



Sustainable Governance Conference  
Lake Naivasha Resort

Leader Wellbeing

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## **About Us**

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**Bespoke holistic work-life solutions for a turbulent world**

### **Organisation Development Solutions**

- Change Leadership Consulting
- Operational and Service Excellence
- Strategic HR Governance

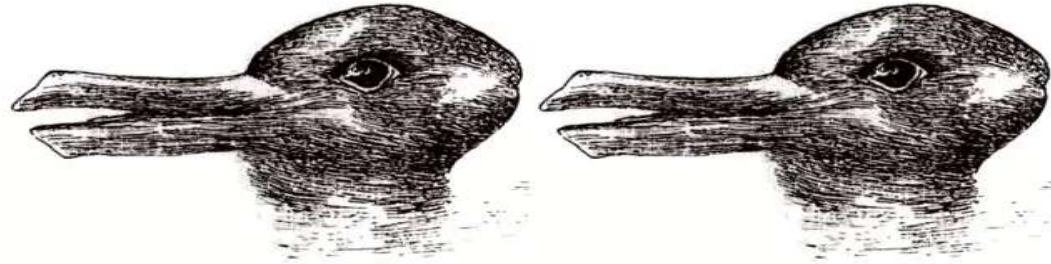
### **Wellbeing Solutions**

- Leader Burnout Prevention and Recovery
- Caregiver Wellbeing
- Remote Worker Wellbeing
- Employee Wellbeing



- The Leadership Context
- Signs of Leader Burnout
- Causes of Leader Burnout
- Impact of Leader Burnout
- Leader Self-Care and Well Being Programs





## **Ambiguity:**

- Doubtfulness, uncertainty of meaning; not clear
- The quality of being open to more than one interpretation
- Induced by hidden information, asymmetric knowledge and unfamiliar contexts.



# A VUCA World

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## **Volatile**

Fast & furious pace  
of change

## **Uncertain**

Unclear about the  
present and the  
future

## **Complex**

Multiple decision  
making factors

## **Ambiguous**

Lack of clarity about  
meaning of events  
and situations

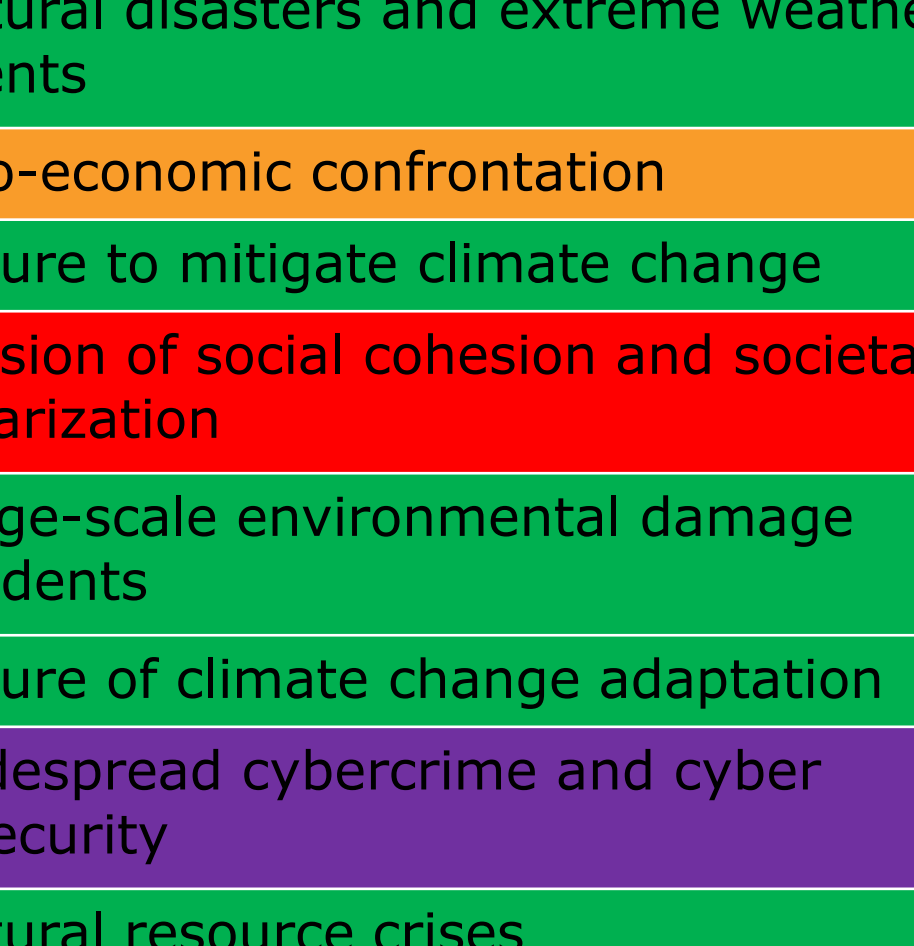
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## 2023 - 2 years risk projection

