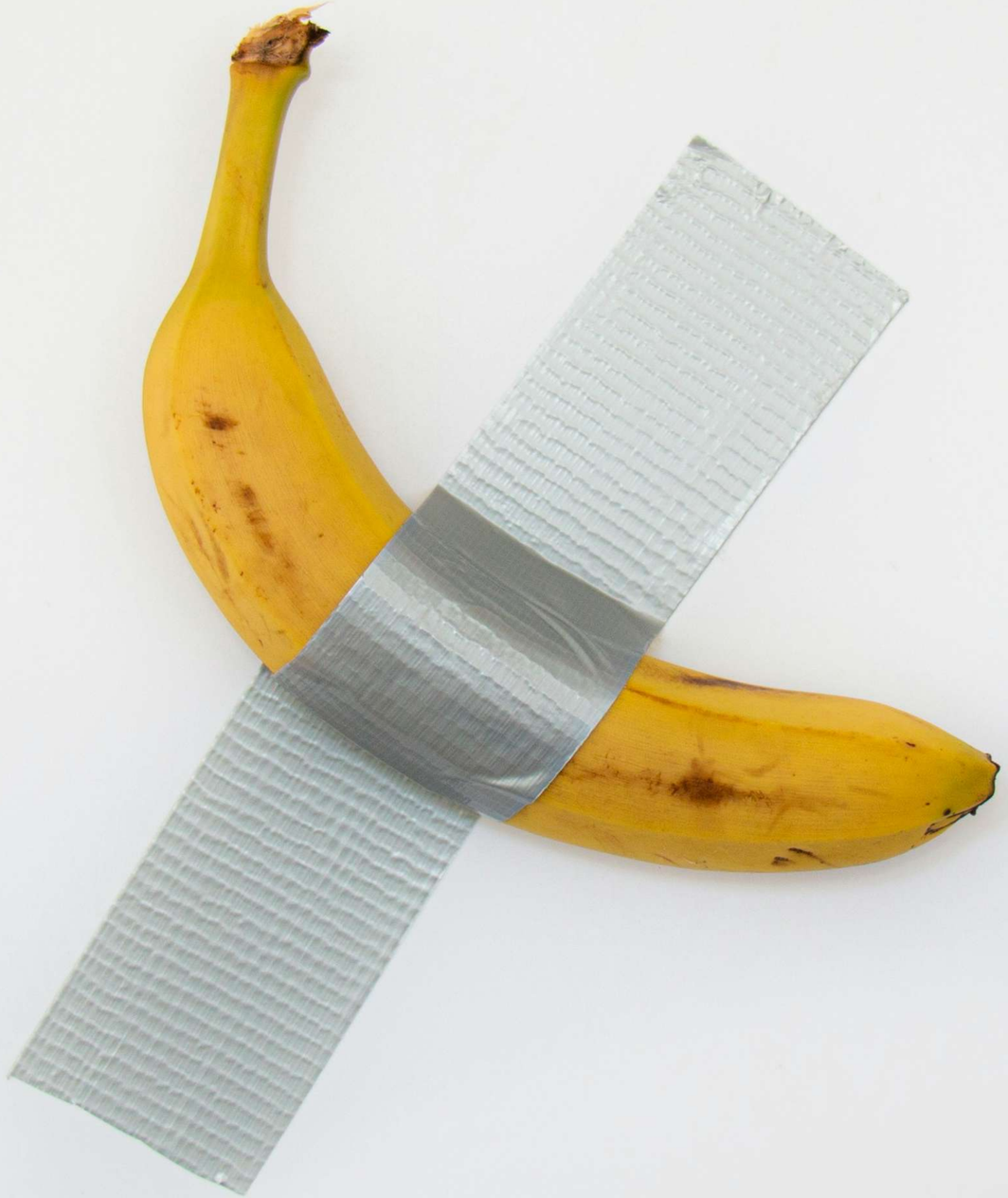

HOW'S
WORK?
WELCOME BACK »

HOW'S WORK?

WHAT *stuck?*



INTERIM ASSIGNMENT · BEFORE DAY 2

Spot One Signal

Today you learned to recognize how stress shows up, not as one bad day, but as a change in a pattern. Before Day 2, we'd like you to try this with one real person on your team.

1 YOUR TASK

- **Choose one team member** you'd like to pay closer attention to.
- **Notice one concrete signal** over the coming weeks, a change in energy, in social behaviour, or in the quality of their work.
- **Write it down**, in a sentence or two. Not to judge it, not to fix it yet. Just to notice it clearly.

2 WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Energy

Someone who was proactive becomes withdrawn. Or the opposite: someone calm becomes restless.

Social

Less present in the team, more tension, or more isolation than before.

Work quality

More mistakes, more procrastination, or a growing need for control.

Look for a pattern, not an incident. One difficult day tells you little. A change that lasts tells you a lot more.

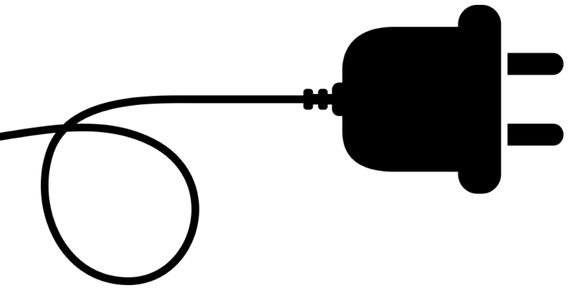
3 BRING THIS TO DAY 2

Come to Day 2 with what you noticed, in a sentence or two. **We'll use it as real material** to practice the conversation itself, so it's grounded in your own team from the start.

HOW'S WORK?

When DOES WORK PRESSURE BECOME A PROBLEM?

About a bank account and a swimmer



What's MY ROLE AS A MANAGER?

The 5 key moments

Who TAKES CARE OF THE MANAGER?

