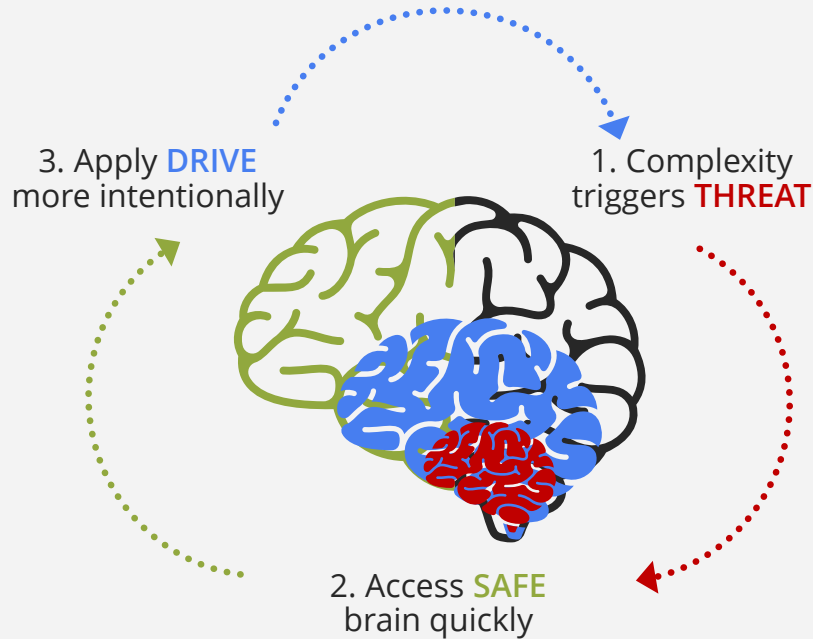
## Meaning

Values give life meaning and purpose. They are the ideas and beliefs we hold as sacred

## Not your values

It can be difficult to know what your values are, but easier to know what they are not!

# Mindfulness



Three motivation systems. Our **THREAT** brain system is our earliest, our **DRIVE** and **SAFE** brain systems followed and have continued to evolve.

Being mindful of our **THREAT** & **DRIVE** brains allows our **SAFE** brain to use **SELF-COMPASSION** to avoid toxic drive and stimulate healthy drive.

“

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

”

