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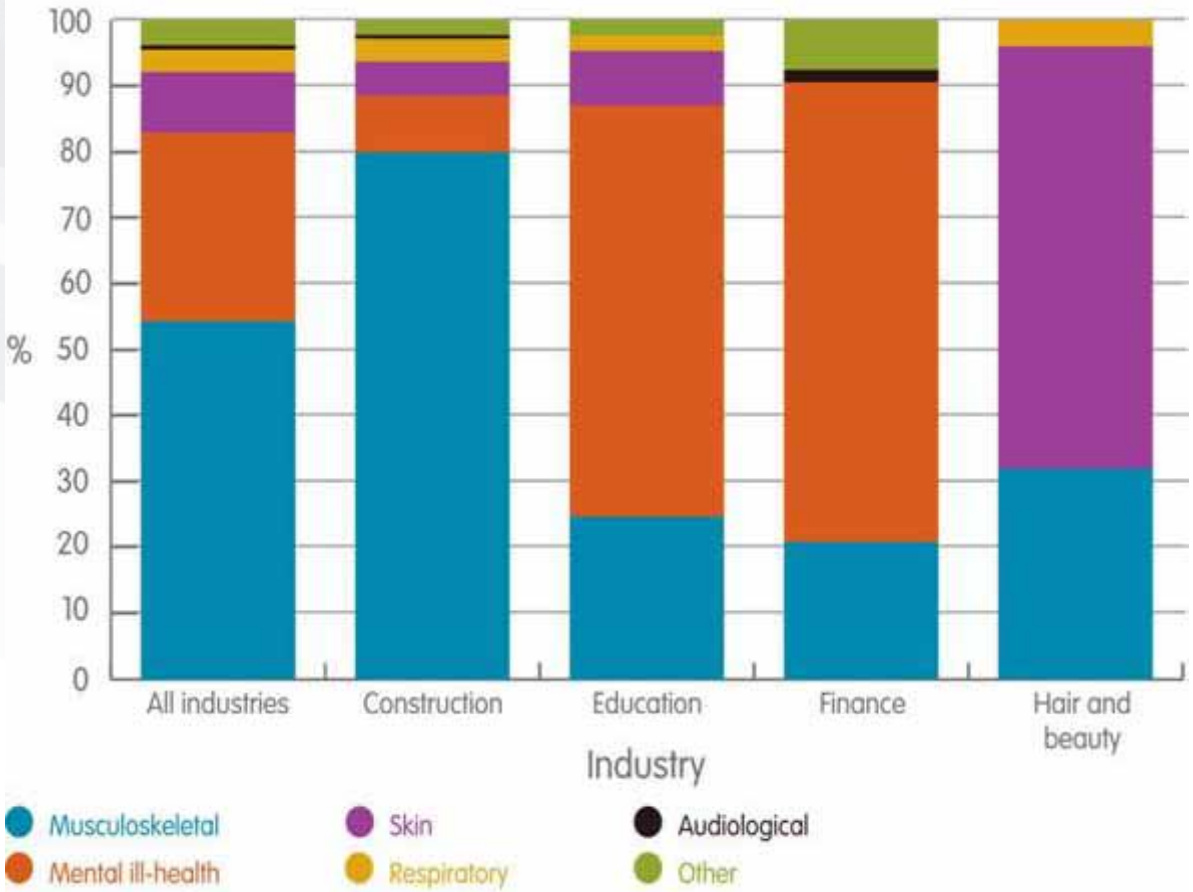
Mental Health at Work during the Downturn

Brendan McLoughlin
Programme Director
Mental Wellbeing, Inclusion & Psychological Therapies

Scale of the problem

- Total cost of mental illness to the economy estimated at £40 billion per year (Royal College of Psychiatrists)
- 63 million working days are lost each year due to mental illness (CBI)
- Cost of reduced productivity whilst in work due to mental illness estimated at £15 billion per year (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health)
- Less than 1/4 of disabled people with mental illness are in employment – half the employment rate for all disabled people
- Some industries show disproportionately high rates of mental illness (e.g. teachers, police, healthcare professionals) but with no common ‘toxic threads’

Nature of the problem



Note: Based on number of cases. Does not cover Scotland and Wales.

Source: Health and Occupation Reporting Network (THOR), a research programme of the Occupational and Environmental Health Research Group of the University of Manchester

