

# Wellbeing at work:

## The voice of managers and team leaders



No pressure. As a manager or team leader, your wellbeing is first on the list. We know that's obvious, but for the benefit of anyone who thinks it should come last, here's a few reasons why:

### 1 Managing people is hard work

You have the same work-related stresses and strains as everyone else - dealing with change and uncertainty; managing your workload; keeping ahead or keeping up with the game; balancing home, work and other commitments.

As your role is about working *through* others, you're trying to be aware of how those things are going for everyone in your team. Plus monitoring that they're working well together - and dealing with it if they're not. And since you're the boss, you're likely to be the first port of call when team members have got problems of any sort.

### 2 Your wellbeing impacts on your team's experience

We all know that work involves challenges and a degree of pressure, but stress happens when you feel the demands of the situation are greater than the resources (time and energy) you can bring. Assuming that work expectations are sustainable - challenging and rewarding but not unreasonable or impossible - the goal of self-care is to not only avoid depleting your personal resources but to maintain and build them.

There's research evidence that when managers look after their own wellbeing, the people reporting to them experience a better quality of leadership:

- Even moderate levels of exercise buffer the negative effects of stress managers themselves experience and increases their resilience.<sup>1</sup>
- Mindfulness - being aware of and attentive to what is going on without an emotional response to it - helps prevent emotional exhaustion and increases psychological reserves.<sup>2</sup>
- Factors which have negative impacts on leadership by depleting personal resources include non-clinical levels of depression and anxiety (which can be exacerbated by alcohol use) and insufficient or unrefreshing sleep.<sup>3</sup>

Check that your self-care strategies cover all bases with Vitae's new self-care plan - a new resource in a [toolkit designed to equip managers](#) for supporting wellbeing at work. 'My self-care plan *Taku mahere hauora*' is based on the holistic [Whare Tapa Wha](#) model developed by Dr Mason Durie, in which the house of wellbeing has four walls to make it whole.

### 3 Lead the way and get with the wellbeing programme in your workplace

Wellbeing at work is for everyone - managers are not excused, as they need it as much as anyone else. Even if you've got good self-care strategies in place, your participation in the work programme is more than symbolic - it shows that you rate it, and puts you in a stronger position to encourage your staff to participate.

### 4 Equip yourself

Ask yourself what experiences, empathy and education you can bring to promoting and supporting mental wellbeing in yourself and others. Think about whether you'd benefit from upskilling through the [Manager Equip toolkit](#) which is designed to support managers and team leaders in their role promoting wellbeing at work. The toolkit comprises workshops, clinics for one-on-one or group consultation, and coaching - please be [in touch with us](#) to find out more.

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<sup>1</sup> Burton JP, Hoobler JM, Scheuer ML. 2012. [Supervisor workplace stress and abusive supervision: The buffering effect of exercise](#). *Journal of Business and Psychology* 27(3):271-9.

<sup>2</sup> Carleton EL, Barling J, Trivisonno M. 2018. [Leaders' trait mindfulness and transformational leadership: The mediating roles of leaders' positive affect and leadership self-efficacy](#). *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* 50(3):185.

<sup>3</sup> Barling J, Cloutier A. 2017. [Leaders' mental health at work: Empirical, methodological, and policy directions](#). *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 22(3):394.