



**Midlands Partnership University**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **MPFT's approach to enhancing and embedding wellbeing within the organisation's culture through SOOTHE**

**Do OD Conference: Elevating Our Everyday Practice**

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# Who we are

- **MPFT** is a large Mental Health, Learning Disability and Community University Foundation Trust based in Staffordshire
- **Large geographical spread** – across Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent and Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, with services across England as far away as the Isle of Wight
- **Two Integrated Care Systems and Boards**, plus provider collaboratives and interactions with Integrated Care Systems across our footprint
- **Approximately 11,000** staff delivering services in wide ranging ways including in hospitals, communities and prisons

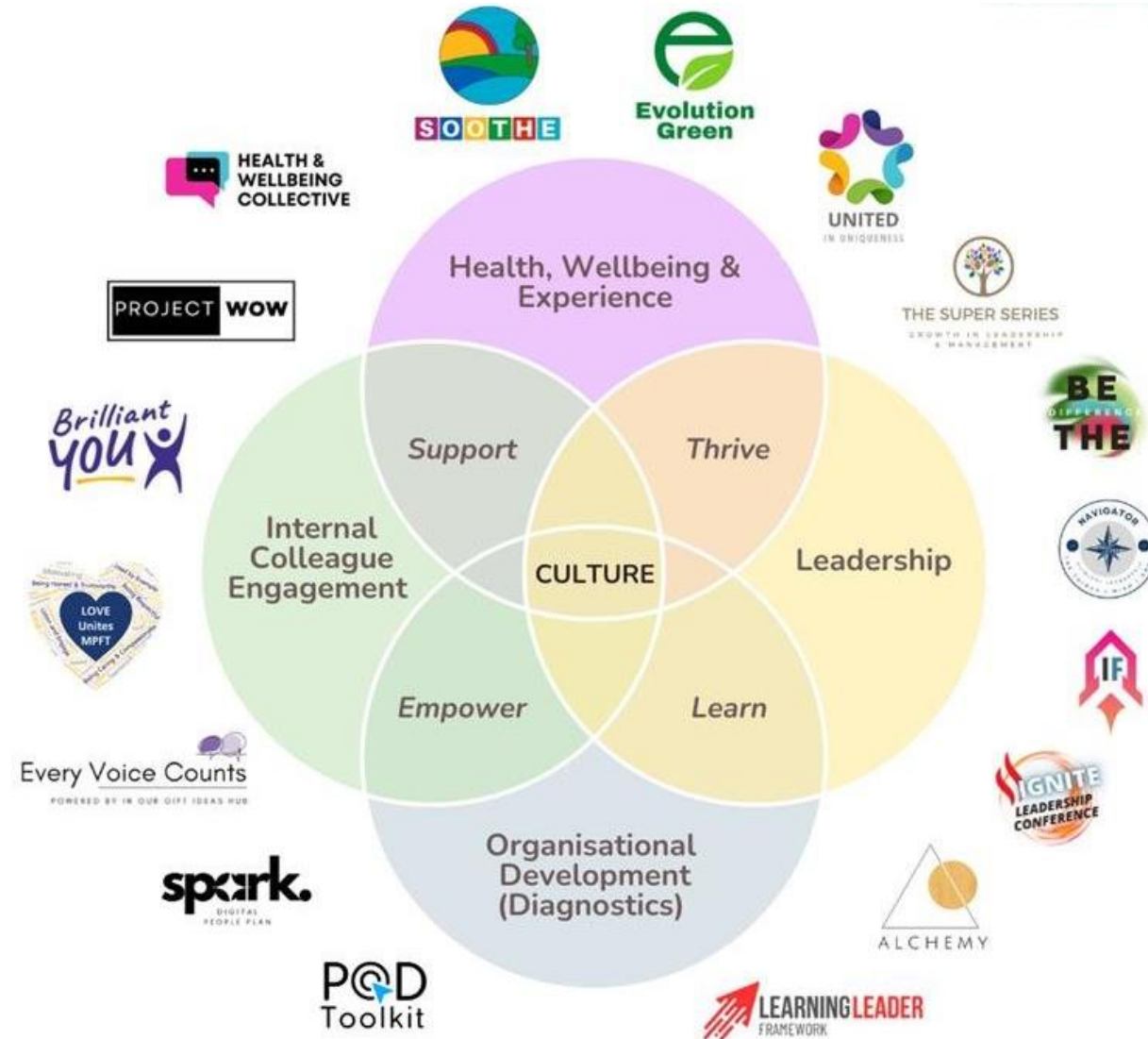


## Challenge

How do we ensure we have an equitable offer to support the wellbeing of all our staff when we have such a diverse and geographically spread workforce?



# What we do



# What we've achieved

## National Staff Survey Results

- 2<sup>nd</sup> position out of 210 Trusts for '*We are Safe & Healthy*' People Promise score
- Best score second year running within our Trust category for '*We are Safe & Healthy*'.

## Success



Our organisational approach has had demonstrable positive impact!