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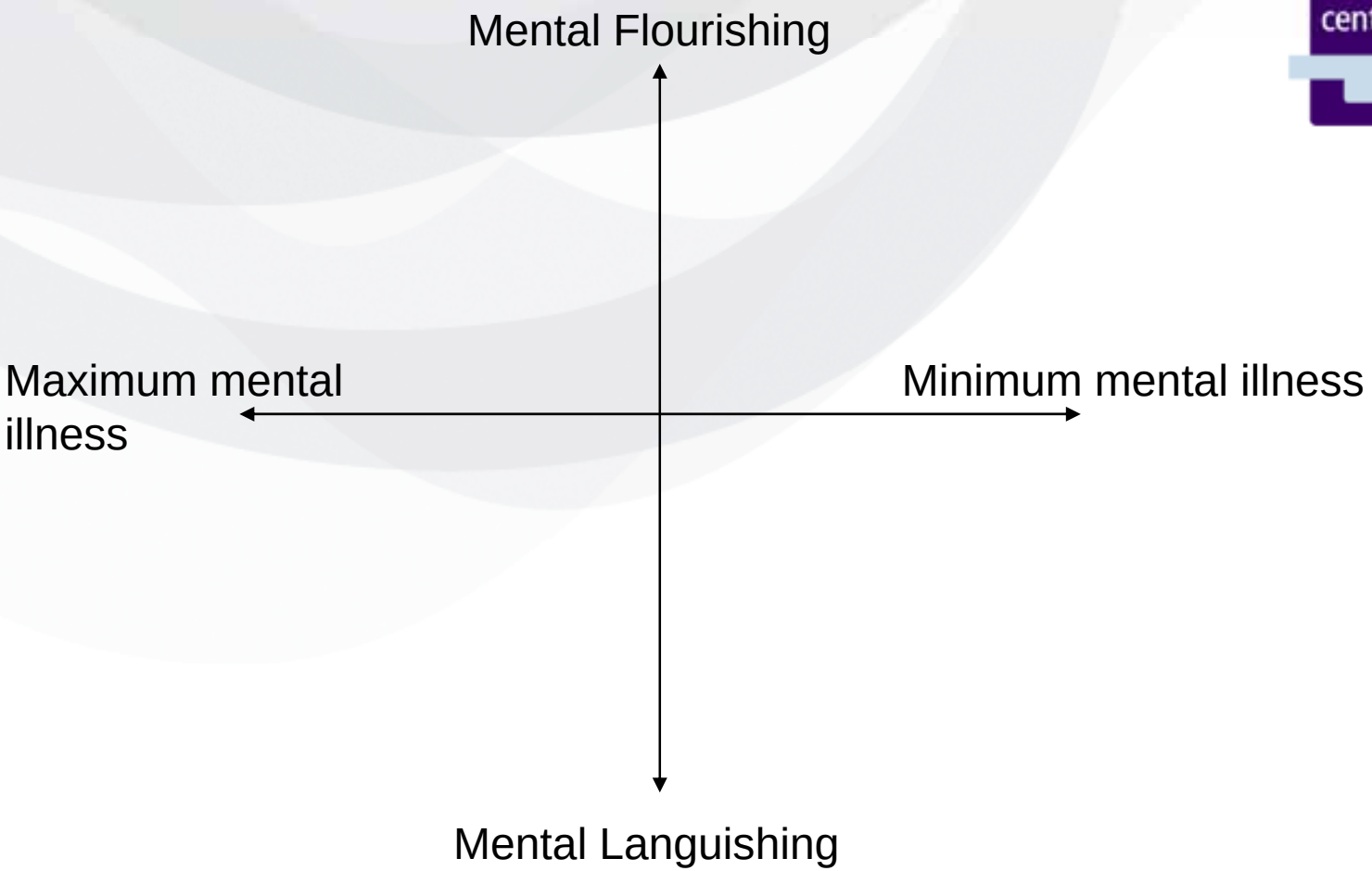

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Benefits of flourishing

- Increased productivity, earnings
- Improved educational performance
- Healthier behaviour e.g. drink less, better diet and exercise more
- More sociable/better relationships within and without work
- Better quality of life
- Less mental illness – not on a continuum, but it does have an impact

Consequences of languishing

- So -Less productive when at work
- More days off work – often occasional days
- More physical illness & limitations – physical illness is harder to cope with
- Less resilience – harder to deal with life's problems in general
- Fewer goals in life – less ambitious
- More helplessness
- Poorer social relationships

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TABLE 2. Simple logistic regression of any CVD onto socio-demographic predictors and mental health status ($n = 2{,}952$; sample unweighted)

Predictors	Odds ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval for (OR)
2nd → Languishing and depressed	2.9***	(1.6–5.1)
Pure major depression episode	2.1**	(1.3–3.3)
Minor depression	1.4	(0.58–3.4)
Languishing	1.5†	(0.96–2.5)
Moderately mentally healthy	1.5*	(1.0–2.1)
Flourishing	1.0	(—)
Control variables		
Females	1.0	(—)
Males	1.3*	(1.1–1.7)
Caucasians	1.1	(0.79–1.7)
Minority status	1.0	(—)
Age 25–34	1.0	(—)
Age 35–44	1.2	(0.62–1.5)
Age 45–54	1.8**	(1.2–2.7)
Age 55–64	2.1***	(1.4–3.2)
1st → Age 65–74	3.3***	(2.1–5.2)
12 years (GED) or fewer education	1.4*	(1.0–2.0)
13–15 years of education	1.3	(1.0–1.9)
16 or more years of education	1.0	(—)
Married	1.4*	(1.1–1.8)
Unmarried (includes separated)	1.0	(—)
Unemployed	1.8***	(1.4–2.4)
Employed (part- or full-time)	1.0	(—)
Smoked or smokes cigarettes	1.3*	(1.0–1.7)
Never smoked cigarettes	1.0	(—)
3rd → Diabetic (taking medication)	2.2***	(1.4–3.4)
Not diabetic (no medication)	1.0	(—)
Exercise	1.1*	(1.0–1.2)
Nagelkerke's R^2	0.13	
Model χ^2	196.9***	

†$p < 0.07$; *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).

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Control
sense of control
over work and life in general

Contributing
-As parent
--as volunteer
--as an employee
-- all of these

Flourishing

Social Networks
Range of Friends
at home & at work

Personal Development
Doing a course
perhaps sponsored through work
Perhaps self funded
to help career prospects/hobby
Part of emotional relationship

- Work organisation
- Physical working conditions
- Employee consultation and involvement
- Organisation’s policies, procedures and rules