



# Using Workforce Insights and OD Practice to Improve Wellbeing Across the Emergency Services During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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# Understanding the effects of the pandemic on workforce wellbeing

Findings from the Skills for Justice & Skills for Health Covid-19 survey and beyond

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# Pandemic impact on wellbeing

More than 1 in 4 adults' wellbeing has suffered in last 7 days. The most common issues are worries about the future (63%) and feeling stressed or anxious (56%) (ONS).

Some people are resorting to harmful ways of coping with the pandemic, including increased alcohol use, substance misuse, and over-eating (Mental Health Foundation).

Few studies have been published in relation to the impact on wellbeing at work, however the BMJ mentions that healthcare workers in China reported experiencing depression, anxiety and insomnia

## Findings from the COVID-19 survey



*“It sometimes became difficult to remain positive as some of our patients died. Generally got difficult seeing so much suffering. Felt isolating. Boring as unable to do much after work. Felt busy at work, and often mentally difficult and exhausting.”*

# Findings from the COVID-19 survey

45.4% of public sector workers reported a negative impact on physical health as a result of the pandemic

*“Threats to my own health, from people spitting or coming into close contact.”*

68% reported a decline in mental health as a result of working during the crisis.

23.6% reported that the pandemic had a positive impact on their physical health - due to greater numbers of staff working from home and partaking in additional exercise.

Poor mental health during this crisis has generally stemmed from two different work-related settings:



**Working from home**



**Working in public settings**

- Many employers have put support structures and other wellbeing initiatives in place to help alleviate these issues such as free counselling, regular check-ins and taking account of individual needs.
- Staff themselves have made extra efforts to help colleagues by sharing experiences and supporting each other.
- Employers have recognised a need to provide additional support, with 69.3% stating that staff wellbeing processes as well as employee engagement (59.2%) are an immediate need.





# Assessing impact of increased pressure on emergency service workers during COVID-19

Best practice in relation to workforce consultation and engagement



## Risks of not engaging and consulting with the workforce

Disengagement

Increased cynicism

Lack of impact – waste of resources

## How to consult with the workforce



Encourage **culture of openness**, no repercussions for feedback



**Take suggestions** seriously and show that you've used the feedback – i.e. “you said, we did”.



**Interviews:** can gather in-depth views however if organisation is large it's difficult to include everyone



**Focus groups:** a more time-effective way of gathering in-depth views, however some might not want to air their views in front of others



**Survey:** generates good response rates, can easily include everyone

# Who to consult with

Targeted sample – representatives of departments/functions. If organisation is large this will save time however some voices might not be heard.

Staff associations – ideal when wanting a certain perspective, perhaps from a group representing those with disabilities. However, this risks side-lining those who are not represented by a group.

Everyone – ensures all voices are heard however this can be time consuming

# Skills needed when consulting workforce



Objectivity – will need to install trust to encourage participation, particularly from those who are rarely heard



Need to be able to devise questions that are not leading and will generate meaningful data



Data analysis skills – to make sense of survey, interview and focus group data

## Summary

- Physical and mental health negatively affected by the pandemic
- Public facing roles are more vulnerable
- Working from home can cause isolation and musculo-skeletal issues
- Need to consult with workforce to understand how they are affected
- When consulting with workforce – need to consider:
  - how
  - who with and,
  - skills required to analyse results



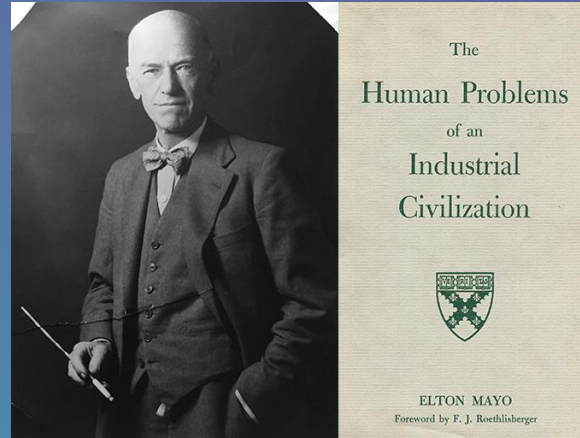
# Taking an Organisation Development Perspective

**Toby Lindsay, Principal Consultant, LMOD,  
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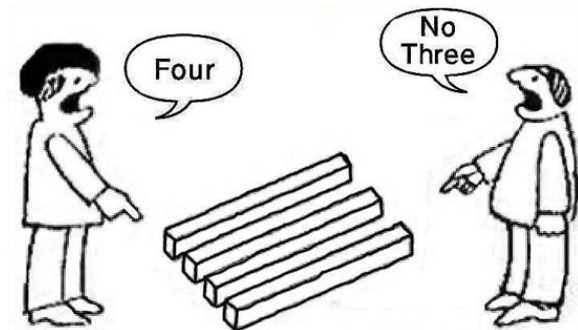
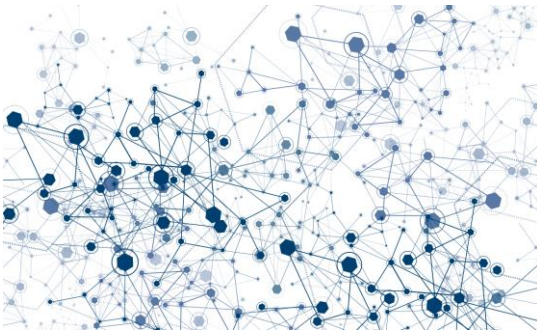
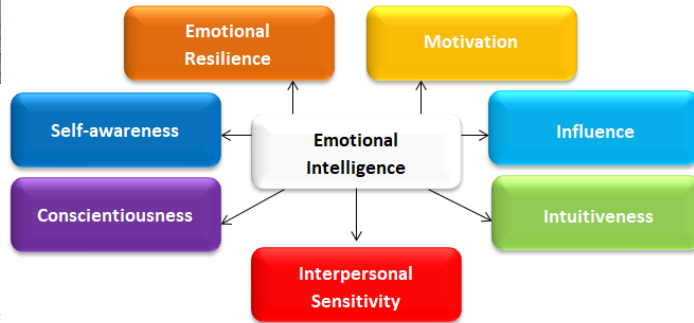
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# Elton Mayo 1880 – 1949

- Ran several experiments at General Electric's Hawthorne plant
- Made several changes to working conditions such as improving lighting
- Began a series of consultations with workers
- Tracked productivity as the experiment's went on
- Found that productivity kept rising as changes were made that both improved and diminished the physical conditions



# Resilience Capability Index, Roffey Park



# Thank You

## Any Questions?



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