

The Wellbeing Workstream



Fundamentally, there is a mismatch of expectations in our industry increasing tension; we need to acknowledge this before we begin...

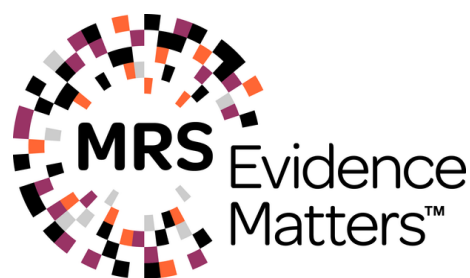
James sums it up beautifully: 'Our expectations based on our own experience seemed to be that in the early days of your career, you work harder and longer. Just a reality to Be faced.

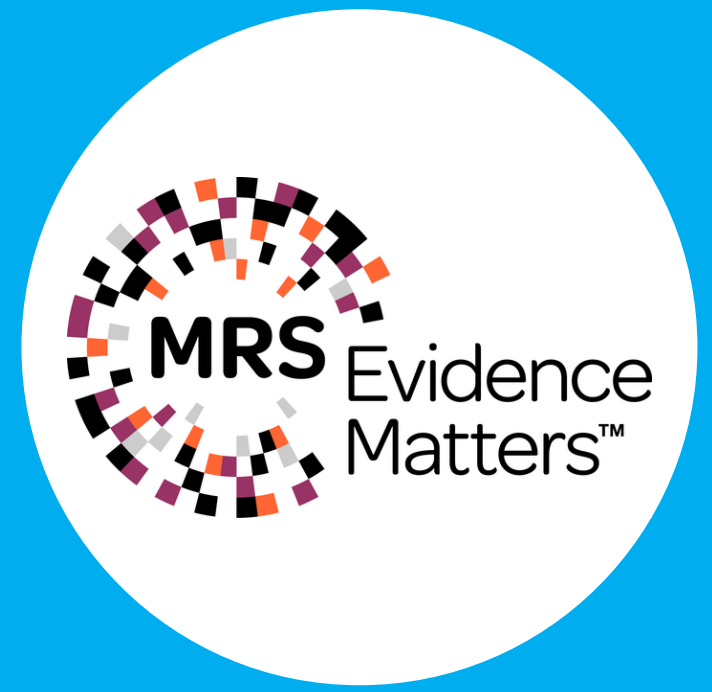
Many of the new generation don't seem to have that to the same extent and it causes tension.

There must be a middle ground to find that requires more open channels to communicate when under duress.

A stressed junior feeling like they're being worked too hard is probably being managed by a stressed manager whose project load is a bit too big.

They need to find the common ground of the shared need (project deadline and low resource) to work out how they will manage the project AND their personal energy to get it done'.





Barriers to wellbeing:
client management is key for
many of the areas



BELIEF THAT 'EXCELLENT' CLIENT SERVICE MEANS SAYING 'YES' ALL THE TIME

VAGUE EXPECTATIONS/OVERPROMISING TO CLIENTS: NO CLEAR EXPECTATIONS SET FOR DELIVERY AND POINT OF CONTACT/OUTPUT

STAKEHOLDER DEADLINES SHIFTING: 'DESIRED' VS 'NEEDED' DEADLINES

PROTOTYPES/CONCEPTS NOT BEING READY IN TIME: PRESSURED TO COMPRESS TIMELINES AND END POINT REMAINS STATIC

- It's not saying 'no', it's saying 'yes' differently.
- Set specific expectations with client throughout project: let them know that if timings change/sign off doesn't happen, there will be an impact.
- Check with the internal team: what is actually possible?
- Sometimes, it's just a no: 'really sorry, but on this occasion, we aren't able to do this; we looked at various ways, including XYX'.
- Find out: What do they really need? Why?