- Improved 15% on the question since 2018 – '*We would recommend MPFT as a place to work*'.
- Consistent improvement in burnout score
- Seen improvement in MSK

# What we've achieved

## Multiple award wins:

- HR Impact Award
- Personnel Today shortlist
- HPMA Award
- British HR Best Culture Initiative Award
- British HR Awards Wellbeing Initiative shortlist



## What staff say about

*"33 years of an NHS career and never experienced the support or awareness around staff wellbeing until MPFT."*

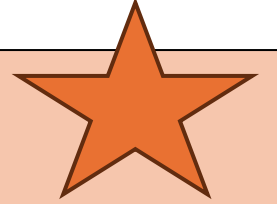
*"So many great things from MPFT and I feel fortunate to be employed by this organisation .... The list is endless. I feel connected as through this we have become a bigger team in a real sense"*

*"I think the way the Trust has supported the workforce during COVID-19 has been incredible. From a Health and Wellbeing perspective it really has worked very hard, and I am very grateful for this - thank you"*

# Setting the scene – travelling back in time

- 2018 - Newly formed trust – merger of two different cultures
- Essential intervention offer for wellbeing (EAP, OH)
- Specialist Staff Psychology Service
- Clinical Psychologist within OD team – well positioned
- 2020 - Covid 19 Realisation - potential trauma – what can we do?

## Challenge

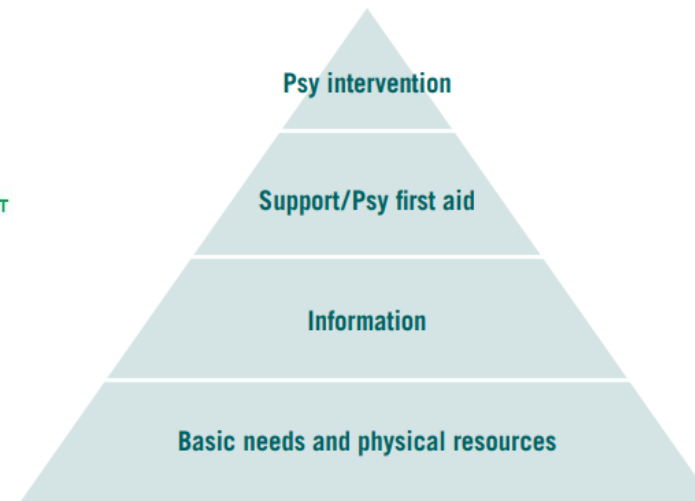
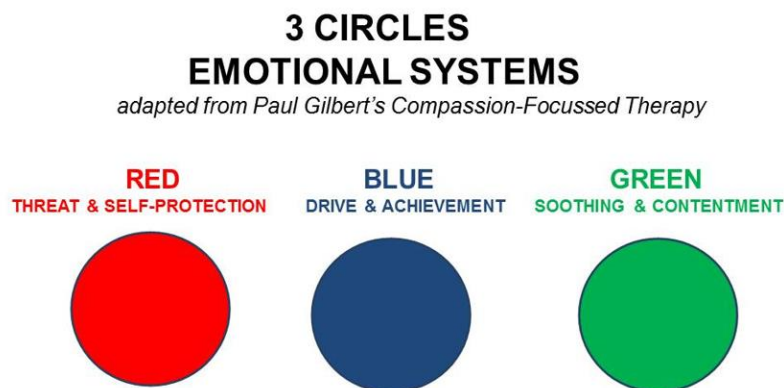


How do we respond to the threat of a global pandemic upon the health and wellbeing of our workforce?