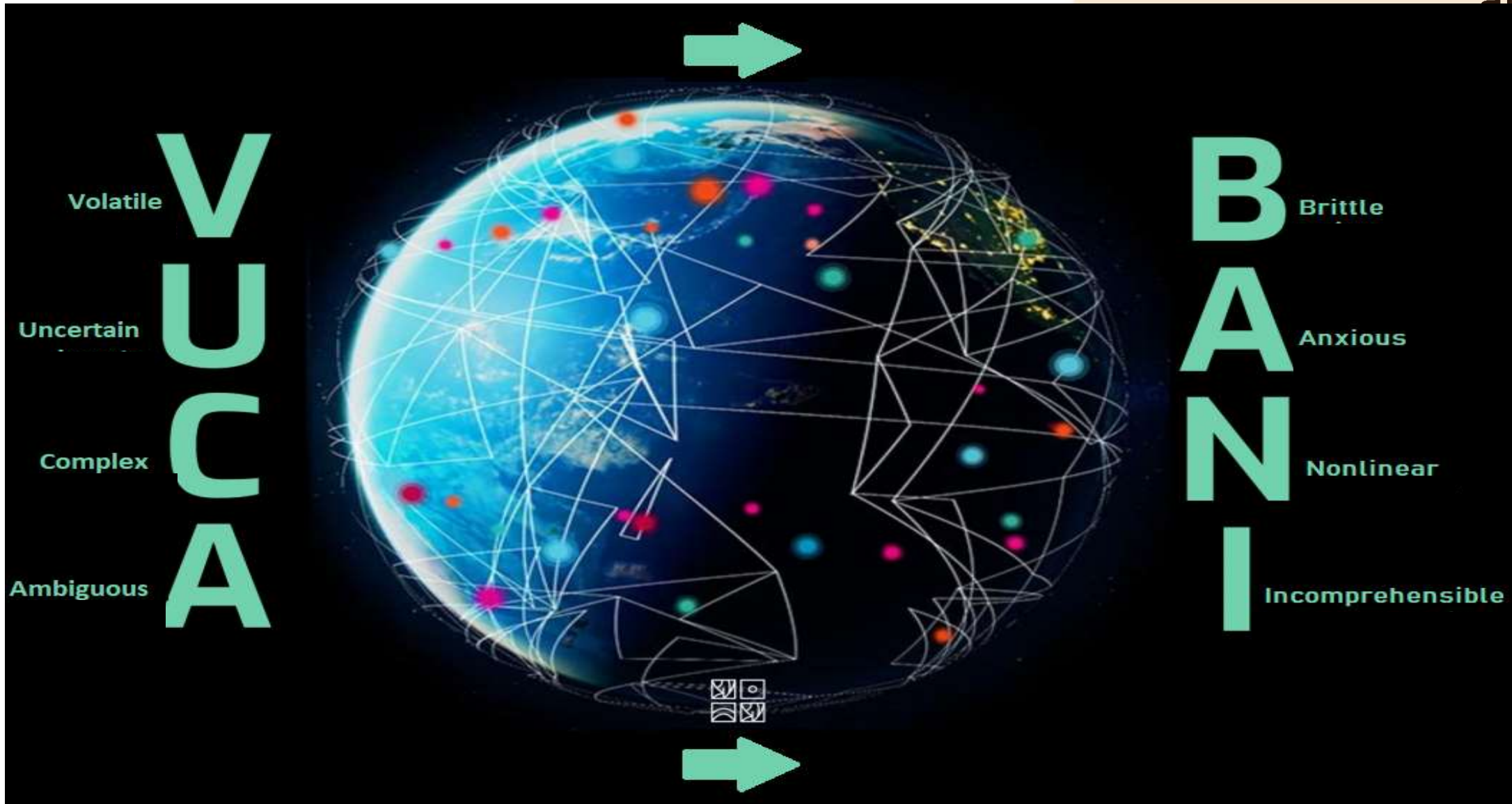


Cost-of-living crisis
Natural disasters and extreme weather events
Geo-economic confrontation
Failure to mitigate climate change
Erosion of social cohesion and societal polarization
Large-scale environmental damage incidents
Failure of climate change adaptation
Widespread cybercrime and cyber insecurity
Natural resource crises
Large-scale involuntary migration

## 2024 - 2 years risk projection

Rank	Driver of Conflict
1	Misinformation and disinformation
2	Extreme weather events
3	Societal polarisation
4	Cyber insecurity
5	Interstate armed conflict
6	Lack of economic opportunity
7	Inflation
8	Involuntary migration
9	Economic downturn
10	Pollution

## Change and More Change +++



## Resilience

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### **Resilience:**

- The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties
- The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape
- An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change
- The capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation by compressive stress





## **Burnout** /'bəːnaʊt/

A syndrome that results from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed



Activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a purpose or result

## Characteristics of Burnout



- High levels of emotional exhaustion (drained, depleted)
- High levels of depersonalisation (cynicism about the value of your occupation/work & detachment)
- Reduced/low levels of sense of personal accomplishment (capability & success)



## Signs

### Physical

- Feeling tired
- Difficulty sleeping
- Experiencing a change in appetite
- Frequent headaches, muscle pain
