

Wellbeing during COVID19

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Combat Stress

Outline for this afternoon

- Wellbeing & resilience
- Why we all deal with things differently (or do we?)
- Simple strategies to benefit your mental health and that of others during COVID19
- An introduction to Combat Stress and what we do
- Q&A
- The different ways companies support our charity

DEFINITIONS OF WELLBEING

“The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.”

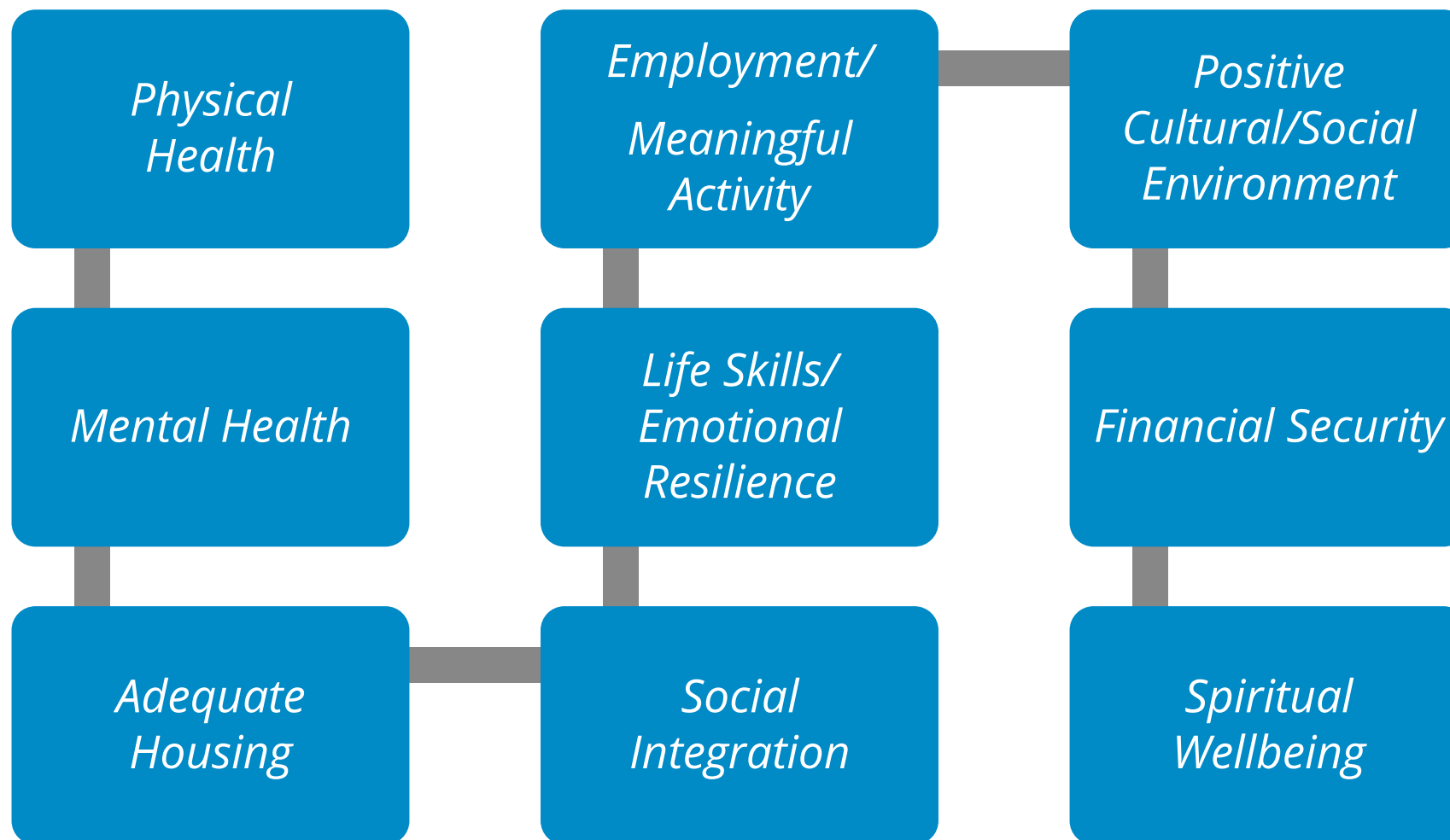


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THE KEY AREAS OF WELLBEING:



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

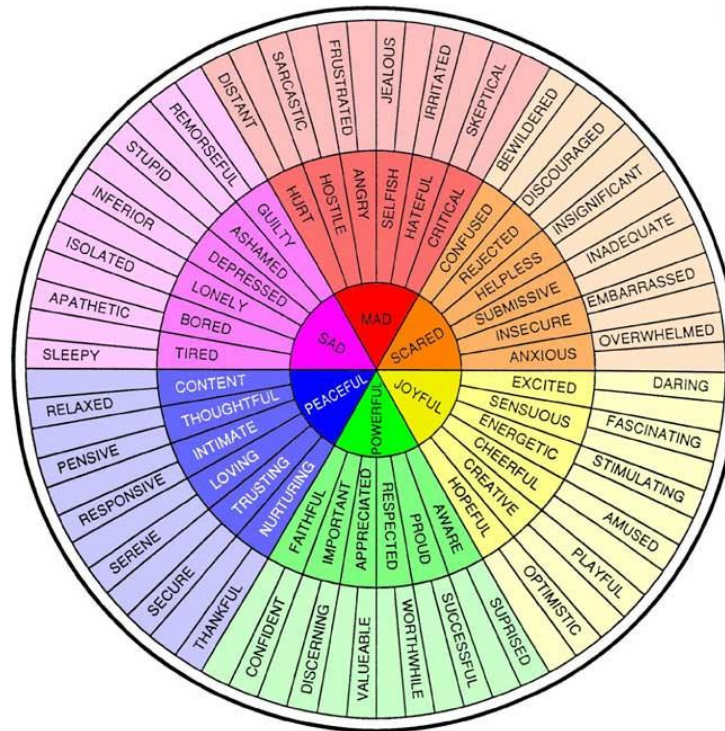
- “The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties”
- *The ability to ‘bounce back’*
- *Thriving despite (or because of) challenges*
- *Adapting well under pressure*
- *Growing: being strengthened and improved by adversity.*



COVID19: THE RANGE OF EMOTIONS & RESPONSES

Emotions provide important information

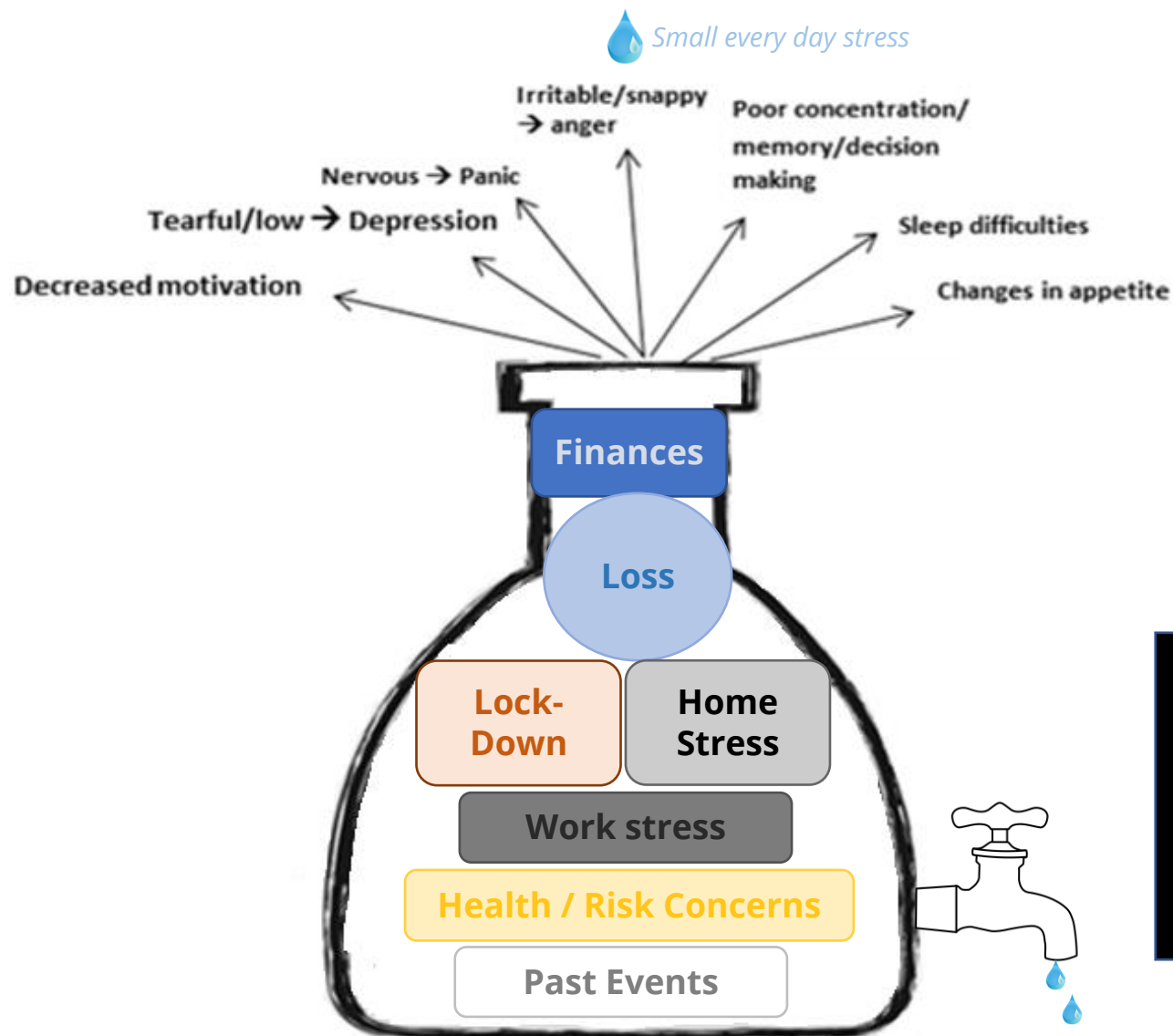
It's usual to experience a range of emotions; feelings ebb and flow