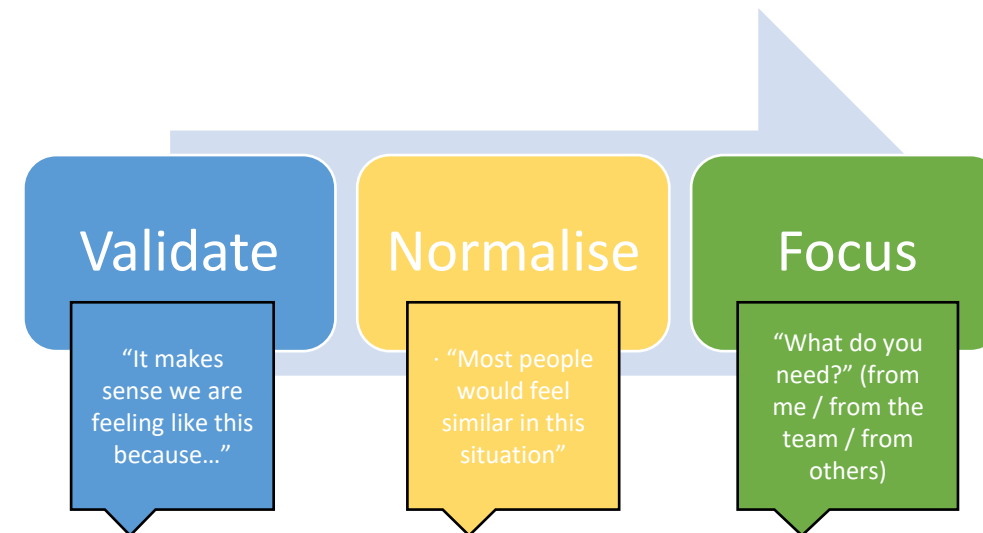


# Responding to distress

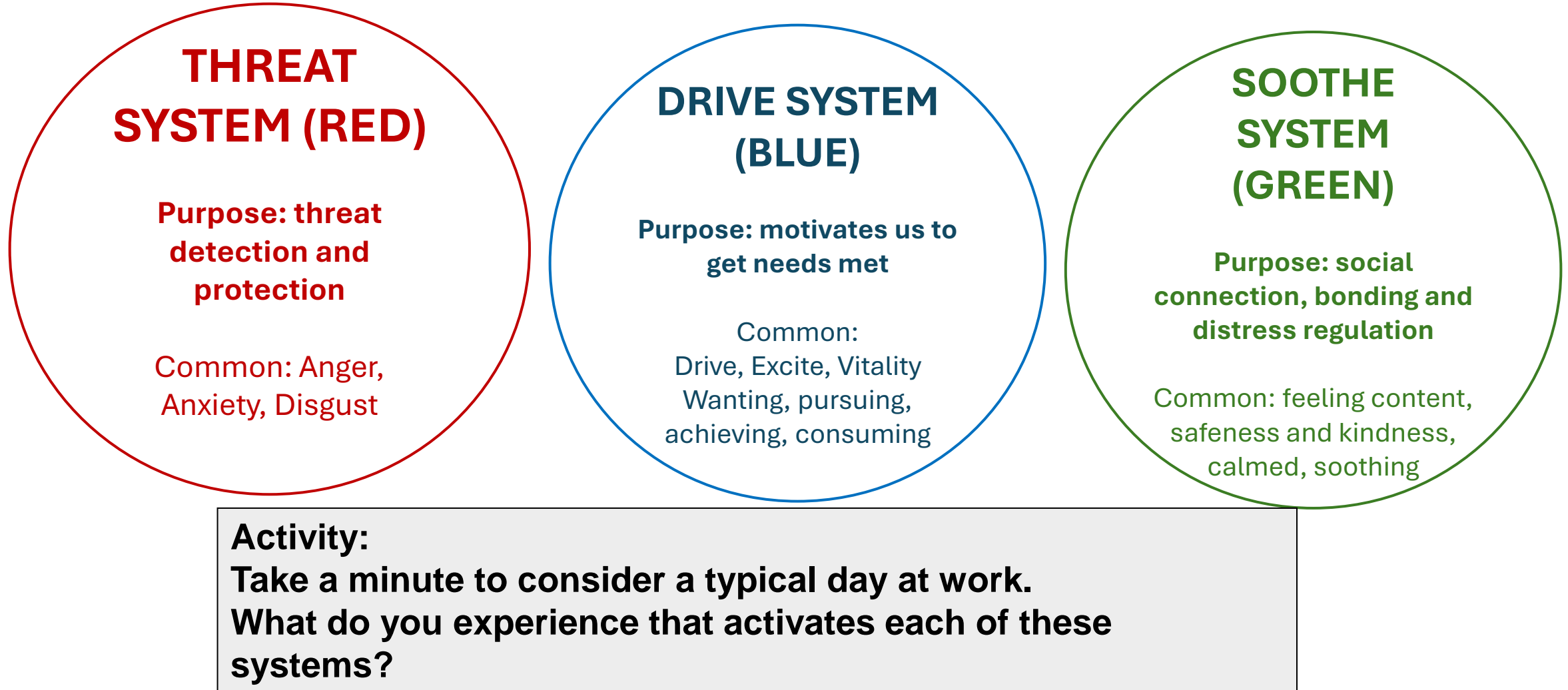
- Empowering a narrative that psychological distress is a natural reaction to unexpected and distressing incidents
- Encouraging the importance of **validating** and **normalising** reactions & help