ADVANCING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN MINING

Insights from the Inaugural 2019 MECA Symposium (October 9-11, 2019)
FOREWORD

“We don’t break big rocks into small ones and sell them without people.”

-Keith Hanson of Lifemark Health Group
during the 2019 MECA Symposium Plenary Panel

This paper outlines key insights brought forward in the inaugural Mining Engagement Conference for Advancement (MECA) Symposium, held in Sudbury, Canada on October 9–11, 2019 in partnership with the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM). This paper was authored by the Global Mining Guidelines Group (GMG).

The event closed with a Think Tank, an interactive session where delegates shared challenges and solutions for fostering engagement in the workforce. The Global Mining Guidelines Group (GMG) was invited by the MECA committee to develop the white paper to give attendees a reference point for their experience and to provide insights to the global industry. The paper summarizes the key ideas that came out of this activity with supporting information delivered by industry leaders in the panel discussion and some of the soft skills development tools offered by experts in workshops.

About the MECA Symposium
This symposium is a place to discover how to engage mining employees, acquire tools to support employees in connecting with their work, and foster discussions that will contribute to creating a more engaged workforce.

The goal is to create a working environment where people can take positive action to further their personal advancement and contribute to the growth of the organization as a whole. Symposium information is posted at www.mecasympoium.com. The next full symposium is scheduled for 2021, with a smaller gathering planned for 2020.

About the Canadian Institute for Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM)
The Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum is the leading not-for-profit technical society of professionals in the Canadian minerals, metals, materials and energy industries. With over 120 years of history and more than 10,000 members nationally and internationally, being a member has its benefits. CIM information is posted at www.cim.org

About the Global Mining Guidelines Group (GMG)
The Global Mining Guidelines Group (GMG) is a network of representatives from mining companies, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), original technology manufacturers (OTMs), research organizations, academia, regulatory agencies, consultancies, and industry associations who collaborate to tackle the challenges facing our industry. GMG aims to accelerate the improvement of mining performance, safety and sustainability by creating guidelines and white papers that address common industry challenges, facilitating collaboration and expanding the industry's knowledge base. GMG also hosts and supports events that bring mining stakeholders together along with external industries to address the industry's challenges, successes and innovations. GMG information is posted at www.gmggroup.org
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Employee engagement and soft skills have never been more important for the mining industry. A number of converging factors are changing the industry, and all of these changes affect the workforce.

The mining industry is being transformed by the digital revolution. The rise of digital technologies such as automation, remote operations and artificial intelligence are changing what mining jobs look like. As a result, employees are experiencing anxiety about job loss and employers are struggling to attract talent to meet skills gaps. At the same time, the digital revolution opens doors for new ways of fostering employee engagement.

Attitudes towards work are also changing. The industry has an aging workforce and companies are looking to attract a younger generation that prioritizes their engagement, doing meaningful work, work–life balance and working in a healthy environment. People are no longer staying in one job for their entire career, so fostering a sustainable culture of engagement is necessary.

Furthermore, the public, regulators and governments are becoming increasingly aware of social and environmental issues. It is more important than ever to have trust between society and industry, industry and community, and employees and employers. Making sure mines are safe and healthy places to work, making sure workplaces are diverse and inclusive, and developing strong relationships with local communities are becoming key factors in maintaining the social license to operate. Employee engagement is a key factor in all of this.
Employee engagement can be defined many ways because there are many layers to each person, organization and community.

**LAYERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL</th>
<th>Engagement is an experience of connecting with yourself, your peers and the work you do. It is also about taking action in order to validate these connections. The engaged employee takes pride in their work, is proactive and organized and is ready to try new things.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>An environment that fosters engagement is key. Organizations need to have the structures, tools and support mechanisms that enable the workforce to feel fulfilled and encouraged to dedicate their efforts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY</td>
<td>The organization and its employees are part of a larger community, and strong relationships with the community are foundational to engagement in the workforce.</td>
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“When you’re engaged, you’re fulfilled.”
-Think Tank Participant

“Engagement is also about having the structures that can support people in their engagement. And equitable engagement, not just allowing the same people to be in that engaged space all the time, but really setting people up to succeed... The system is sometimes set up to reward certain types of engagement.”
-Think Tank Participant

“There’s a really powerful experience about representing the company in the community, but also about adopting that lens of how we’re seen in the community. Let’s not overlook that as an engagement tool.”
-Think Tank Participant
“If you have a happy workplace, you’re going to attract the most talented, happy people.”
- Shastri Ramnath, CEO of Orix Geoscience
during the MECA Symposium Plenary Panel

Sustainable engagement is a two-way street. Employees need the culture and structure that supports their ongoing engagement. Trust is at the foundation of this environment.