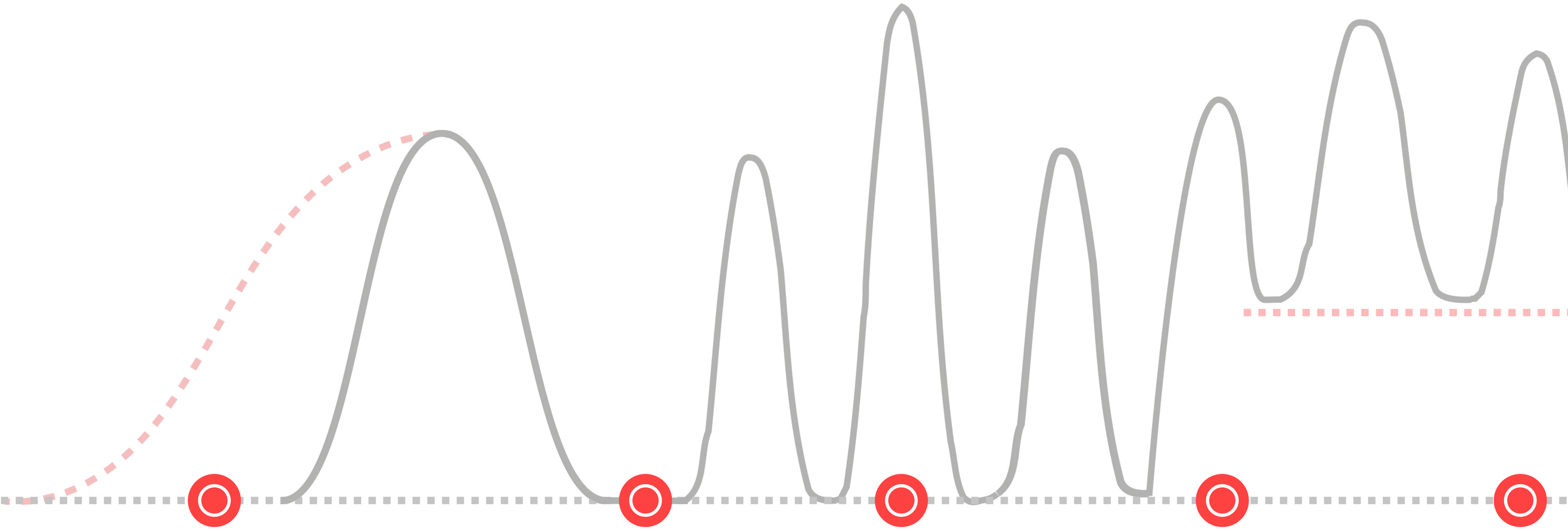
Emotional labor

How CAN WE HAVE EFFECTIVE DIALOGUES?

Conversation techniques with a professional actor

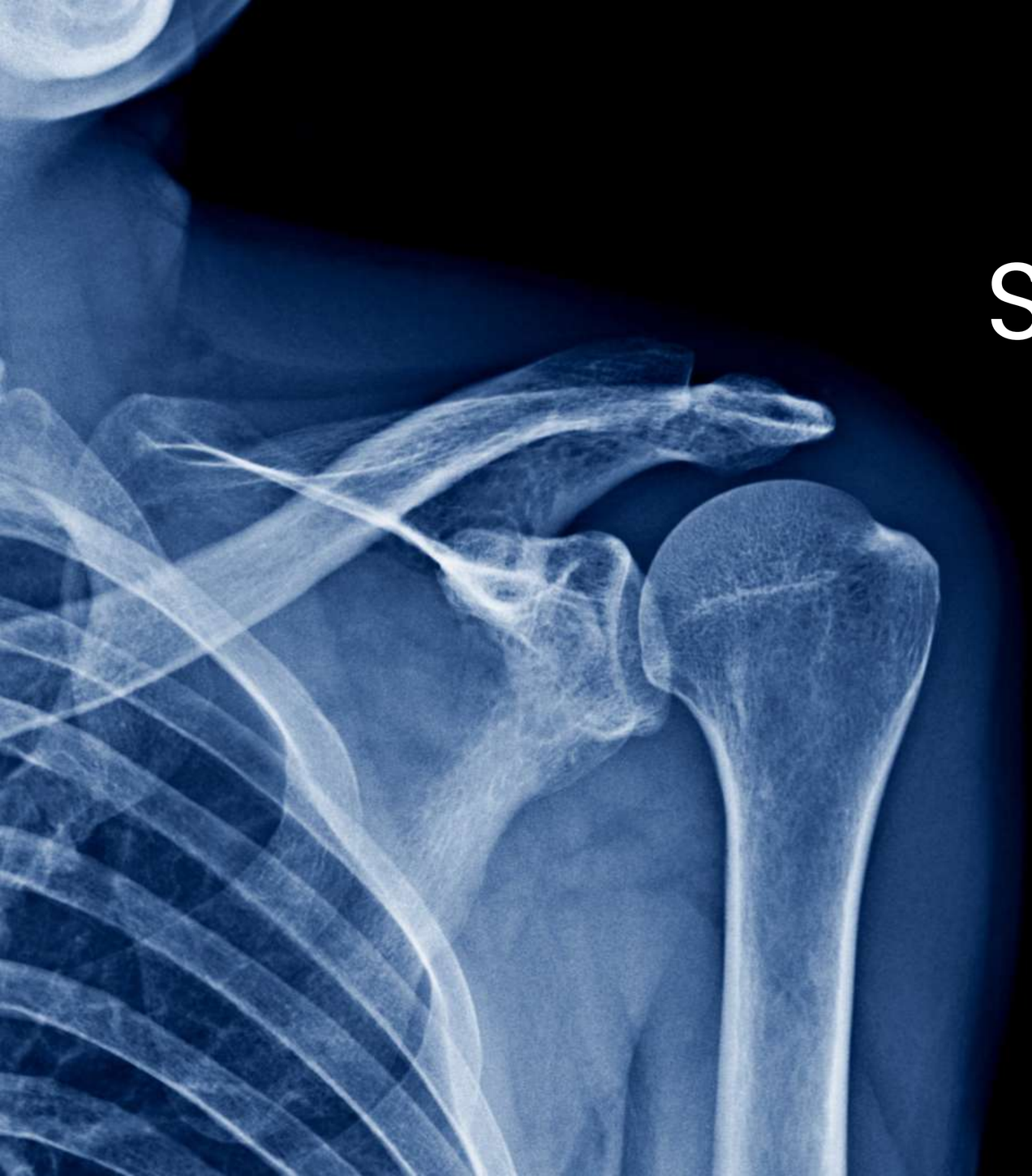
5 KEY MOMENTS

HOW'S WORK?