- Weak immune system & increased vulnerability to illnesses

### Emotional

- Lacking motivation
- Experiencing feelings of self-doubt
- Failure or loneliness
- An overall feeling of dissatisfaction
- Checking out of meetings mentally

### Behavioural

- Social isolation
- Not performing your responsibilities
- Rage and anger outbursts
- Brain fog and forgetfulness
- Sarcasm & negativity about work





## Causes of Burnout

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- A mismatch between excessive workload and the time to do it.
- Insufficient autonomy due to micromanagement or other factors.
- Role ambiguity which causes uncertainty and confusion, results in low confidence.
- A struggle with work-life integration.
- Inadequate support and resources to get work done.

## Causes of Burnout

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- Activities that
  - Promise great success but make attaining it nearly impossible
  - Arouse a sense of inadequacy and guilt
  - Arouse deep emotions like sorrow, fear, despair, compassion, helplessness, pity and rage
  - Are overwhelming with complex detail and have conflicting forces
- Working in a helping profession
- Technology over connectedness



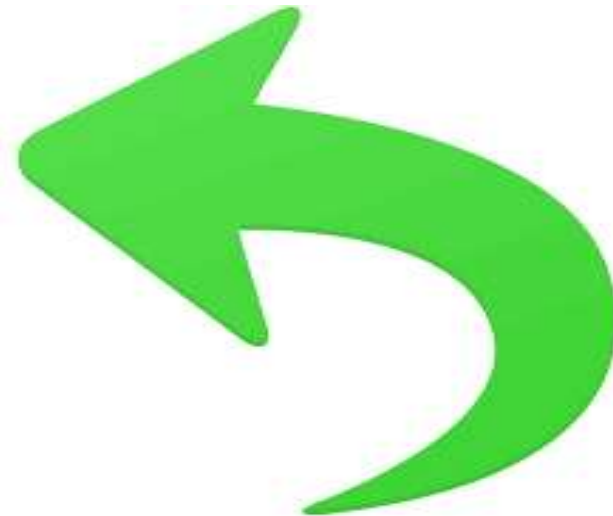
## Causes of Burnout

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- Loneliness or isolation in leadership.
- The feeling that no one appreciates or knows the price being paid or being absorbed on behalf of others.
- Exposure to risk of attack for doing your job without providing a way to defend yourself.
- Exploitation but little to show for having been exploited/victimised.
- Work that feels meaningless – makes you ask what's the point? (Purposelessness)

