

A woman with dark, curly hair and black-rimmed glasses is shown from the chest up. She is resting her chin on her right hand, looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. She is wearing a light-colored, button-down shirt. The background is a blurred office setting with a window showing a cityscape.

A Manager's Guide to Self Management

Managers Feel the Pinch Series

Managers?

They're the most stressed, sleep-deprived and distracted members of a company (1). Thrown into positions without adequate training, walking the impossible tightrope between managing individuals and their performance, whilst also answering to key decision-makers and stakeholders.

DID YOU KNOW?

72% of managers have felt stressed in the past 4 weeks (2).

Our *Managers Feel The Pinch* research paper unearthed some shocking statistics that show the disproportionate level of struggle managers face in comparison to colleagues and directors. This can, and is having catastrophic consequences on employee wellbeing and turnover; 1 in 3 UK workers have admitted to quitting a job because of bad management (3). So how can we help managers to feel and perform better at work?

Why are managers so stressed?

Often, managerial roles are bestowed upon high performers, without adequate training on how to be a successful manager. Managing a team means helping each member to manage and regulate their own emotions. This emotional labour often goes unacknowledged, becoming a silent burden which managers are expected to carry, despite never being taught how to.

So how can we equip managers to navigate this challenge?

What skillset does emotional labour require?

Civility Pays

Civility is a key tool for undertaking emotional labour, and when deployed correctly, can deliver results in the form of an emotionally well-regulated team.

Put Civility into Action

Appreciation

Thanking people and sharing genuine appreciation regularly is an essential practice when managing or leading a team.

Acknowledging Others

Similarly - acknowledging peoples contributions, what they are thinking, feeling, and saying can have a big impact. Aim to give everyone a voice, by allocating time in meetings and discussions for each individual.

Sharing Credit

By sharing credit when and where it's due, managers can help bolster the confidence and emotional wellbeing of employees and promote a culture where performance is valued over presenteeism and office politics.

Listening Attentively

This means carving out time with no distractions to be fully present and listen to the other person. Thought it's tempting, don't jump into immediate problem solving mode; listen wholeheartedly and make sure to clarify and acknowledge what is being said e.g.

"What I'm hearing is that ... have I got that right?"

Get Stuff Out of the Way

Our research survey asked participants how often things 'get in the way' of them doing their job, and over half of the managers we surveyed said that things do consistently get in the way. Meetings can so easily become the bane of managers' lives, eating into precious time and delivering nothing but frustration and conversational cycles that never translate into actionable tasks. So often, it seems like meetings hinder rather than help managers, taking up time and energy which they don't have set aside

So what's the answer?

Banning meetings outright is unrealistic. But there are steps we can all take to make sure meetings deliver, rather than drain.

Use the POST Method

Purpose, Outcome, Structure, Timings.

Ensure everyone attending a meeting is clear on the following:

- What's the purpose of this meeting?
- What's the structure for this meeting?
- What's the timing for it?
- What are the outcomes from this?

Once meetings become helpful and productive, rather than time consuming they serve to help rather than hinder managers and the wider team.

Help Managers Help Themselves

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

We've talked so far about how managers are tasked with helping regulate the emotions of their team members and colleagues - **but what about the emotional state of managers themselves?**

Managers Feel The Pinch reports that managers are the least likely (in comparison to colleagues and directors) to feel okay sharing feelings of overwhelm, upset, frustration and annoyance (4).

Moreover, there's a clear link between emotional expression, sleep deprivation and stress; of the 72% of managers who admitted to feeling stressed at work. Additionally, 83% of them said that it is not okay for them to share frustration or annoyance at work, and 80% couldn't share feelings of overwhelm or upset at work (5).

Plus, 53% of the managers who said they were unable to express feeling overwhelmed also experienced disrupted sleep due to work stress (6).

It's clear that for managers to feel and perform better at work, we need to help enable them to express their emotions at work.

A Crash Course in Emotional Expression

START WITH THE SENSES

For example, you might describe: 'I can feel a frown on my face' 'I can feel butterflies in my stomach' 'I can feel my mind racing' 'I can feel my shoulders rising' or 'I can feel my shoulders tensing.'

Making the statement 'I feel.. [angry, offended, scared]' can feel daunting, especially when we're sharing this with colleagues in a professional setting. For many, it's easier to starting by labelling the sensations and actions that the emotion is bringing forth in you.

When labelling actions, we might express things like:

'That jumped out at me.'
'I could feel myself leaning towards that'.

DON'T FORGET

Expressing emotion when we feel it is the best way to regulate feelings in a healthy, constructive (rather than destructive) way.

'That got me to stop still' or 'That got me to think'.


'I could feel myself leaning away from that.'


Relate these sensations, or actions back to the original trigger e.g. 'As we discussed the way forward on that particular project, I noticed that it made me stop still and think really hard about...'


Enjoyed this resource?