All emotions are important; feelings provide us with valuable information

It is okay to not be okay

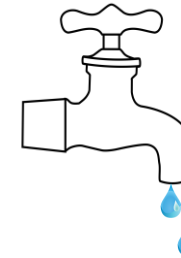
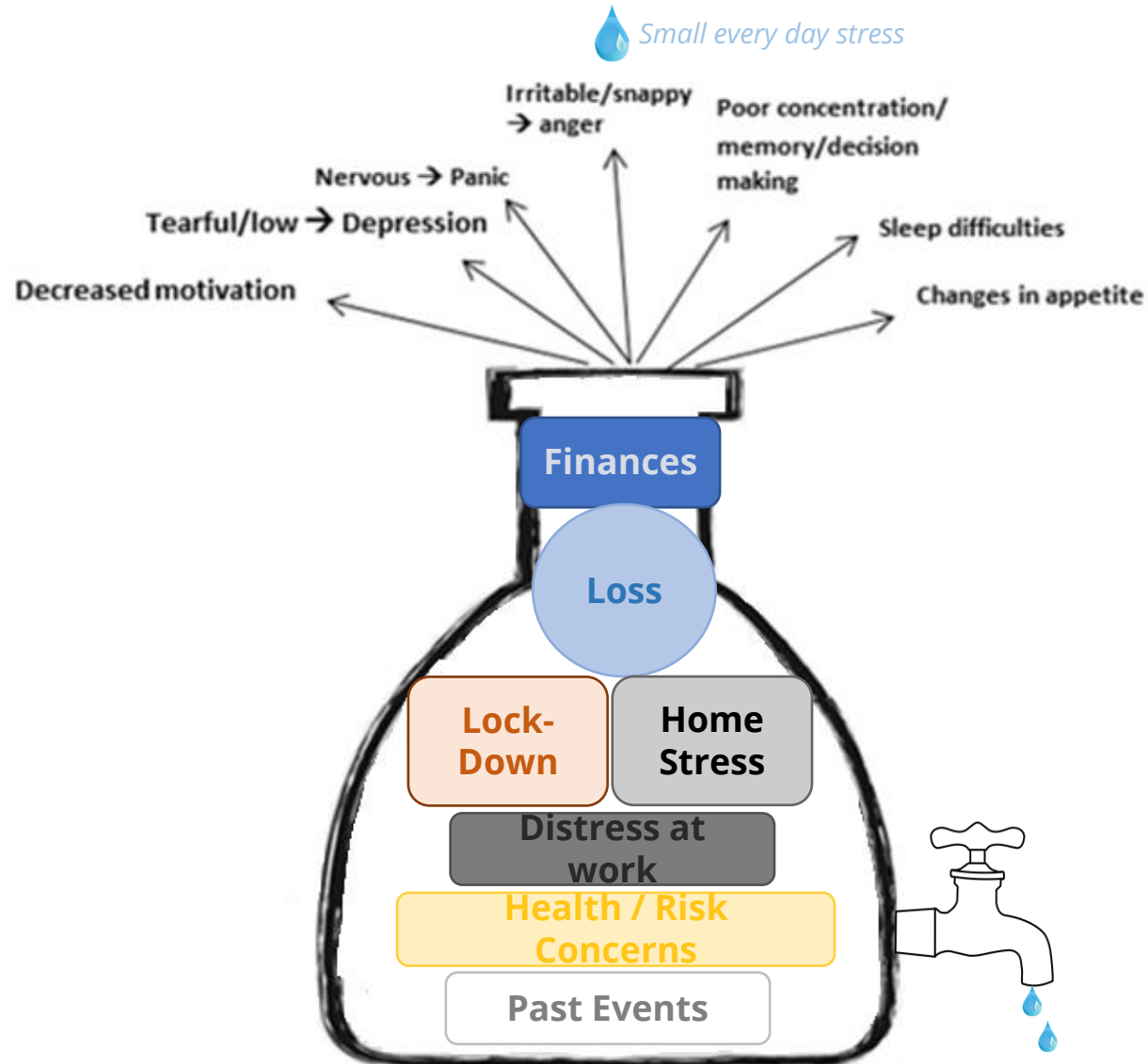
THE STRESS BOTTLE



