

NAVIGATING SNAKES IN SUITS: FOSTERING EMPLOYEE WELLBEING AND POSITIVE WORK RELATIONSHIPS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Snakes in Suits: Deceptive and manipulative behaviour in the workplace

"Psychopaths are social predators who charm, manipulate, and ruthlessly plow their way through life, leaving a broad trail of broken hearts, shattered expectations, and empty wallets. Completely lacking in conscience and in feelings for others, they selfishly take what they want and do as they please, violating social norms and expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret."

Understanding the impact of employer-employee relationships on mental health

Practical ideas to protect yourself against toxic relationships in the work environment

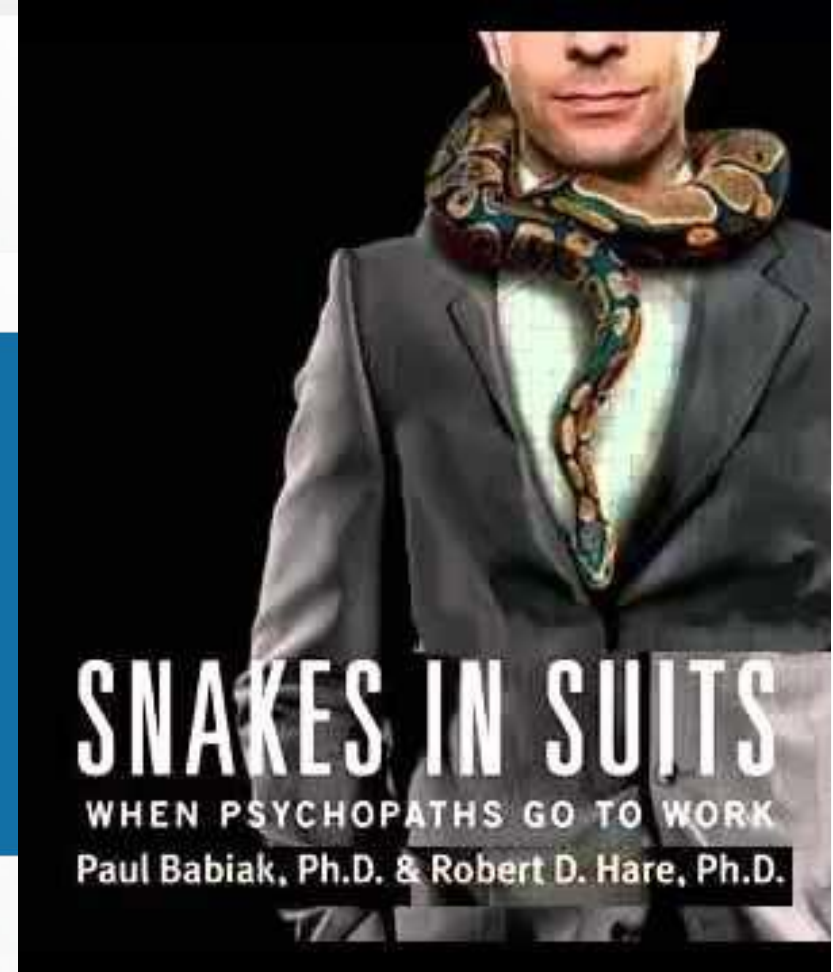
Protecting yourself from toxic relationships between manager and employee

Understanding what we need from leaders now and into the future to groom a work environment that fosters employee wellbeing



NEGATIVE MANAGER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

- South Africa rated the worst manager-employee relationships (World Economic Forum)
- 75% of people leave their managers not their jobs (Gallup)
- Employees in toxic relationships with their managers are 60% less productive (Harvard Business Review)
- Increase in employees taking more sick days/ mental health days to avoid work environment.
- Lower levels of customer satisfaction, profitability and overall organizational performance (Corporate Leadership Council)



Employee Turnover

Absenteeism and Presenteeism

Bottom Line

Solutions

Given that we understand the imperative to have an effective workplace mental health programme, do we know what strategies to implement?

SNAKES IN SUITS: Deceptive and manipulative behaviour

SNAKES IN SUITS: Charming facade

Personal agenda involves exploiting others

Lack of empathy:
Disregard for wellbeing of others, low conscience

Superficial Charm,
taking significant risks,
short-term focus

Adaptable, Narcissistic
(entitled, superiority),
Destructive Impact

Not just a challenge; it's an opportunity for growth. Opportunity to sharpen our discernment, strengthen our resilience, and fortify our commitment to creating healthier, more compassionate work environments.