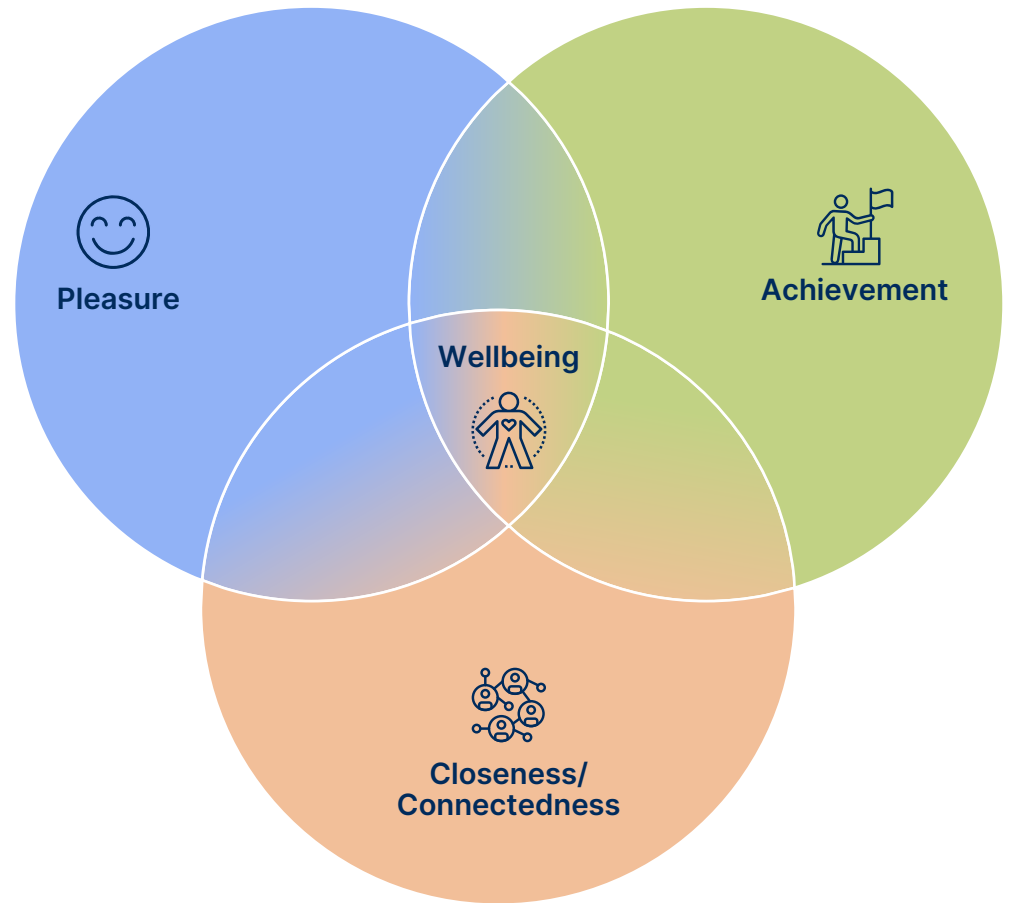
Viktor E. Frankl



# Self-Compassion & Work/Life balance

Warning signs and working  
towards balance

# Self-Compassion: Your Daily Wellbeing



# Benefits of self-compassion

- Promotes work-life balance
- Improves physical / mental health
- Increases self-worth
- Inspires contentment
- Helps us to treat others with care
- Helps to repair past traumas
- Increases our productivity



**“The capacity for  
self-soothing**

is born out of hundreds  
and hundreds of instances of  
being soothed by someone else.”

Rachel Sorenson

# SIGNS we need self-care

## Physical



- Tension headaches
- Disturbed sleep & fatigue
- Run down or illness due to low immune system

## Mental



- Poor concentration/forgetfulness
- Tension
- Depression, anxiety
- Substance misuse

## Emotional



- Excessive crying
- Angry outbursts

## Social



- Excessive isolation
- Getting triggered easily



# H

## Hungry?

Hunger often coincides with a drop in glucose, which can create hormonal changes in the body that affect brain functioning.

# A

## Angry?

Why are you angry? Where is it coming from? Are you expressing your anger at the person you're angry at?

# L

## Lonely?

Feeling 'outside the tribe' is a big stressor. Not being able to access the comfort of connectedness exacerbates distress.

# T

## Tired?

Tiredness makes everything else more difficult





## “True self-care

is not salt baths and chocolate cake, it is making the choice to build a life you don't need to regularly escape from.”

Brianna Wiest



# Not just another chore!

## Am I deserving of self-care?

“Please don't underestimate the impact of using a kind and gentle tone of voice when relating to yourself.

If you don't use warmth in your relationship with yourself, self-care activities become just another chore, something that has to be done as opposed to an act of love.”

Dr Roisin Joyce



# Getting on the road to Self-Care

## Attend to things within your control

This is not only good practice for you but a good model for your child

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## Listen to your own needs

This can help you to recognize personal signs of stress in good time. Cultivate self-awareness

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## Step out of your comfort zone and build your confidence

Do something you've never done/go somewhere you've never been - novel experiences trigger release of dopamine, exercise releases endorphins

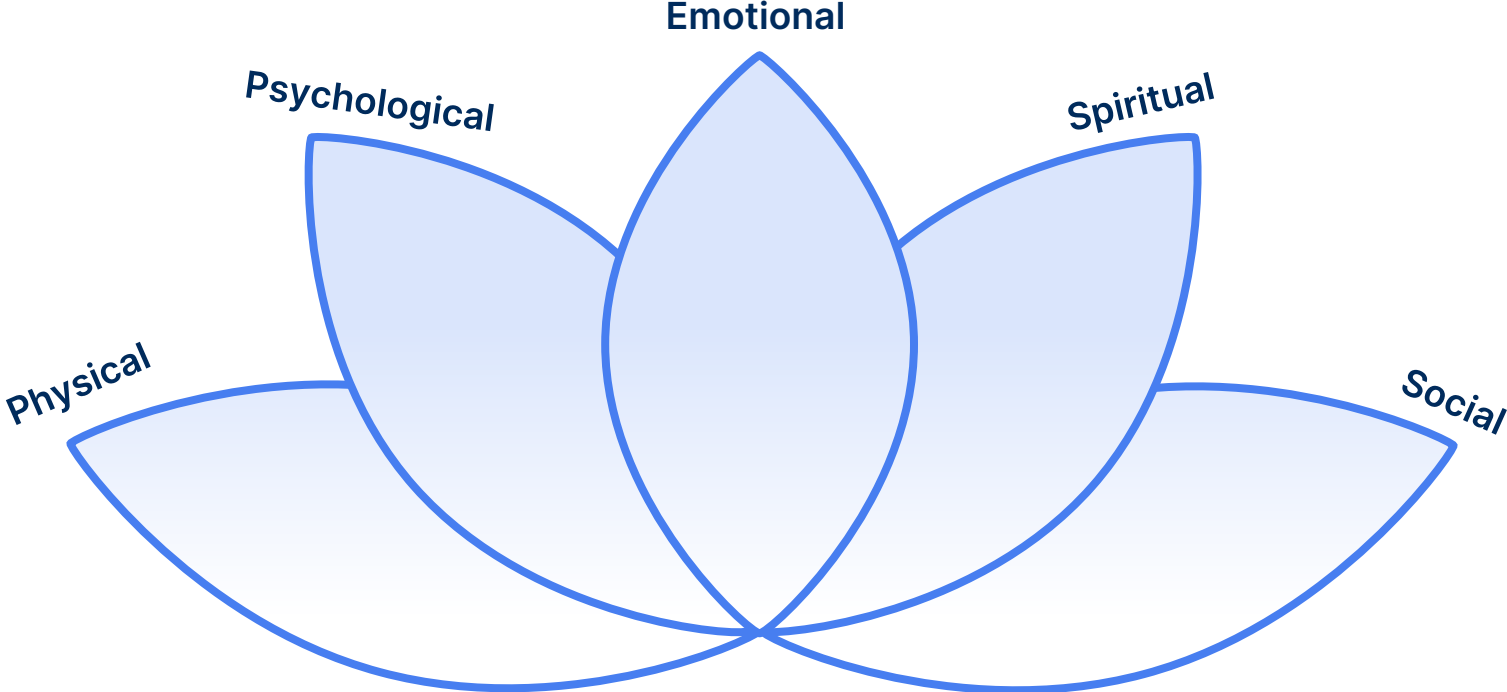
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## Keep work and family life separate

