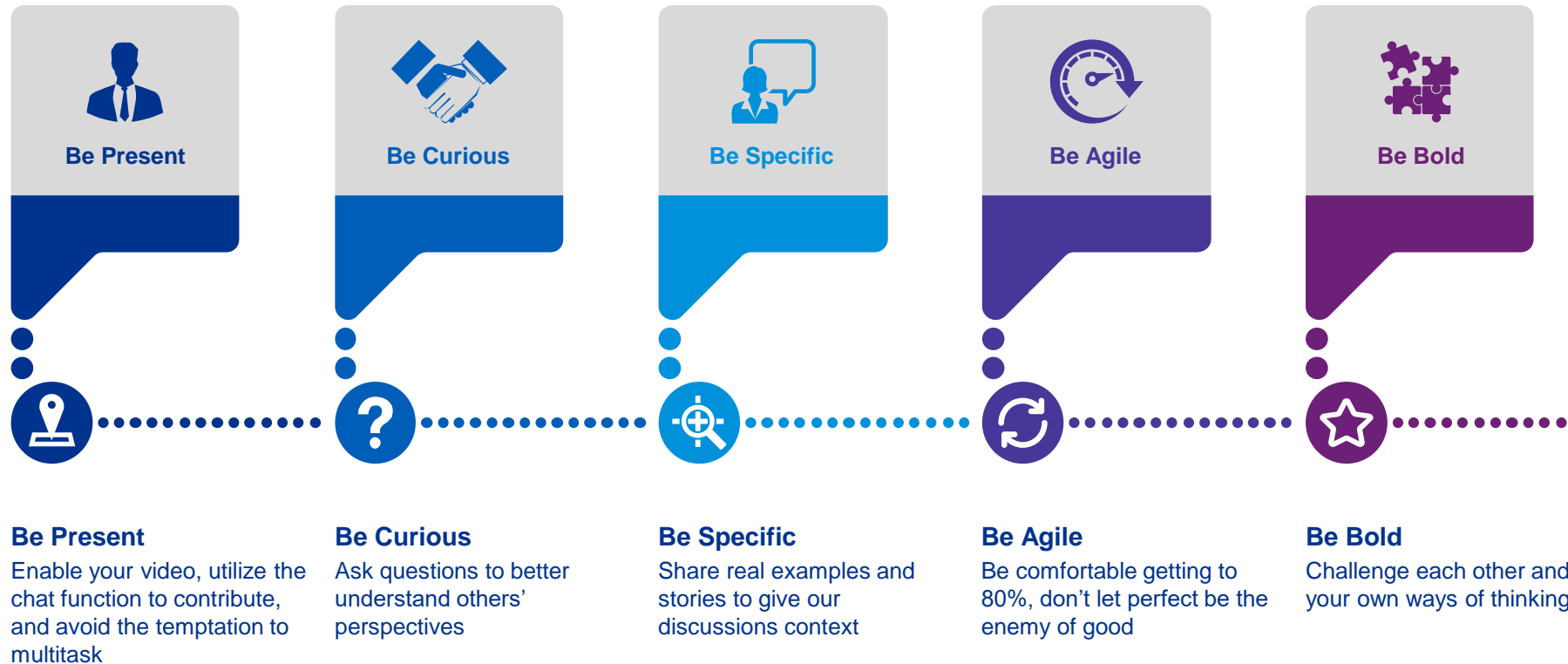# Mental Health & Leadership in the Wake of COVID-19

April 7th, 2020

Ground Rules: Virtual Interactions

To get the most out of remote working, the following are ground rules for virtual interactions, be it client meetings, internal team meetings, or webinars.

Be Present	Be Curious	Be Specific	Be Agile	Be Bold

Be Present
Enable your video, utilize the chat function to contribute, and avoid the temptation to multitask

Be Curious
Ask questions to better understand others' perspectives

Be Specific
Share real examples and stories to give our discussions context

Be Agile
Be comfortable getting to 80%, don't let perfect be the enemy of good

Be Bold
Challenge each other and your own ways of thinking

Today's Presenter

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Inclusion and Diversity Practice
Senior Consultant

How to Use This Deck

We're all in this together during these times of uncertainty. As workforce dynamics shift, organizational structures change and remote work becomes the new normal for many, the ability for leaders to support teams and colleagues to support each other is paramount.

This toolkit is designed to support leaders and guide them in how to; reduce uncertainty within their workforces, support the mental health of employees, increase employee engagement and subsequent productivity, and lead with inclusion.

This toolkit also provides employees with resources on how to support their own and their colleagues' mental wellbeing.

