



Trauma-Informed Leadership for Current & Aspiring Leaders

Matt Bennett, MBA, MA



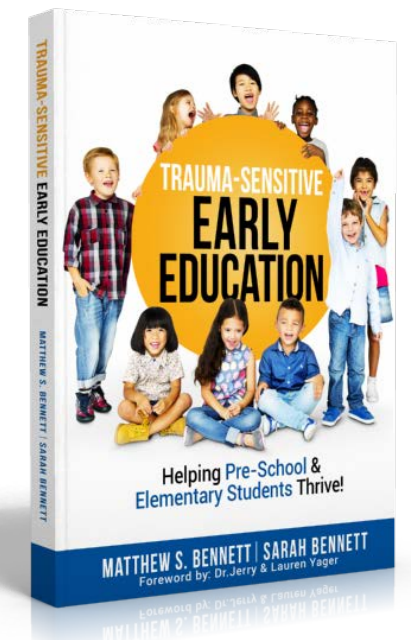
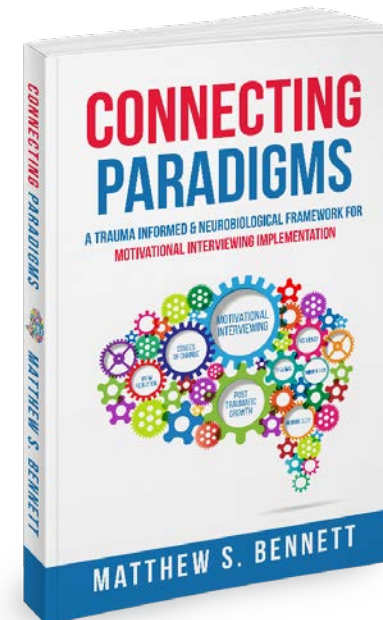
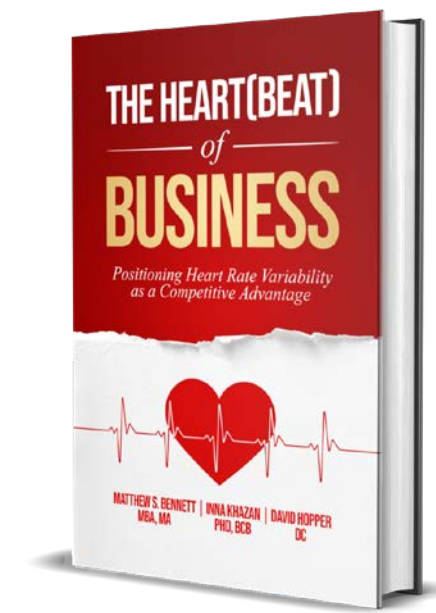
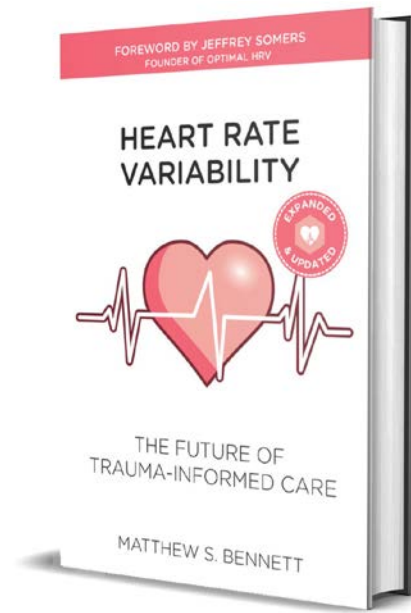
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Before we start

- Leadership is a journey
- Acknowledging trauma
- Take care of yourself
- Mindset of recovery

Format and activities



The Pillars of a Trauma-Informed Organization/System

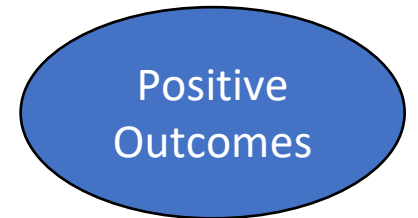
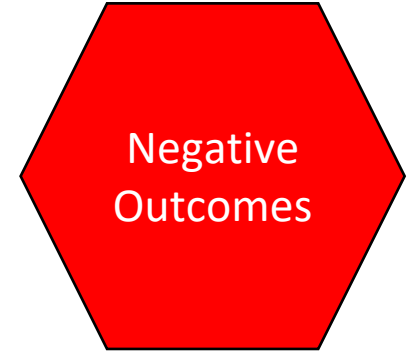
Trauma-Informed Leadership

Staff Wellness

Trauma-Informed Strategies

Trauma Treatment

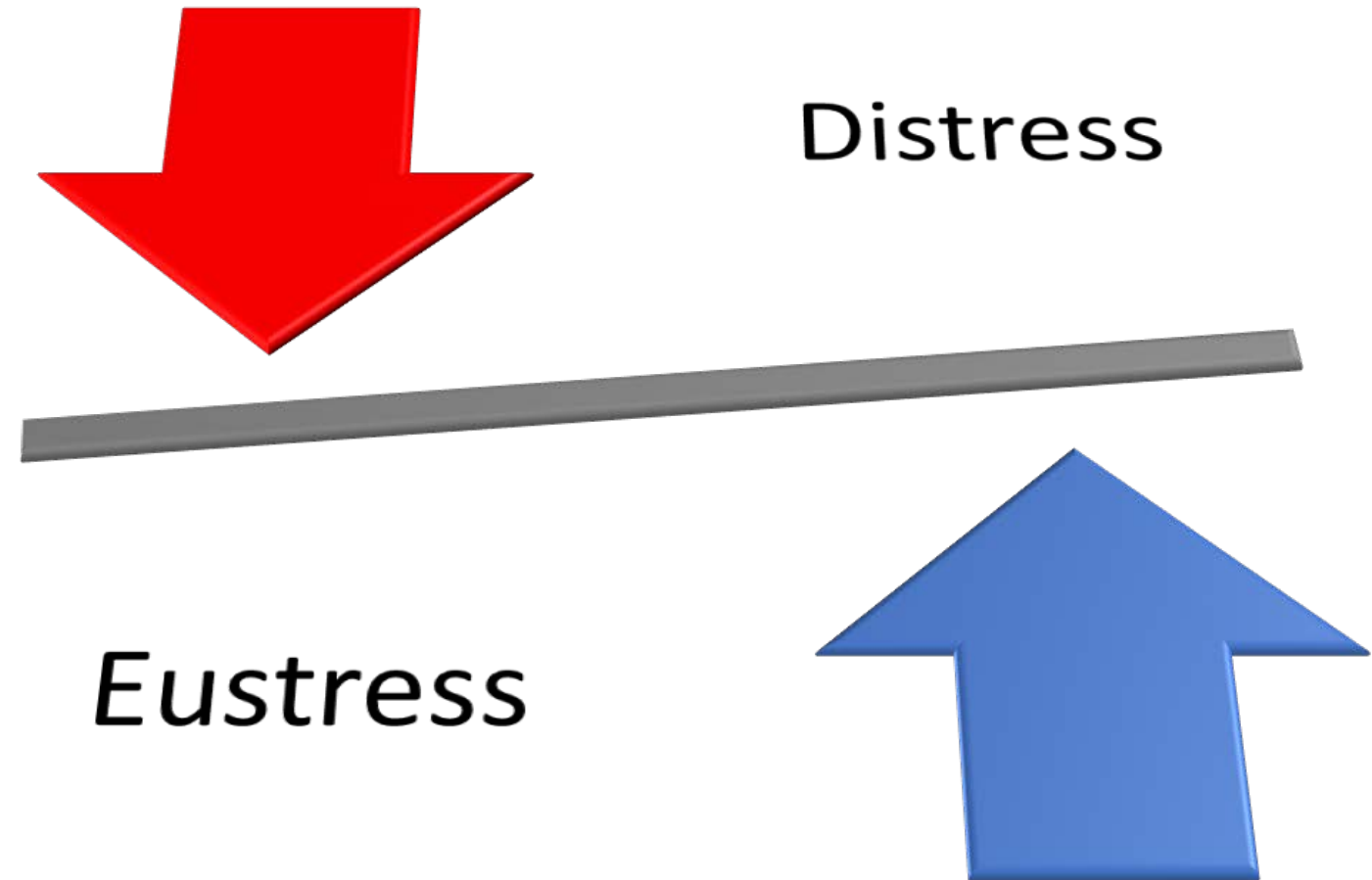
Job Demands & Resources Model



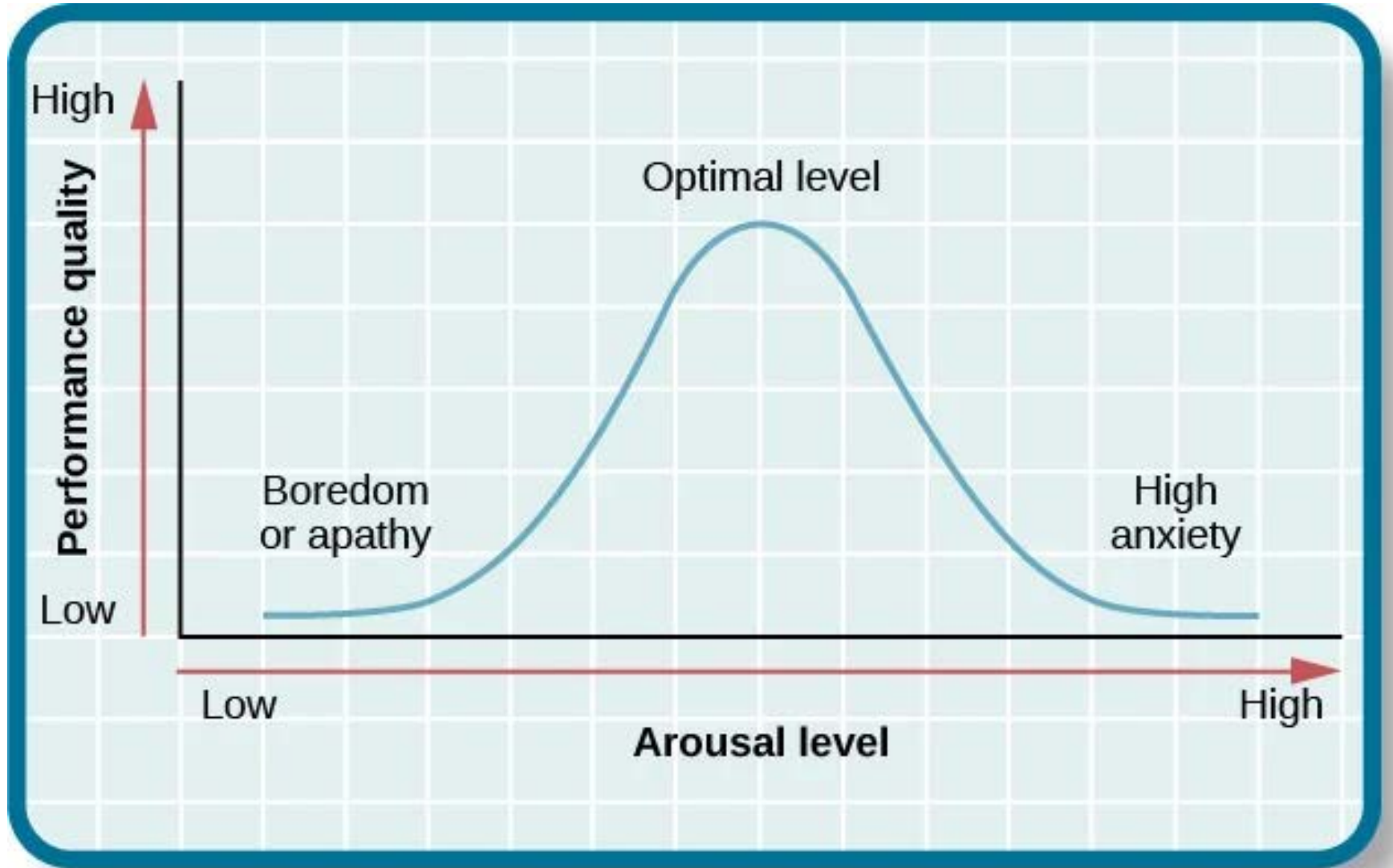


Job Demands

Physical, social, emotional, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort and are associated with certain physiological and psychological costs