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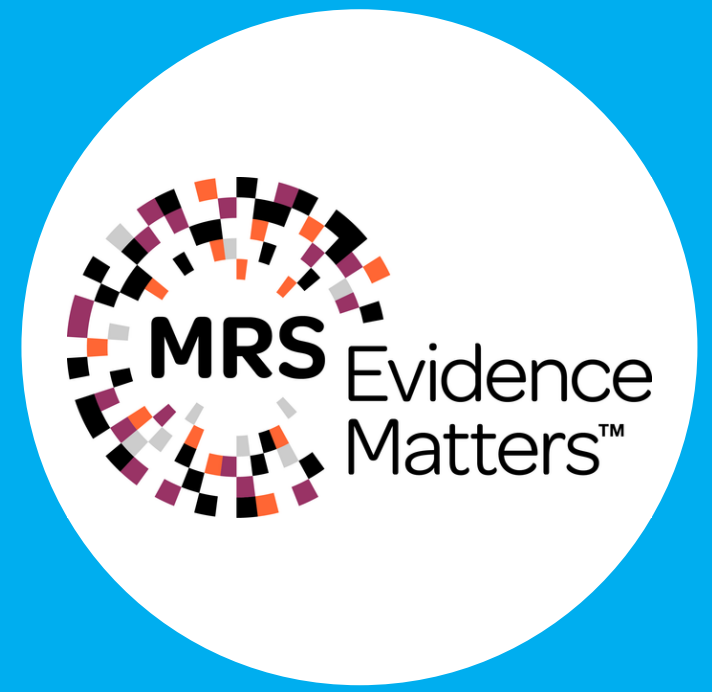
GLOBAL TIME DIFFERENCES: UK BASED TEAMS MEETING NEEDS OF TEAMS AROUND THE WORLD

'Clear expectations setting: 'You will get XYZ at this specific time': think ahead. If you say 'with you by morning', clarify which time zone you mean.
It's not saying 'no', it's saying 'yes' differently'.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: DIFFERING LEVELS OF ACCEPTABILITY BETWEEN CULTURES: TONE, TIMEFRAMES, WORKING HOURS (SEA POSES GREATEST CHALLENGE)

Train juniors specifically on how to manage cultural differences: let them know what to expect: i.e. SEA cultures may need 'less fluff': emails should be polite and warm, but shorter, and more to the point.

- We forget that clients are human too: they are under pressures that we don't always understand, or neglect to think about as we are wrapped up in our own worlds.
- It's our role to ensure their wellbeing as well as ours: we can do this through teaching them the characteristics that makes a good project.
- Give them specific feedback: explain why you loved working with them in detail. WHY are they good partners. Deliver messages with confidence; it's infectious.
- Make your clients feel valued: partnership is about positive reinforcement



Barriers to wellbeing:

We have to accurately convey the reality at time of recruitment



**HIGHEST TIER CONSUMERS
ONLY AVAILABLE IN
EVENINGS: MUST WORK
EVENINGS TO
ACCOMMODATE FIELDWORK**

**MULTIPLE LOCATIONS
THROUGH
COUNTRY/WORLD
REQUIRED: MUST
TRAVEL TO MULTIPLE
LOCATIONS**

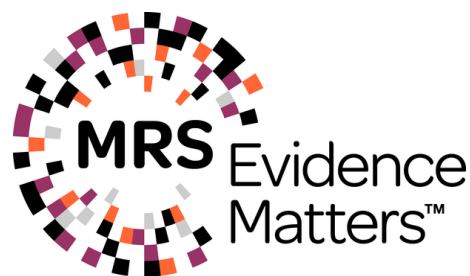
Effectively communicated and practiced TOIL: plan in advance. The second we know we have to work late, adjust work schedules accordingly and protect that time.

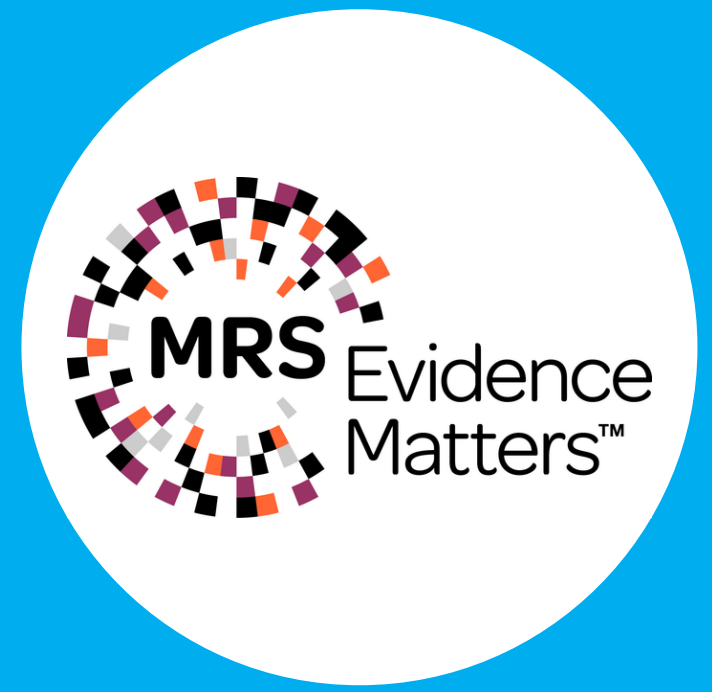
It's about not obscuring reality of life in market research; sometimes, you have to work harder and later than usual, and sometimes things get fraught...