Focusing on Mental Health During Times of Uncertainty

Reducing uncertainty is at the base of creating a mentally healthy workplace and a sense of security for employees. Leaders should aim to decrease the sense of uncertainty, to allow the focus to be shifted away from anxiety towards motivation. In framing the environment, leaders should create a sense of shared purpose, so employees understand they're not alone, and build a sense of psychological safety.

Reducing Uncertainty

Increasing Engagement

Leading with Inclusion

Social Distancing Can't Mean Social Isolation

The adverse affects of social isolation on mental and physical health are detrimental.

2x Loneliness and social isolation are twice as harmful to **physical and mental health** as **obesity.**

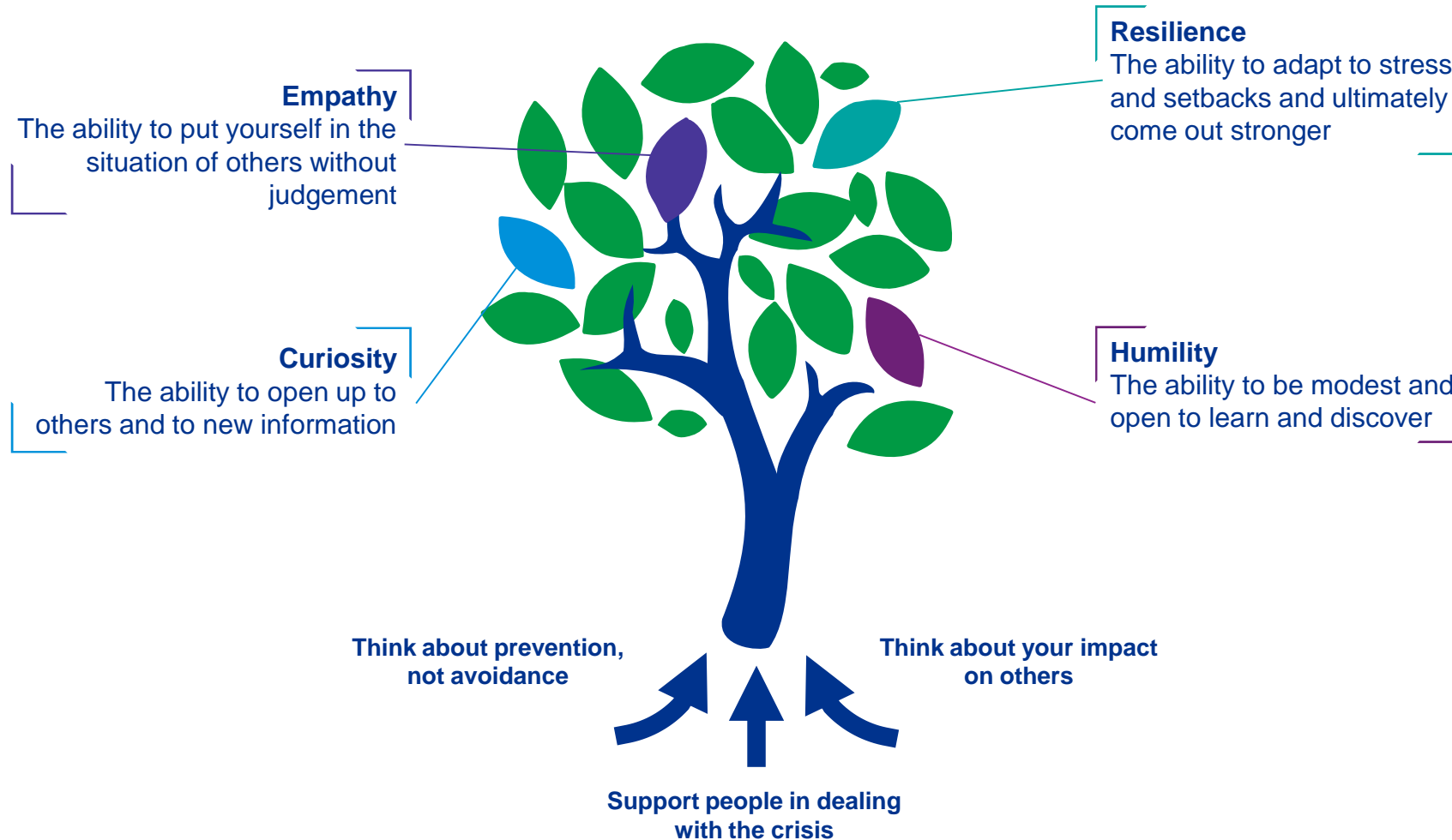Those who feel isolated show **lower engagement** and **commitment** to their organization