### Flexibility
As companies become more global and diverse, more are adopting flexible schedules and trusting their employees to support each other. Flexibility encourages engagement by fostering strong work–life balance and accommodating the diverse lives that people lead.

“Everybody works around the clock now. But it’s your own hours, it’s your own way and you get things done.”
– Christine Bertoli, Principal Consultant and Consulting Manager at Deswik, speaking on the Plenary Panel about Deswik’s culture code

### Autonomy
Personal autonomy, mastery and purpose in the workplace are huge engagement pieces. When employees see their purpose and the value that they offer and are allowed to master their own skills, they are going to be engaged.

“With autonomy comes trust because your colleagues or your boss would only give you that if they trusted you and you are competent to do the job.”
– Think Tank Participant

### Communication
Communication is at the centre of engagement. The work environment needs to be one where people can feel safe enough to have difficult conversations. It takes trust, and it also takes awareness of the self and of the people around you.

“One of the messages is about being present and checking yourself with the people you work with, whether you’re leading them or not.”
– Brooke Yeates, Manager, Governance and Change Management, Base Metals at Vale, while moderating the Plenary Panel

### Leadership
All employees are part of building the environment to foster engagement, but it needs to be driven by strong, self-aware leadership.

“[Good cultures] are relatively easy to set up with a good leader in a new enterprise: a new team, company, or specific project. I’ve heard about how difficult it is to do in a big entity, but each leader can lead that and change that culture at a local level. And that’s the best way to foster engagement.”
– Think Tank Participant

### TRUST

**Assumptions erode communication.**
Before taking action, ask questions: What is happening? Why are you making the assumption that you are? Where is the other person is coming from?
Check out tools from MECA Symposium workshops on communication (pages 11–15)

**What about changes in leadership?**
Mining is a cyclical industry and changes in leadership are therefore inevitable. When a leader who fosters engagement leaves, it is important to set up a method of embedding their qualities into the company and transferring the emotional intelligence that they have to the new leader.
WHY DISENGAGEMENT HAPPENS

“If you’re not interested in becoming engaged, I can assure you that it is going to be incredibly challenging to engage others and to foster engagement.”

Miranda Rocca-Circelli, CEO of Creative eLearning Design, while facilitating the Think Tank

Just like engagement, disengagement will look different for every person. While disengagement can be personal, it often emerges from an environment that has failed to foster engagement through lack of trust, autonomy, communication, leadership or organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISENGAGEMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Powerlessness</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inertia</strong></td>
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<td>A lack of trust and lack of recognition for the work they do can leave employees feeling like they cannot influence anything or make a difference.</td>
<td>A lack of movement or professional and personal growth or being in a job that is boring to you can lead to disengagement. Sometimes boredom means you are in the wrong job, but in other cases employers can make a difference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;When you’re not valued and you don’t feel like you’re adding anything. What that’s done to me is that I’ve moved to another company.”</td>
<td>&quot;When I’m not growing, I get disengaged.”</td>
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<td>-Think Tank Participant</td>
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<td>&quot;In meetings and you’ll say something, and it is almost like you haven’t said anything and then somebody else will say the same thing... it’s pretty disengaging.”</td>
<td>&quot;When you’re rolling the same rock up that hill over and over again, just to watch it roll back down again... If you’re bored at your job, that’s probably not a good job for you.”</td>
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<td>-Think Tank Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>What can employers do?</td>
<td>What can employers do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Recognize employee successes, including small ones</td>
<td>• Offer professional development opportunities</td>
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<td>• Communicate why the work is valuable to the company</td>
<td>• Explore ways to add variety to the workday</td>
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<td>• Encourage personal autonomy</td>
<td>• Offer mentorship opportunities</td>
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<th><strong>Burnout and stress</strong></th>
<th><strong>Diverging priorities</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>The modern workplace is full of pressure and stress, which can lead to disengagement. Stress and burnout can also come from life outside of work, but they can be compounded by the work environment.</td>
<td>People have more things in their lives than work – such as family, friends and hobbies – and it is sometimes difficult to be engaged in all of it at once. Individuals need to prioritize how they engage with different aspects of their lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Change fatigue...because the way mining is currently funded, it is very project-based... If [change] is not coordinated well, there is just no way of assessing that.”</td>
<td>“I’m engaged in so many things [right now] that I wouldn’t be able to be engaged with as many things as I’d like to be. I have to take a step back.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Think Tank Participant</td>
<td>-Think Tank Participant</td>
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<td>“An anxious brain is a resistant brain”</td>
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<td>-Bill Richardson of The Perdix Group during his workshop on distress tolerance at the MECA Symposium (see pages 17-18 for tools)</td>
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<tr>
<td>What can employers do?</td>
<td>What can employers do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improve change management</td>
<td>• Communicate with employees about their priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learn to recognize the signs of stress and burnout in their workforce and act on it (e.g., reduce workload, give breaks).</td>
<td>• Identify priority areas for engagement within the workplace</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Give opportunities – such as flexibility – so that employees can prioritize other parts of their lives</td>
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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: CHALLENGE AND ENABLER