# Burnout





**Personality &  
Personality  
Disorders**

**Position in  
Family**

**Culture**

**Gender**

**Early life  
experience**

**Socialisation**

**Work  
Environment**

**Life  
experiences**

**Anger style**

**Spirituality**

**Tech  
Connectedness**

**Definition  
of Success**

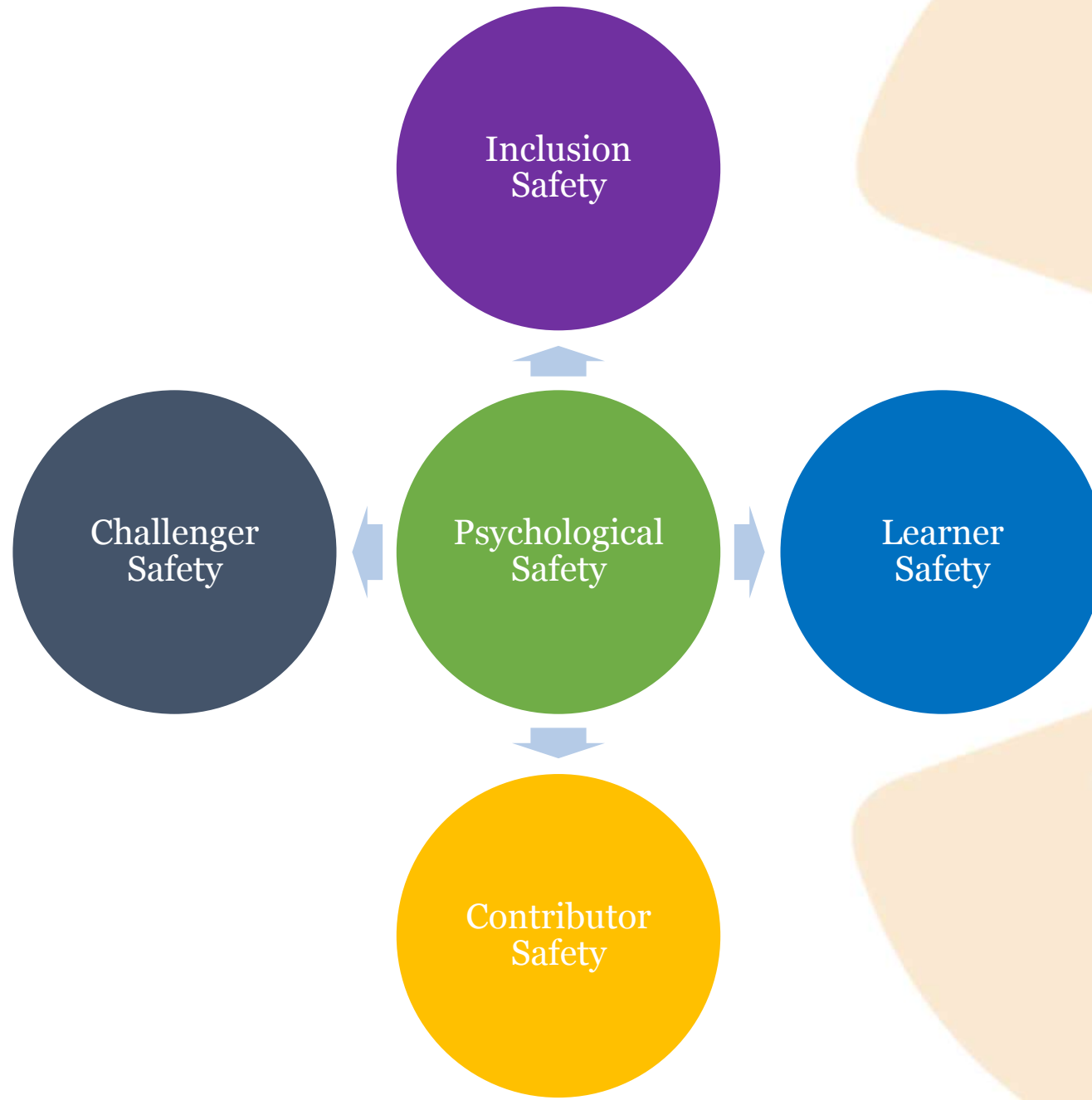
**Work  
Environment**

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## **Psychological Safety in the Board Room and the C-Suite**

