

# ‘Stop Managing Support Workers!’

Positive Psychology  
for Support Worker  
Success and  
Retention’



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Ariya Neuro Care

# Background

Social Care Manager by background  
now Director of Ariya Neuro Care

Worked with ABI in community-based  
services for over 25 years

MSc Brain Injury Rehabilitation

Studying Kindness and Wellbeing in  
the Workplace at University of Sussex

Developed 3 community transitional  
rehabilitation services and a  
community outreach supported living  
service in South Yorkshire/ Derbyshire



# Support Workers - are they difficult to manage?

Who here Manages Support Workers?

Surely, we all want thriving, happy, committed and proactive Support Workers, but how?



# Support Workers - are they difficult to manage?

Today I'm going to look at:

1. Support Worker wellbeing through the PERMA model of wellbeing (Seligman, 2012, 2018)
2. How focussing on 'wellbeing' rather than 'managing' staff gives better results for better **engagement and retention**

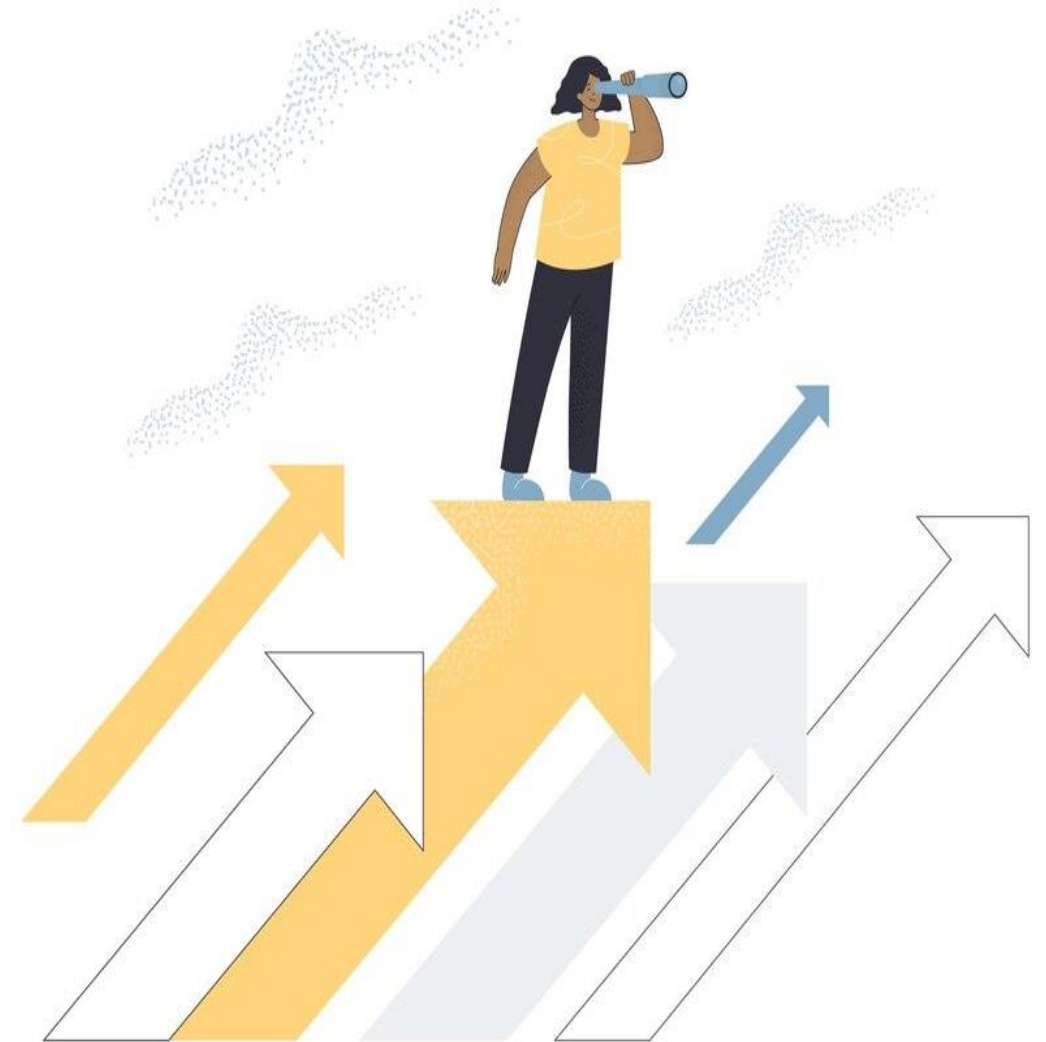


# Stop Managing Support Workers – Support them to Flourish!

Believing  
someone can  
flourish...