people to focus on what is important right now



**Figure 1:** Stepped psychological response  
British Psychological Society, 2020



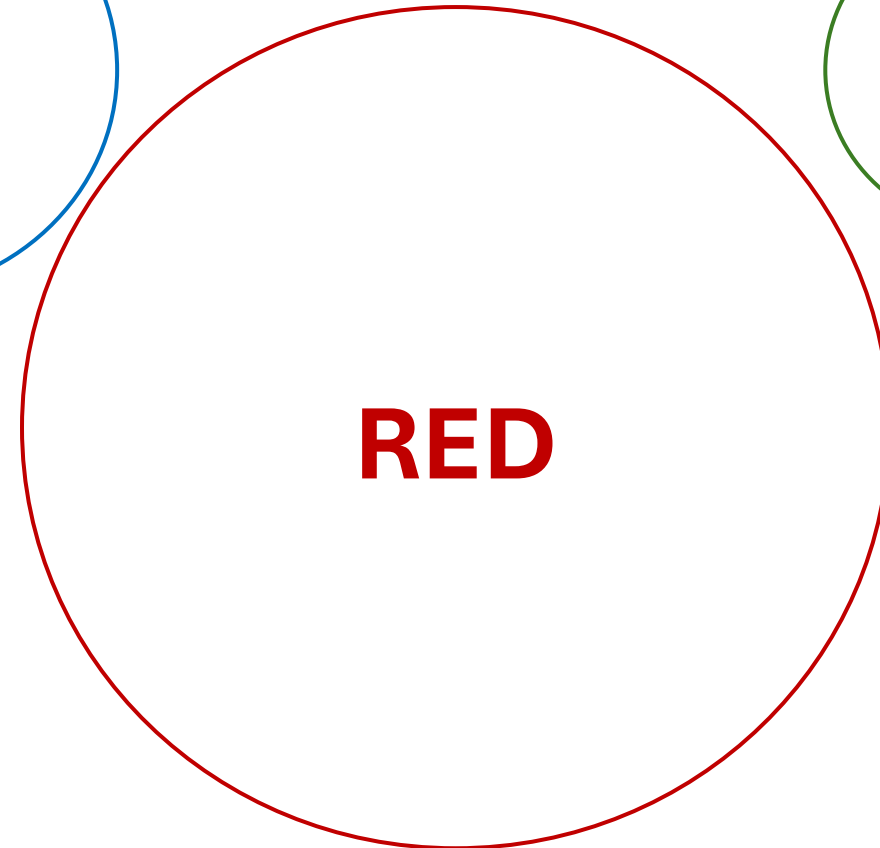
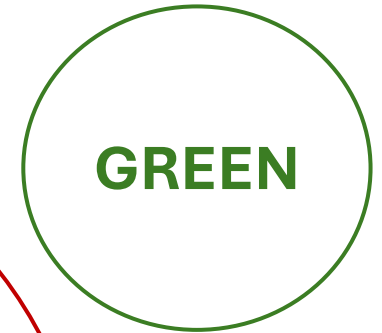
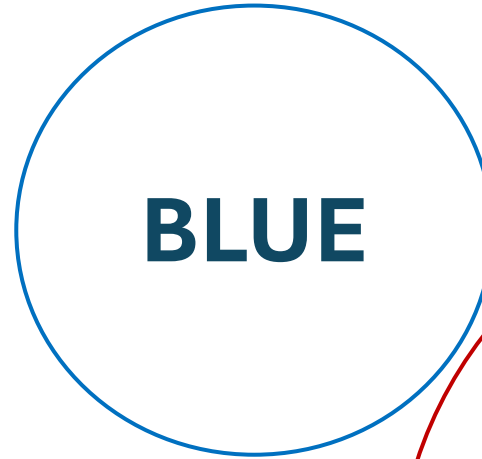
# Compassion Focused Therapy – 3 systems model