If you are working, try to close the door on your work when you finish/leave and be present when you are at home.



# Lotus of Self-Care INDIVIDUAL Exercise



# Nurturing your Soothing System



## Nourish

How do you nourish your body, heart, mind, spirit and social selves on a regular basis?



## Set realistic intention

What realistic intention can you set to nurture each of your self-care areas?



## Make it happen

Once you can identify at least one self-care intention in each area, what do you need to make this happen?





# You Have Already Shown Resilience!

Anxiety  
+ Compassion  
.....  
= Resilience

**“Resilience**

is the ability to resist or  
bounce back from adversity  
and not break.”

Prof. Tanya Byron

# Connection:

## The power of compassion in managing anxiety

### A kind heart can:



#### Explore

Explore any of your own discomfort provoked by your anxiety, and work on feeding your Soothing circle with Self-care practices.



#### Anchor

Realise your crucial role in Anchoring your nervous system, while encouraging gradual exposure to the things you fear.



#### Connect

Connect to your kind heart to 'unpack' the secret message behind your anxiety, helping you to feel accepted and understood – Feeling felt.



#### Empower

Building on the quality of your relationships from which empowering and problem-solving strategies can emerge – Empowerment.

# 3 Pillars of 'Good Enough' Parenting

1

**Learn to trust**  
your gut instinct



2

**Let go**  
of the fallacy of  
perfection



3

**Get to know**  
**yourself**  
as a parent and prioritize  
self-care





# Compassion

is an irreplaceable  
dimension of excellence for  
any organisation that wants  
to make the most of its  
human capabilities

# Workplace Wellbeing Survey

## 1,000 Employees

In September 2022 we commissioned a survey\* of 1,000 employees in medium or large organisations

## Aim

To determine the state of their mental health and wellbeing, and how well supported they felt.

## Why?

With increased openness during the pandemic, the scale of poor mental health and wellbeing facing employees has become very apparent.

## Published

The results were published as a whitepaper with comments by workplace wellbeing thought leaders and included steps to build a mental health strategy.



Scan to download



# What companies can do...

## Embrace growth mindset

Embrace growth mindset and willingness to embrace new ways of working

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## Right to disconnect

Right to disconnect and Predictable schedules

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## Clear support systems

Mental Health First-Aiders/ EAP/ SilverCloud

---

## Anchor days

Facilitate face-to-face time without being oppressive

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## Social events

Sponsor corporate social events



Pick your tribe carefully

# When to ask for help?

Asking for help can be really difficult .  
It may be time to consider it if...

You are noticing that you are worrying a lot.  
"What if?..."

Anxiety is holding you back from engaging in your life

You notice that your mood is low most days

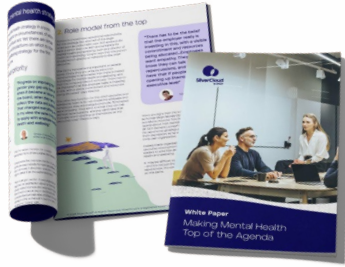
Your sleep patterns and appetite have changed

Your thinking patterns are more negative than positive

It is difficult to see a future as your mood is low and your anxiety is high

You are avoiding social contact because you would prefer to be alone

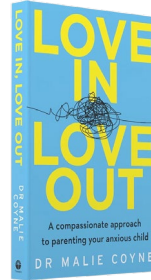
# Questions?



Whitepaper

**Making mental health  
top of the agenda**

Scan to download



Book

**Love In, Love Out:**  
A compassionate approach to  
parenting your anxious child

Scan to visit [drmaliecoyne.ie](http://drmaliecoyne.ie)



The Work Well  
Institute

Course

**Compassionate self-  
care for working parents**

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