What does that  
feel like?

‘Flourish  
Potential’



# The tenderness of Support Workers

- The Cavendish Review (2013) highlighted that Support Workers are frustrated by the lack of recognition from employers/Managers
- Contributing to **turnover rates of 30.9%** nearly double national average



# The tenderness of Support Workers

- 49% of Support Workers have minimal or no qualifications (Skills for Care, 2022)
- Often from reduced socio-economic backgrounds (Laporte, 2002; Weber, 1978),
- Many lack confidence when working with more qualified professionals.
- Resulting in deference, compounded with the devalued professional status of Support Workers, impacts Support Worker self-efficacy.
- Less likely to contribute, limiting engagement and essential feedback.

**They need a culture that actively supports kindness**



# Kindness Cultures

**kindness-culture is:** *A work environment where respect, empathy and compassion are highly valued and engrained in the workplace* (Houlis, 2023).

- Genuine kindness and care for one another
- Trust and Integrity in both actions and speech
- A developmental environment (non-blame culture that enables growth)





# Kindness Culture

## Kindness benefits:

- Benefits on health

(Burr et al., 2015; Poulin & Holman, 2013; Whillians et al., 2016). Whillians et al. (2016) Burr et al. (2015)

- Reduction in stress/increase in longevity.

Poulin and Holman (2013), Brown et al. (2003)

- Positive correlation between kind prosocial acts on happiness and wellbeing

(Curry et al., 2018; Grant & Berry 2011).



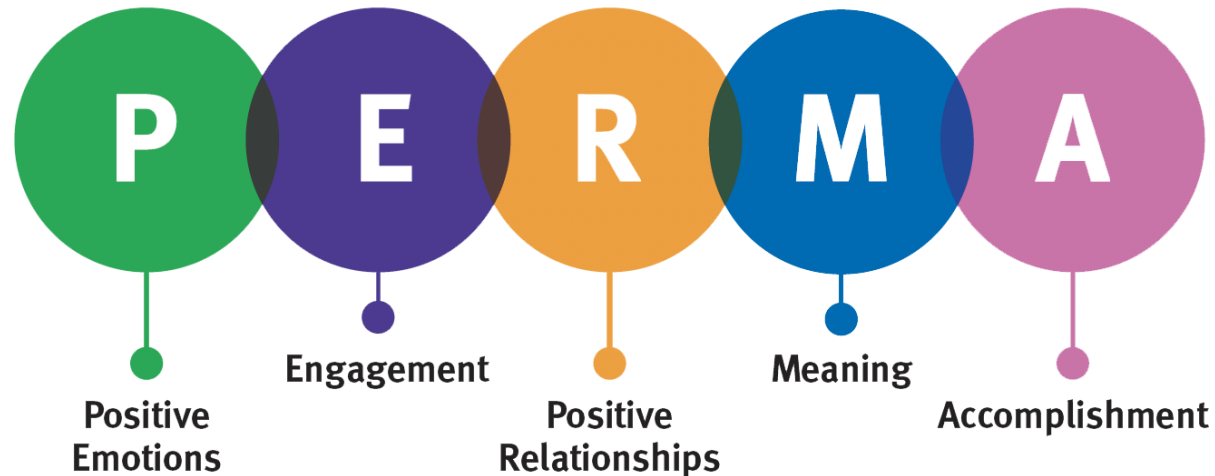
# Supporting People to Flourish

## PERMA model, Martin Seligman

is a framework for understanding and achieving human flourishing.