As leaders, our job is to be honest with the reality, help people prepare for it and call it out. We look at what we can do to help people both prepare and recover and it's not ok to expect people to do 'harder and later' relentlessly. The SLT's responsibility is to help manage your time and help teach balance and communication. Life and work can't always be prescriptive in the real world. We can teach and manage elements such as flexibility by leading by example and role model what 'good' looks like, but unless people take some responsibility themselves, they won't even achieve it.

Call out that 'stuff will go wrong; we'll never get 100% right: reality is that work is a dynamic balance of competing requirements which we're all trying to navigate together. Aim for perfection – but don't expect to get there.

In many years to come, it may be that as an industry (and as a world) we can wholeheartedly say that we fit around our lives BUT we're not at that stage yet – it's baby steps – not full throttle.





Barriers to wellbeing:

Role modelling behaviours and
specific training



**MULTIPLE PROJECTS RUNNING SIMULTANEOUSLY:
MULTITASKING IS KEY, CHALLENGES AROUND
PRIORITISATION (AND CHANGING PRIORITIES)**

'Time management training: provide, train and offer continuous support with management: important and urgent, important but not urgent, not important and not urgent etc

**EMOTIONAL DESIRE TO PLEASE: CLIENT/SLT PRAISE FOR
INDIVIDUALS AND TEAM MEMBERS – EMOTIONAL REWARD**

Ensure praise is delivered for skills beyond commercial success or successful delivery: be specific. It is linked to excellent client comms or time management/saying no etc

**TEAM VS SLT HIERARCHY: SLT/BOARD FOCUS ON
TEAMS, NOT THEMSELVES/THEIR PEERS**

- Senior team bonding is essential; the behaviours in this group filter throughout the business: 2 hour agenda less catch ups – let's talk about what matters most. If there are big topics, put in a separate meeting about it.
- Juniors get stressed when they see their manager stressed/they do not want promotion themselves: SLT need to know this. Cross function mentors help people see their own behaviours reflected in others.

COMMERCIAL TARGETS WITH PERFORMANCE RELATED PAY. GROWTH TARGETS FOR CLIENT ACCOUNTS, AGENCY TEAMS: PUSH TO ACHIEVE GREATER PERSONAL FINANCIAL RETURN

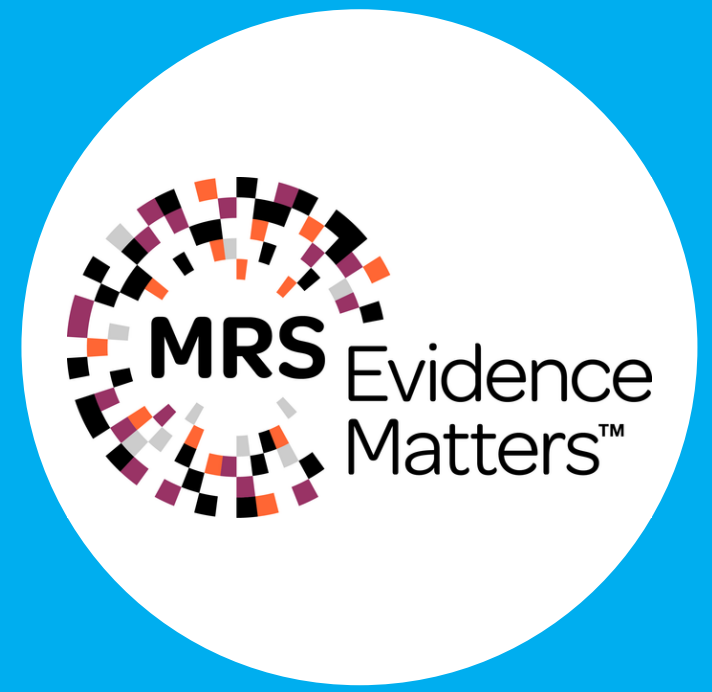
PROMOTIONAL PATHWAYS: INDIVIDUALS WHO WISH TO STAND OUT. MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING/THINKING OF NEEDS/CAPACITY/CAPABILITY OF WIDER TEAM TO DELIVER TO IT