- PREVENTING WORKLOAD
- DISCUSSING WORKLOAD
- DISCUSSING WORK-RELATED STRESS
- PROVIDING SUPPORT DURING ABSENCE
- SUPPORTING REINTEGRATION



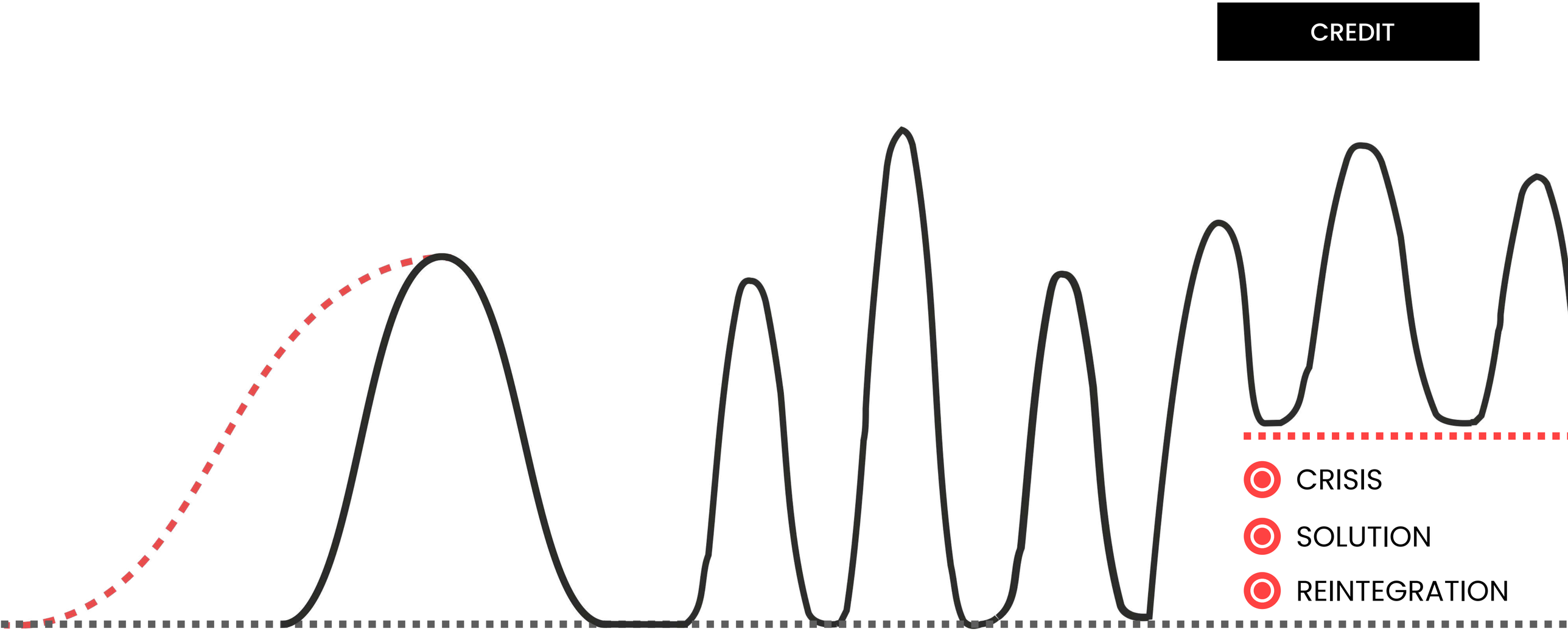


SUPPORT DURING *absence*



WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF *mental health* PROBLEMS?

HOW'S WORK?



HOW'S WORK?

COACH *versus* THERAPIST




What do you need?

Recommendations – Supportive Leadership & Effective D

At EUROCONTROL MUAC, we highly value the wellbeing of our
understand that our industry can be uniquely challenging, highly dem
involves tight deadlines. That's why we have developed the following r
to help you as a manager to support your team members.

As a manager, you want the best for your team. You want your team
coming to work, to be able to develop their talents, and to find their w
short, you want to have a positive impact on your team members' expe

Five key moments

To have that positive impact, it's crucial to press pause regularly –
forward. You can do this by engaging in conversations with your team
discussions can provide you with the opportunity to understand the nee
and concerns of your team members, allowing you as the team leader
individual needs and enhance their experience at work.

In the following recommendations, you'll find tools designed to hel
reflect in five distinct ways using five key moments, empowering y
forward more effectively. Depending on the current experiences of you
can select the key moment that best suits the individual team membe
whole. Is everything under control for now? Don't underestimate the va
discussing well-being—it's a crucial step in preventing long-term abse

Key moment 1: proactively discussing w
work

It can sometimes feel like you and your team members only need to p
things become unmanageable, during periods of increased pressure,
Whether you're working in a project-based environment, or in an opera
Ops Room, as a team leader it's essential to regularly schedule check-
when there's no immediate pressure. These check-ins help the team
and ensure that everyone is performing well. You can use these meeti
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1. Roles: does everyone still know what their responsibilitie
Why it works: people grow and change, just like the responsi
with their roles. If you never take a moment to check that every
same page, things can go awry without you realising.

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When a leader notices that a team member's stress level is
even getting worse, despite coaching and work-related adjus
look towards the various support services available within th
can check out the different support services that are availab
following link: **Energy and Resilience Management Support**

Key moment 4: Support during absence

As a leader, you are the first point of contact for your team memb
absent due to illness, but it's important to remember that your rol
coach, not to act as a therapist.

1. **General contact with your team members**

You are responsible for maintaining the connection between y
and the organisation during their absence. The level of this co
tailored to the personal needs of the team member concerned

- **Stay in touch**: regularly check in with your team memb
due to illness, whether their absence is because of
health reasons.
- **Set clear boundaries**: establish clear boundaries ab
often you will have contact, always respecting th
preferences. If you're unsure about the right approac
consult the Medical Adviser for guidance.
- **Prepare your conversations**: have a clear idea of the
to ask during each meeting and keep the conversation
limited in order to avoid overwhelming the team memb
- **Adjust as necessary**: continuously assess whethe
contact plan is still working for both parties, as needs ar
evolve throughout the recovery process.
- **Show empathy without adding pressure**: let your te
that you care, especially during difficult times, but
additional pressure for them to return.
- **Discuss work updates**: check if your team member w
updates about the team, ongoing projects, or clients.
stay connected to the workplace without actively takin
- **Talk about task distribution**: ask how they feel ab
colleagues are handling their tasks during their absenc
- **Communicate with the team**: discuss together how th
communicated to the team and how their tasks will
interim.

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- **Agree on appropriate communication channels**: set boundaries on which channels should be used or avoided, such as Teams, email, or work-related WhatsApp groups, depending on the team member's wishes.

2. **Behind the scenes**

Keeping track of what happens during your team member's absence will help them reintegrate smoothly upon their return without feeling overwhelmed. This ensures no important information is lost and encourages transparency and inclusion.

- **Document key changes**: keep a record of any significant changes within the department that could be relevant for your team member when they return.
- **Support the team**: acknowledge and support the colleagues who are stepping up to handle additional responsibilities during the team member's absence.
- **Assess information needs**: check with the team to understand what information they need regarding the absence, while respecting the privacy of the absent team member.
- **Consider sending a small gesture**: the team may want to show support by sending a thoughtful gesture, like a bouquet of flowers or a card, to the absent colleague.

3. **Specific considerations for burnout and mental health-related absences**

When a team member is dealing with burnout or mental health challenges, your approach should be even more sensitive and flexible, ensuring that you support their recovery in a way that respects their emotional state.