Lack of social connection **raises health risks** to an equivalent level of **smoking 15 cigarettes** a day.
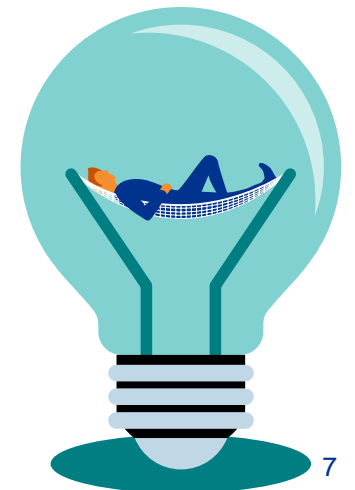
Engage in Modelling Compassion Towards Others

Employees look to their managers for cues about how to react to changes or crises and leaders should continue to model compassion. Employees themselves can focus on demonstrating empathy and understanding towards themselves and colleagues during difficult times. .

Resilience
The ability to adapt to stress and setbacks and ultimately come out stronger

Empathy
The ability to put yourself in the situation of others without judgement

Curiosity
The ability to open up to others and to new information

Humility
The ability to be modest and open to learn and discover

Think about prevention, not avoidance

Think about your impact on others

Support people in dealing with the crisis

Care for Others Starts With Self Care

To build a positive work environment for yourself and others, it's important to start with caring for yourself. Below are some questions you can be asking yourself to check in on your wellbeing.

01
Are you being understanding with yourself and your current situation?

02
Are you acknowledging your own life and work challenges?

03
Are you investing in your own physical and mental resilience?

04
Are you being open with yourself and focusing on the bigger picture?

Supporting Others by Recognizing Mental Distress

What's important is to recognize when the mental distress you or someone around you is experiencing becomes a mental health problem.

Someone may be struggling with their mental health if you notice a change in their thoughts, feelings and behaviours that is:

Intense

Long Lasting

Negatively Affecting

8

Concrete Ways to Support Others and their Mental Health

As a leader, your job is to care for employees, and it is important to refer to resources and guides on how to do that in the most effective way. You are not alone and relying on and referring to resources is important in your goal to support yourself and others.

Recognize when someone might be struggling and be there for them. Consider taking Mental Health First Aid Training and/or referring to their resources. **01**

If you're concerned about someone's mental distress, talk to them. Say what you see and show you care to build trust. **02**