- It is the responsibility of a senior leadership team to set realistic goals: if circumstances beyond control change, targets may need to be adapted (up or down) but communication of these are essential.
- Monthly catch ups with line reports: where do they stand? Set expectations as well as giving feedback and addressing any challenges or concerns/supporting. If the company is not performing well, and promotion is unfeasible financially, they must know this.
- For those who are not 'team players', directly link their promotional pathway to KPIs outside of commercial metrics. They need to deliver within parameters of team capabilities.

EXPECTATION OF FLEXIBLE WORKING AND INSTANCES OF PERSONAL FLEXIBILITY HAVING NEGATIVE IMPACT ON WIDER TEAM, ALBEIT UNINTENTIONALLY ('I CAN'T WORK THAT MORNING, SO I CAN ONLY TALK IT THROUGH WITH YOU AFTER 7PM - SORRY')

DIFFERENT LIFE STAGES/LIFE PRIORITIES: WORKING PARENTS, NEW RELATIONSHIPS, DIVORCES, YOUNG, FREE AND SINGLE – ALL INFLUENCE ABILITY AND INCLINATIONS TO WORK IN CERTAIN WAYS

- First person flexibility can mean inflexibility to other people's requirements: people focus on their own needs without considering the impact on others.
- Empathy sessions can easily become moaning sessions: 'I have XYZ to do', rather than understanding the other person's POV.
- We have to have grown up conversations and set expectations from start of contract. Let's not forget the working part of work. Fundamentally, how do we go about doing our job well? Let's not prioritise life over a job that was taken with clear expectations set. How do we help people execute the parts of their life they can't change, without detrimental impact to others? Simply, we have to have awkward conversations to ensure mutual benefit.
- Efficiency training: what processes/ways of working can improve efficiency to allow greater flexibility?
- Core hours: what are these to your business? Are they needed?



Barriers to wellbeing:

Role modelling behaviours is key



Not enough storytelling:

Not sharing failures/things I learnt the hard way:
permission to not be ok

Programmes delivered functionally: what's it for
discovered: does now share the when, who and
how - not just at time of crisis – it's proactive, not
reactive. Talk through with people who have
experienced it. Gives permission for use.

Unaware of what support is available: support is mentioned sometimes in company updates – SLT have assumption of knowledge and understanding, when things are not truly known about or understood: dominant where there is high staff churn rates. Need for constant reiteration through storytelling.

Not knowing what problems they are allowed to bring to the table: personal and work related issues are equally as valid: interrelated (exacerbated through hybrid working)

Emotional barriers: guilt, fear, shame

Responsibility: whose responsibility is it to ensure wellbeing? Both personal and employer.

Vulnerability and empowerment: seniors may not be comfortable sharing their own challenges and stories: their teams follow their lead

Identifying reactive, normal emotional response to something vs mental health issues/warning signs that may evolve

Belief that it is 'dealt with': no ongoing programme of support/prevention/check ins

Prejudice or perception of prejudice: being treated differently or fear it happening based on age, gender, ethnicity, religion, orientation etc...

Personal circumstances/history: things behind the scenes or previously bad experiences colouring ability to speak up or challenges with a family member/spouse

- We need to go beyond telling people that wellbeing tools exist. To make adoption happen, we need to live it in a practical way. It is our responsibility as a business to role model it and demonstrate culture with actions, otherwise it lives in 'box tickery'
- Engage with most senior managers who are prepared to talk through their own usage of using the support system and experiences: what, where, when, how: shared their lived experiences. Each manager has to be prepared to do the same.
- If no one is available internally, we need a trusted external advisor.
- Ensure HR representatives and wellbeing first aiders have senior roles: senior people will NOT approach junior team members with problems.