“The first part is [that] we are afraid of digital transformation as something that takes away jobs, so we need to engage people on that topic. The second is [that] you may not be able to do team development sessions in person, and we have to get used to that. And mining is a very physical environment, and [getting used to non-physical environments] is something that is a different way of looking at things.”

-Think Tank Participant

The shift to digital ways of working is a disruptive factor in employee engagement. First, many employees have anxieties about job loss and job changes. These anxieties are well-founded: The World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Survey (2018) found that 72% of respondents in the mining and metals industry expect that their companies will reduce their workforce due to automation by 2022.

In terms of employee engagement, it is important to address these anxieties honestly and transparently, develop pathways for the workforce to adapt, and communicate the benefits such as how technological innovation removes people from unsafe environments.

Digital transformation can also open doors for engagement. For example, the increasing adoption of autonomous technologies and remote operations also enables opportunities for job sharing, part-time work, working from home and other forms of flexibility that would be more difficult in physical environments. On the flip side, the increasing prevalence of virtual teams that interact digitally also means that what engagement looks like also needs to change. Learning how to work and maintain engagement in non-physical environments is a big part of preparing for employee engagement of the future.

USEFUL RESOURCE

GMG’s (2019) Guideline for the Implementation of Autonomous Systems in Mining devotes a section to engaging the workforce and the community.

LESSON LEARNED: LET GO OF PERCEPTIONS

Sometimes the challenges of digital transformation are based on perception rather than reality. For example, one Think Tank participant shared an experience of introducing iPads in underground mines. The perception was that it wouldn’t work because miners wouldn’t be interested in using them or wouldn’t have the skills. However, this wasn’t the case. It is important to let go of such perceptions based on the work that people do and “understand humanity and how it thinks as opposed to what we think it thinks.”
"[Engagement] is about people’s lives. Getting people engaged is about making sure our industry is as safe as it can be."
-Think Tank Participant

In their State of the Global Workforce report, Gallup (2017) found that “highly engaged business units realize 70% fewer safety incidents.” This statistic is especially pertinent to mining as an industry where safety risks are prevalent. Mike Parent, Vice-President of Prevention Services at Workplace Safety North, spoke to this during the plenary panel. In his years investigating health and safety incidents in mining, he has found that issues that cause incidents frequently lie in the emotional intelligence and soft skills at play when supervisors interact with their front-line employees. For example, if employees do not feel comfortable speaking up around their supervisors or do not feel that they would be heard if they did, they may not raise safety concerns that they have. Psychological safety is also a key enabler for engagement. Employees need to feel safe and secure enough to talk about psychological hazards in the workplace such as bullying, workload management and issues with leadership.

While awareness, communication and training are some avenues for increasing psychological health and safety, it also needs to be integrated into the organization’s systems. In the plenary panel, Keith Hanson of Lifemark Health Group outlined a process that aligns with what we do with physical hazards:

- **Assess the risk:** What is the current mental health situation? What are the organizational risks? What are the personal risks?
- **Target and manage risks:** Implement training programs, operational controls, communications.
- **Measure risks:** Identify gaps and weaknesses, identify how you are doing, reassess.

Action is key, as Hanson summarized in the panel: “In order to fully get at this in our workplaces we need the courage to stand up and do it. We need the courage to be a little bit vulnerable, we need to work it into our systems, and when you start doing this you need to follow through, otherwise you’re going to lose the trust of your people.”