It extends beyond traditional notions of happiness and discusses the five essential elements that make up PERMA

### PERMA model of well-being



# The PERMA Model of Wellbeing for Support Workers



## Positive emotions include:

Amusement, fun, awe, wonder, amazement, gratitude, hope, optimism, feeling encouraged, interest, curiosity, joyfulness, love, closeness, proud, confident, serenity, contentment, peacefulness



# The PERMA Model of Wellbeing for Support Workers



## The Broadening Effect (according to Fredrickson, 2013)

Positive emotions increase:

- Flexible, variable, expansive and inclusive thinking
- Creative thinking
- Problem solving
- Rational decision making
- Capacity to persevere
- Capacity to handle challenging tasks
- Improved work performance



# The PERMA Model of Wellbeing for Support Workers (Seligman 2012, 2018)

## The Broadening Effect cont.:



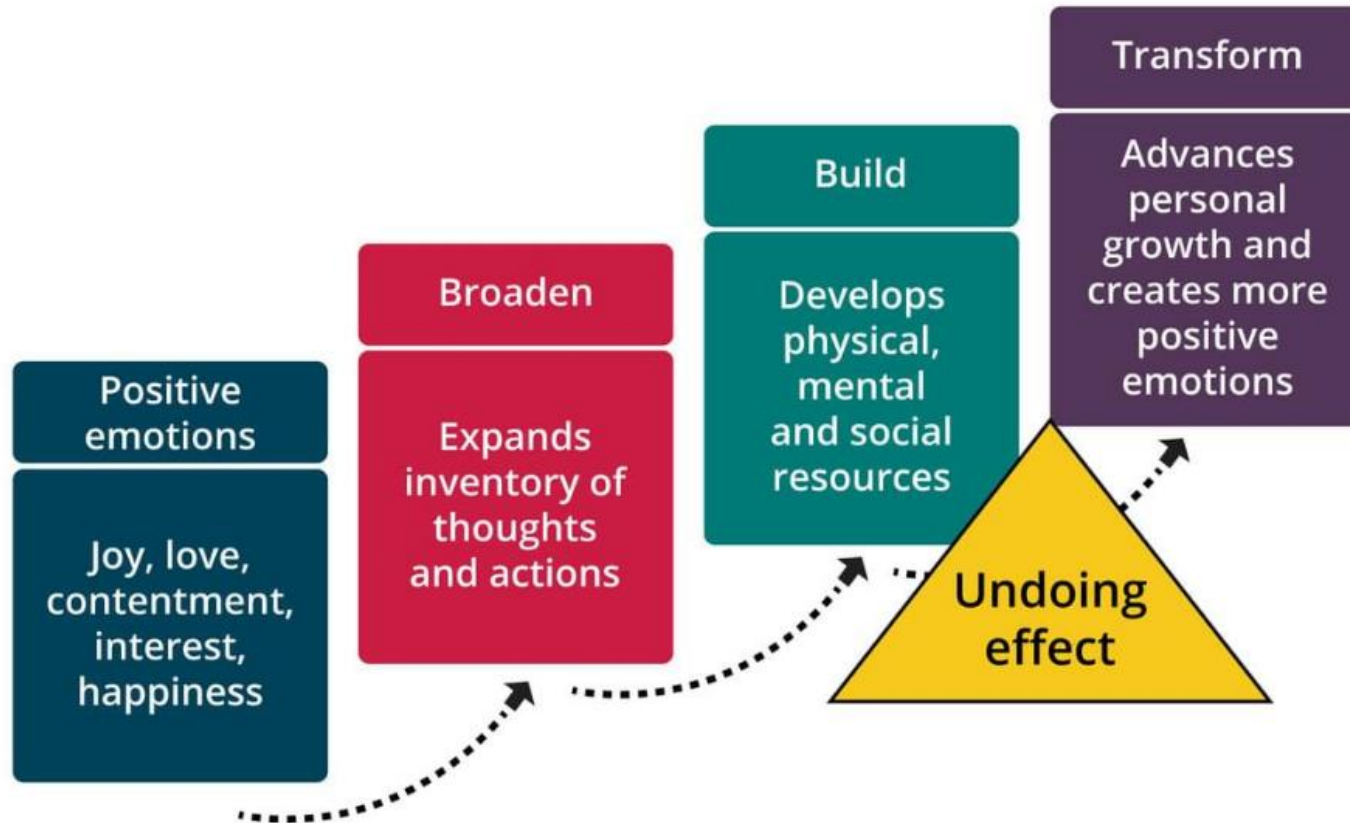
- Improves our capacity to be attentive to others
- A change of focus from 'me' to 'we'
- Increased prosocial or altruistic intent
- Reduced social friction
- Increased sense of independence
- Higher level of trust
- Fewer competitive comparisons
- Less jealousy
- Positive emotions reduce tensions, (individual levels but also in groups)