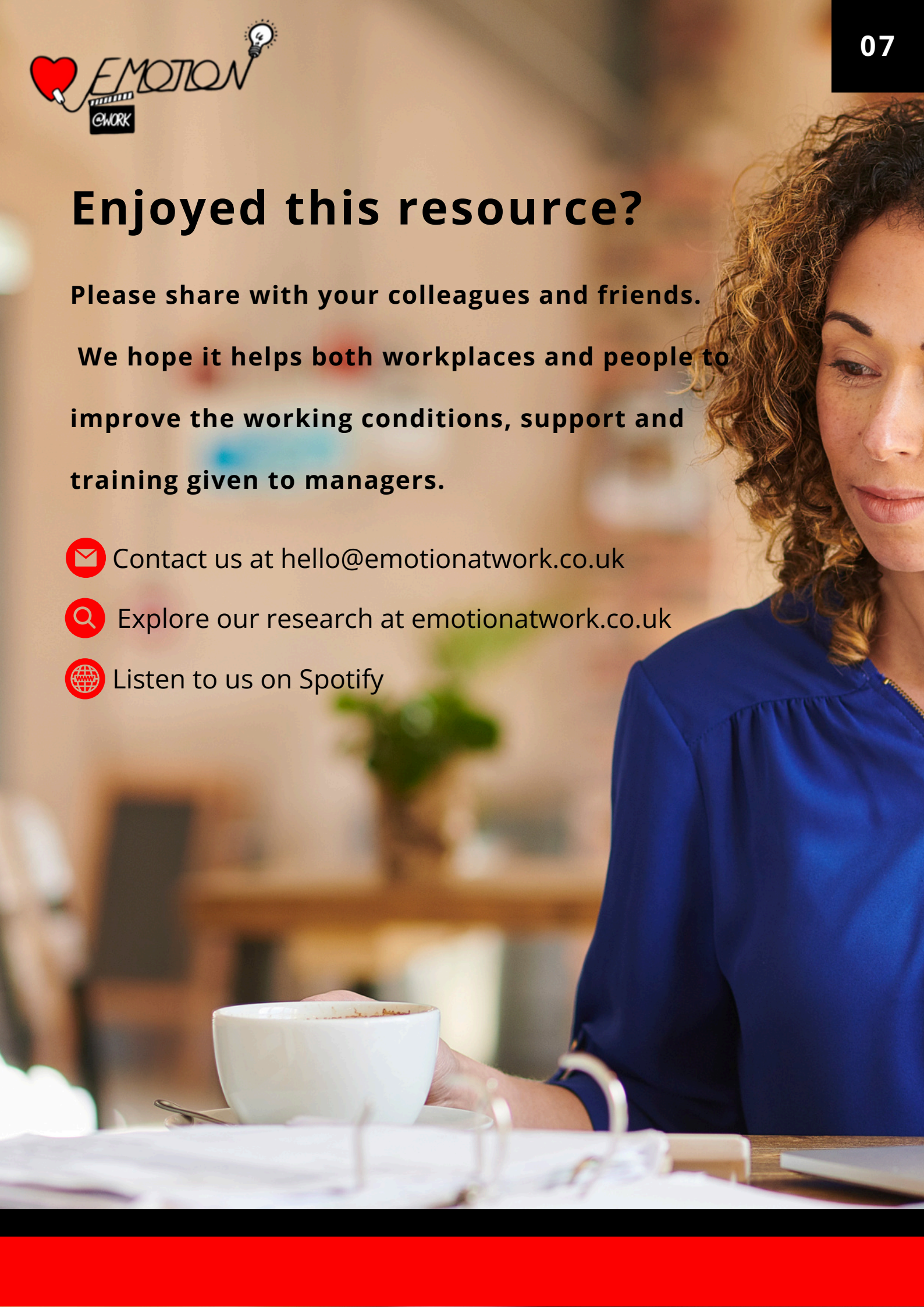
Please share with your colleagues and friends.

We hope it helps both workplaces and people to improve the working conditions, support and training given to managers.

 Contact us at hello@emotionatwork.co.uk

 Explore our research at emotionatwork.co.uk

 Listen to us on Spotify



Reference Index

- (1) Emotion at Work, (2022). Managers Feel The Pinch: Emotional wellbeing in the workplace.
- (2) Emotion at Work, (2022). Managers Feel The Pinch: Emotional wellbeing in the workplace. p.4
- (3) Stewart, H. (2023, October 15). Bad management has prompted one in three UK workers to quit, survey finds. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/oct/15/bad-management-has-prompted-one-in-three-uk-workers-to-quit-survey-finds>
- (4) Emotion at Work, (2022). Managers Feel The Pinch: Emotional wellbeing in the workplace. p.5
- (5) Emotion at Work, (2022). Managers Feel The Pinch: Emotional wellbeing in the workplace. p.9
- (6) Emotion at Work, (2022). Managers Feel The Pinch: Emotional wellbeing in the workplace. p.12-13.