What we often see is this.

We need to:  
**Grow Green**  
**Build Blue**  
**Reduce Red**



*“To have a sensitivity to suffering in self and others and a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it.”*



# A holistic approach to wellbeing



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<b>S</b>	Self-Care - Practice self-care by being kind to yourself, take a break, stay healthy and stay safe
<b>O</b>	Open-Up - Talk, share your experiences and feelings, we are here to listen
<b>O</b>	Others - You are not alone, others are here for you and there is lots of support if you need it
<b>T</b>	Teamwork - We are all in this together; stay connected, look out for each other and keep huddling
<b>H</b>	Help - It's ok to need some extra help. Ask and take the support you need for what you are facing
<b>E</b>	Enjoy - Find ways to take time out and do things that make you happy

- Our commitment to alleviate and prevent distress 6 areas of well-being
- Evidence based and informed by national guidance
- Empowering framework for individual, team, leader and organisational approach to well-being
- Supporting the development of a culture with well-being at its core
- Promoting the Soothe System with greater compassion

## Success

Creating an innovative evidence based and psychologically informed approach!



# Stakeholder engagement

- Developed in partnership via stakeholder consultations
  - Clinical Psychologist
  - OD Director and OD Practitioners
  - Director of Psychology
  - Wellbeing & Recovery college lead
  - Chief Executive and Executive Board
  - Operations Managers
  - Trade Union - Staff Side.
- Community spirit – Chaplaincy, Freedom To Speak Up (FTSU)
- Outreach engagement with teams and services



## Success

Engagement enriched the framework whilst ensuring organisational buy in, helping maximise it's reach and effectiveness at supporting and improving the wellbeing culture.

# More than an Anagram, it's a Philosophy

## Outside:

Sharing of good practice and innovative thinking with others outside of the organisation

## Organisation

- Organisational commitment and buy-in to using this as a vehicle for staff health and wellbeing and positive organisational culture
- SOOTHE is used to influence culture e.g. Open up.
- Integrating SOOTHE into other organisational agendas e.g. GREEN Team and Financial wellbeing

