



Society of Actuaries in Ireland

Stress Testing – The Human Impact

16th April 2021

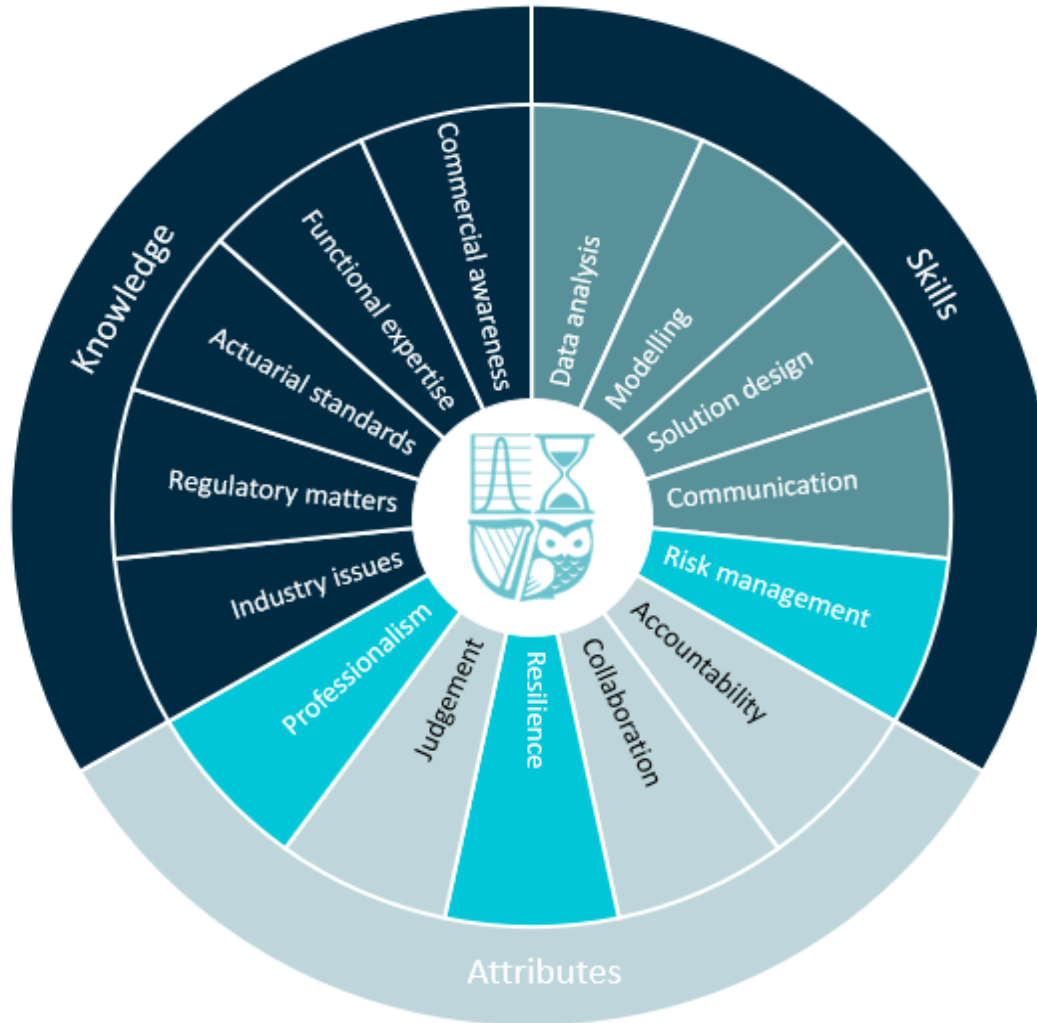
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Competency Wheel





John Deely

- Organisational Psychologist (former wannabe actuary)
- Works with organisations on design of selection process, talent development, people strategy and coaching for performance
- Work with individuals in relation to career development and change
- Set-up Pinpoint in 2000 with fellow psychologist Sophie Rowan (author of “Happy at Work”).
- Advice is informed by perspective of both the **employee** and the **organisation**



Today's Session



1. Current Context and Definition of Stress
2. Benefits and Challenges of Remote working
3. Tips and Takeaways

- Q & (hopefully) A
- Links to Resources



What are we in the middle of?

The future has already arrived. It's just not evenly distributed yet.

William Gibson



Pandemic Permission

PREDICTED WORK SKILLS in 2020 (Based on 2011 Research)

COGNITIVE LOAD MANAGEMENT:

The “ability to discriminate and filter information for importance, and to understand how to maximise cognitive functioning using a variety of tools and techniques.”

VIRTUAL COLLABORATION:

Ability to work productively, drive engagement, and demonstrate presence as a member of a virtual team.



