

# Book review



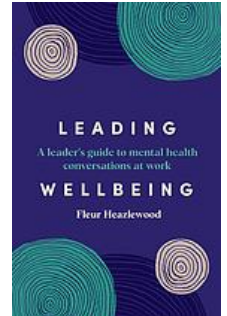
## Leading wellbeing: A leader's guide to mental health conversation at work

**Author:** Heazlewood, Fleur.

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Fleur Heazlewood's *Leading Wellbeing* is a great book for people leaders and workplace wellbeing professionals at any level. The book delves into the intersection of workplace performance and mental health, offering invaluable insights and practical strategies for leaders to create and maintain psychologically safe environments in which people can feel 'ok not to be ok'. This excerpt from the book was particularly insightful when talking about empathy "The most important part of listening well is to acknowledge and validate that what the other person is feeling is real for them" (p.115).

The author discusses the notion that high performance cannot be sustained unless it is accompanied by mental and physical wellbeing. She highlights the fact that 1 in 5 individuals experience mental distress at work each year—thus stressing the importance of collective action in supporting our colleagues' mental health and wellbeing. Heazlewood also emphasizes the pivotal role of leaders in fostering a psychologically safe work environment—one where individuals feel valued, supported, and empowered to prioritise their wellbeing.

The author provides a practical framework for leaders to proactively address mental health concerns, including recognising signs of burnout, facilitating open communication, and offering support tailored to individual needs. She talks about the importance of the balance between caring for an employee's wellbeing whilst maintaining performance expectation, and also advocates for a holistic approach that integrates mental health support into everyday conversations and performance discussions.

There are some great practical strategies covered in this book for creating a healthy work environment, from fostering inclusivity and open communication, to providing support for mental health issues and promoting self-care. I particularly like how the author says to "actively manage your priorities and workload to within your capacity rather than to your exhaustion edge" (p.74), which is a timely reminder to ensure we are both modelling our maintenance of healthy boundaries and being mindful of our own wellbeing.

What sets "Leading Wellbeing" apart is the practical tools given, such as self-assessments, checklists, case-studies, reflection questions, and action and development plans. It also provides valuable insights and guidance for leaders at every level. Heazlewood's emphasis on developing mental health literacy and mastering communication skills equips readers with the tools needed to initiate compassionate and effective conversations about mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. With a blend of research-backed insights and practical advice, this book is perfect for anyone committed to fostering a culture of positive wellbeing, psychological safety and high performance in their organisation.

### **Review by Vibha Prasad, Organisation Development Coordinator**

*Disclaimer: Please note these reviews are not intended as endorsements or recommendations from the Mental Health Foundation. This feature introduces resources that may be useful for individuals with an interest in mental health and wellbeing topics.*