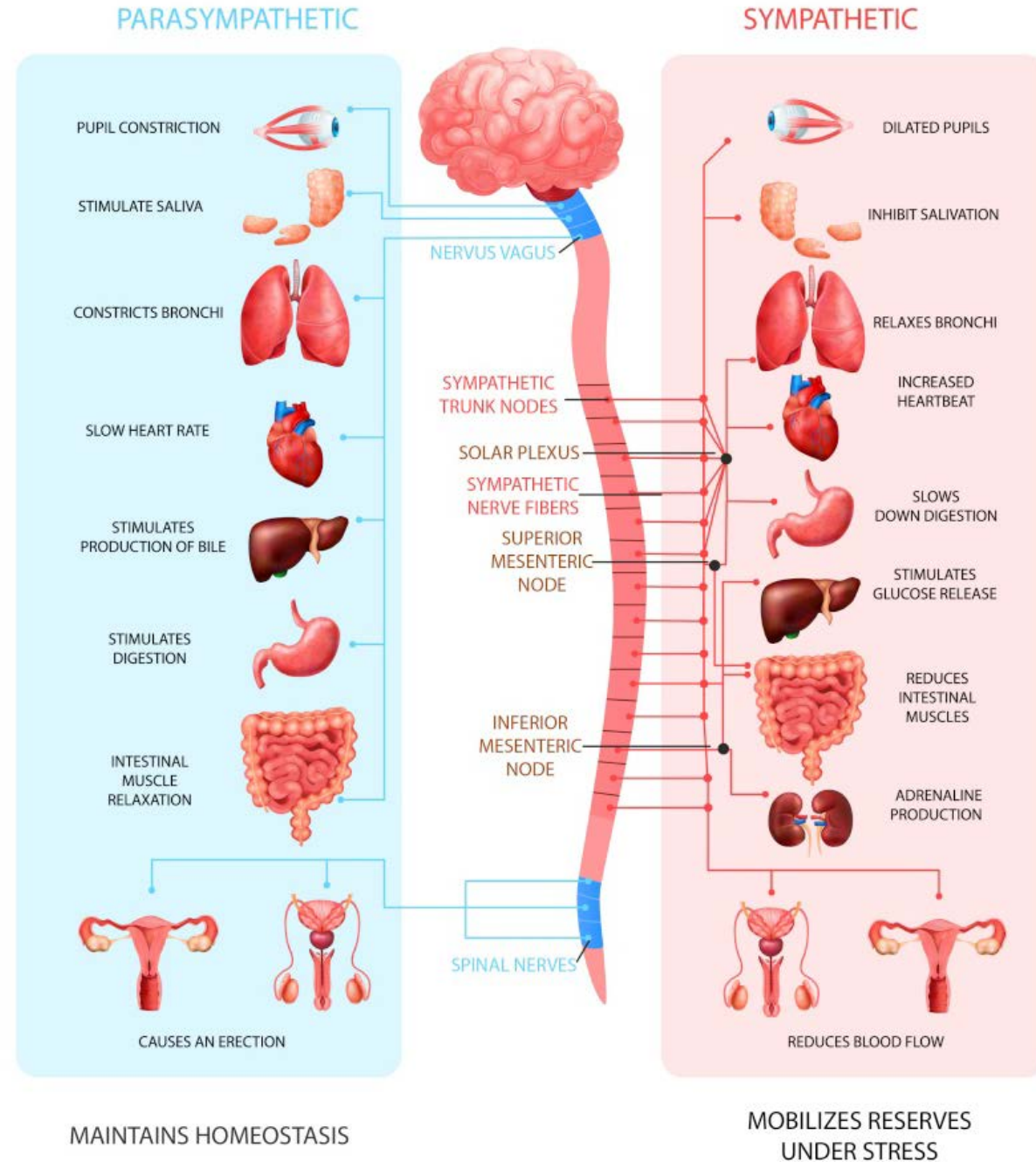
Yerkes-Dodson Curve



Stress, Trauma, & the Autonomic Nervous System

Stress Ladder

- Ventral vagal – strong connection to prefrontal cortex and executive functioning
- Sympathetic – strong connection to amygdala and flight/fight response





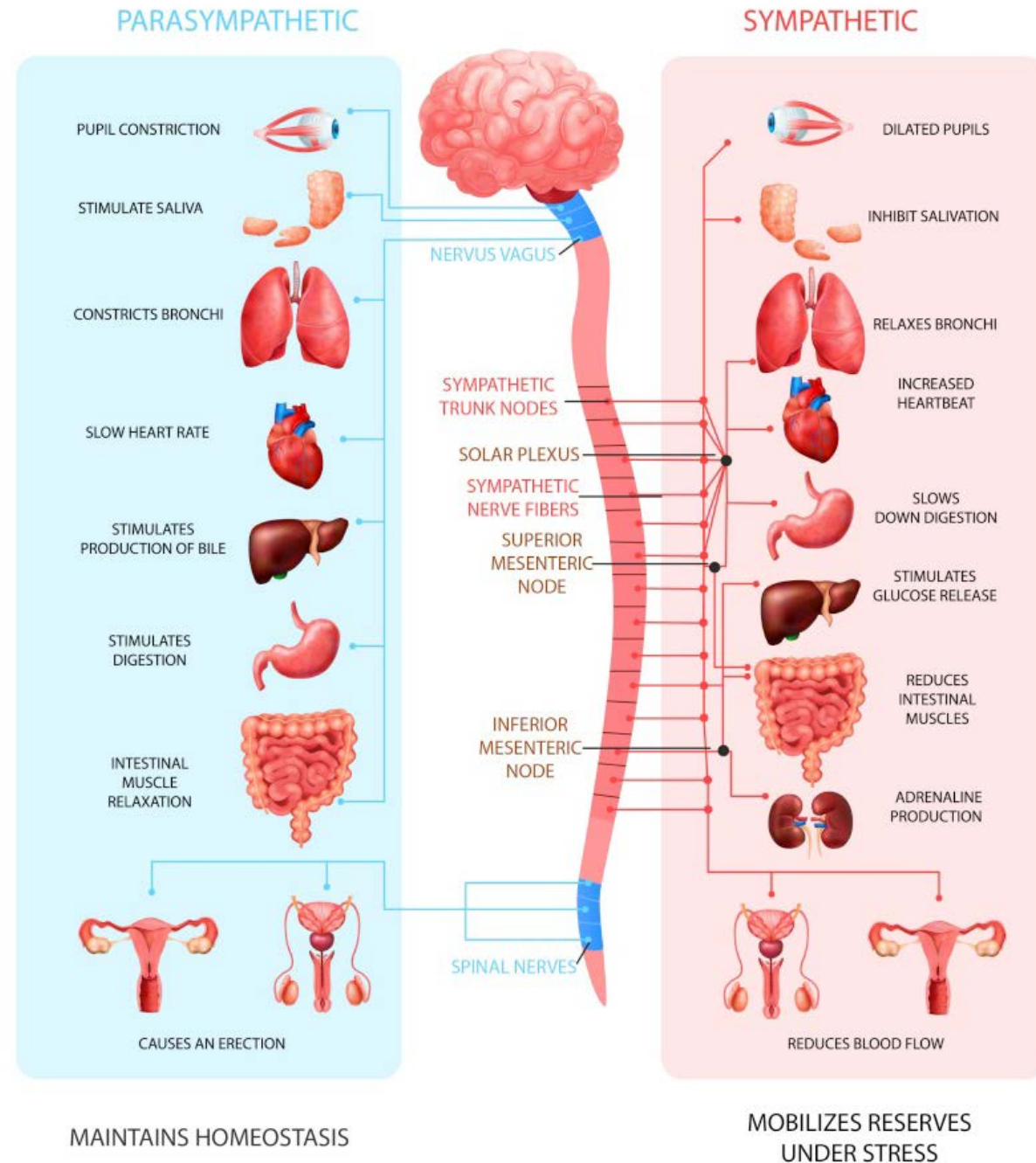
Stress, Trauma, & the Autonomic Nervous System

Stress Ladder

- Ventral vagal – strong connection to prefrontal cortex and executive functioning
- Sympathetic – strong connection to amygdala and flight/fight response
- Dorsal vagal – shut down and freeze response

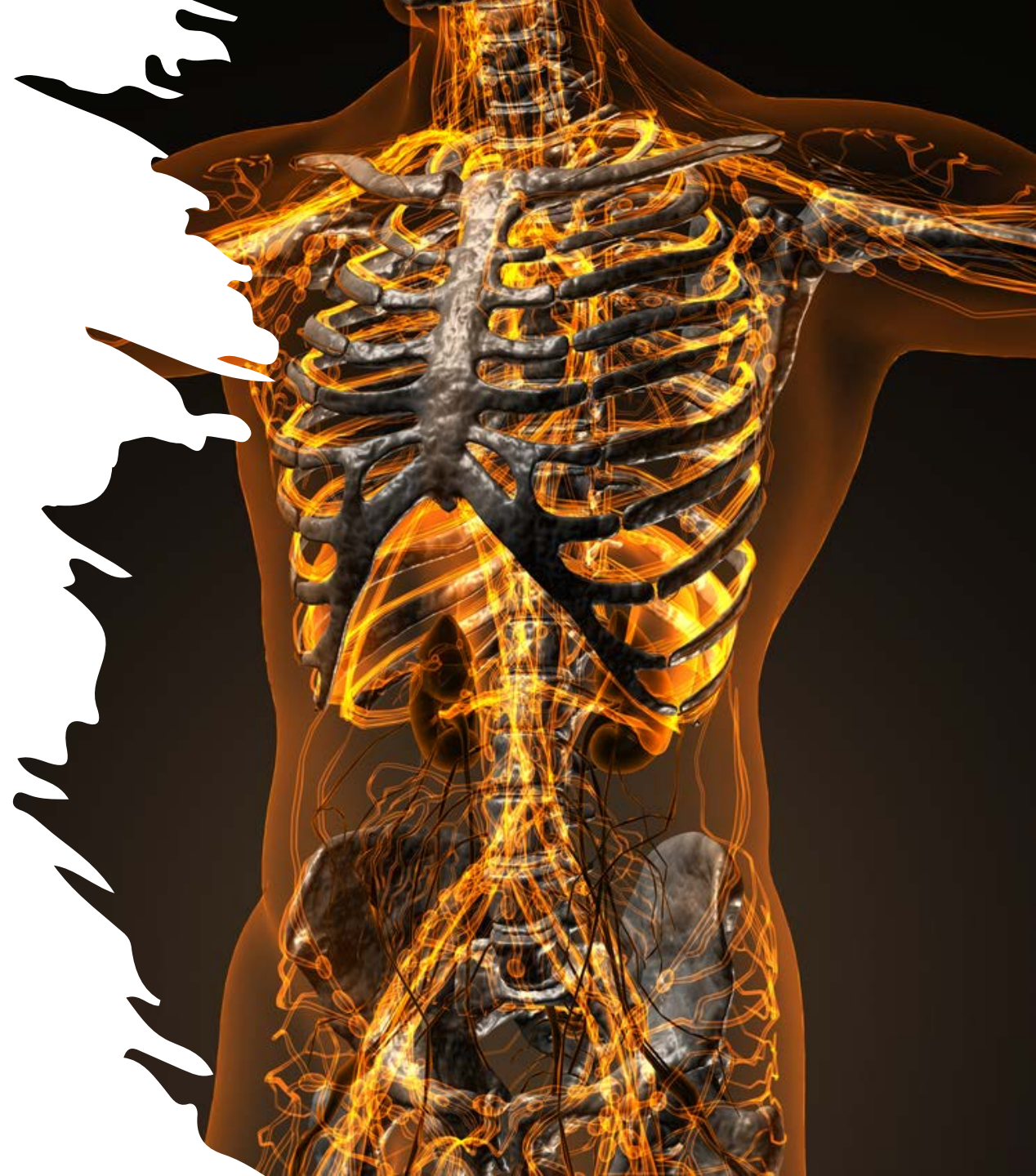
Quantifying Post-Traumatic Growth

- Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia
- Heart Rate Variability



The Dangers of Stress - Inflammation

- Cytokines: Friends and Foes
- Inflammation
 - Gut
 - Leaky Gut Syndrome
 - Immune functioning
 - Brain
 - Mental health
 - Cognitive functioning



How big is your cup?