Hear them out, learn how to be a good listener and balance the conversation. Know your role and learn how to set boundaries. **03**
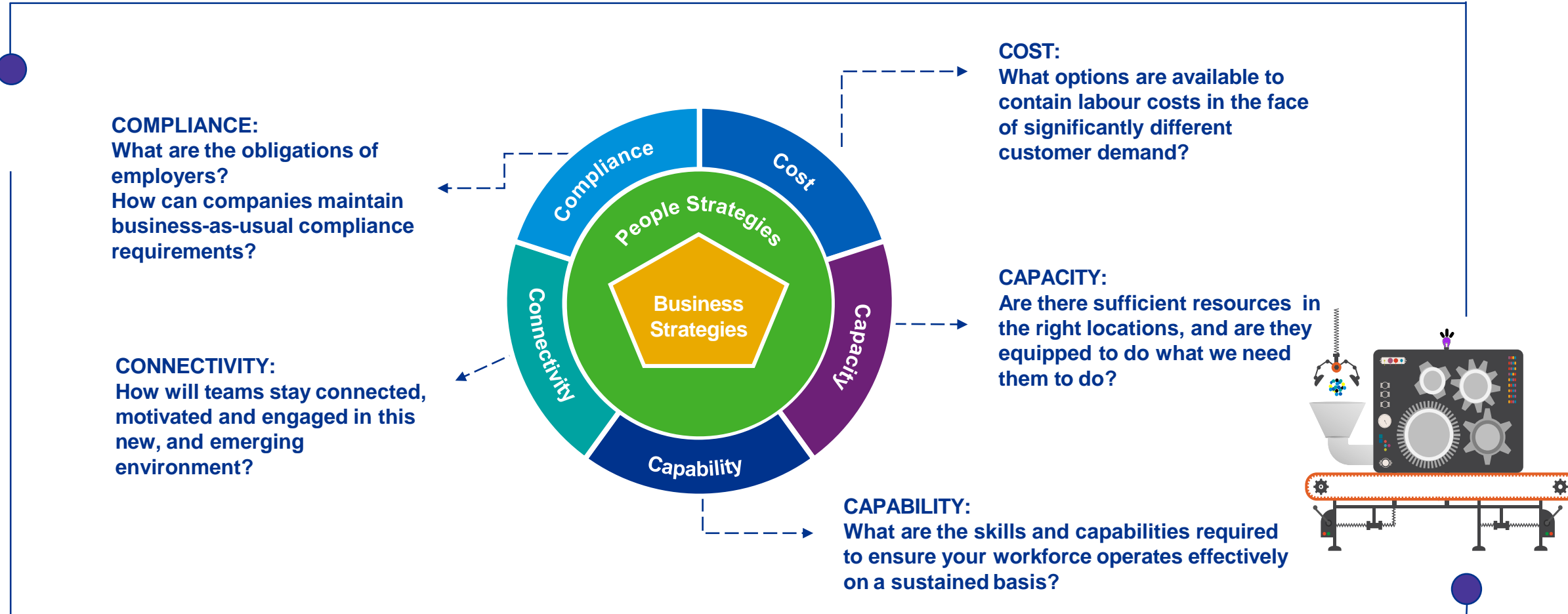
Connect people to help, and find ways to help people access professional and community resources. **04**
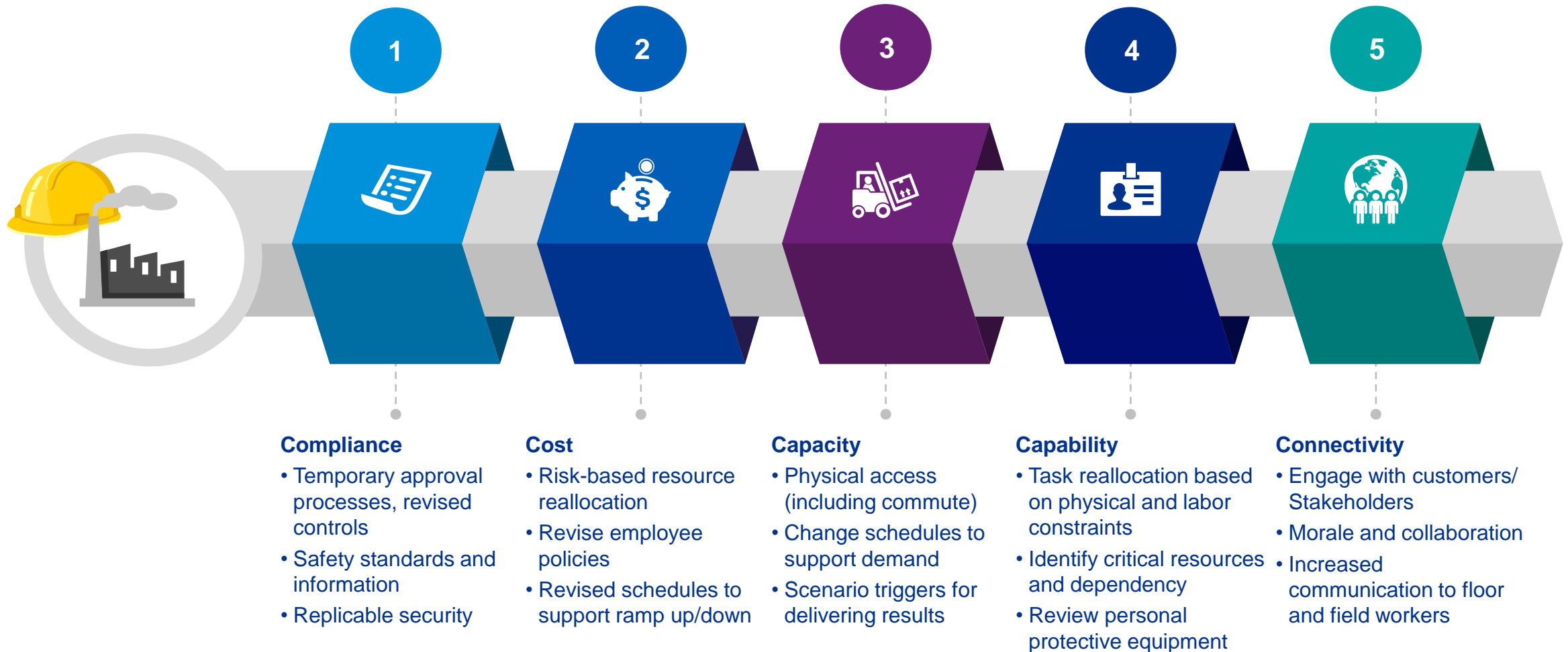
The 5C Framework – Managing Talent Risk in Turbulent Times

A framework provides structure and a starting point for organizations that are thinking about how to adapt to unprecedented challenges. The 5C frameworks helps you address key questions such as *"what risks can we address now, and how can we be preparing ourselves for the future?"*

COST:
What options are available to contain labour costs in the face of significantly different customer demand?

