

Who is looking after Doctors' Health?

Practitioner Health Matters Programme

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Medical Director PHMP
IMO AGM April 6th 2018



PHMP

Service which provides support, advice, treatment and monitoring for mental health issues including stress, burnout, 2nd victim syndrome, as well as substance misuse issues



PHMP

Strictly *CONFIDENTIAL* service

INDEPENDENT but has an MoU with the 3 Regulators

Clinical Advisory Group

Charitable status: not for profit + service is free of charge

Strong governance structure

Self-referral (email and phone) or via
colleague/faculty/employer



PHMP

MOU with the Medical Council

Confidentiality

“The identity of individual practitioners with the PHMP shall not be disclosed for the purpose of reporting unless the PHMP recommends that the medical practitioner is not compliant or otherwise has concerns that requires referral to the Council”

Referral to IMC

1. Non-Compliance

“concern about a practitioner’s health due to lack of contact and/or non-compliance with PHMP recommendations”

2. Imminent risk to Self, Patients or Public



Wanted – medical staff

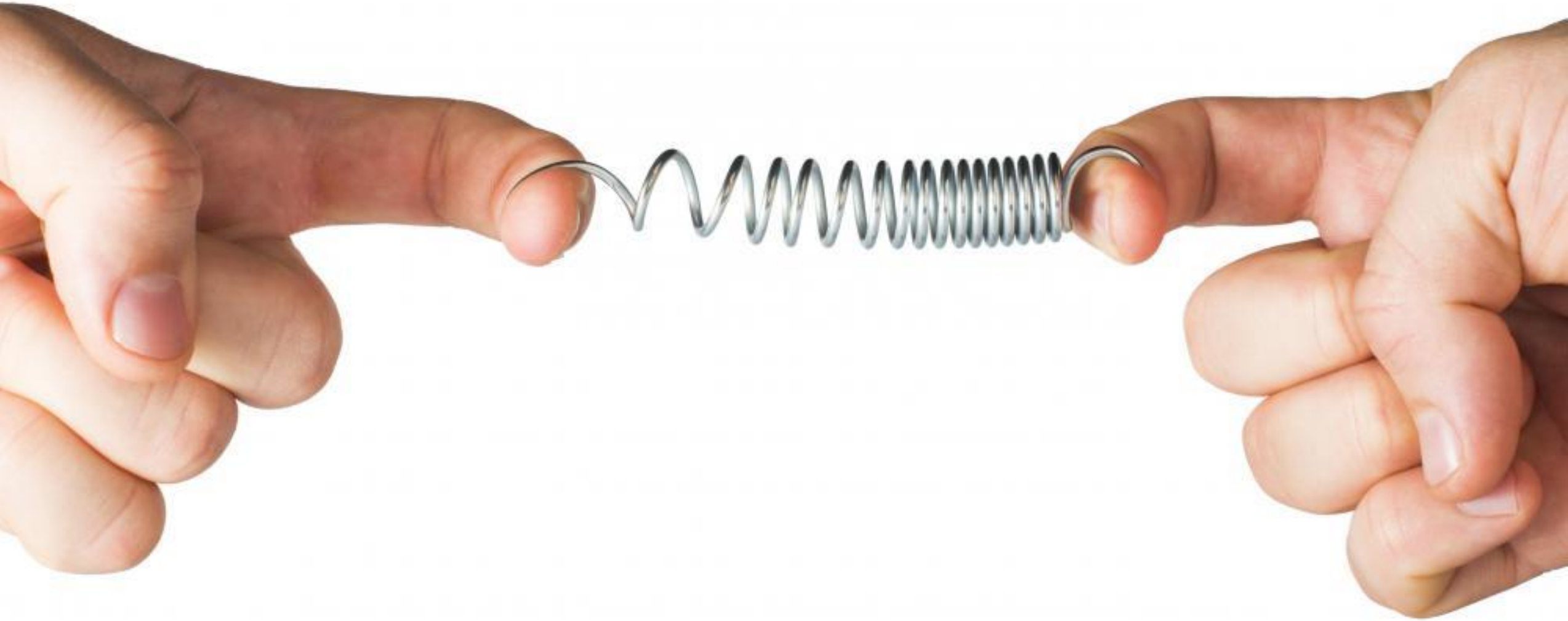
**High academic achievers only
with strong perfectionist and
self-critical traits preferred.**

Successful candidates will have had:
5+ years training in party-fuelled
student culture followed by sleep
deprivation and long hours in their
twenties; regular exposure to death,
loss and human misfortune; never-
ending exams and lifelong study;
constant onerous responsibility for
other people's health and wellbeing;
strict, hierarchical, conservative training
with a hint of bullying and intimidation.

