

Pat Armitstead

Transforming Workplace Wellbeing

A Case Study on a 15 month Series with



This is a precis of a program delivered to 450 Senior and Middle Managers, and Supervisors of Programmed, a company with 26,000 staff nationally. The company's mission is to be a leading provider of staffing, maintenance, and facility management services and to do so injury free. Services including education, health, infrastructure, manufacturing, transport, mining, facility management, property services, electrical technologies, industrial maintenance, health landscaping, grounds and marine.



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Pat Armitstead

Transforming Workplace Wellbeing

Multi-Award Winning Speaker, Facilitator, Author



0487105785

pat@joyology.co.nz

www.joyology.co.nz

“Transforming Workplace Wellbeing”



A one day program designed to build a safe, supportive 21st century workplace culture where leaders are educated and skilled to embrace vulnerability and the human condition with empathy, compassion and confidence

AUSTRALIAN CASE STUDY 2017/2018



Program delivery by Pat Armitstead

RGN, Dip Ed, NLP Master Practitioner, mBIT Coach

Organisation status pre engagement:

1. Leading provider of operations and maintenance services across Australia and NZ - 26,000 staff
2. Limited ability to recognise and link signs/symptoms for depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation
3. Limited ability to lead a conversation past “are you OK” and access appropriate support
4. Daily exposure to triggers and risk factors for staff alongside physical safety concerns
5. Common ground of safety, care, empathy and good customer service and need to integrate wellness action plans

Organisation status post engagement

1. Consistently in upper quartile for EAP usage in Australia
2. General upskilling senior and middle managers and supervisors around mental health and similar issues
3. Supervising groups educated and aware behaviour changes and charged to take action with empathy
4. Increased understanding and use of tools and allowed to take action and use them
5. Matured thinking on mental health and psychosocial hazards and effect on wellbeing, and now using service readily available in the business such as Super, Gym, medical care and discounts

SECTION# 1 - ABOUT THE CLIENT:-

Client retains confidentiality

Client Industry - Leading provider of operations and maintenance services including education, health, infrastructure, manufacturing, transport and mining – 26,000 staff. Services range over facility management, property services, electrical technologies, industrial maintenance, health landscaping, grounds and marine.

5 key details guiding their participation

1. Common ground of safety, care, empathy and good customer service
2. Committed to ensuring all employees are part of an enjoyable/rewarding workplace
3. Committed to be serving the real human needs of their people
4. Committed to the creation of a high trust environment
5. Absolute commitment to creating a safe workplace

Client testimonials attached at document end

SECTION#2 - THEIR CHALLENGE:-

Issues/Challenges to be addressed

1. Help leaders know what to say when a staff member might be/is at risk and the next steps to take
2. Improve communications/processes to create higher levels of trust with staff so they access EAP
3. Improve leaders awareness/empathy for depression, anxiety and possible suicidal ideation
4. Open the eyes of leaders to provide as real an experience as possible in order to shift thinking

Why did they have this problem ?

1. Help leaders know what to say when a staff member might be/is at risk and the next steps to take
2. Improve communications/processes to create higher levels of trust with staff so they access EAP
3. Improve leaders awareness/empathy for depression, anxiety and possible suicidal ideation
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Clients expected outcomes

This is a company driven to engage.

The philosophy of “if you see it own it “ is ingrained.

They have made a lifetime commitment to RUOK.

They believe all people come to work to do a good job.

They wanted to respectfully and with care reach out to those people.

Safety is their highest consideration.

They say “We can’t be a leader if we injure our people”

1. To be better informed on depression anxiety and suicidal ideation
2. To be able to recognise the subtle signs that indicate a staff member has a problem
3. To be able to implement workplace tools, especially the workplace wellbeing plan
4. To re-enforce reasonable adjustments and tools to help keep them flexible
5. To have the leaders equipped to be having the brave conversations if a staff member was at risk and to then take appropriate next steps to ensure safety

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Why did Programmed choose Pat Armitstead to upskill their most senior group managers and influencers?

- skilled in creating a high trust environment
- creative and original thinking to shift perceptions
- ability to influence and build relationships in the moment
- powerful facilitator with nursing background and lived experience
- engages people deeply by incorporating storytelling
- Uses language to liberate empathy and compassion

SECTION#3 – MY SOLUTION

This was my approach

- A series of one day workshops usually in a boardroom setting, quiet and private
- 20-30 people usually per group in 5 locations around Australia
- The initial delivery was educating around depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation.
- It was acknowledged how some of this material could be confronting and people advised to look after themselves as need be and to support each other.
- Discussion followed around stigma, transformational change and stress
- Discus attitudes, thoughts and behaviours around employing someone with a mental illness
- A detailed precis of common signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety were provided.
- The next step is a video that shows what an anxiety episode looks, feels and sounds like.
- Participants are well prepared for the possibility of being triggered and I watch the audience throughout to ensure wellbeing.
- If people need to leave the room they are checked on.
- This leads into the major turning point for the day as members then work in pairs and revisit in their minds what happened and what they saw/heard in the video. They isolate behaviours, emotions, thoughts (perceived) and physical symptoms.
- Up to 30 minutes is devoted to this and then I take back leadership and run through the myriad of things that are there to be seen and heard. **This is the biggest learning curve as people see what they missed and can appreciate how that happens in their reality**
- Following this there are case studies where this new learning and judgement can be applied
- This then leads to brave conversations and what builds rapport and questioning techniques.
- The session draws to a close with an overview of a wellness action plan, how they might adjust for their setting, and how they could use it when meeting with staff members who might have mental health problems
- The dimensions of wellness and being personally responsible is shared as a group with members invited to commit in areas where they feel a shortfall
- A range of fact sheets and resources are shared as part of ongoing personal tool kit
- A workbook aids this entire process