COMPLIANCE:
What are the obligations of employers?
How can companies maintain business-as-usual compliance requirements?

CAPACITY:
Are there sufficient resources in the right locations, and are they equipped to do what we need them to do?

CONNECTIVITY:
How will teams stay connected, motivated and engaged in this new, and emerging environment?

CAPABILITY:
What are the skills and capabilities required to ensure your workforce operates effectively on a sustained basis?

A Unique View for Manufacturing – Key Considerations

For manufacturing and industrial employees, the working environment is still tied to a place, other people, and requires plant and equipment. How can you as an organization support employees that cannot be remote?

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

Compliance
- Temporary approval processes, revised controls
- Safety standards and information
- Replicable security

Cost
- Risk-based resource reallocation
- Revise employee policies
- Revised schedules to support ramp up/down

Capacity
- Physical access (including commute)
- Change schedules to support demand
- Scenario triggers for delivering results

Capability
- Task reallocation based on physical and labor constraints
- Identify critical resources and dependency
- Review personal protective equipment

Connectivity
- Engage with customers/ Stakeholders
- Morale and collaboration
- Increased communication to floor and field workers

Safeguard Your Mental Health

To promote your wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around you, aim to get the most out of your workday, remaining engaged and mitigating feelings of isolation.
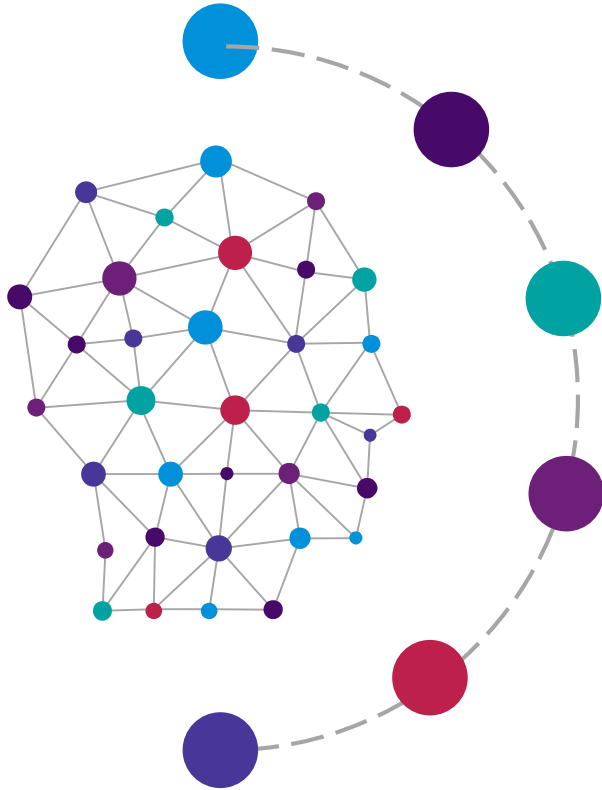
Recognize Constraints

Get Active

Create a Routine

**Establish a Work Mindset**

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Develop Healthy Habits

Seek Support

Supporting The Psychological Health & Safety of Employees

CMHA has recommended several ways for employers to support the psychological health and safety of employees during these unprecedented times.

Think ahead, communicate openly and stay in touch

Create a sense of purpose and vision

Support employees emotionally and in concrete ways

Develop ownership and accountability

Build Empathy and Trust Amongst Colleagues

Establishing a sense of community and belonging in workplace communities is more essential than ever before. Those who feel a sense of inclusion show increased job performance and decreased turnover risk.
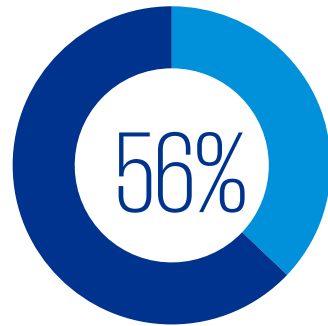

56%

Those who feel a sense of inclusion show **increased job performance**.