Easy access to pharmaceuticals.

Royal Medical Benevolent Society

Resilience = Strength under Stress



Workplace Issues:

Workplace

PATIENT COMPLAINTS

- Management demands
- Time pressures
- Emotional demands
- Moving jobs

Individual Practitioner Issues:

Health concerns

REPORT TO REGULATOR

Concerns

Tipping Point

Male, 20's, combination factors
Isolated from family and friends
Dropped out of medicine
Gambling issues
Attempted suicide

Surgeon,
Self-prescribing opiates
Abusing alcohol
Complex underlying issues
Relationship problems
Unresolved grief reaction

Female, single handed GP
Self-prescribing opiates and benzos
Conflict at work
Personal and financial pressures
Additional risk factors++
Admission required
Follow up and monitoring with PHMP

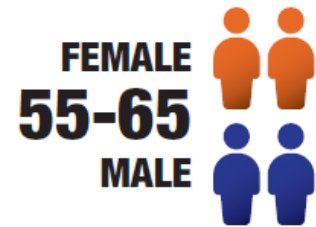
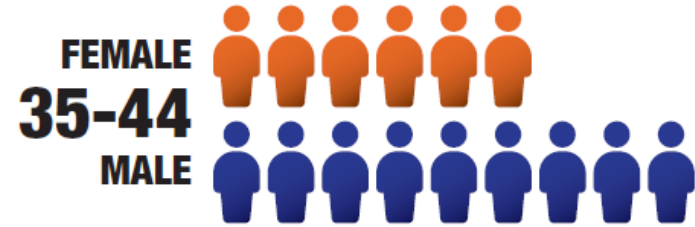
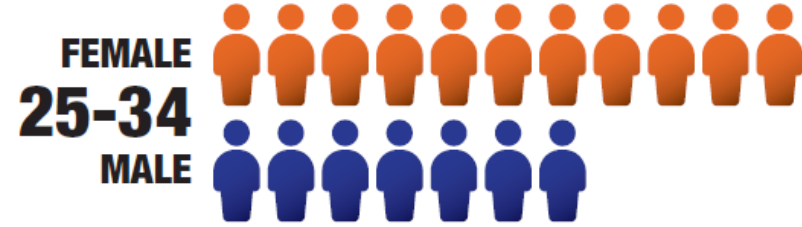
Female, referred by Training Body
Performance concerns
Working in a challenging specialty
Anxious, perfectionist personality
Poor self-management of wellbeing
Hx of depression/anxiety as a student.
Feeling isolated and unsupported++