Traits of Resiliency

Nerd Definitions of Resiliency

- Prefrontal cortex and amygdala
- Ventral vagal and sympathetic

Water in your cup: Allostatic load



How full is your cup?

Stress Intensifiers

- Duration
- Uncertainty
- Importance

Trauma Response:

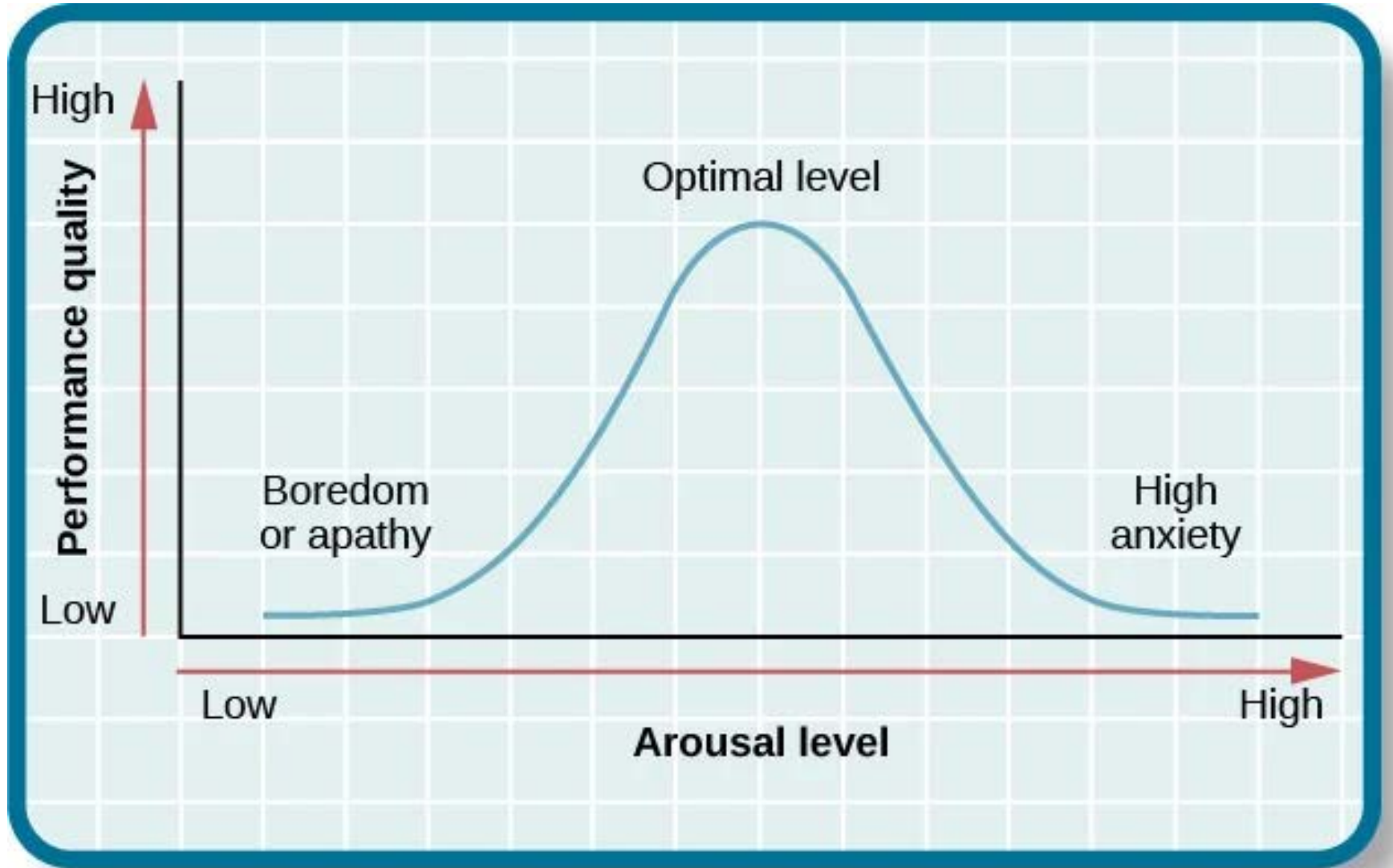
- Cup overflows
- High levels of stress for extended periods of time



HOW HAS THE STRESS AND
TRAUMA OF THE LAST SEVERAL
YEARS IMPACTED THE HEALTH OF
YOUR TEAM AND ORGANIZATION

Small Group Question

Yerkes-Dodson Curve



Complexity of Helping Fatigue

Distress	Trauma Response
Workload	Burnout – No longer able to handle the amount of distress inherent to the job
Lack of resources	
Team/organization dysfunction	
Empathetic intensity – Transfer of pain and suffering from one person to another	Compassion fatigue - Exhausted by trauma exposure
	Vicarious trauma - Trauma resulting from exposure to another's traumatic pain and suffering
	Secondary trauma – Exposure to trauma or work situation that is retraumatizing
Moral distress – Asked to act or watch others violate safety, values, morals, and ethics	Moral injury – Mental health crisis resulting from moral distress



Our Systems and Society is Failing Us

- While surveys vary, these professions seem always to make the top 5 for most burned out:
 - Health care
 - Social services
 - Education
- How we work is not working (Gallup, 2023)
 - 59% of workers are burnt out
 - Workplace stress was at a historic all-time high in 2023
 - 55% of workers are unable to establish a work-life balance

The Death Nail of Self-care

- It is unfair (not backed by research) to burnout and traumatize people at work and expect them to take personal time to recover
- The failures of the “employee” depends on their self-care and ignores organizational factors
- We sit with the dilemma
 - Personal behavior improves resiliency and performance
 - Organizational factors can either destroy or support resiliency and performance

A pink sticky note with a dark border, placed on an orange background. The text "TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF" is written in large, bold, black, hand-drawn capital letters. The note is slightly tilted and has a white, torn-edge effect on its left side.

TAKE
CARE OF
YOURSELF

Stages of Helping Fatigue

Healthy,
Motivated,
& Engaged

Wired &
Tired

Exhaustion
& Guilt

Shame,
Cynicism &
Callousness

Trauma &
Crisis

Decreasing Health, Social/Emotional/Cognitive Intelligence, & Quality

CRISIS AND TRAUMA

Physical Health

Cardiovascular Disease

Stroke

Type II Diabetes

Musculoskeletal Disorder

Cancer

Immune Issues

Physical Fatigue

Sexual Issues

Gastrointestinal Problems

Headaches

Physical Illness

Back Problems

Social/Work Health

Social Isolation

Relationship Issues

Poor Performance

Absenteeism

Tardiness

Theft

Dehumanization of People

Turnover (at least 40% is stress related)