50%
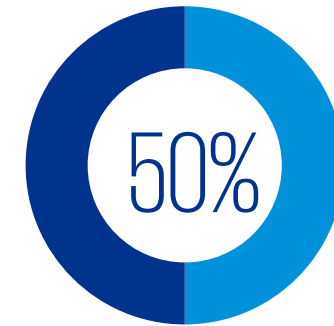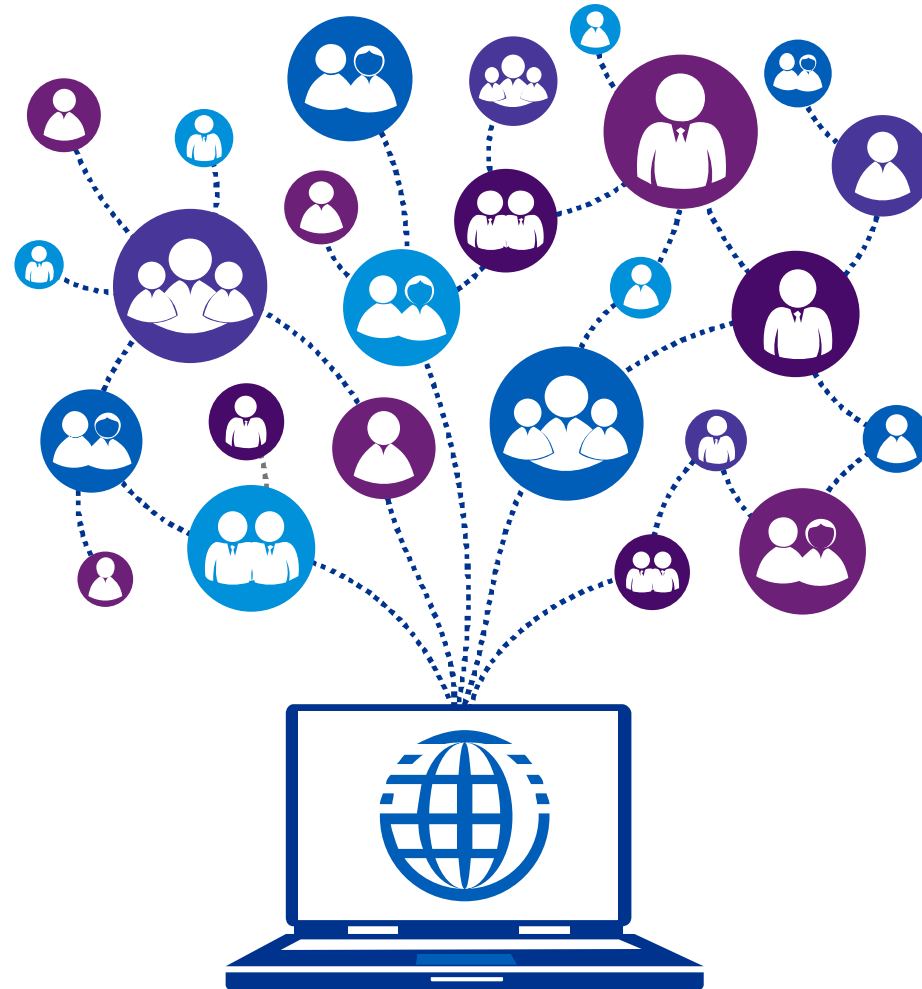
Those who feel a sense of inclusion show **decreased turnover risk**.