PHMP Annual Report
2017

Key Points

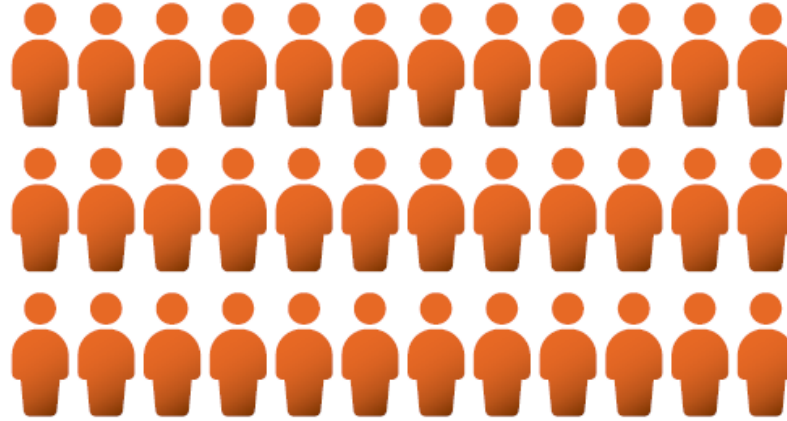


REGISTRATIONS BY AGE & GENDER



PRACTITIONER PATIENT
SPECIALITY

DOCTOR



PHARMACIST



DENTIST



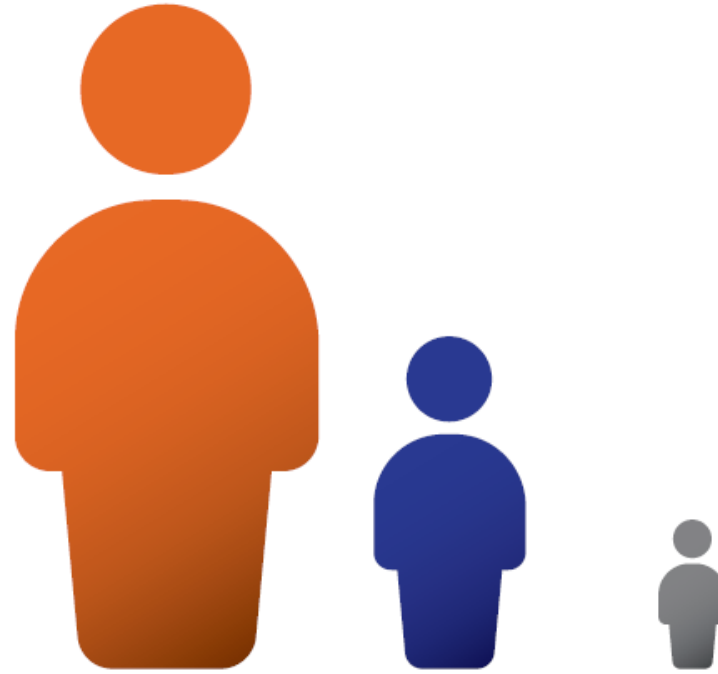
OTHER



REFERRALS TO PHMP



PRESENTING PROBLEMS



58%

Mental
Health

29%

Substance
Misuse

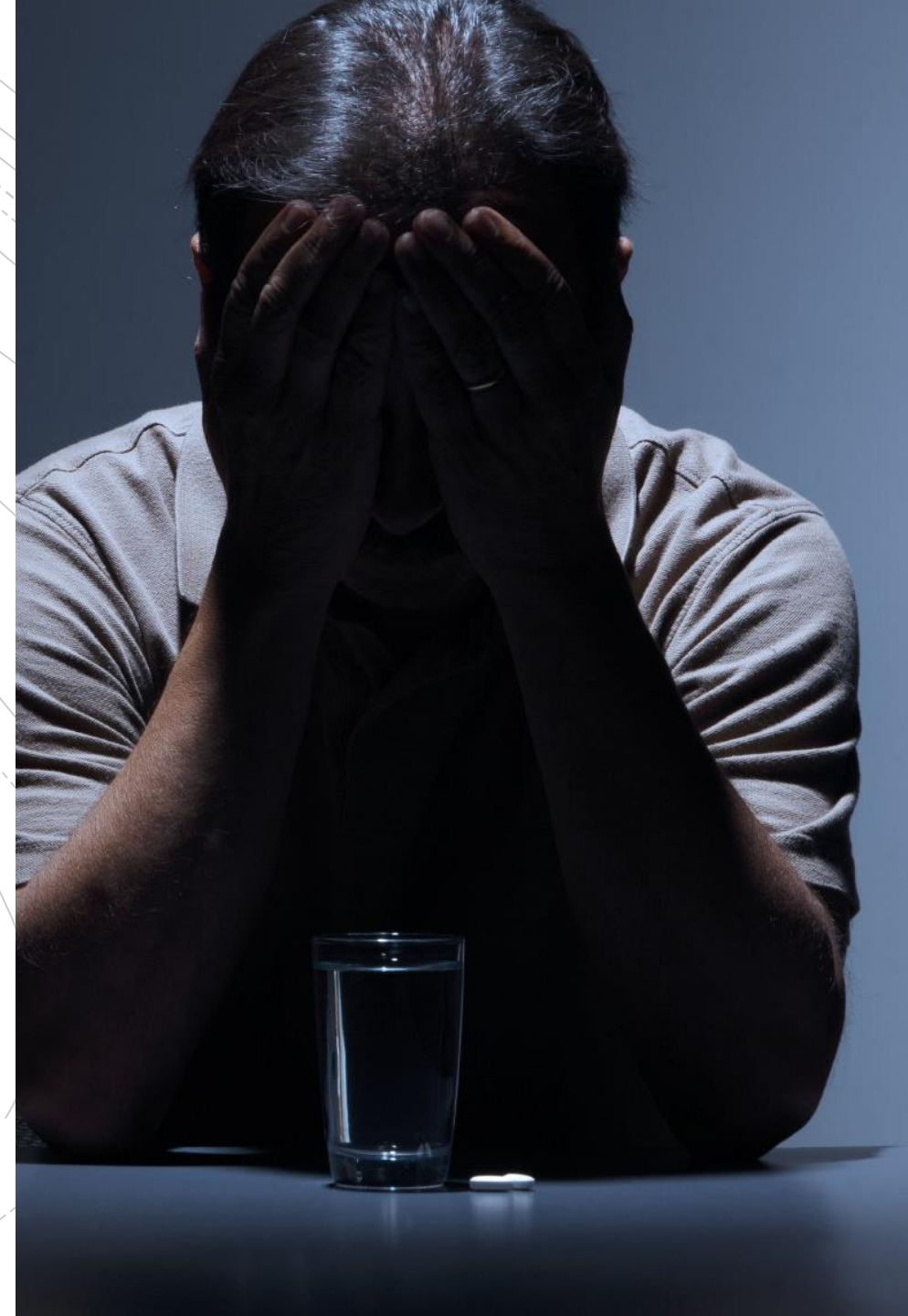
13%

Mental
Health &
Substance
Misuse

PHMP

PHMP experience is that practitioners drift into using alcohol and/or drugs to manage their stress, burnout, unhappiness or mental health problems

Shame – Reputation – Stigma – Confidentiality



- Small, but persistent changes of behaviour and performance need to be taken seriously
- Usually the workplace is the last place where signs of impairment appear
- By the time someone appears impaired at work the problems are very advanced
- Colleagues often ignore or miss signs and symptoms



What to look out for – from subtle to obvious

- Change in appearance/presentation
- Irritability, agitated, evasive, volatile
- Preoccupied or distracted, poor concentration
- Isolating from professional and social activities
- Not taking time-off or unexplained absences, sick leave
- Unreliable - late for surgery/not answering phone
- Hypervigilant – difficulty managing risk
- Working in isolation – working in teams offers some protection

Why does
Doctors' Health
matter?





Patient Safety

Physician Wellbeing

Or the
ultimate
risk....



Dr Pamela Wibble's observations Washinton Post article Jan 2017

- **Doctors fear their mental health care won't remain confidential**
- **Patient deaths hurt doctors**
- **Malpractice cases or complaints can be devastating**
- **Academic failure kills medical students' dreams**
- **Assembly-line medicine kills doctors**
- **Bullying and sleep deprivation increase suicide risk**
- **Blaming doctors for their own distress/burnout increases suicides**
- **Some doctors develop on-the-job post-traumatic stress disorder**
- **Doctors have the same problems as everyone else but lack time to address them**

Mental Health

“a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”