**Combat Stress Online
Self-Help Materials:**

www.combatstress.org.uk/mental-health-support-during-covid-19

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO MANAGE STRESS



- Eat 3 meals a day & stay hydrated
- Get serious about sleep – 8 hours a night
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a routine
- Take regular breaks during work, including 'micro breaks'
- Breathe!
- Plan regular, feel good activities
- Stay in touch with friends/family
- Avoid unhelpful coping strategies – these will add to the stress bottle
- Limit time engaging with news

COVID19 Impact on mental health of the UK population?

Research followed 2021 people since March 2020 – published January 2021

- *Results showed:*
 - *Initial increases in anxiety and depression, but generally didn't continue*
 - *For 30% it had been ongoing since before COVID19*
 - *Those most at risk were people with*
 - *prior experience of mental health problems*
 - *those experiencing economic hardship*
 - *Social isolation and loneliness, and those with young children contributed to worsening mental health*
- *56% remained resilient and for 8% their mental health improved*
- *Both encouraging and concerning results – nearly 1/3 may be struggling with MH*
- *Group is not homogenous and so 'one size fits all' support is not likely to be most effective*
- *Take a personalised approach to support*

Combat Stress

UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health. For a century we've helped former servicemen and women with mental health problems such as PTSD, depression & anxiety. The work we do is life-changing and often life-saving.

- 1. We offer specialist assessment and evidence-based treatment for veterans with complex mental health needs resulting from their military service experiences*
- 2. We are a veteran-centric organisation*
- 3. We are a trauma-informed organisation*
- 4. We offer truly integrated inter-disciplinary treatment and support*
- 5. We are research leaders for complex mental health needs in veterans*
- 6. Our clinical and support interventions are tailored, agile and flexible*

PAUL'S STORY...