Be Intentional With Your Communication

Without vocal tone or physical gestures, messages via text message leave room for potential miscommunication. It's important to consider these communications as a form of relationship-building. Below are some tips for preventing miscommunication:
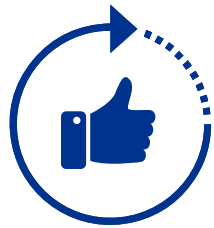
Be positive in your writing
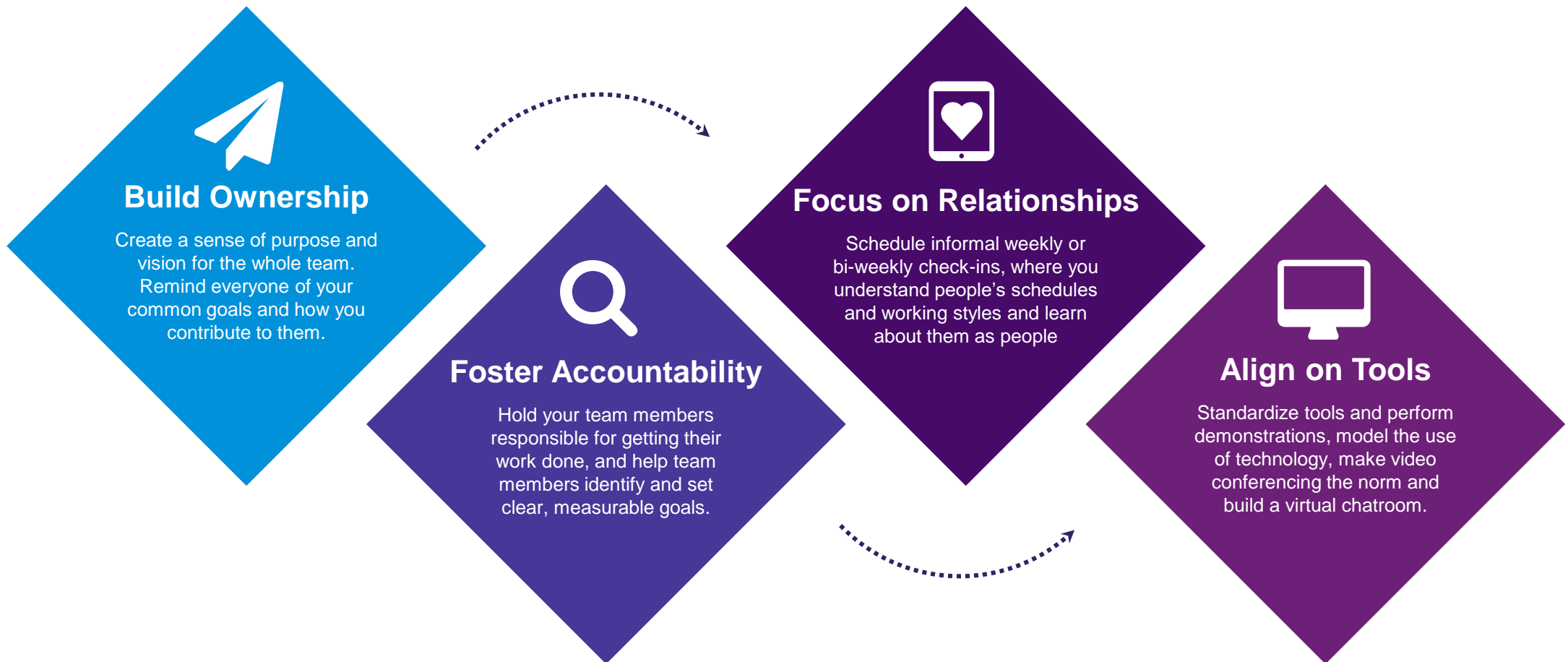
Schedule a video call

Consider using emoji's and GIFs
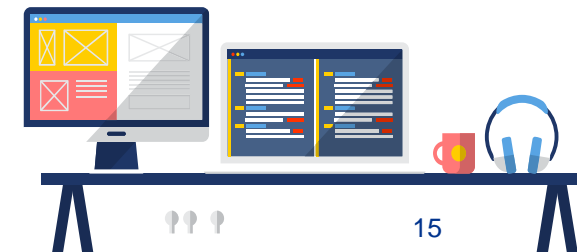
Discuss communication expectations

How to Work Inclusively with Remote Teams

Building a sense of team and belonging is key in allowing yourself and others to remain focused and motivated, especially during times of increased stress. Below are ways, particularly for leaders, to lead remote teams inclusively.

Build Ownership

Create a sense of purpose and vision for the whole team. Remind everyone of your common goals and how you contribute to them.

Foster Accountability

Hold your team members responsible for getting their work done, and help team members identify and set clear, measurable goals.

Focus on Relationships

Schedule informal weekly or bi-weekly check-ins, where you understand people's schedules and working styles and learn about them as people