Definition of Stress

- **STRESS** occurs when **PRESSURE** exceeds your **PERCEIVED** ability to **COPE**.
- Dynamic, specific to the person and their circumstances
- **DISTRESS vs EUSTRESS**



Perception



“Humans see what they want to see.” **Rick Riordan**



Yerkes-Dodson Human Performance & Stress Curve





Reality of Stress

- Perception may trigger or exacerbate stress
- The response is a full on mobilisation of internal physiological and neurological activity
- 3 key response manifestations – (psychological, behavioural, physical). E.g.
 - 1) Anger, mood swings
 - 2) Passive /aggressive, disturbed sleep, comfort consumption
 - 3) Dry mouth, migraines, clammy hands, conditions flare up (skin)



Stress will express itself





Permission to Learn?



“THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT, NOT BECAUSE OF A VIRUS, BUT BECAUSE OF WHAT WE’VE LEARNED.”

Fred Luddy (Founder & CEO of ServiceNow)



“HISTORICALLY, PANDEMICS HAVE FORCED HUMANS TO BREAK WITH THE PAST AND IMAGINE THEIR WORLD ANEW. THIS ONE IS NO DIFFERENT. IT IS A PORTAL, A GATEWAY BETWEEN ONE WORLD AND THE NEXT.”

Arundhati Roy (Author and Activist)



Benefits and Challenges of Remote Working



Benefits of Remote Working

- Autonomy = a driver of satisfaction
- Curating own time to achieve balance
- Commuting
- Financial and other savings
- More focus, less In person distractions
- Depends on nature of work, personal style and circumstances
- Talent attraction / retention / advocacy



Challenges of Remote Working

- Corporate challenge
- Always on
- Even greater dependency on tech
- Zoom fatigue
- Different management and leadership skills
- Lack of Rituals (a key trigger for habits)
- Harder to build social capital



Activities that are richer (or essential) in person

- Aspects of on-boarding
- Collaboration
- Brainstorming
- Feedback / HR
- Building social capital, fancy another beer and pizza over zoom?



Practical Tips and Takeaways



Summary

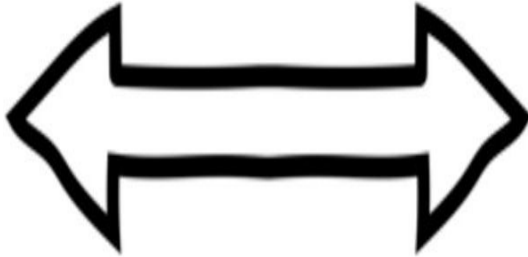
- Control
- Self-talk
- Managing Energy vs Time
- Mono tasking



Locus of Control & Worry

EXTERNAL LOCUS
OF CONTROL

INTERNAL LOCUS
OF CONTROL



OUTCOMES OUTSIDE YOUR
CONTROL - DETERMINED BY
'FATE' AND INDEPENDENT OF
YOUR HARD WORK OR DECISIONS

OUTCOMES WITHIN YOUR
CONTROL - DETERMINED BY
YOUR HARD WORK,
ATTRIBUTES OR DECISIONS

- Locus of Control
- Stress Construct
- Rumination



CIN Analysis (Control, Influence, No Control)

- Pick a concern, area of worry.
- Name it
- Then identify

What You Have
Control over

What You Can
Influence

What You have
NO control over



Self-talk



“Most of us talk to ourselves in ways we’d never talk to anyone else.”

Talk to yourself as a friend, not an enemy.