# The PERMA Model of Wellbeing for Support Workers (Seligman 2012, 2018)

## The function of positive emotions

Figure 4.2: The Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions. Adapted from Fredrickson, B. L., (2013). Positive emotions broaden and build. *Advances in experimental social psychology*. 47, p. 16.



# The Building Effect



- Intellectual resources (learning capacity, resourcefulness, openness)
- Physical resources (increased cardiovascular/ immune health)
- Social Resources (new relationships, building trust, caring for others)
- These resources are durable, outlasting transient nature of emotions



# The 'Broaden and Build' Positivity Ratio

Baumeister et al (2001)



- Bad emotions outweigh good ones
- We are wired to focus on the negatives
- We need several positive emotions to outweigh negative ones
- Fredrickson and Losande (2005) suggested **3:1 ratio**





# The 'Broaden and Build' Positivity Ratio

## Reflection Questions:



**Positive  
Emotions**

- Pleasurable activities give us happiness –how much pleasure and positive emotion happen on your Support Worker shifts?
- Are they getting approx. 3:1 positive/ neg ratio?
- Can we reframe communication in a more positive way?



# ENGAGEMENT/ FLOW



- Engaging in tasks we find interesting/ absorption/ lose sense of time
- Task that necessitate the use of strengths, skills or talents which we perform to some level of mastery
- bringing about a sense of success  
(Caveats –absorption can be in negative actions)



# ENGAGEMENT/ FLOW



## Reflection Questions:

- What are our Support Workers Masters in?
- Do we take this away? (as we are accomplished in this too, or that it is easy?)



# RELATIONSHIPS



- You need positive relationships for good wellbeing
- Relationships that have depth and longevity
- A massive part of retention is around quality relationships in work
- Relationships need effort and consistent work



# RELATIONSHIPS



**Positive  
Relationships**

## Reflection Questions:

- Are we putting consistent work into our interdisciplinary relationships with Support Workers?
- Are Support Workers part of 'the rehab clan'?



# MEANING



Meaning

- That our work is greater than ourselves/ transcendent quality
- The bigger picture  
'a sense of 'mattering'
- That life makes sense and is motivated by goals
- That life has a sense of coherence (Baumeister 1991, Reber&Wong 1982)



# MEANING

## Reflection Questions:



- How often do people consider Care/Support to be of a transcendent nature? (Often viewed as basic actions/ chores/ menial tasks)
- Are we clarifying the greater vision in our work and how they are a part of this?
- Do our Support Workers have roles that are incoherent, fragmented and unclear?



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



**Accomplishment**

- The pursuit and completion of undertakings or objectives aligned with our interests or goals
- Goal and Achievements are important
- Are we giving our Support Workers stretching goals?

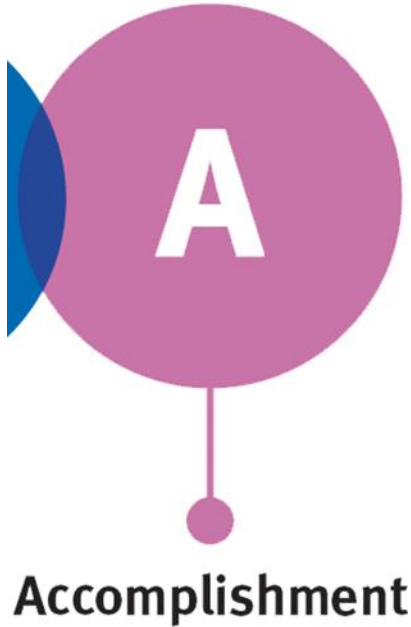




# The PERMA Model of Wellbeing (Seligman 2012, 2018)

## Reflection Questions:

- Are we giving our Support Workers stretching goals or do we limit them?
- Do we ensure that there are small wins throughout the week?
- Are we development focussed?
- Do we celebrate successes?  
How?