Filed Grievances

Litigation

Low Job Satisfaction

Mental Health

PTSD

Memory Loss & Cognitive Decline

Sleep Problems

Headaches

Mental Fatigue

Anxiety & Irritability

Depression

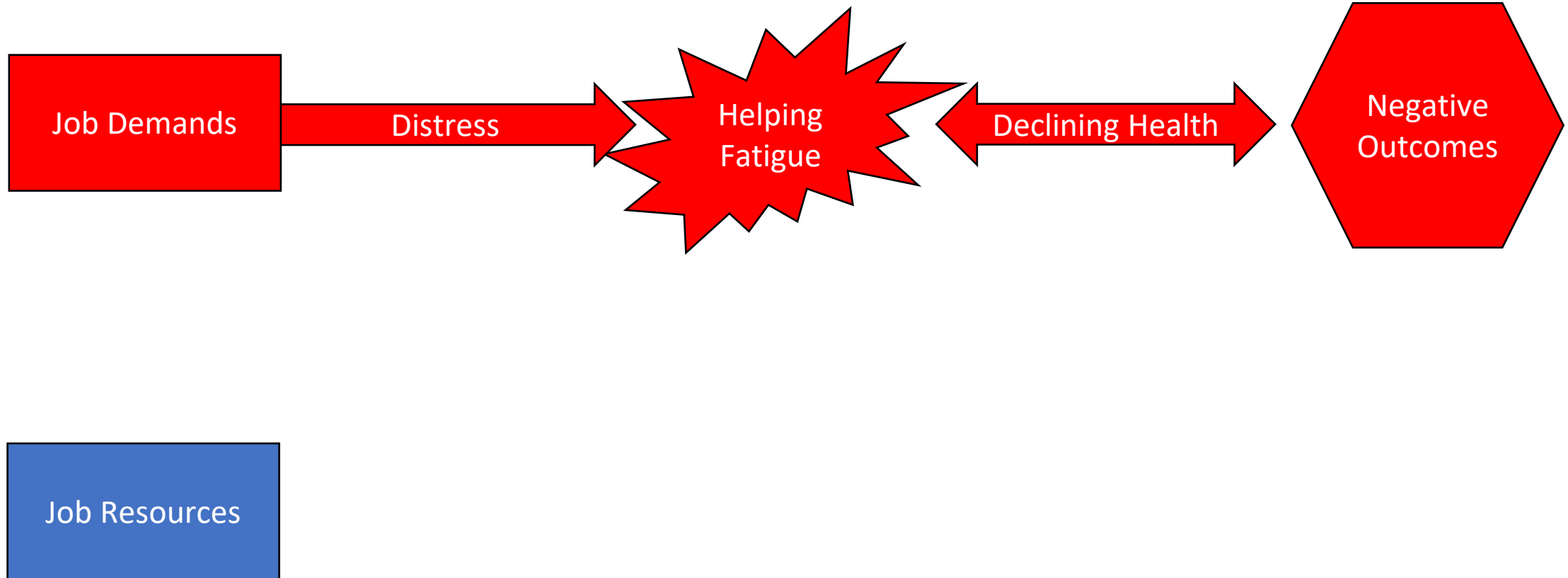
Aggression

Defensiveness

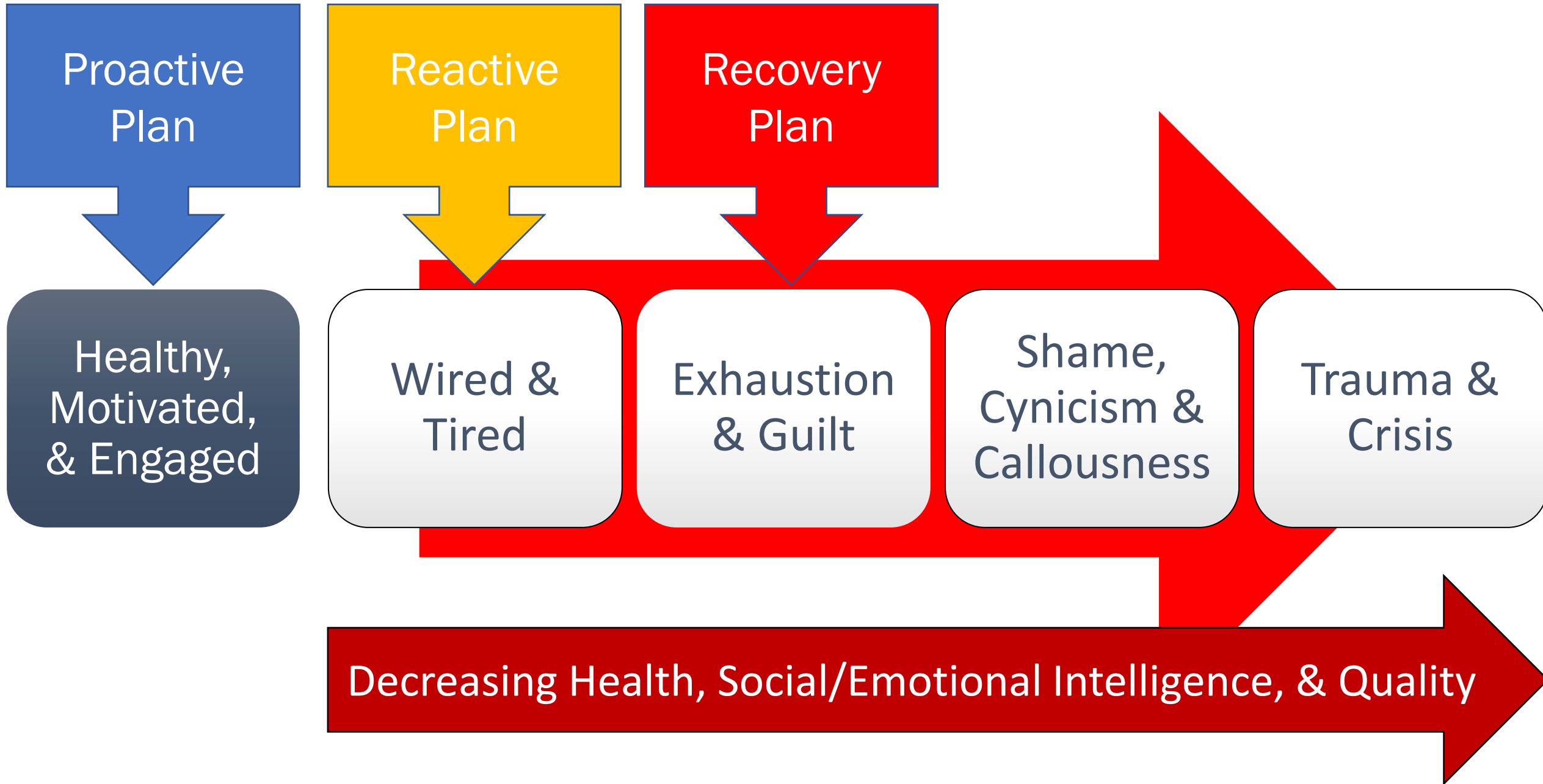
Negative World View & Hopelessness

Negative attitude

Job Demands & Resources Model



Stages of Helping Fatigue



MAXIMIZING WELLNESS & QUALITY: WWW.OPTIMALHRV.COM/HANDOUTS

Personal Wellness

- Foundations of wellness
 - Sleep
 - Nutrition
 - Movement/Exercise
- Passion
- Mindfulness
- Therapy
- Social network

Professional Performance

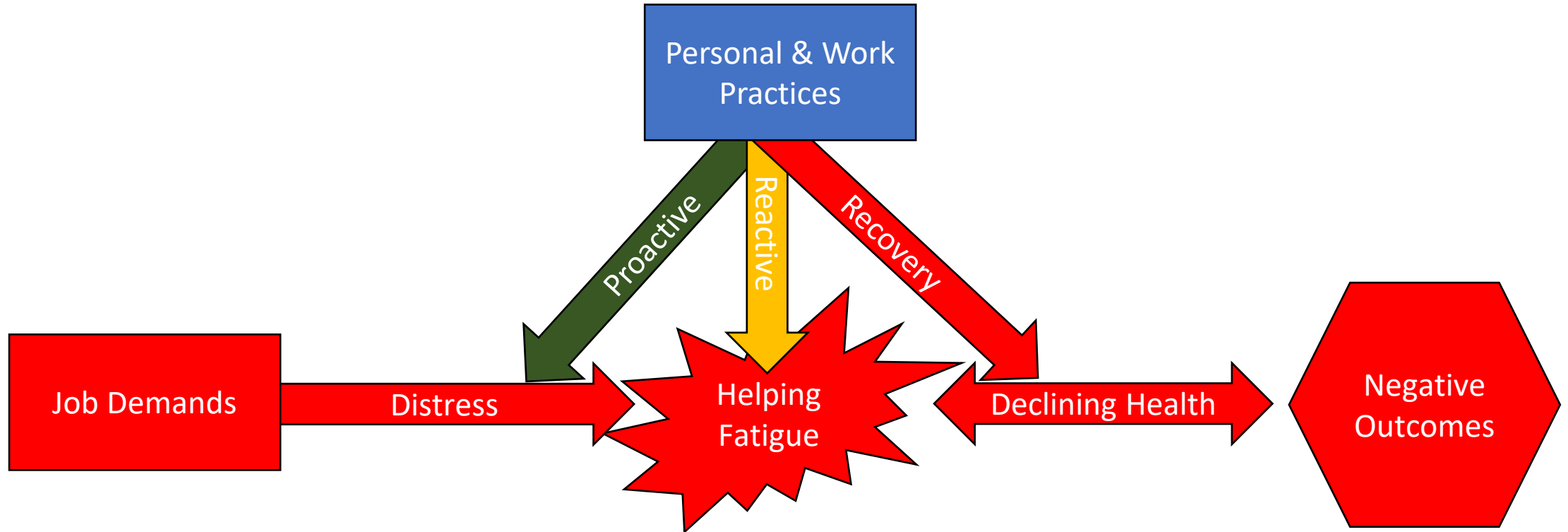
- Recovery time
- Hyper-efficiency
- Deliberate Practice
- Organizational/Team culture

YOU ARE THE
ROLE MODEL
FOR STAFF
RESILIENCY
AND
WELLNESS



Managing Job Demands





Expectations During Recovery

- Changing priorities
- Help reestablish work/life balance
- Support the creation and implementation of a plan
- Focus on the Shared in Shared Expectations!



Assessing Organization & Job Match

- Only 20% of people give a strong “yes” to the question: “Do you like what you do each day?”
- The crucial question
- Addressing lack of organizational/job attribute match
 - Start an honest dialog
 - Finding a better fit internally
 - Helping find better situation outside the organization



The Bigger Issue

- Amount of work people give is directly related to their perception of whether others are pulling their weight
- An underperformer will dramatically pull down the productivity of the entire group
- Though a little less detrimental, people who try, but do not have the ability to pull their weight will also bring down productivity



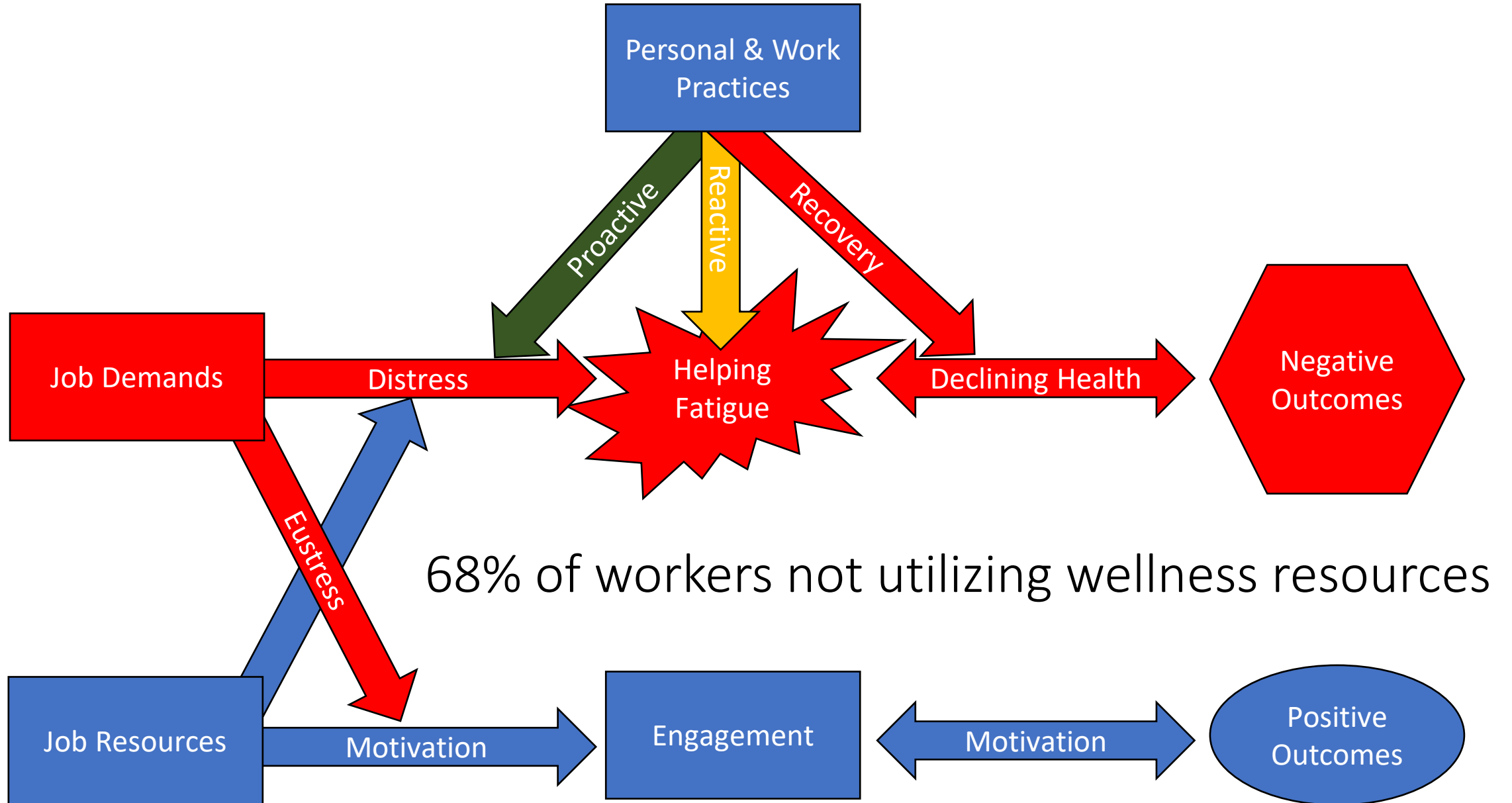
Job Resources

Physical, social, emotional, or organizational aspects of the job that may do any of the following

- Reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs
- Be functional in achieving work goals
- Stimulate personal growth and development