ABUSE OF POWER AND TOXIC BEHAVIOUR

RED FLAGS FOR TOXIC BEHAVIOUR

- **Toxic Behaviour: Actions, attitudes or interactions that create a negative and harmful environment.**
- **Leads to negative impact on wellbeing.**
- Bullying/Harassment
- **Manipulation and Deception:** Colleagues who consistently manipulate situations for personal gain. Spreading false information or rumors to damage others' reputations.
- Micromanagement
- Passive-Aggressive Behaviour
- Withholding information
- Favoritism
- Lack of Accountability
- Excessive negativity
- Isolation and Exclusion
- Sabotage and Undermining
- Poor communication
- High Turnover and Low morale



INFLUENCE IMPACTS PERFORMANCE

When subordinates obey leaders because of	Job satisfaction is	Organizational performance is
Referent power	High	High
Expert power	High	High
Reward power	Medium to low	High to medium
Legitimate power	Medium to low	No relationship found
Coercive power	low	No relationship found

Charisma

Trust

Connectedness

Knowledge

Skills

Incentives

Exchange

Hierarchy

Punishment

IMPACT OF EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS ON MENTAL HEALTH



Maxwell says

“ Leadership is not about how people
experience you, but how people
experience themselves in your presence ”

PROTECTING YOURSELF AGAINST TOXIC BEHAVIOURS

Recognise
toxic patterns

Separate out
what is yours
and what is
not/
Self-awareness

Gas lighting?

Uncertainty
and
Ambiguity:
Mentally
taxing

Reputation
and Public
Scrutiny

WORKPLACE CULTURE

Setting
boundaries/
Strategies for
saying 'no'

Clear
communication
/ assertiveness

Document
everything!

**Upward
management**

Seeking
support /
utilising
resources

Note: The behaviour may not change, so goal is to protect yourself and your wellbeing. Consider your options.

WHAT DO WE NEED FROM LEADERS



Leading with compassion and emotional intelligence

- Heart-centered leadership
- EQ, AQ, CQ, RQ, SC, PQ
- Compassionomics



Growth Mindset

- Learn, unlearn
- Upskill, reskill
- Self-awareness
- The learning organisation



Culture of Care

- Accountability
- Check-ins
- Vulnerability (VUCA-D)



Destigmatize Mental Health

- Be comfortable with being vulnerable
- Creating psychological safety
- Create space – talk openly



Delegate and Empower

- Distribute workload
- Reduce individual stress
- Promote collaboration
- Reduces need to have answers



Consider professional Help

- Often need permission to seek help – not immune to stressors
- Proactive
- Setting the example

FUTURE-FIT LEADERS

Leaders with high EQ can positively influence workplace culture.

Putting Humans at the Center:

- Shifting the focus from task-oriented management to people-oriented leadership.
- Encouraging open communication, active listening, and empathy.

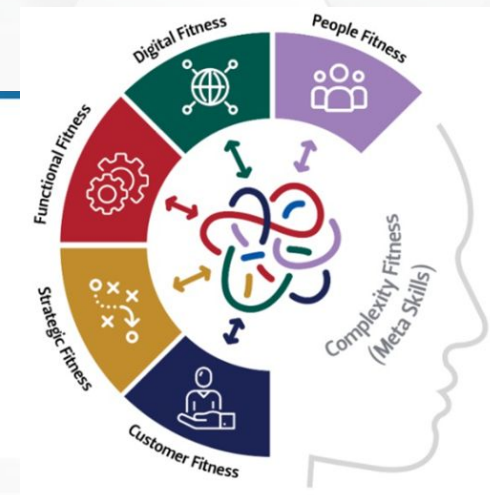
Future-Proofing Leadership Skills:

- Identifying the need for evolving leadership skills to meet changing workplace dynamics.



OTHER SUPPORT STRUCTURES:

- Upward management
- Support structures
- Workplace policies and processes
- Check in on yourself: Mental Health!



EQ

AQ

RQ

CQ

DEIB

Collaborate

Lifelong
Learner

Growth
Mindset

Resilience

Prosilience

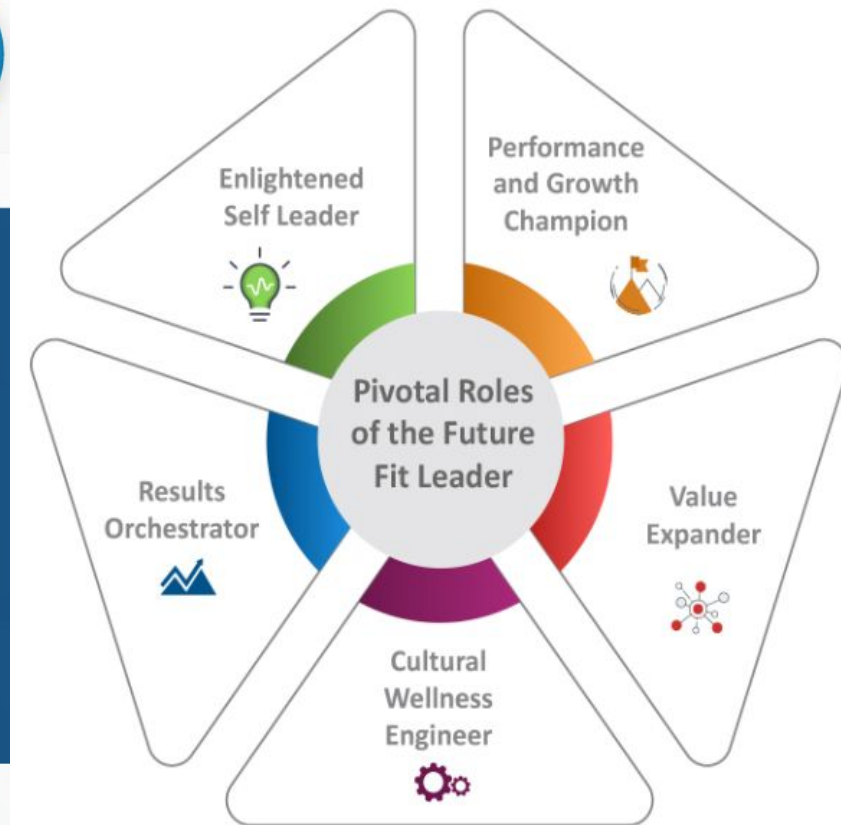
Purpose-drive
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Heart-Cent
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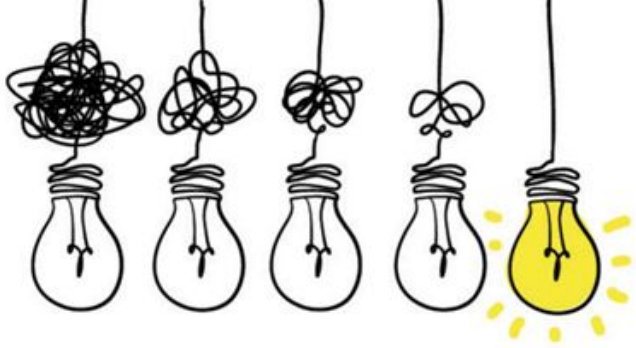
FUTURE-FIT LEADERS