**The Link With Leader Wellness**



<p><b><u>Inclusion Safety</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfies the basic human need to connect and belong.</li> <li>• Allows people to bring whole self to work</li> <li>• Can you be your authentic self on your team?</li> </ul> <p>No Inclusion Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superiority and hierarchy dominate culture.</li> <li>• Barriers are maintained and reinforced.</li> <li>• Officially in a team but do not feel part of the team.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Learner Safety</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing the space to learn and grow</li> <li>• Fundamental need to be satisfied in order for innovation to flourish.</li> <li>• Fear is detached from mistakes and mistakes are rewarded as part of the learning process.</li> <li>• Learning encouraged and celebrated.</li> <li>• Learners are protected.</li> </ul> <p>No Learner Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mistakes are hidden and punished.</li> <li>• Team executes more than they innovate.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Contributor Safety</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfies the basic human need to make a difference and offer meaningful contributions.</li> <li>• Empowers people with autonomy, guidance, and encouragement in exchange for effort and results.</li> <li>• Team thrives under outcome accountability.</li> <li>• Clearly defined roles but encouragement to think outside roles.</li> <li>• Small wins are celebrated.</li> </ul> <p>No Contributor Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy given with little to no guidance</li> <li>• Team members feel like benchwarmers.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Challenger Safety</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfies the basic human need to make things better.</li> <li>• Provides protection in exchange for candour.</li> <li>• Gives team members a voice to speak up when there is an opportunity to improve.</li> <li>• Fosters disagreeing productively.</li> </ul> <p>No Challenger Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teams fall silent</li> <li>• People are punished for their bravery and candour.</li> </ul>





## What Can Burnout Look Like In Leaders?

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- Frequently cancelling meetings on short notice or not showing up to important meetings and events
- Detachment and starting to avoid or shift responsibilities to others
- Decline in communication and its quality
- Dropping the ball and increased mistakes
- Decision fatigue - Increased poor decisions, developing indecision, increased procrastination, letting people do what they want even when you know they shouldn't



## What Can Burnout Look Like In Leaders?



- Developing a negative attitude or pessimistic outlook to work and the organisation
- Reduced innovation in problem solving and settling for old, familiar or ineffective solutions rather than trying to find new solutions to problems
- Negative emotions beginning to leak frequently and unexpectedly into your work and relationships
- Decreased collaboration on team assignments
- Declining to work in teams/attend social events because you no longer have the energy to engage socially

## Effect on Organisation

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- Strained relationships/team dynamics,
- Negative organisational culture & work environment & culture
- Poor decision-making
- Strategic setbacks
- Decreased productivity
- Decreased innovation and creativity
- Increased turnover



