



ARE YOU SURVIVING OR THRIVING?

You do so much to help your team succeed, but by giving so much, do you actually give less? Looking after yourself is vital when supporting others, particularly when working in a demanding world such as football. Here we encourage you to honestly ask:

- Am I healthy?
- Am I thriving or just surviving?
- Am I looking after myself as well as I should?

How Healthy Are You?

You know a lot about health. That its more than being free from disease, more than just physical health, and that being fit does not necessarily mean that you are healthy. You probably also know that a busy schedule often dictated by others, and a job that demands putting others before yourself, can make it difficult to be as healthy as you would like.

But did you know that if we take the World Health Organisation definition of health as being “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being”, that less than 20% of the UK population would be seen as healthy, with good wellbeing, or as flourishing?

So how healthy are you? Think for a second:

- Are you making the most of your abilities?
- Are you coping with the normal stresses of life?
- Are you working productively and effectively?
- Are you able to contribute to your community?

Of course, we'd all like to say yes to these questions, but if you are one of the 80% in the UK who do not, then you would be classified as being without complete health.

So what are the consequences of incomplete health for us, for our players, our colleagues and teams?

Complete health or flourishing provides: energy; confidence; better coping under pressure; stronger attentional focus, clearer thinking and better decision-making; greater creativity; optimism; greater empathy and more productive inter-personal relationships. All of these have clear positive effect on our ability to care for, support, and work with others. Conversely, anything less than complete

health has the potential to undermine these, whilst anything less than complete mental health has been shown to lead to worse functioning in terms of physical disease, work productivity, and psychosocial functioning.

So why is wellbeing a potential concern for FMPA members?

It is reasonable to assume that all of us want to excel and contribute within our lives. But increasingly as a sport and across society there is realisation of a growing health crisis with real personal, professional and societal consequences. Mental health, in particular, is in the public eye due to:

1. 1 in 6 of the UK population experiencing a common mental health problem, e.g., anxiety or depression, in any given week.
2. Stress being the most common work-related risk to health and the biggest cause of long-term work-absence.

The incidence of these amongst football support professionals is unknown, but anecdotally, many are exposed to major stress-related threats, e.g., frequent and dramatic change, job instability, bullying, low work-life balance, lack of control or trust, and opposing aims and values to management. Of course we know of the physical implications of long-term stress, e.g., cardiovascular, respiratory, musculoskeletal, gastro-intestinal, endocrine and reproductive problems and increased susceptibility to infection. But within such an environment, it's easy to see how our psychological and social wellbeing, our sense of competence, autonomy, value, contribution and community, might also start to deteriorate.

What to do if you are concerned.

1. Reflect honestly on your health status.

Admitting to ourselves that we do not have complete health is often difficult. This is made harder when your working world prioritises physical excellence, and when; you've always self-identified as being healthy, others reinforce that you are in good health or 'doing well for your age', or others rely on you to 'hold it all together'. But you have to be aware of concerns to address them.

2. Do not be ashamed: Prioritising our wellbeing is neither selfish nor unnecessary. It's also useful to know that some can maintain complete mental health whilst experiencing depression. Health deterioration might well be a consequence of your aiming to do your job well, but holding good health is clearly crucial for doing your job well. It might be difficult to talk to your colleagues about it, but that doesn't mean that there is no one to talk to.

3. Consider the current personal and professional implications of your current health status.

Consider how these affect what is important to you and use these as motivators.

4. Prepare to take control.

Changing health behaviours is not easy and takes time. Think what you need learn, know and do to prepare. Do not change too much at once. We often feel that too much of our lives are beyond our control, but we can have more control than we realise; likewise there is the potential for more support than we realise.

THE AIM OF FUTURE ARTICLES AND THE FMPA IS TO HELP!

**PUT ON YOUR
OXYGEN MASK
BEFORE HELPING
OTHERS**



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