- **Be patient and considerate**: mental health recovery often takes longer than physical health recovery, so give your team member the space they need to heal, without rushing their return.
- **Adapt your communication**: establish a contact schedule that suits their energy levels and state of mind. Ensure that conversations remain supportive, and avoid work-related discussions unless the team member initiates them.
- **Offer work updates if desired**: if your team member is open to receiving updates, provide information in small, manageable pieces, always respecting their need for distance from work-related matters.
- **Avoid performance-related pressure**: make it clear that your focus is on their wellbeing and not on when they can return to work. Reassure them that their health comes first, and that their role will be waiting when they're ready.

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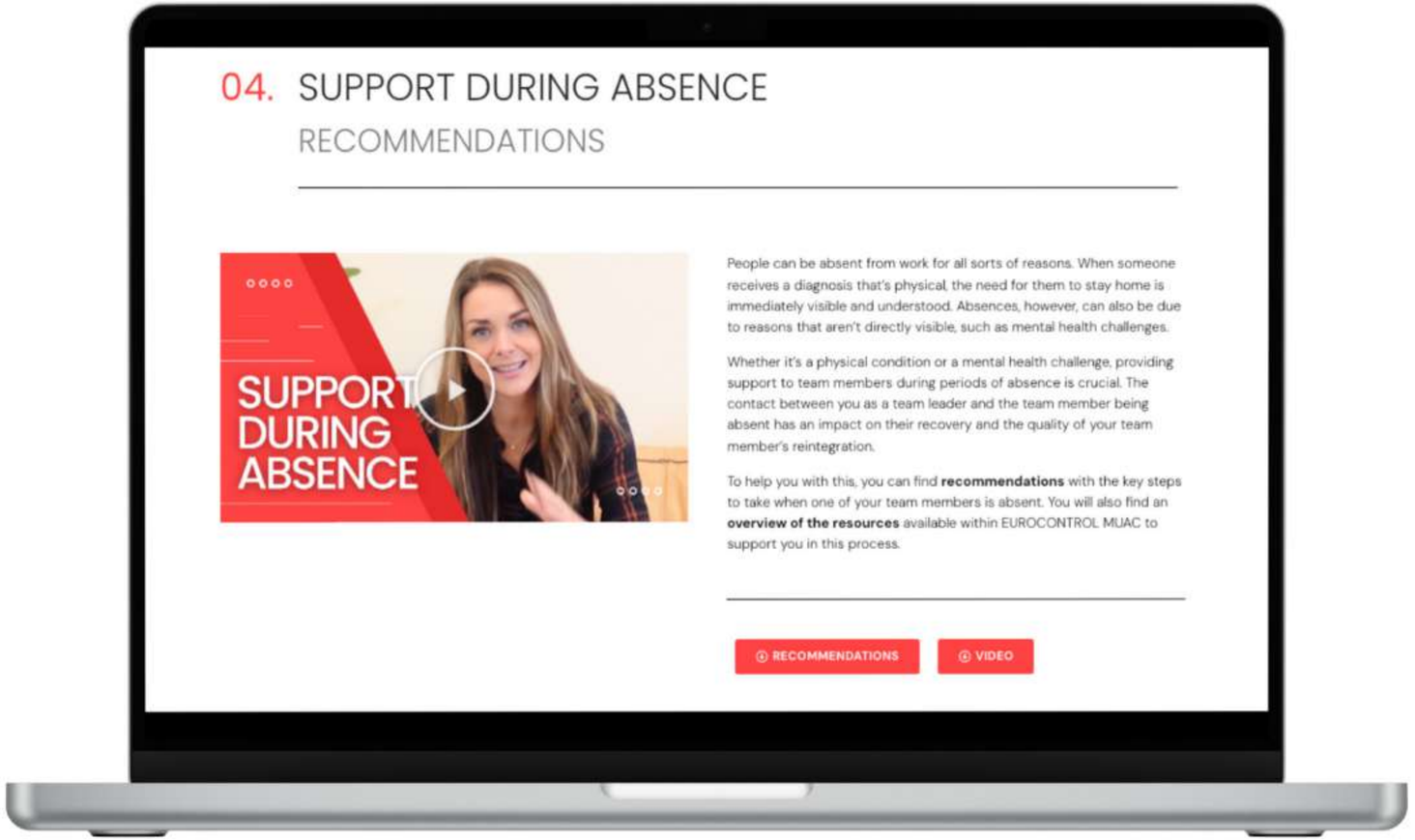
04. SUPPORT DURING ABSENCE
RECOMMENDATIONS
SUPPORT DURING ABSENCE
People can be absent from work for all sorts of reasons. When someone receives a diagnosis that's physical, the need for them to stay home is immediately visible and understood. Absences, however, can also be due to reasons that aren't directly visible, such as mental health challenges.
Whether it's a physical condition or a mental health challenge, providing support to team members during periods of absence is crucial. The contact between you as a team leader and the team member being absent has an impact on their recovery and the quality of your team member's reintegration.
To help you with this, you can find **recommendations** with the key steps to take when one of your team members is absent. You will also find an **overview of the resources** available within EUROCONTROL MUAC to support you in this process.
RECOMMENDATIONS
VIDEO

- PROACTIVELY DISCUSSING WELLBEING
- DISCUSSING WORKLOAD
- DISCUSSING WORK-RELATED STRESS
- SUPPORT DURING ABSENCE
- ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE RETURN




HOW'S WORK?
WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF
reintegration

At EUROCONTROL MUAC, we highly value the wellbeing of our employee
understand that our industry can be uniquely challenging, highly demanding, and
involves tight deadlines. That's why we have developed the following recommend
to help you as a manager to support your team members.

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Key moment 1: proactively discussing wellbeing
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Whether you're working in a project-based environment, or in an operational team
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when there's no immediate pressure. These check-ins help the team to move fo
and ensure that everyone is performing well. You can use these meetings to proa
discuss everyone's roles, expectations, talents, and challenges. The aim is to
everyone engaged and address any potential obstacles at an early stage.

1. Roles: does everyone still know what their responsibilities are?
Why it works: people grow and change, just like the responsibilities that
with their roles. If you never take a moment to check that everyone is still
same page, things can go awry without you realising.

- **Encourage professional support**: remind them of
resources available at EUROCONTROL MUAC if the
support. Check out the support network via the foll
and Resilience Management Support Network 20
- **Discreet team communication**: when communicat
ensure that details of the team member's menta
remain confidential. Focus on how the team will co
effectively, while being respectful of the team memb

When someone from your team is absent due to burnout, it can als
leader. In addition to practical adjustments and potentially challengin
can also affect you personally. Therefore, it's essential to take goo
during this time. Talk about this with your fellow team leaders, or seek

Key moment 5: Ensuring a sustainable
work

When someone returns to work after a period of absence, it is importa
words, the right approach, and the right balance. The return to
responsibility in which you, as a leader, play an important role, al
figures. Each team member is different, and therefore, each rein
requires a tailored approach.