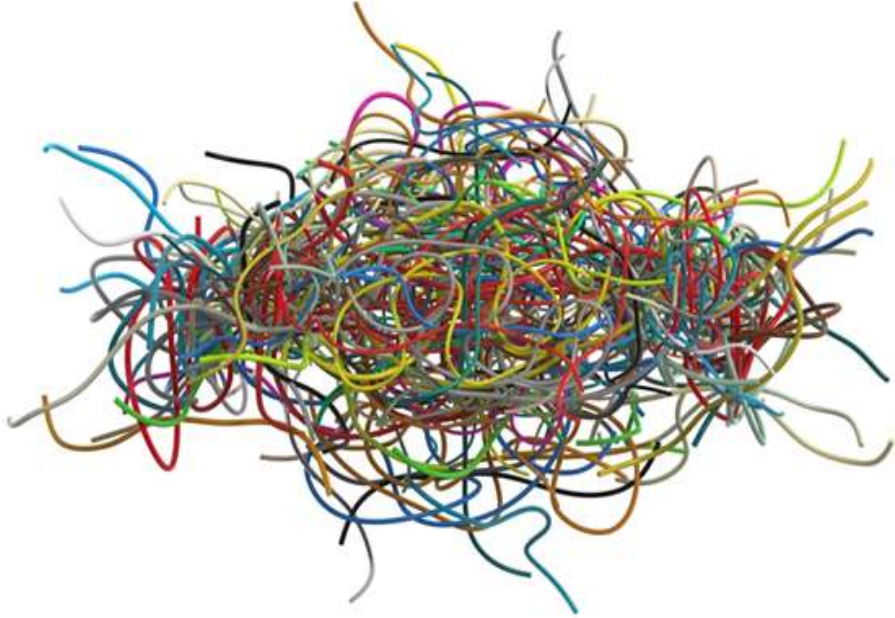


## Impact of Leader Burnout on Leaders

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- Increased physical and mental health situations
- Family & social life degeneration
- Drops in performance
- High functionality
- Presenteesim (present but distracted and fatigued leaders) or increased turnover
- Reluctance to take individual or organisational growth opportunities
- “Self-medication”





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Authenticity – Be kind to yourself

Authenticity – It's ok not to be ok

Normalise and  
prioritise self care -  
it is a necessity not  
a luxury

## Strategy

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Self care takes being deliberate and a  
supportive ecosystem

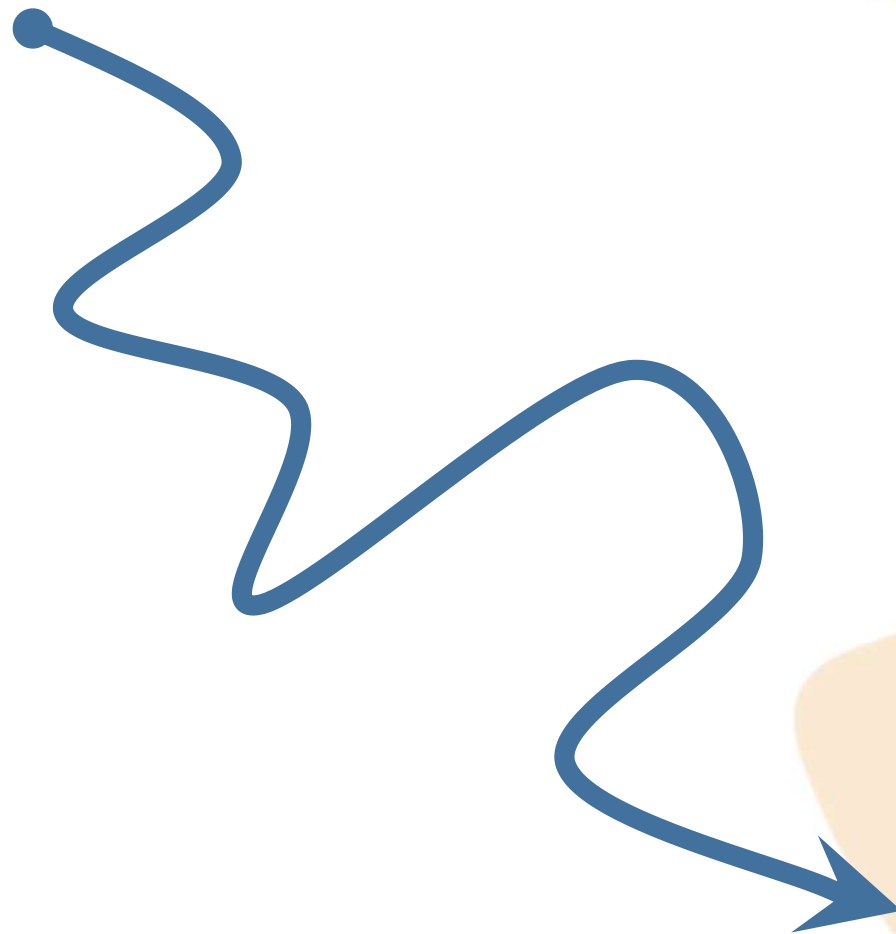


GET **EQUIPPED**



## The Myth and The Ideal

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## **Deep Problems – Deep Self-care**