WHO definition 2014

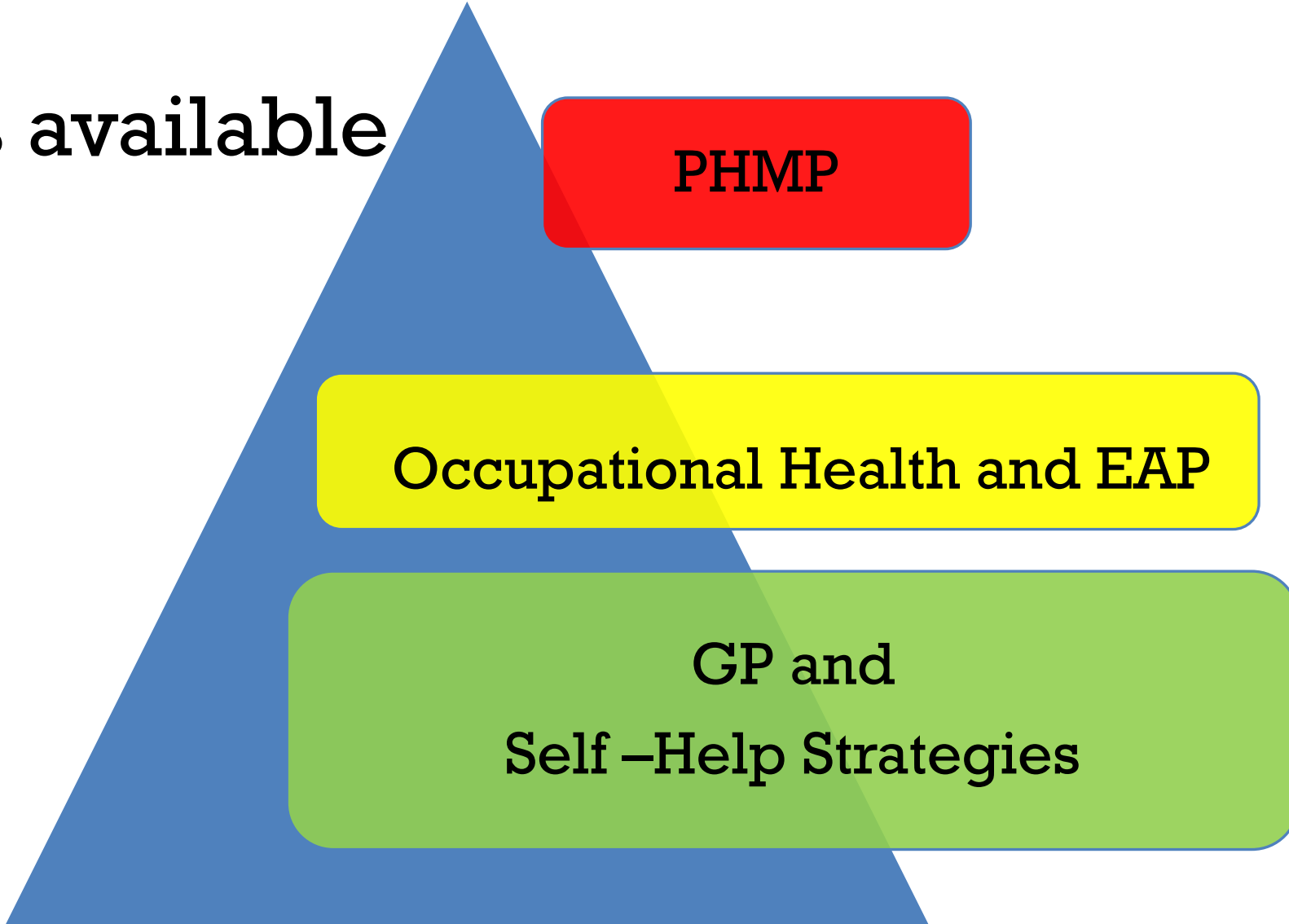


Supports available

PHMP

Occupational Health and EAP

GP and
Self-Help Strategies



“ ..things were really bad, I could see no way out .. I was feeling suicidal. In the end I was hoping someone would notice just so the nightmare would end. It is such a relief to have somewhere I can talk about my problems”

“ ...I wanted to give up medicine, I didn't care anymore what happened to my patients, I was exhausted but I couldn't sleep, I felt hopeless and so guilty about how I was feeling..I didn't know where to turn.”

“ I have been given a gift, its so good to be able to practice again ...”

“I thought I was providing a great service even though I was drinking...its only since I stopped I realise how wrong I was..”

“I wish I had known about the PHMP sooner. If I knew this help was available I could have avoided the mess I am in now..”