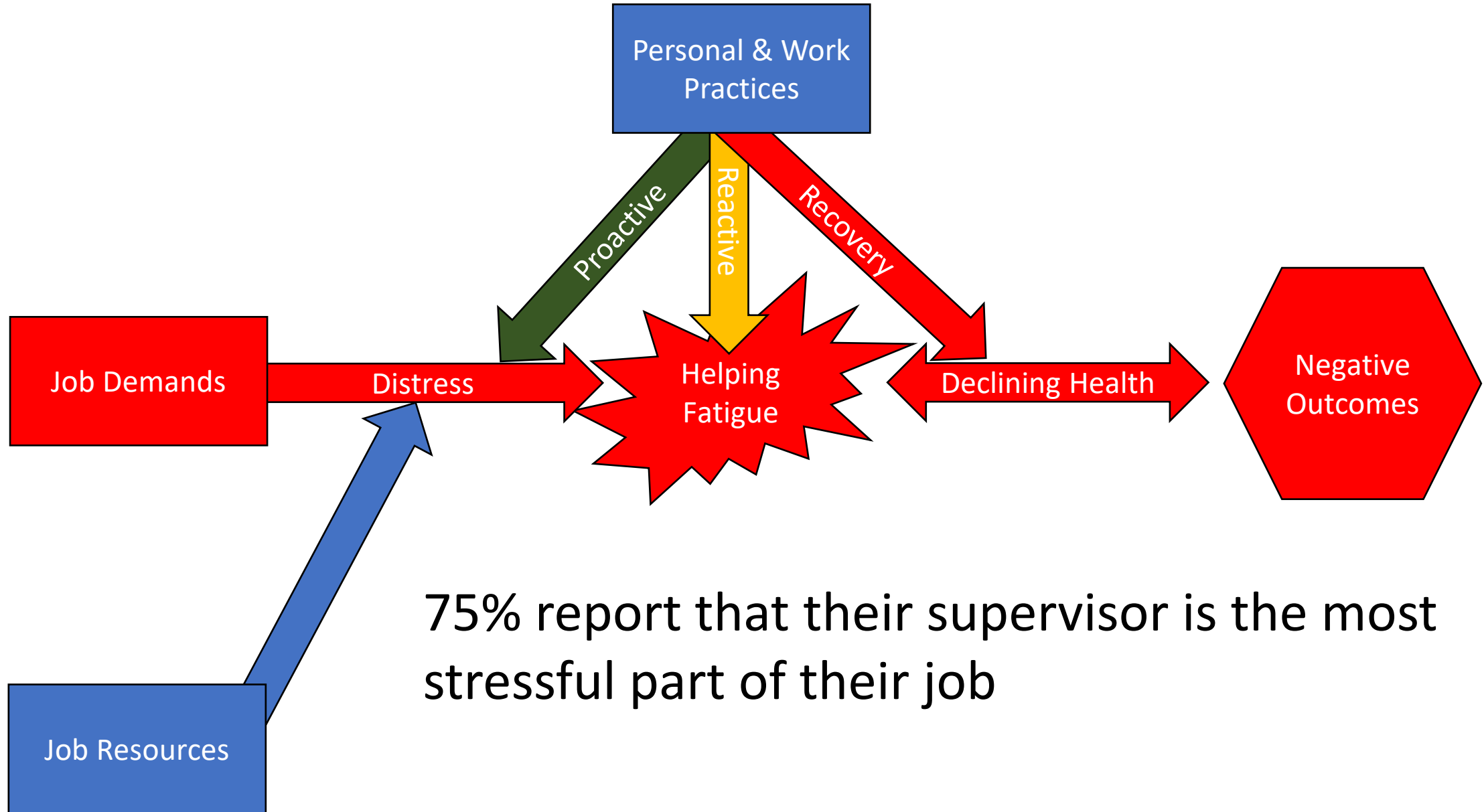


Job Demand and Resources Model



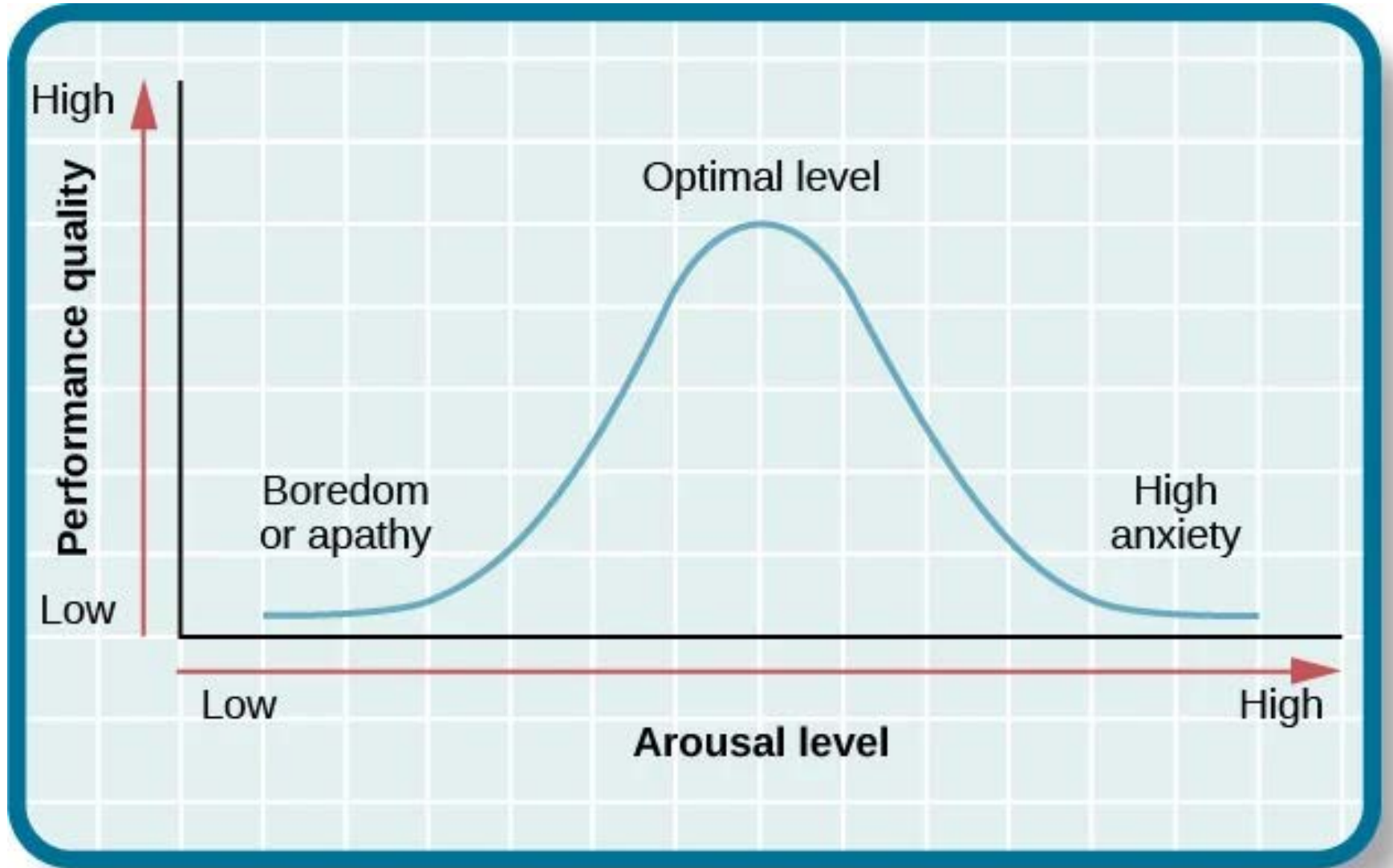
Positioning Supportive Supervision to Counter Helping Fatigue





75% report that their supervisor is the most stressful part of their job

Yerkes-Dodson Curve



Supportive Supervision Co-regulation

- Relational support and staff health
- Understand stress level and helping fatigue
- Time to build trust and safety
- Dedicated time to connect



Supportive Supervision Structure

- Wellness
- Professional development
- Administrative



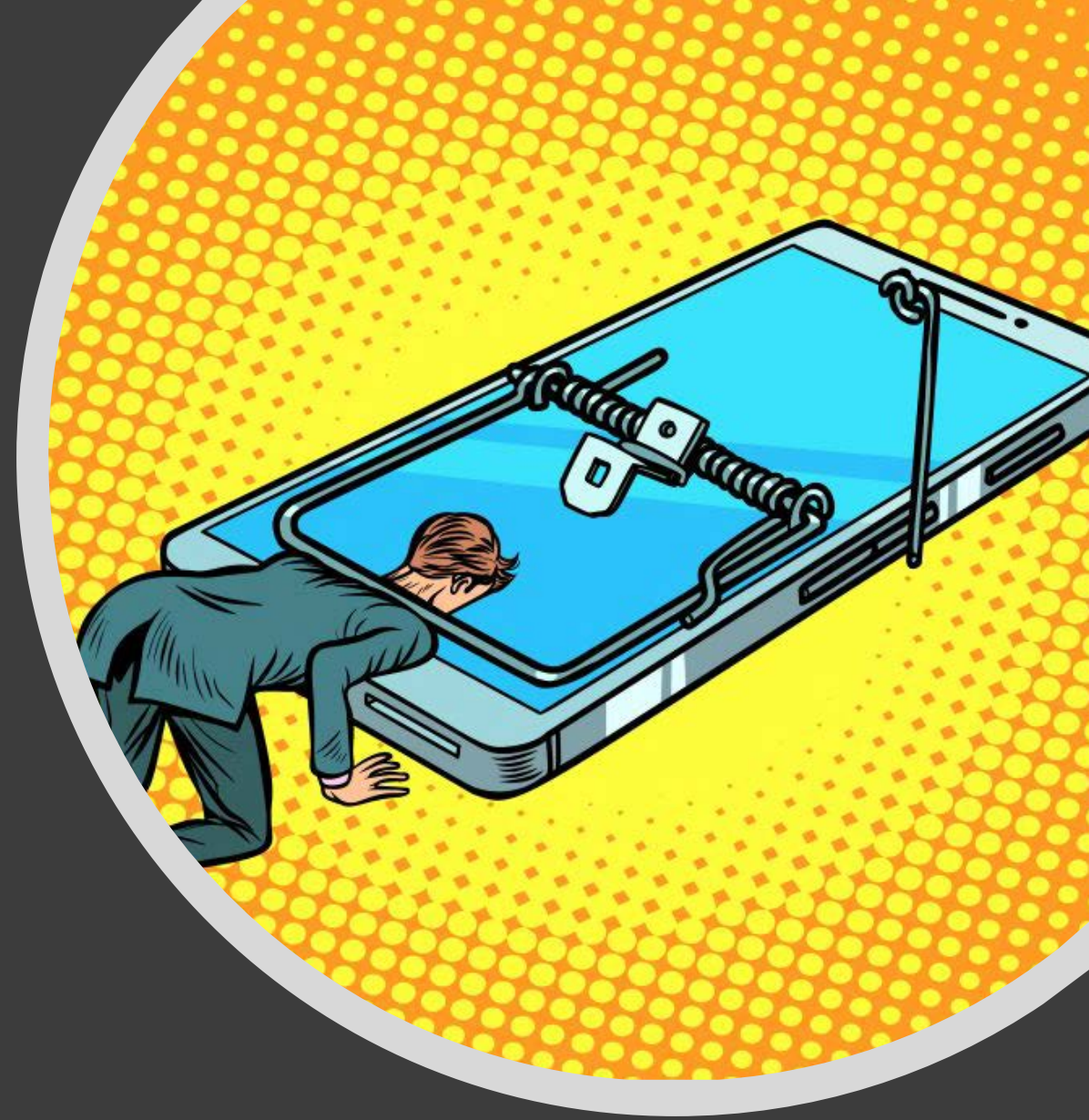
Trauma-Informed Human Resource Strategies