To ensure that the return to work is sustainable for the future, it's imp
leader to develop a reintegration plan in collaboration with the relevan
member, the team, HR, MUAC's Welfare Officer, the MUAC Medical Ad
you will find a recommended outline of the key steps in preparing for
effective return to work.

1. **Maintain contact with your team member throughout**
of absence

The relationship between you and your team member plays ar
the reintegration process and in the sustainability of their retu
team member has given you permission to stay in touch, mak
taking advantage of this opportunity, even if they have be
extended period of time.

Be intentional in asking about their experience of this contact
would like to make any adjustments. However, continue t
important this contact is for you as a leader.

2. **Prepare for their return to work**

Ensure that all key figures are involved in the reintegration process, including the team member themselves and the entire team.
Engage in discussions with your team member about their return to work. Here are some conversation starters that may provide direction:

- "Does anything need to change for you to be able to resume your work (e.g. temporary task reduction or adjusted working hours)?"
- "Is there anything I or the team can do to support or improve your recovery?"
- "Are there any factors that are hindering your return to work?"

Ensure that alongside reducing certain task demands (for example, complexity of tasks or workload), there is also a focus on growth and valuing the strengths of the team member. Some conversation starters that focus on growth and allow the team member to look towards the future could be:

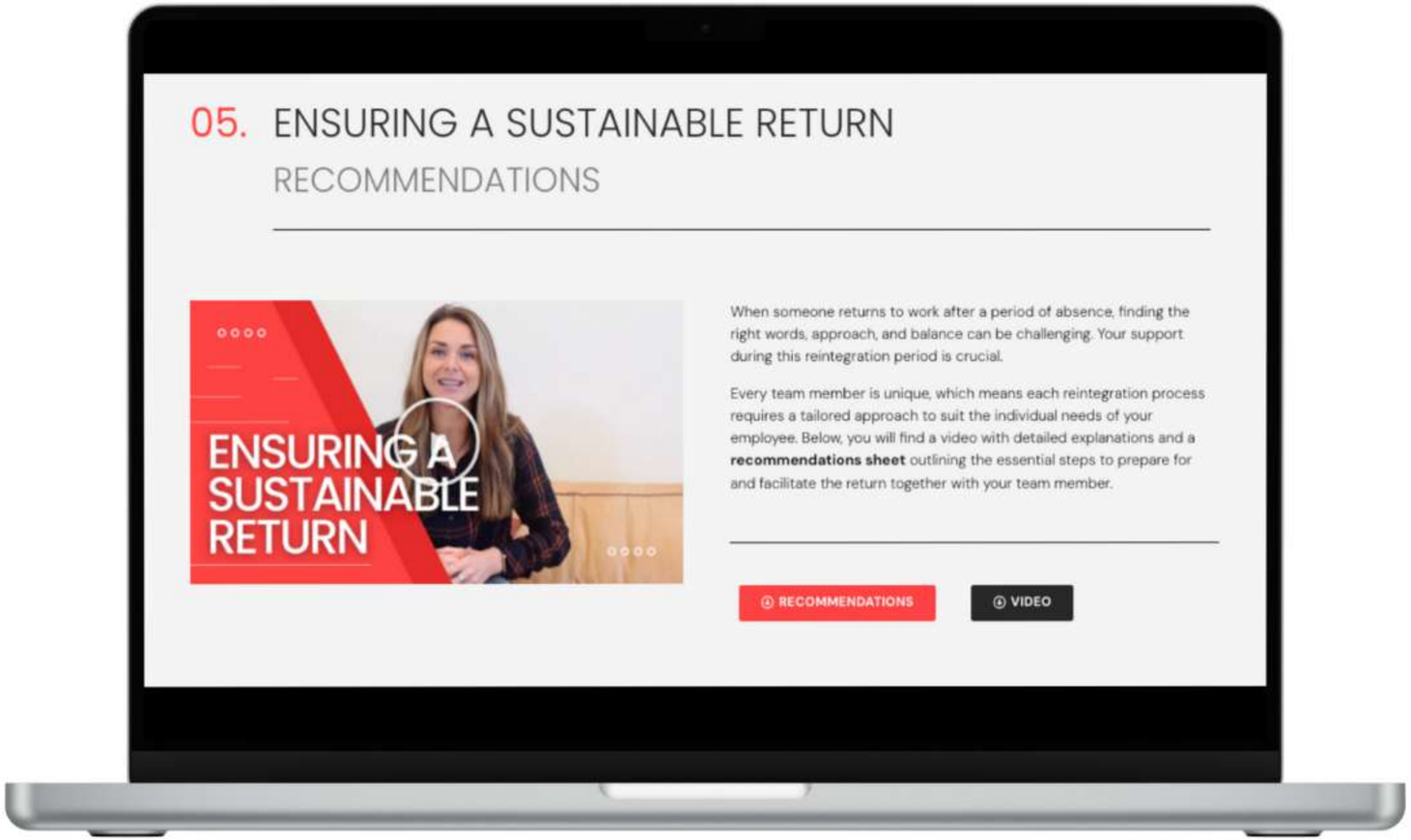
- "What would I like to be more involved in in the future?"
- "What energises me?"
- "What resources are available to help me to cope with the demands of the job?"
- "What strengths can I leverage?"
- "Which tasks are within my comfort zone, and which tasks would help me grow?"

Ensure that there is a progressive return to work. Research shows that a gradual return reduces the chances of relapse. For example, encourage social interaction in the workplace by inviting your team member to a team lunch or breakfast. Inviting them to attend a team meeting could be another option, before they return for a half or full day.

3. **Organise a welcoming first day back**

Make sure that the first day your team member returns to work is well-organised. Don't overwhelm them with to-do lists or discussions about how to approach the upcoming period. Treat this day purely as a reintegration day, allowing your team member to get used to being back and reacclimatise to the environment. Take the time to check in with them and find out what they need for this first day back in the office or the Ops Room. The needs of the person may vary depending on the reason they were absent in the first place.

- Organise an informal team gathering to start the day (e.g. breakfast or a coffee break).
- Be present and available on the day of their return so that you can support them if needed. A day filled with meetings is not appropriate for this, nor would it be suitable for your team member who has just returned to work.
- Ensure that the team is present and informed on the day.


05. ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE RETURN
RECOMMENDATIONS
ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE RETURN
When someone returns to work after a period of absence, finding the right words, approach, and balance can be challenging. Your support during this reintegration period is crucial.
Every team member is unique, which means each reintegration process requires a tailored approach to suit the individual needs of your employee. Below, you will find a video with detailed explanations and a **recommendations sheet** outlining the essential steps to prepare for and facilitate the return together with your team member.
RECOMMENDATIONS
VIDEO

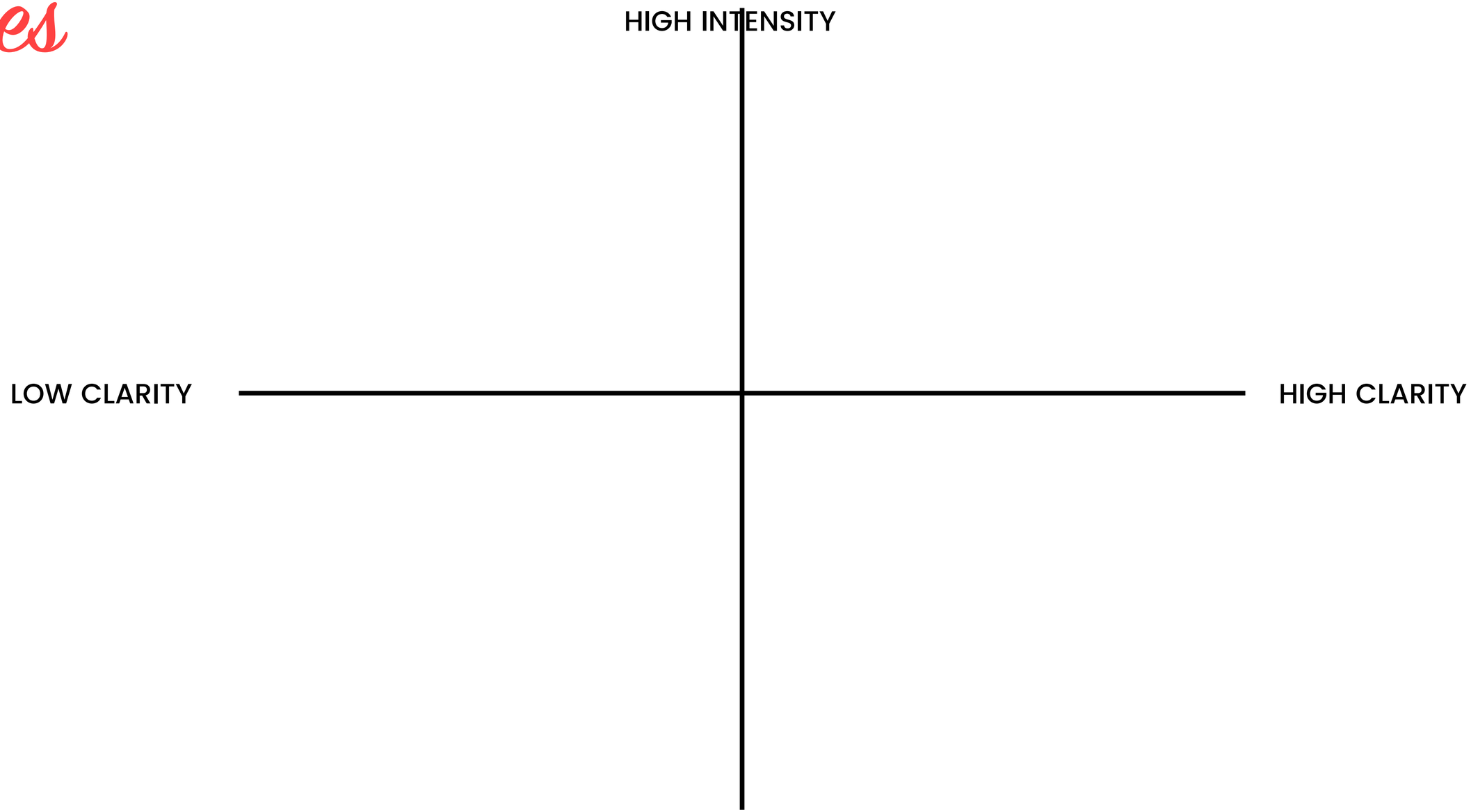


HOW'S WORK?

SIMULATIONS WITH *professional* ACTOR


HOW'S
WORK?
WHAT IS THE UNDERLYING NEED?
ONE-SIZE
fits all?

WORKLOAD *zones*



WORKLOAD *zones*





PRACTICING WITH PROFESSIONIAL *actor*

DEMONSTRATION EXERCISE

Reflection TIME



Four questions

Q1: Which **zone/quadrant** would you place the employee in? What made you think that?

Q2: What was the **need** of the employee?

Q3: What was the **leader's approach** or strategy?

Q4: **What effect** did that approach have on the employee?

WORKLOAD *zones*

HOW'S WORK?



WORKLOAD *zones*



High performance ZONE

INTENSITY

HIGH

- Actively protect **recovery and breaks** to prevent energy from being depleted.
- **Acknowledge** the effort and explicitly **recognize** the work that is being done.
- **Reinforce confidence** by confirming that the employee is capable and on the right track.
- **Check in regularly** to monitor how the pace is holding up and where support may be needed.

HIGH

CLARITY

WORKLOAD *zones*



WORKLOAD *zones*



Risk ZONE

HIGH

INTENSITY

- Create **structure** by clarifying who does what, by when, and with which resources.
- Make **priorities** explicit and actively remove or postpone what does not truly matter.
- Ensure **alignment** by reducing conflicting expectations and agreeing on one clear point of contact.
- **Check in regularly** to see where confusion remains and where the employee gets stuck.

LOW

CLARITY

WORKLOAD *zones*



WORKLOAD *zones*



CLARITY

LOW

- Make the '**why**' behind tasks and projects explicit.
- **Clarify goals and expectations** to restore a sense of direction.
- Reconnect daily work to the **broader impact** for the team or organization.
- Remove **unnecessary** administrative or bureaucratic friction where possible.
- **Check in regularly** to see where meaning or momentum is getting lost.