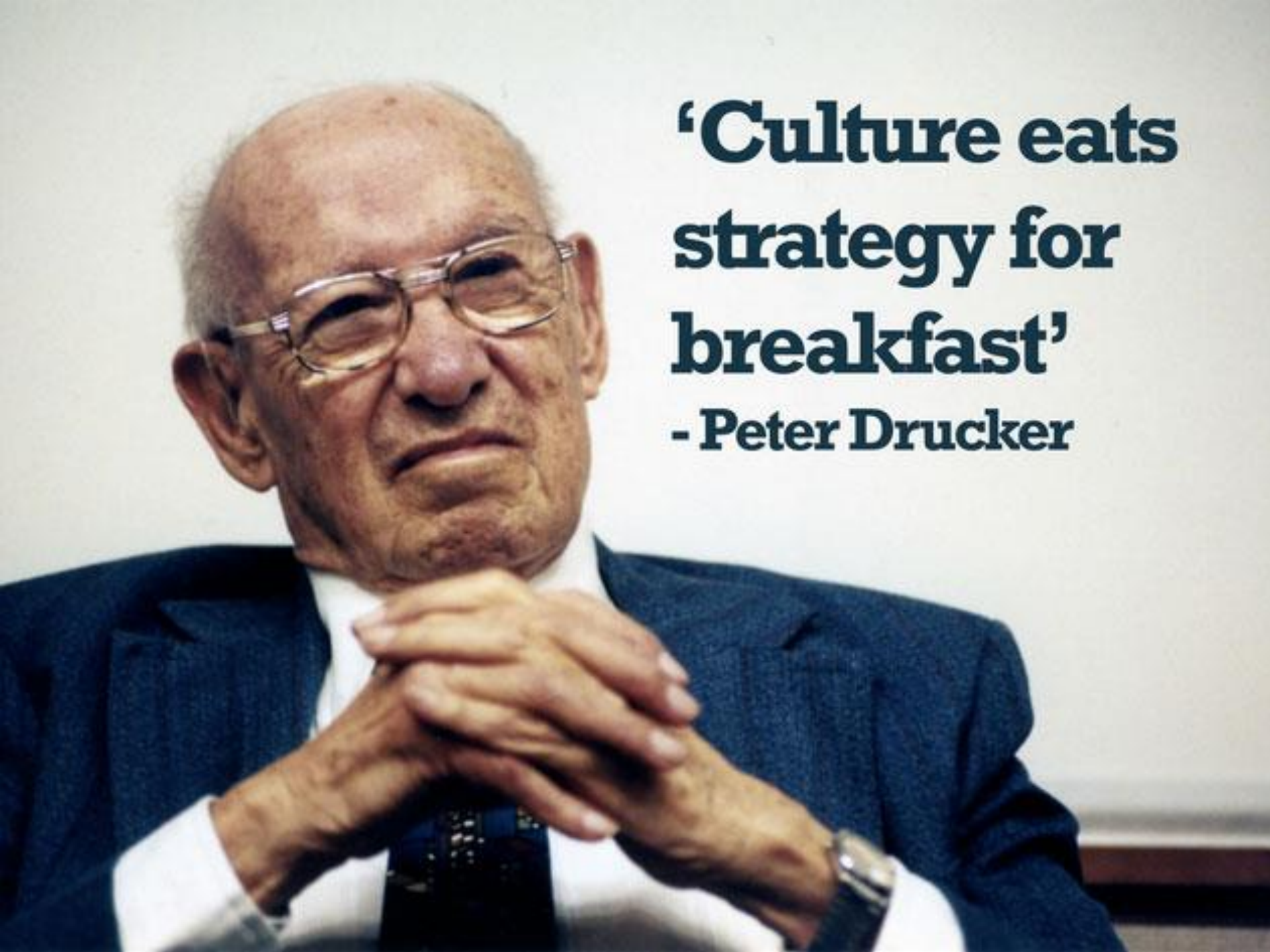
Lessons Learned?

Success rate is good: >80% can get back working safely and well

Prevention is better than cure...



Raising awareness - Education - Early Intervention



**‘Culture eats
strategy for
breakfast’
- Peter Drucker**

Change to a
culture where
practitioners
are valued and
feel valued

PHMP

Healers also need healing...
help is available



Thank
you

PractitionerHealth

LOOKING AFTER YOUR WELLBEING IN CONFIDENCE



www.practitionerhealth.ie