**HOW CAN YOU HELP SUPPORT STAFF
RESILIENCY WITH JOB RESOURCES?
ARE PEOPLE UTILIZING THESE
RESOURCES?**

Breakout Group Question

Recovery

- Encourage disconnecting from work communications after hours and vacations
- Celebrate those who use their paid time off – be the role model
- Power of 2-week vacations
- Transitioning folks back from vacation



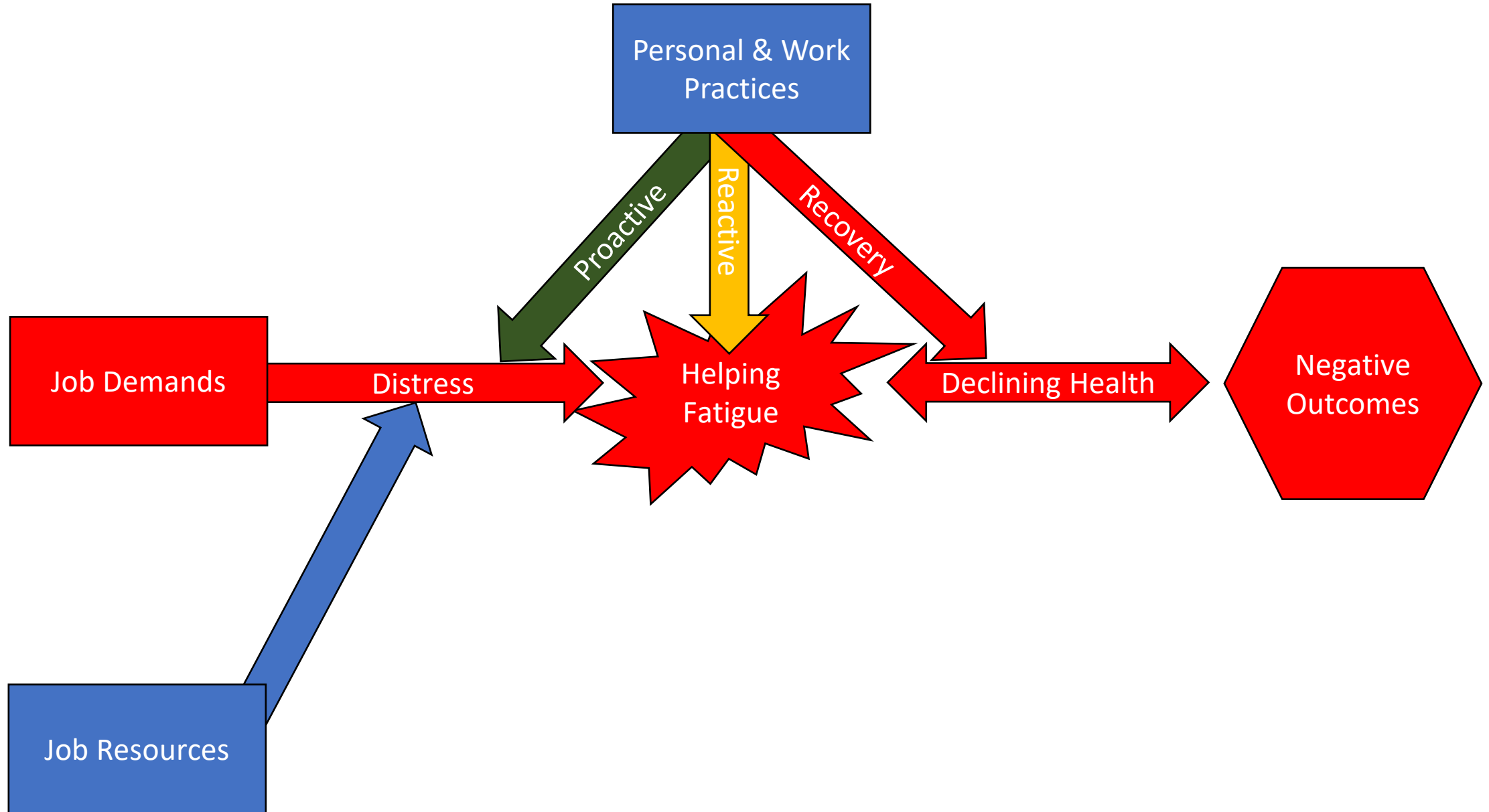


Therapy

- Access to free therapy
- Leadership needs to role model the use of therapy and be able to discuss the process

Positioning a Healthy Culture as a Crucial Job Resource





A 3D network diagram consisting of blue lines connecting various spheres. Some spheres are white, while others are blue. The blue spheres are larger and more prominent, particularly one in the foreground. The white spheres are smaller and more numerous, scattered throughout the network. The lines are thick and blue, creating a complex web of connections.

Team/Organizational Culture

The way staff work together and the set of beliefs and values that guide behavior and decision making



Program/Organizational Climate

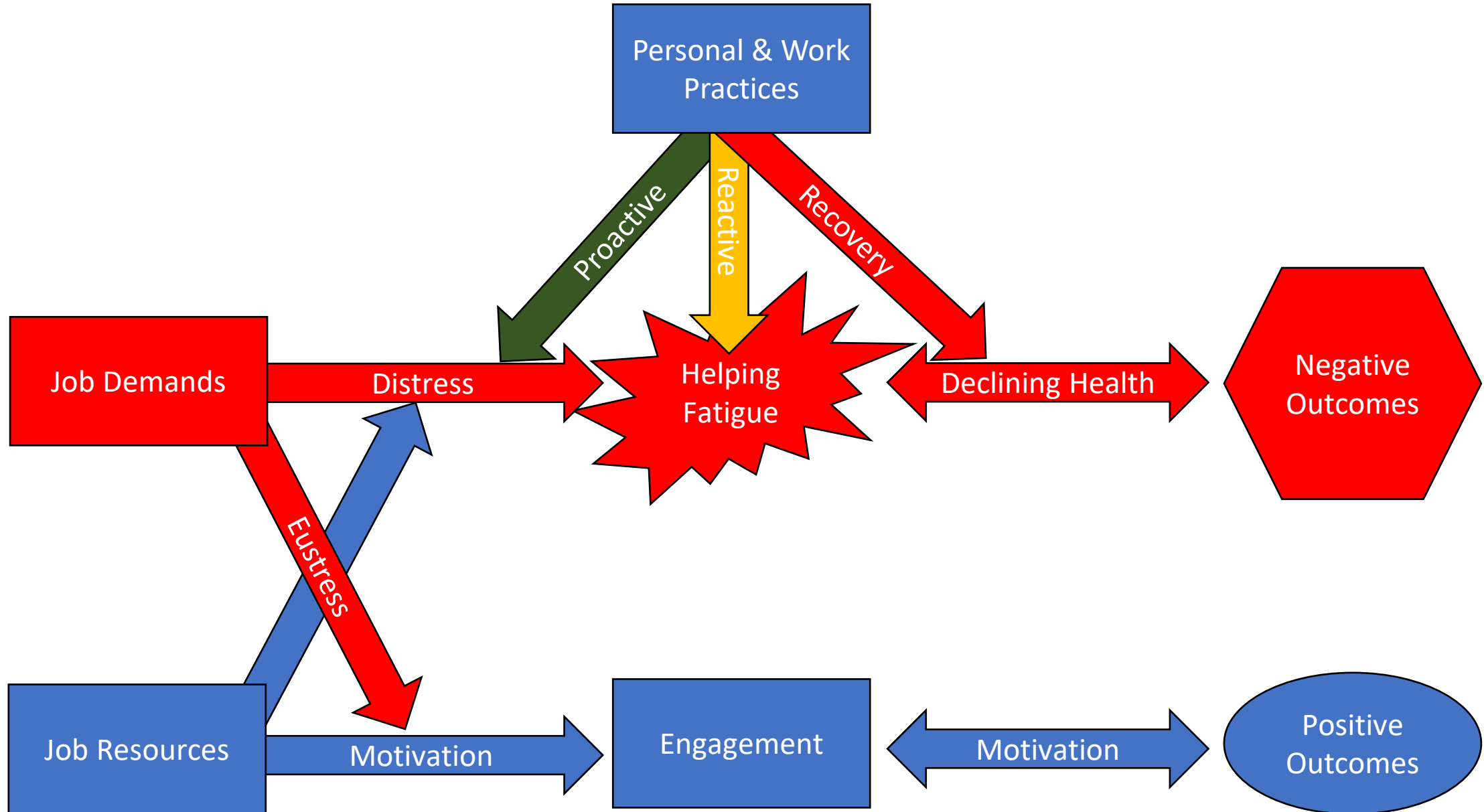
How the people experience the program or organization including the physical space, processes, and staff