Some key aspects of future-fit leadership include:

Vision and Strategic Thinking - **Agility and Adaptability (Adaptive intelligence AQ) – Change Agents** – Idea generators and implementors (innovation and experimentation) – **Lifelong learners** - **Emotional Intelligence (EQ) - Global and Cultural Awareness (CQ)** – Technological Savvy - **Collaboration and Team Building (inclusivity)** - Ethical and Responsible Leadership - **Resilience and Risk Management - Purpose-Driven Leadership**



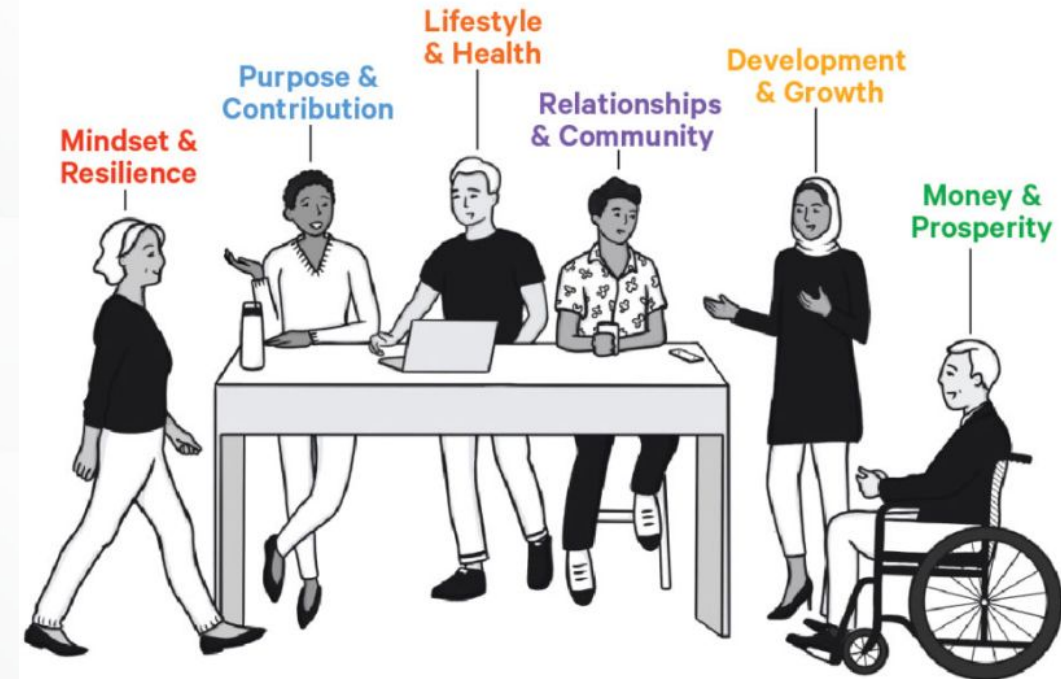
Mental Health



- Broader than mental illness which is higher than ever before
- Anxiety, depression, loneliness
- Feeling of belonging – value spaces that are meaningful
- Manager-employee relationships are centre of the working experience and working environment.
- AI: Integration! Can't run away from relationships and impact...

Evidence: Jobs of the future

- Wellbeing Directors
- Chief of Happiness
- Wellbeing data analysts
- Sleep coaches
- Smile specialists
- Virtual and remote wellbeing professionals
- Wellbeing Tech experts
- Resilience specialists (subject taught at school)



THANK YOU

"Wellness is the compass that leads us to the summit of success. Let's climb together and conquer new horizons of vitality." - Oprah Winfrey