Align on Tools

Standardize tools and perform demonstrations, model the use of technology, make video conferencing the norm and build a virtual chatroom.
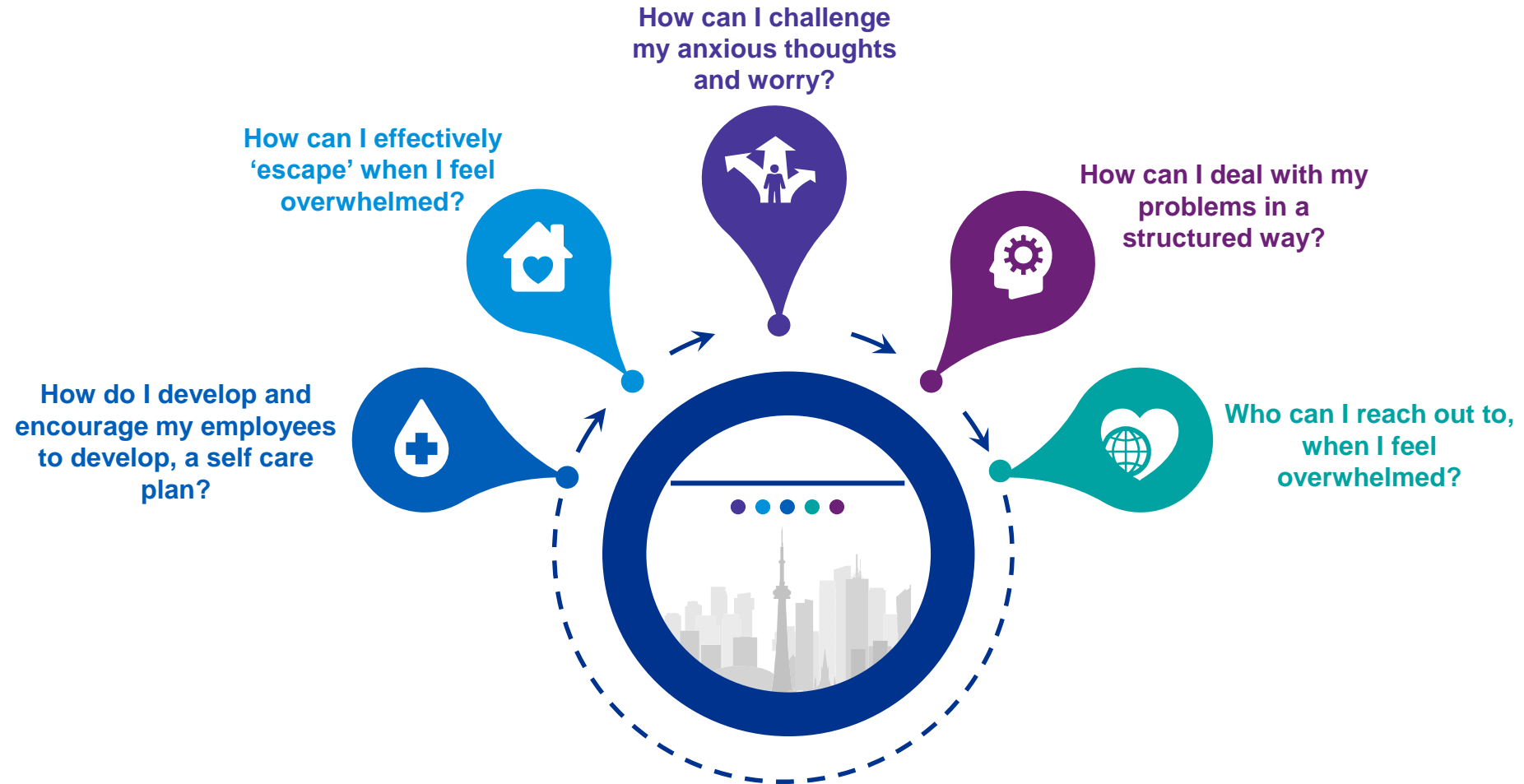
Key Ingredients for Leading and Being Part of Remote Teams

Below are key ways for people to support each other and to remain engaged, during this time when many of us are working remotely.
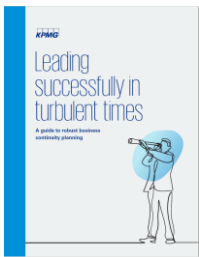
- Set Expectations
- Over Communicate
- Be Flexible and Patient
- Maintain Social Connections
- Show Appreciation
- Provide Clarity
- Leverage Technologies
- Be Available

Questions People May be Asking Themselves

The following slide details helpful resources that can help you answer the following questions.

How can I challenge my anxious thoughts and worry?

How can I effectively 'escape' when I feel overwhelmed?

How can I deal with my problems in a structured way?

How do I develop and encourage my employees to develop, a self care plan?

Who can I reach out to, when I feel overwhelmed?

Resources to Lean On

The current slide provides helpful resources to help you answer the previous questions and to support your mental health and wellbeing.

Planning and Challenging Thoughts
[Click Here for Challenging Worries](#)
[Click Here for Intentional Planning](#)

Creating a Home Retreat
[Click Here](#)

Dealing with Problems in a Structured Way
[Click Here](#)

Developing a Self-Care Plan
[Click Here](#)

Reaching Out for Support
[Click Here for free, online 24/7 supports](#)

[Click Here for free, video-based peer support groups](#)

Leading successfully in turbulent times
A guide to robust business continuity planning

Read [here](#)

To stay updated with our latest insights, visit our website dedicated to dealing with the business implications of the coronavirus.

[_"The Business Implications of Coronavirus – Embedding Resilience"_](#)

We're here for you!

If you need any additional information or materials, please reach out to:

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