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Client involvement

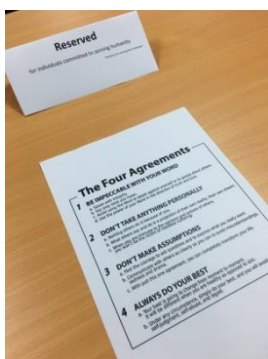
1. We worked closely together preparing members and ensuring peoples readiness
2. Some preliminary work was set to have people view some mental health videos
3. Smaller intimate groups free of interruptions were planned
4. Consideration made for how some of the content can be linked to what is already in the workplace

Solution and timeline

The delivery of a standard program with customised sections focussed on for client needs
The delivery to small groups in boardroom settings to enable sharing and ensure privacy
Exposing the mostly male audience to sometimes confronting material while ensuring their wellbeing throughout, enabled them all to experience each other at another level and see the personal challenges many had.

Business leaders don't need extensive knowledge on the conditions; they just need their eyes opened to what they do not see.

A one day program was delivered to teams of 20-30 people in all states



SECTION 4 - RESULTS

The wellbeing of leaders, managers and supervisors at Programmed has been enhanced by my offering.

The evidence of this is in :-

- Immediate feedback
- Organisational discussion post training
- Three and six month follow up
- EAP uptake in upper quartile

KPI's, Measurements, Statistics or ROI Data that Demonstrates The Value Of The Solution/Strategy

ACT Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey states expected short/longer term change:-

Within a few months – improvements in employee engagement and team cohesiveness

Within 1-2 years – improvements in health knowledge and behaviours, job satisfaction, productivity and corporate image

Within 3-5 years – reductions in absenteeism, injuries and workers compensation costs.

- The [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) imposes a legal duty on business operators to do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate or minimise these risks. This legislation defines 'health' to include physical and psychological health. This has now been complied with.
- The Workplace Wellness Action Plan is in place across most areas of operation.
- Employee feedback post the event is a strong confirmation of a shift in mindset and the influence long term will be measured
- Board Members feedback agrees there is demonstrable improvement in the area of leaders being enabled to be having brave conversations .
- Annual data collection for EAP access by personel will be reported
- Annual data collection for stress related illness/injuries will also be reported
- The company has a Domestic Violence program that is immediately implementable for a person in crisis

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SECTION#5 – CONCLUSION

Many leaders would now like to delve deeper into Emotional and Conversational Intelligence and a proposal is being offered to deliver into that space

Participant Feedback

Everyone needs to do this with Pat !

Pat was fantastic – engaging and informative

I feel so much better equipped to recognise the risks

- Pat had great empathy – created a safe space
Better informed and skilled to be making brave conversations*

*Great presenter
good materials
great resources for post event*

Small groups engaging and personal

One man said “I wasn’t going to come. I was too scared and confronted. But at 2am I woke and booked the flight and did the pre-work on the plane. My brother suicided 8 months ago and I have not known how to deal with it. Thankyou for today”

Every group there were 1-3 men who shared about the loss by suicide of a family member, and their unresolved grief

One man said “I did not know until today my wife suffers with anxiety. I am going home today to be present to my wife.” His peers gave him a standing ovation

One man shared at length about his manic depressive father and the effect that had on his life to this day. All the men in the room were shocked and many said “I am so sorry...I didn’t know that”

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Participant Feedback

All 450 participants scored 3.5 and 4 out of possible 4 across these areas:-

- Topic relevance
- Increased understanding of mental health issues
- Examples and activities relevant
- Presenter skill and empathy
- Presenter knowledgeable
- Program length
- Able to now make changes in line with learning

One woman shared how she very tentatively employed 2 people with mental health problems....one with depression and the other with aspergersand expanded on the influence that had on the 30 people in that woman's team.....the empathy that grew out of their connection and caring for these 2 people and their unique vulnerabilities. Over a 12 month period they became far more connected than previous and far more demonstrable care and concern.

And the people employed flourished in their roles!

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Other Businesses worked for



Other client endorsements

"Pat is one of the most positive, energetic people I have ever met. She adds enormous value to the quality of environments. It's high time we we focussed on proactive prevention of health problems and stress." **Robyn Stent, former Health and Disability Commissioner, NZ**

"I just wanted to say thank you again. I left the session yesterday feeling so uplifted and empowered to be generous to others daily. You do great stuff."
Kerry Dewar, Learning & Development Consultant - Sales, Coca-Cola Amatil (NZ)

It was wonderful to have your input which has encouraged people to look at life from a different perspective and the energy to lift their horizons.
Laurie Finlayson, National HR Manager, Kensington Swan Law Firm

"Thank you for your presentation...It's hard to find a speaker that has a major point of difference and who is able to keep the delegates attention throughout. Your handout notes were just brilliant....especially the last paragraph!" **Verity Martin, Martin Personnel**

Pat is well ahead of her time in the regard of understanding what causes wellness and happiness within the human condition, and I have seen her lead many others into the discovery of this within themselves. " **[Kym McDonald](#), Owner and Managing Director - Inner Transformational Coach, Mindgarden Coaching and Consulting Ltd**

"Pat commits the cardinal management sin of spreading joy and making people smile. If her practices become widely adopted, going to work will become fun, and people will enjoy the experience. Ultimately she is a dangerous subversive to dullness, mediocrity and boredom. Why can't we have more like her?" **John Bishop - Media commentator**