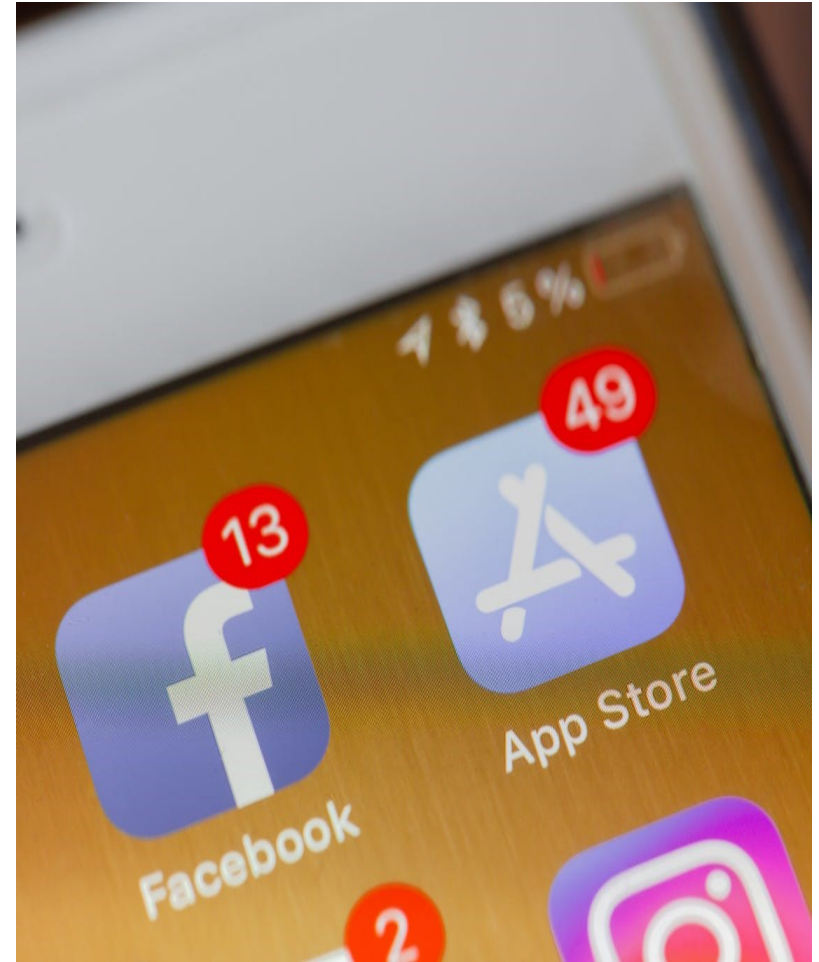
Managing Energy, Not Time

- Certain hours are high return, how do you invest them?
- Rituals and rhythms which are enablers
- Push Recover
- Will power

Hours / Units / Zones	M	T	W	T	F
Break the day down into zones typically 45 minutes or 60 minutes.					
Zone 1: Start time?					
2					
3					



Mono Tasking / Priority





Stress busting wisdom that never ages

- Things that keep getting repackaged but are underpinned by a huge volume of research over decade
- Improve your own resources (Am I eating well? Am I sleeping well? Am I exercising?)
- Micro breaks that recharge (heart rate up, fresh air, music)



To Conclude



- Take stock otherwise events or life will take stock for you.
- Diary a meeting with yourself (periodically), a lay by.



Links & Resources

- The First Step to being powerful (article on self-talk)
 - <https://hbr.org/2013/11/the-first-step-to-being-powerful>
 - Nonverbal Overload: A Theoretical Argument for the Causes of Zoom Fatigue
 - <https://tmb.apaopen.org/pub/nonverbal-overload/release/1>
 - 9 things successful people do differently by Dr. Heidi Grant Halvorson
 - <https://hbr.org/2011/02/nine-things-successful-people>
 - “Decades of research on achievement suggest that successful people reach their goals not simply because of who they are, but more often because of what they do.” The thoughts in the article have been condensed into a short video.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWRZ8jjBmO8>
 - Podcast & Transcript. Stop. Breathe. We Can’t Keep Working Like This.
 - Cal Newport explains how Slack and Gmail are making us miserable — and what to do about it.
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/05/podcasts/ezra-klein-podcast-cal-newport-transcript.html>
 - The Only Way to Get Important Things Done
 - <http://blogs.hbr.org/schwartz/2011/05/the-only-way-to-get-important.html>
 - Extract: *“Over the past decade, I’ve built a series of rituals into my everyday life, in order to assure that I get to the things that are most important to me — and that I don’t get derailed by the endlessly alluring trivia of everyday life.”*
- Six Ways to Refuel Your Energy Every Day
- <http://blogs.hbr.org/schwartz/2010/12/six-ways-to-refuel-your-energy.html>



More Links & Resources

What's the one task that if completed or advanced would make it a good week?

Is that task in your diary at a time that is likely to be a productivity peak for you?

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2009/02/how_to_mitigate_the_urgent_to.html

How to write to do lists that work – 2 simple actions

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2009/01/how_to_write_todo_lists_that_w.html

Nine things successful people do differently

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2011/02/nine_things_successful_people.html

Email – Master or tool? Habit or Helper?

Email is tonally challenged. Don't Forget To Use the Phone

<http://blogs.hbr.org/trapani/2009/10/when-its-time-to-shut-down-ema.html>

Many of us are not optimally using our concentration span'

<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-33/september-2020/many-us-are-not-optimally-using-our-concentration-span>

A New, More Rigorous Study Confirms: The More You Use Facebook, the Worse You Feel

<https://hbr.org/2017/04/a-new-more-rigorous-study-confirms-the-more-you-use-facebook-the-worse-you-feel>

Giving Critical Feedback Is Even Harder Remotely

<https://hbr.org/2021/01/giving-critical-feedback-is-even-harder-remotely>

Stress - causes of stress and how it can impact on you

<https://www2.hse.ie/coping-with-difficult-situations/stress/>

Questions

Please click on the 'Raise Hand' icon
to ask a question
and
wait to be unmuted

or

Use the Q&A function