Promoting Engagement to Improve Outcomes

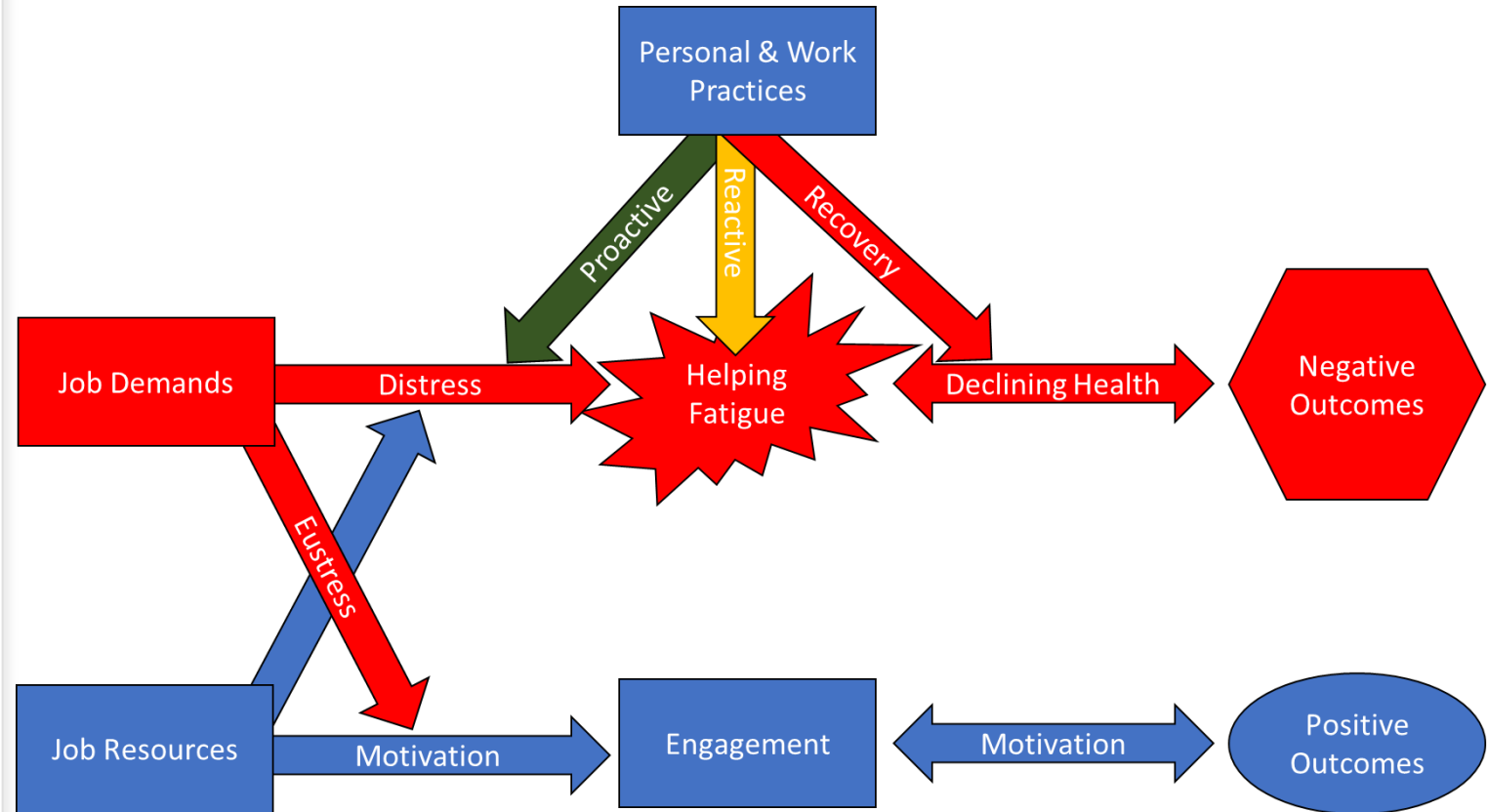


Job Demand and Resources Model



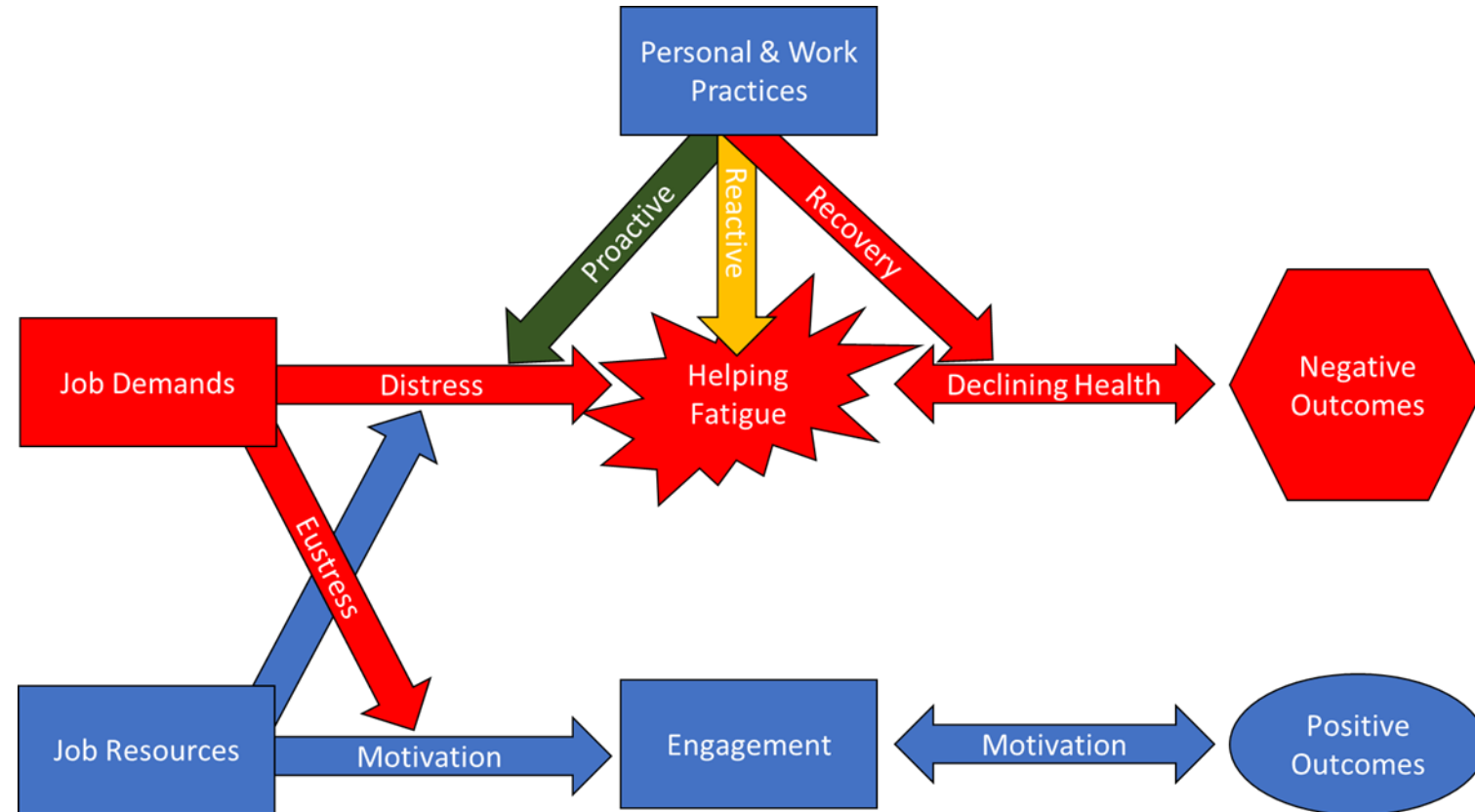
Engagement

Positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by grit (passion and perseverance) and dedication (importance, pride, and challenge)



Lack of Engagement

“Actively disengaged employees erode an organization's bottom line while breaking the spirits of colleagues in the process. Within the U.S. workforce, Gallup estimates this cost to be more than \$300 billion in lost productivity alone. In stark contrast, world-class organizations with an engagement ratio near 8:1 have built a sustainable model...As organizations move toward this benchmark, they greatly reduce the negative impact of actively disengaged employees while unleashing the organization's potential for rapid growth.” – Gallup



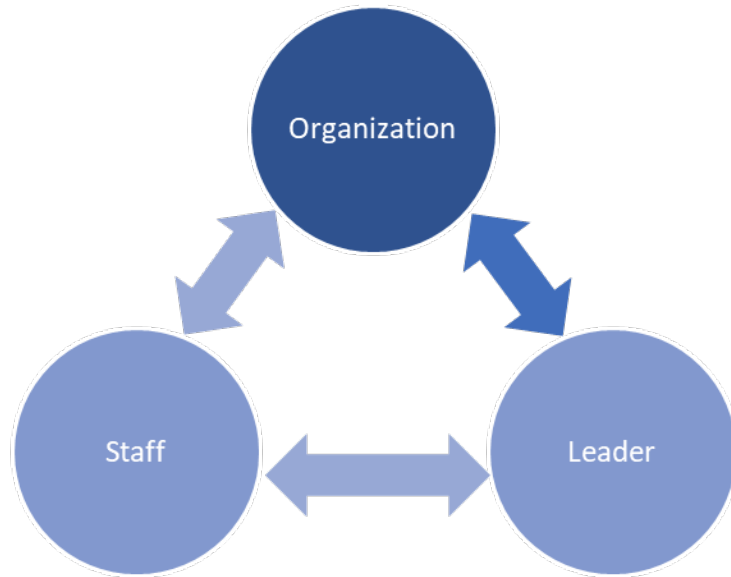
Key to Engagement

- Whether or not staff feel that **leaders care about their well-being** is the **#1 predictor** of organizational engagement
 - Only 38% of workers feel this is true of their leaders
 - 50% felt their well-being didn't matter at all to their leaders
 - Only 10% felt like they were a vital asset to the organization



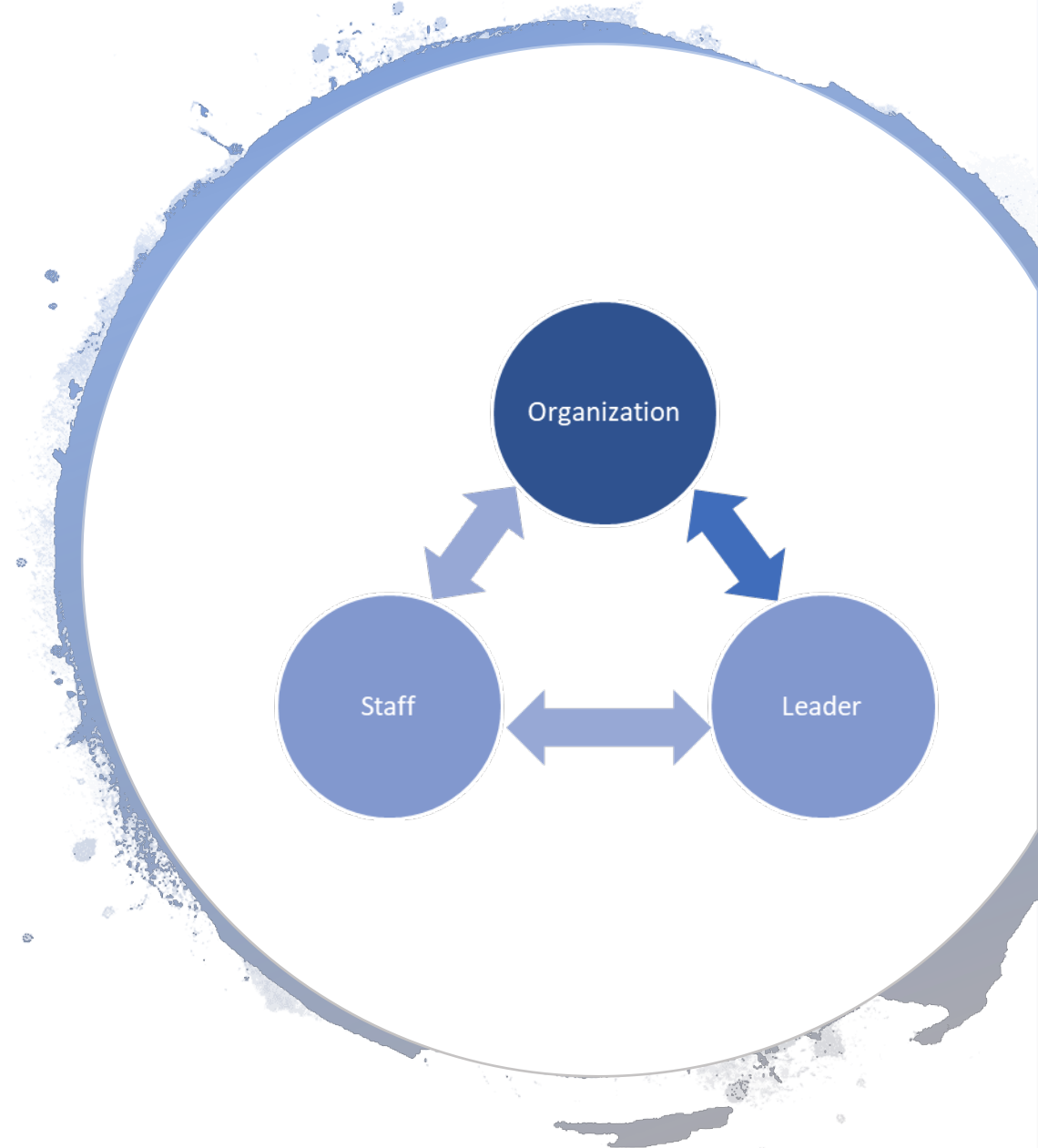
Shared Values

- “Deeply held values help us to avoid being whipsawed by whatever winds happen to be blowing around us. Values provide an internal source of direction for our behaviors.” Tony Schwartz
- Leader’s job
 - Connect their values to that of the organization
 - Help staff identify their personal values
 - Connect staff’s personal values to that of the organization
- When values conflict moral distress and injury occur



Impact of Shared Values

- Revenues increased 4X
- Stock prices grew five times faster
- Profit performance was 750% higher
- Job creation increased by 7X
- Increased engagement
- Facilitate consensus on key organizational goals
- Better understanding of job expectations
- Increased personal and team effectiveness
- High levels of organizational loyalty and pride
- Decrease in turnover and burnout



Shared Vision

- The leader connects the future direction of the organization to the passion of the staff and the mission of the organization
- Shared values are the means-the shared vision is the end
- When futures are shared:
 - Attracts more people
 - Sustain higher levels of motivation
 - Withstand more challenges