# What the PERMA Model has taught us?

- Positivity and Pleasure
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishments

*“Use your signature strengths and virtues in the service of something much larger than you are.”*



# Bigger picture: Profession of Support Workers

- Ballat (2020) refers to Support work as 'Intelligent Kindness'
- Positioning kindness as the profession of Support Workers
- Could give elevation to their work and evolve a new positive identity; one that plays to their inherent strengths
- A pathway to a meaningful career



# Benefits of Wellbeing for Support Workers

- They bring optimism, practical problem solving, care (and hard work!)
- In a many organisations, team members are only functioning at 65% of their potential (Blane). Yours could be 90-100%!
- For a truly exceptional team the Support Workers have to be enabled to shine.



# Results of a wellbeing and kindness culture



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Ariya Neuro Care (Supported Living) Limited  
**Ariya Neuro Care**  
 (Supported Living) Limited

**Inspection report**

10 Percy Street  
 Rotherham  
 S65 1ED

Tel: 07891429690  
 Website: www.ariya-neurocare.com

Date of inspection visit:  
 20 September 2021

Date of publication:  
 15 November 2021

Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Outstanding ☆
Is the service safe?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service effective?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service caring?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service responsive?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service well-led?	Outstanding ☆

Ariya Neuro Care (Residential) Limited  
**Clifton Court**

**Inspection report**

60 Doncaster Gate  
 Rotherham  
 South Yorkshire  
 S65 1DH

Tel: 01709324304  
 Website: www.ariya-neurocare.com

Date of inspection visit:  
 09 March 2022

Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Outstanding ☆
Is the service safe?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service effective?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service caring?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service responsive?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service well-led?	Outstanding ☆

Ariya Neuro Care (Residential) Limited  
**Ariya House**

**Inspection report**

70 Vernon Road,  
 Worsbrough,  
 Barnsley  
 S70 5BE

Tel: 01226294484  
 Website: www.ariya-neurocare.com

Date of inspection visit:  
 18 January 2023

Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Outstanding ☆
Is the service safe?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service effective?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service caring?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service responsive?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service well-led?	Outstanding ☆



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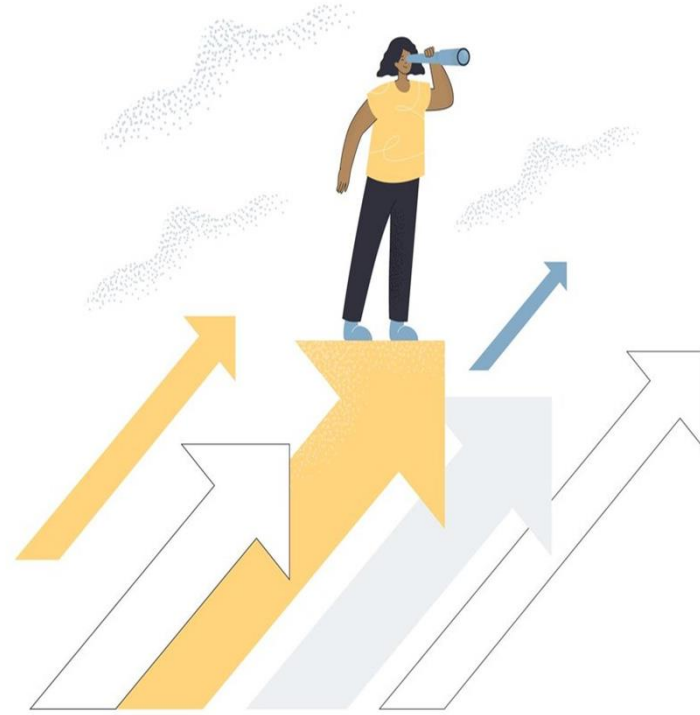
# Benefits of Wellbeing for Support Workers

*“Use our signature strengths and virtues in the service of something much larger than you are.”*



# Stop Managing Support Workers – Support them to Flourish!

- Remember that ‘flourish potential’ feeling?





**Thank you for your time,  
wishing you every  
success with flourishing  
teams**

**Lucy Fallon  
(Ariya Neuro Care)**



**Ariya Neuro Care**  
**www.ariya-  
neurocare.com**