Drift
ZONE

LOW

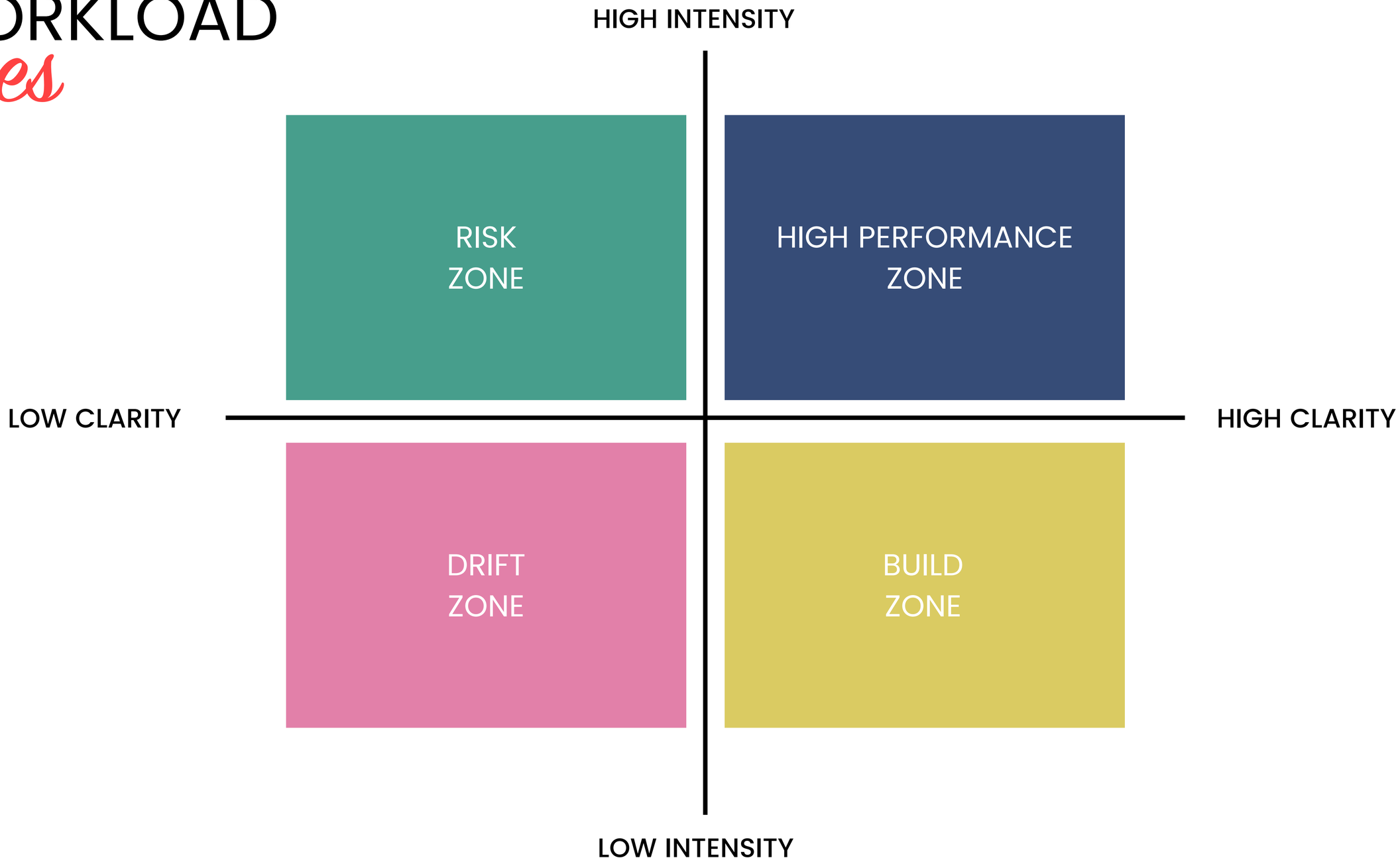
INTENSITY

HOW'S WORK?

WORKLOAD *zones*



WORKLOAD *zones*



CLARITY

HIGH

INTENSITY

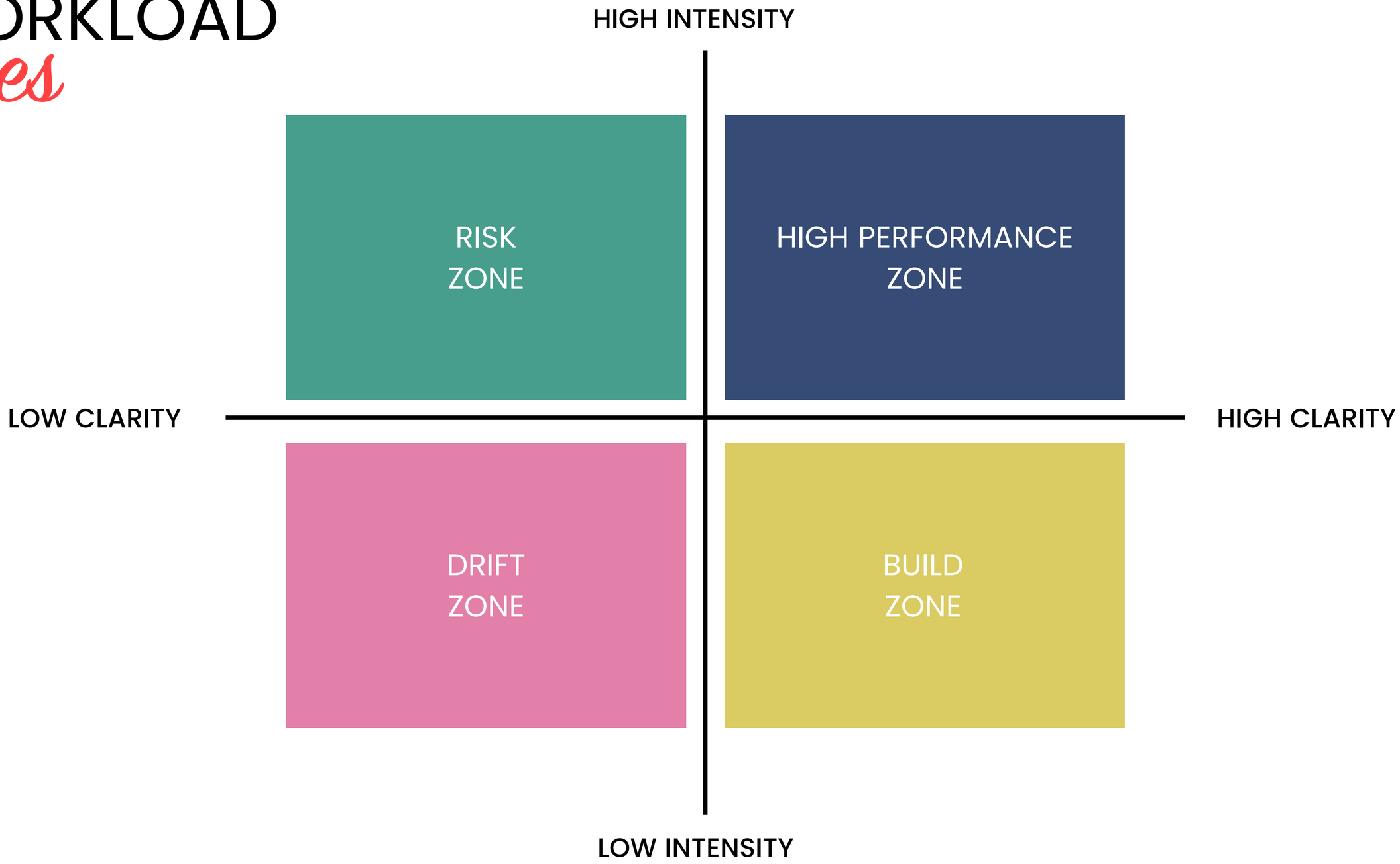
LOW

- **Encourage** employees to use available capacity for learning or improvement projects.
- Offer **autonomy** and invite **initiative** rather than filling the space for them.
- Actively monitor whether calm turns into **boredom** or **disengagement**.
- **Check in regularly** to explore where growth or challenge might be missing.