## Leadership:

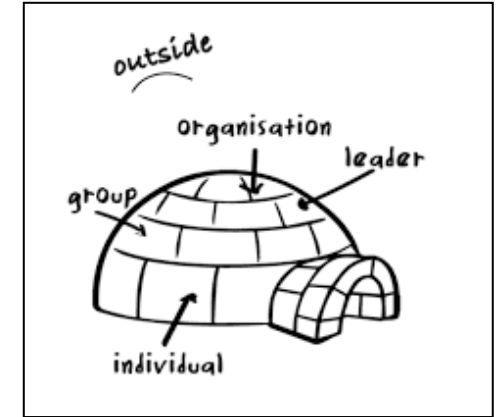
Supporting our cultural journey. Interventions to encourage Leaders to understand what SOOTHE is and how to utilise it within their own teams and services

## Group:

T is for Team – utilising SOOTHE as an opportunity for team development and effectiveness.

## Individual:

Empowering staff to utilise the 6 areas of SOOTHE to improve own wellbeing



The IGLOO Model  
(Neillson, 2019)

## Success

A holistic approach promotes and prioritises health & wellbeing within the organisation's culture!

# More than an Anagram, it's a framework



- **Self-care:** Importance of promoting a proactive and preventative approach to own wellbeing
- **Open up:** SOOTHE Buddies, Staff Psychology Service, Coaching
- **Others:** Men's health. Menopause, Schwartz round, EDI networks
- **Team:** Leadership and Team Development Super Series – focus on wellbeing
- **Help:** Optima OH, Physio service, Citizens; Advice Partnership
- **Enjoy:** Recognition through LOVE Awards, Long Service, George Cross, benefit promotion



# Group discussion

Thinking about your own organisational approach and interventions to support wellbeing...

*How does your current approach map against the SOOTHE Framework?*

<b>S</b>	Self-Care - Practice self-care by being kind to yourself, take a break, stay healthy and stay safe
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# Where is SOOTHE going?

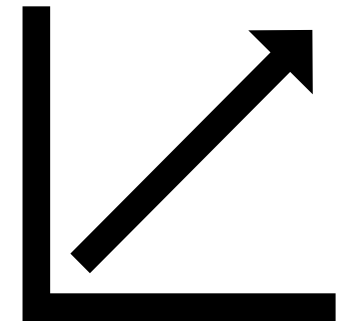
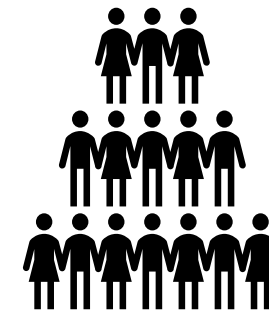
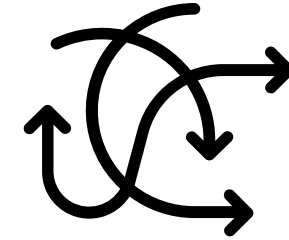
- **Future Fit** – finances can dictate the current conversation. How do we keep wellbeing on the agenda in meaningful ways?
- **Shift Left - Prevention** – e.g. health inequalities (Wider determinants of health, Index of Multiple Deprivation data)
- **Continuous review of the evidence-base** - empirical literature, expert data and internal data
- Continue to strengthen a culture based on **compassion**
- **Constantly responding to change** – fostering agility and psychological flexibility
- **Engaging in research**
  - Contributing to and sharing learning
  - Seeking opportunities for formal research





# Summary

- In the complex and challenging situation of the pandemic we creatively developed SOOTHE
- SOOTHE is our wellbeing framework that is:
  - scalable
  - psychological-informed
  - evidence-based
  - embedded within our culture
- Despite our diverse and disperse workforce and challenges of delivering healthcare, evaluation and evidence shows SOOTHE works for us



# References and useful information



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Gilbert, P. (2009). Introducing compassion-focused therapy. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 15(3), 199–208. doi:10.1192/apt.bp.107.005264

Nielsen, K., Yarker, J., Munir, F., & Bültmann, U. (2018). IGLOO: An integrated framework for sustainable return to work in workers with common mental disorders. *Work & Stress*, 32(4), 400-417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2018.1438536>

[IGLOO Framework | Affinity Health at Work](#)

<https://view.pagetiger.com/soothe/>



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