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### **Dopamine The reward hormone**

- Completing tasks
- Celebrating little wins
- Doing self care activities
- Listen to music
- Trying something new

### **Oxytocin The love/attachment hormone**

- Showing & receiving affection
- Trust & being trusted
- Support system
- Social interactions
- Keeping a pet

### **Endorphin The Pain Killer/Calming Hormone**

- Laughter
- Exercise
- Play
- Touch

### **Serotonin The Mood Stabiliser**

- Sunshine
- Exercise
- Outdoors – nature
- Prayer and reflection
- (Healthy) meals



## Self Care – First, The Basics

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Nourish your body with wholesome meals ... health, mood, memory, sleep



Hydrate ....affects mood, energy, brain functioning, focus, digestion, sleep .....



Proper sleep ... key for physical and mental health. Affects ability to learn, think, remember, immune system, recovery .....

## Self Care – First, The Basics



Exercise (regular) triggers your happy hormones (endorphins).



Connect with others.... It's a basic human need. Talking to another person face to face reduces isolation & boosts your mood



Connect with God .... Feed your spirit & pour out your soul.

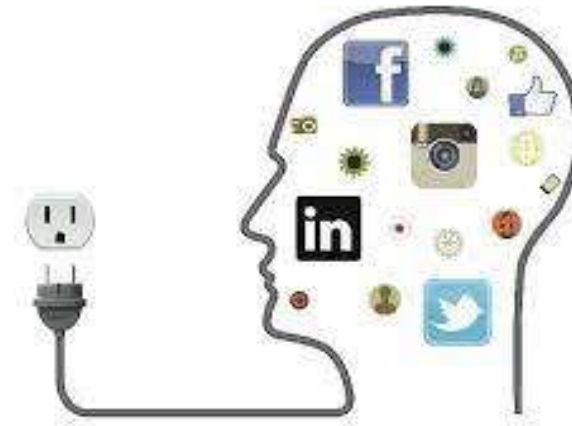


## Self Care – First, Some Basics

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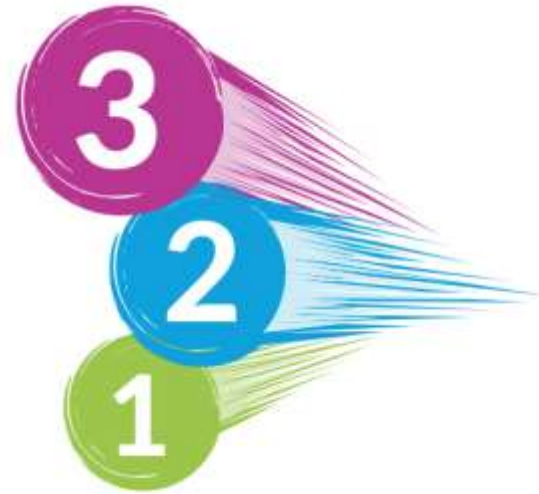
Disconnect & unplug .... affects physical,  
mental and relational health +++



# Rules

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# Holistic Wellbeing Programs

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# Safeguarding Leader Wellbeing

- Encourage open communication
- Build psychological safety starting at the Board Room and C-Suite
- Mandate work-life balance and include it in performance management
- Prioritise holistic soft skills development for leaders
- Establish expectations and clear boundaries



## Safeguarding Leader Wellbeing

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- Equip your leadership teams to lead their direct reports
- Regularly assess the workload of leaders
- Ensure access to mental health support
- Encourage taking time off
- Reward the efforts of your leadership teams
- Lead by example in matters wellness



## **Payback of Institutionalising Leader Wellness Programs and Practices**

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- Increased leader resilience
- Improved performance
- Reduced turnover
- Enhanced organisational culture
- Greater innovation and creativity
- Improved employee well-being
- Better decision-making at all levels
- Enhanced reputation







1. What will I do differently for myself?
2. How will I lead others differently?
3. What will I implement at my workplace?



Thank You



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