Build

ZONE

WORKLOAD *zones*



HOW ABOUT *your team* ?




WHO TAKES
CARE OF THE
manager?

HOW ABOUT *you*?



>> EXERCISE

Workload Compass

MAKING WORKLOAD DISCUSSABLE AND MANAGEABLE

HOW'S WORK?

CONVERSATION ANCHORS

To make workload discussable and manageable, it helps to **break it down** into **two dimensions**: intensity and clarity.

Intensity is about how heavy the load feels, for example in terms of workload, complexity or time pressure.
Clarity is about how clear the expectations are; think of priorities, roles and responsibilities, and processes.

Together, they form **four quadrants** that you can recognise through the conversation anchors you find in each quadrant.

On the next page, you will find an empty version that you can use as **support** during the conversation itself.



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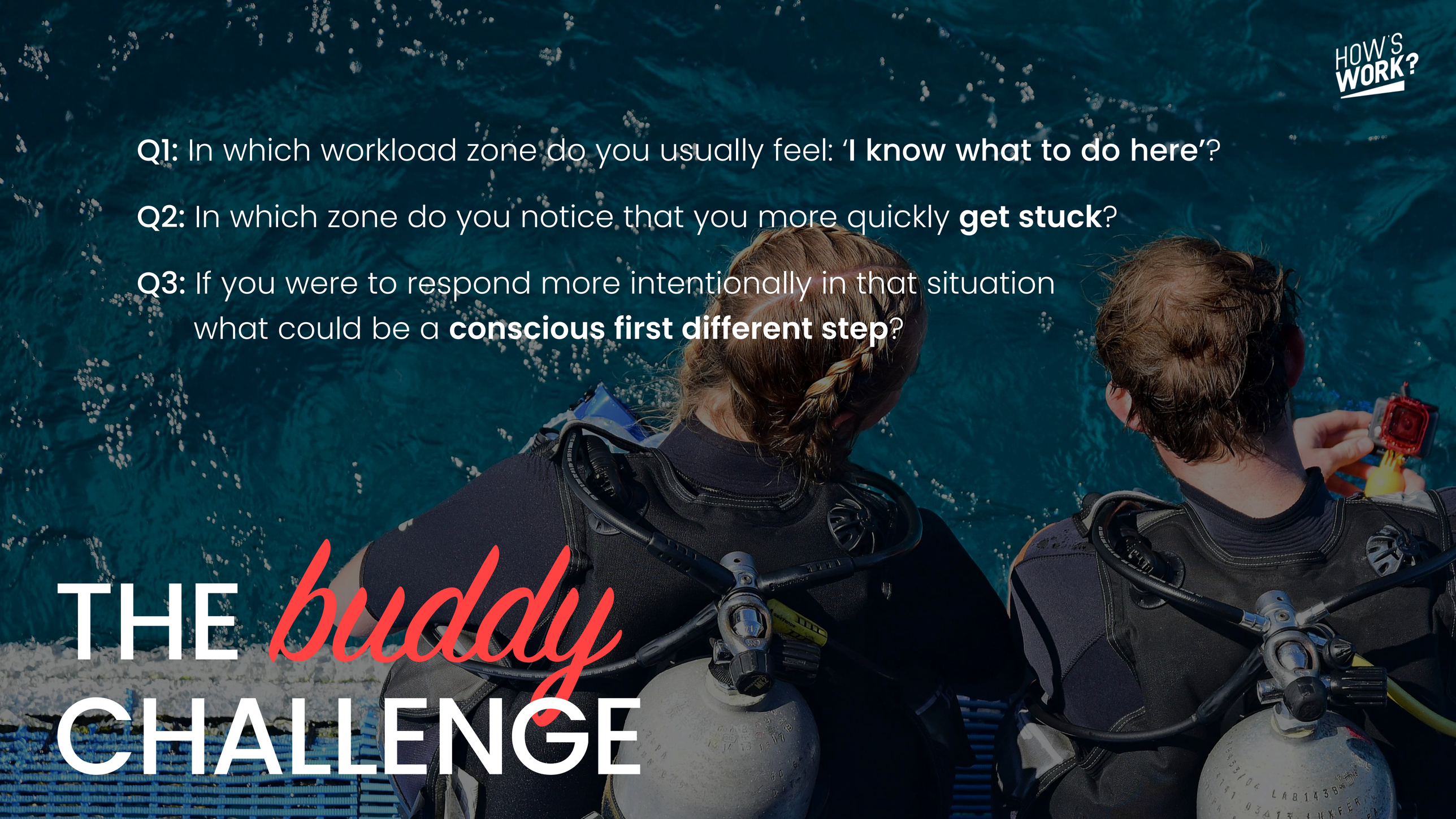

HOW'S WORK?

Q1: In which workload zone do you usually feel: '**I know what to do here**'?

Q2: In which zone do you notice that you more quickly **get stuck**?

Q3: If you were to respond more intentionally in that situation what could be a **conscious first different step**?

THE *buddy* CHALLENGE



PRACTICING WITH PROFESSIONIAL *actor*

'HOW TO MAKE IT WORSE' EXERCISE

Pitfalls (Well-intended)

OVER-REASSURING

Don't worry, it will be fine. +
I'm sure you can handle it. +

RATIONALIZING

Given the situation, this is actually normal. +
Your workload isn't higher than others. +

IMMEDIATE TAKE-OVER

I'll take this off your plate. +
Sophie will help you with this. +

MINIMIZING

+ *It's a busy period for all of us.*
+ *Everyone is busy right now.*

"ME TOO"

+ *I know, this organization is exhausting sometimes.*
+ *Wait until you hear what my week looks like.*

PATRONIZING

+ *You'll learn how to deal with this over time.*
+ *It's actually quite straightforward.*


HOW'S WORK?
PRACTICING WITH
PROFESSIONIAL actor
HOW ARE YOU?

PROACTIVELY DISCUSSING WELLBEING

DISCUSSING WORKLOAD

DISCUSSING WORK-RELATED STRESS

SUPPORT DURING ABSENCE

ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE RETURN




it's OK*

MIRROR TECHNIQUE

I HEAR... I SEE...



L ISTEN

A CKNOWLEDGE

S OLUTION

~~I understand~~ ...
But ...



PRACTICING WITH PROFESSIONIAL

ADDRESSING WORKLOAD TO MGMT

D ESCRIBE

E XPLAIN

S OLUTION

C ONSEQUENCE


What's
next?


HOW'S WORK?
THANK YOU!