Impact of Recognition

- High performers (individuals and teams) are shown to get 5.6 times more positive feedback than negative
- Low performers get 2.8 times more negative feedback than positive
- High Recognition Environment
 - 39% Increase in staff satisfaction
 - 73% Increase in morale
 - 64% Increase in engagement
 - 45% Increase in loyalty
 - 20% increase in productivity
 - 20% increase in revenue

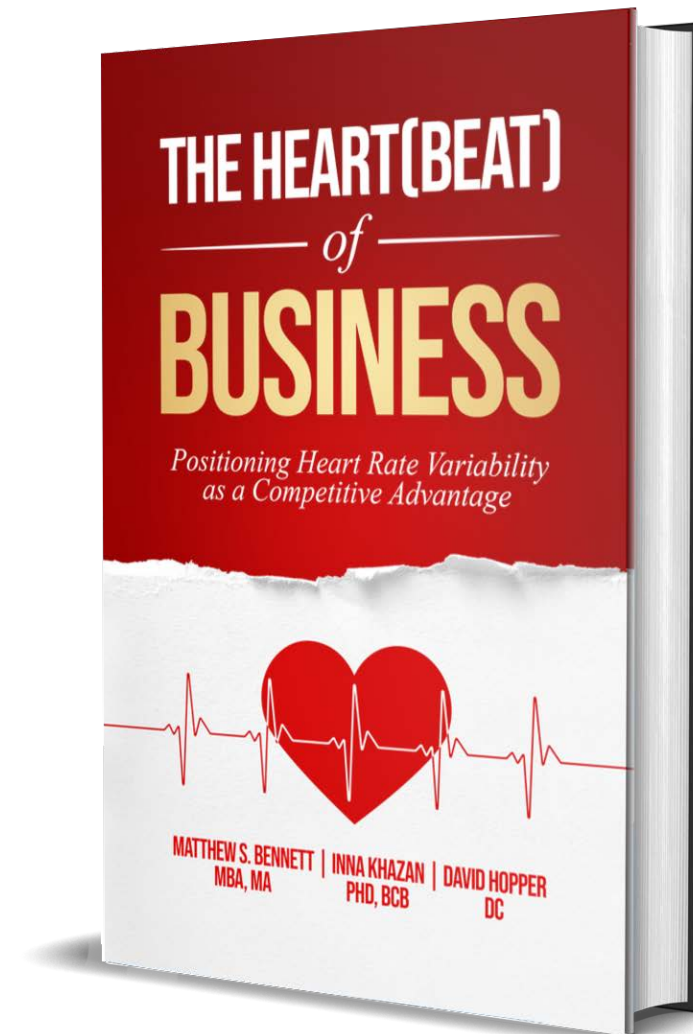


Impact of Recognition

- Alignment with Shared Values and Vision.
- Reinforce growth mindset by recognizing behaviors
- Make it meaningful
 - Invite important people
 - Customize it to the staff
 - Make it timely
- Let employees recognize employees

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- Assessments
 - Professional Quality of Life: <https://proqol.org/>
 - Gallup 12: <https://www.gallup.com/access/323333/q12-employee-engagement-survey.aspx>
- Keep Learning: Get a free book at optimalhrv.com
- Thank you for all your work!



Leadership Activity

How do you measure organizational & job fit?

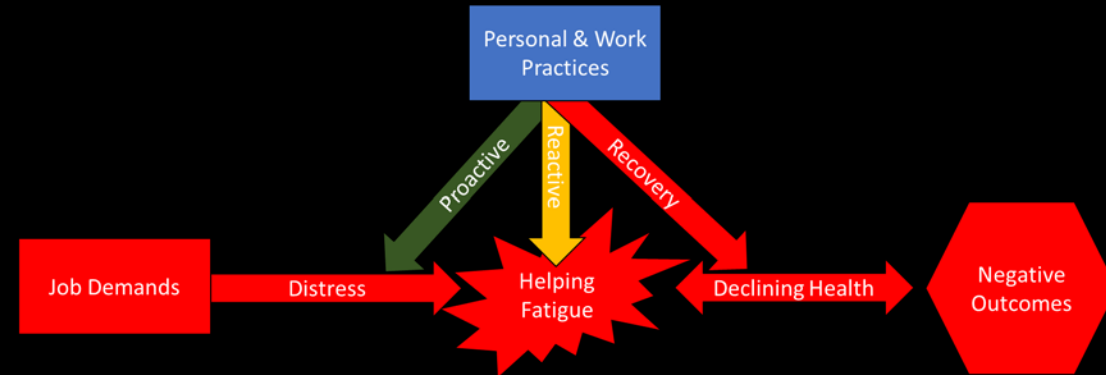
- For new employees
- For current staff

How do you handle lack:

- Organization fit?
- Job fit?

Have you established shared expectations?

- Write down the expectations you have of each position you supervise
- Have a conversation or have those you supervise write down what they think is expected from them in their position.



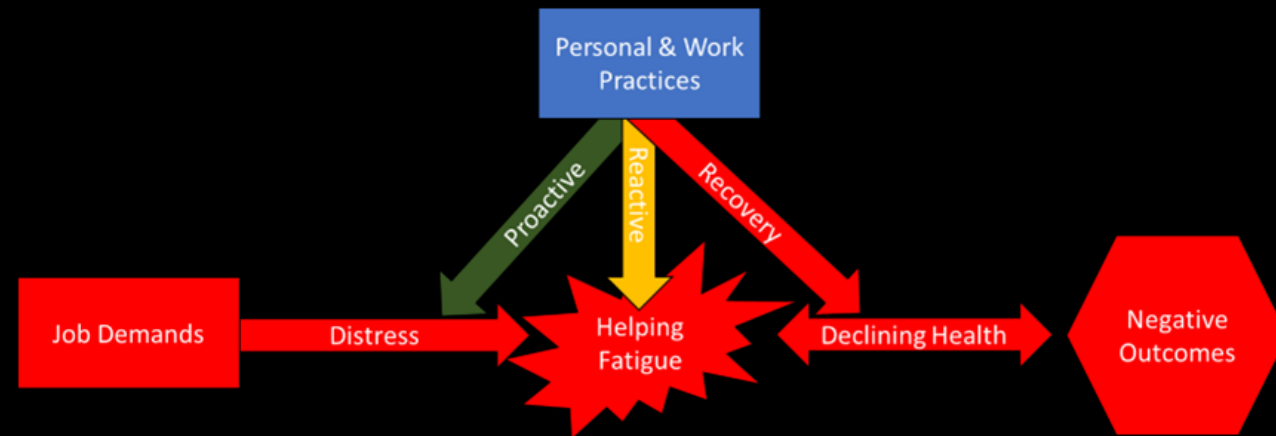
Leadership Activity

For your position

- List the job demands
- List the job resources

For each position you supervise

- List the job demands
- List the job resources

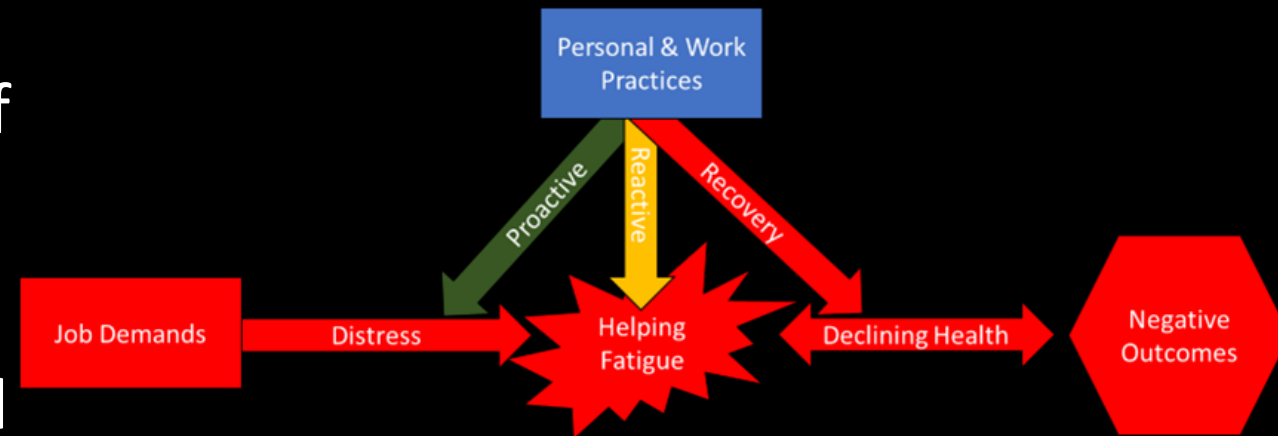


Leadership Activity

Chart out how-to best position supervision as a job resource to counteract the stress and trauma of job demands

Create your own resiliency plan and share with those you supervise and teammate

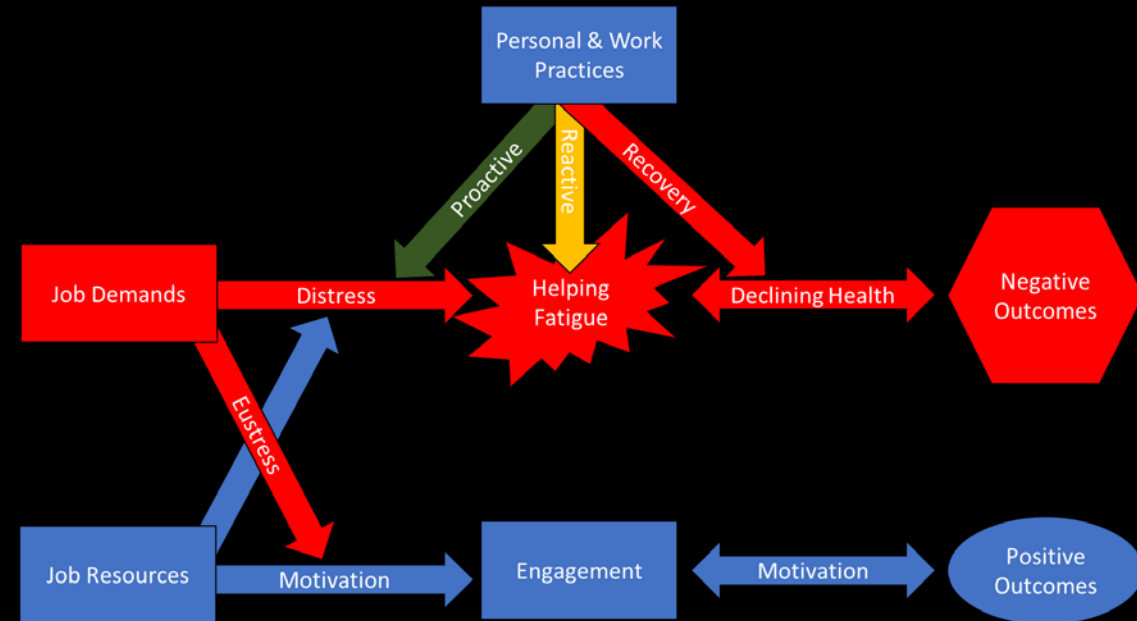
Ensure all staff have resiliency plans



Leadership Activity

Identify ways to position HR policies and benefits as part of your recovery plan

Are there any new benefits you could offer for recovery?



Leadership Activity

- Identify areas for improvement to increase positive and growth mindsets in teams and the organization
- Assess current strategies for accountability and identify areas for improvement
- Test your shared vision and shared values (can your staff state them)
- Focus on creating or strengthening vision and values
- Ensure a well-structured formal recognition structure
- Access your use of democratic collaborative decision making
 - Identify areas for improvement
 - Create a structure for staff involvement
 - Create a structure to allow staff to identify and work on crucial problems and areas for improvement