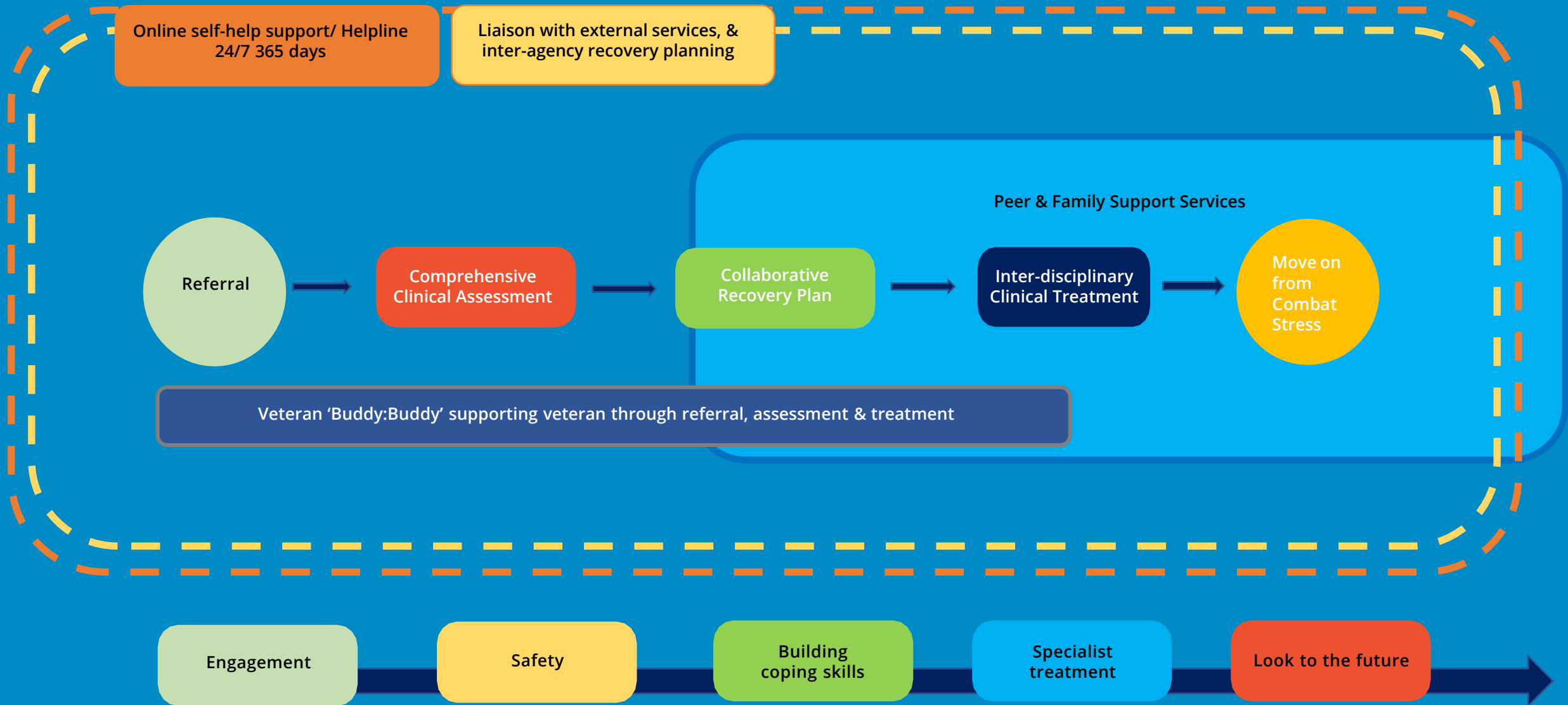
- Paul joined the RAF in 1989, aged 20. He served for 23 years, undertaking operations in the Middle East, North Africa and Afghanistan within the military intelligence arena.



"I'd always had a fascination with aviation and aircraft. I wanted to get on a formal career path and to travel the world. I'd left school with only a handful of O-level qualifications, but the RAF spotted that I had an aptitude for learning languages. I was subsequently taught three target languages over my career to a very high level, as well as completing several masters degrees.

"During my time with the UN, I saw horrific events linked to children - it threw my world upside down. I was a new dad at the time and on return home it became apparent to me that I wasn't the same person. However, I kept my concerns bottled up and just carried on without talking to anyone.

A veteran's recovery journey



An example treatment plan



Help to
reduce
alcohol use



Psychological
therapy for
Complex-PTSD



Family
Support



Advice to
Employer

Risk Management Plan

PAUL SHARES HIS STORY...



"On that very first call, just talking to someone really helped. I was reassured it was OK to feel this way. I began weekly one-to-one therapy sessions. I learnt different techniques to cope with my feelings and experiences. It was an emotional roller coaster, but it was a very good and thorough process.

"Life has definitely changed for the better.

"It's taken 20 years for me to come to terms with my experience but I've made sense of it now. Before I got help from Combat Stress, if any event triggered my PTSD response the world would immediately become a very dark place, but that's no longer the case."

COVID19 Impact on Veterans' mental health?

- *Veterans adapted better than expected*
 - *More control over environment*
 - *Less social contact*
- *The loss of in-person work increased risks*
- *The more socially isolated, the more at risk*
- *“Can do” attitude has pros and cons*
- *15% also had a Covid-19 bereavement*
- *Social and practical support crucial*
- *Long-term impact unknown*

From the Combat Stress study: Exploring the impact of Covid-19 and restrictions to daily living as a result of social distancing within veterans with pre-existing mental health difficulties. Murphy, D. et al, 2020, British Medical Journal Military Health

Online resources for veterans, their families and those who support or employ veterans

SELF HELP GUIDES

Our self-help guides have been developed by the specialist mental health clinicians working at Combat Stress in collaboration with veterans.

GET STARTED



Questions?

Thank you for joining us this afternoon.

For more information about Combat Stress:

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