**USEFUL RESOURCE**
The Mining Mental Health Study (2018), a study of mental health in Vale’s Ontario Operations identified some key areas of concern that can help inform mental health strategies in mining.
THE BIGGER PICTURE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

"[Engagement] is about connecting with the community... How can we improve how we're seen as a business or how we're showing up in the community? That – at a fundamental level – is going to help us engage with one another, engage with the company and also with the community."

- Think Tank Participant

When we talk about building our people or creating an organizational culture, this does not happen in a vacuum. People and the companies that they work for are part of a broader community. Therefore, integration with the community will shape engagement.

"Mining is seen as a dirty business... the idea of us providing vital resources to society is dislocated...we have to pick up the narrative."

- Ian Pearce, Director of Nexa Resources, delivering the MECA Symposium Keynote Address

People can represent their company in the community by listening to feedback. They can use this feedback to help the company improve and make a positive difference in the community.

Society as a whole is also becoming much more conscious of companies’ track records in their relationships with their communities. Not only does this have implications on the social license to operate, but on an individual level, the company’s reputation in the community is becoming a deciding factor when potential employees evaluate where they want to work.

Engaging with Indigenous Communities

In the plenary panel, Stacey Vincent Cress of Waubetek Business Development Corporation emphasized that there is no single way to engage with indigenous communities because every community and every culture is different. However, there are some key practices that will benefit these relationships:

• Make sure that the employees represent the community that they are in by offering employment opportunities and training to indigenous communities
• Include indigenous communities in conversations and listen to their side of the conversation
• Make trainings such as indigenous awareness programs the norm
• Remove your preconceptions about what the relationship is all about

"If our companies do have a strategy, vision or policy that talks about the significance of engaging with indigenous communities, those shouldn’t only be done when we are engaging with an indigenous community. That should be embedded as part of our everyday operations."

- Stacey Vincent Cress, Mining Project Manager at Waubetek Business Development Corporation during the MECA Symposium Plenary Panel
NEXT STEPS

“We have tech roadmaps...but what about the people strategy? To take all [these] points and build them to build a strategy that the mining industry can follow. That would be a really good step forward.”
-Audience member during the MECA Symposium Plenary Panel

INDIVIDUALS

• Work on improving your soft skills.
• Share insights about what you have learned with others (i.e., coworkers, team members).
• Create time to be introspective about your approach to work and life.
• Be a champion of fostering engagement in your workplace.
• Define engagement and disengagement for yourself.

INDUSTRY LEADERS

• Make soft skills training accessible to all employees – especially those who may not have as many opportunities to attend conferences or off-site training sessions.
• Understand how different people define engagement and disengagement in order to develop inclusive strategies for assessing and improving engagement levels in your teams or in your organization.
• Work with educational institutions in order to start the conversation with the students in mining and mineral resources programs and set future generations up for success.
• Prioritize mental health, look into the research that has been done and understand the plans that you can put into place.
• Define what concrete action looks like so that these actions can be taken.
• Empower employees to be involved in the community, for example, by sending people to events, in order to receive feedback and foster broader engagement.

“There is magnificent intelligence and magnificent creativity within everybody. Just be the facilitator.”
-Audience member during the MECA Symposium Plenary Panel

“One area that would absolutely transform the mining industry is if all of our workers, the hourly workers, the guys at the face, on the machines are getting the exact same exposure [to] learning communication skills, how to influence, how to be resilient.”
-Think Tank Participant
**MECA Next Steps**
The MECA committee has reconvened and is working on 2020/2021 programming. MECA representatives presented on "Enhancing Productivity Through Employee Engagement" at the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) convention in March 2020. While the first half of the year will be focused on learning what support industry needs, the latter half will kick off with the 2021 theme announcement at the MECA Mingle. To contact MECA, email Theresa Nyabeze at info@mecasymposium.com

**Aligned GMG Initiatives**
GMG is currently preparing for the launch of a new Workforce of the Future Working Group. Many initiatives on the workforce of the future are currently done on a national basis. However, this is a global issue. Like safety, it is also a non-competitive issue that the industry can work on together. This group will as an international platform for sharing successes, challenges, case studies and best practices.
The topic is, however, far from new to GMG. Evolving workforce requirements have been central to GMG projects that focus on implementing and benefiting from new technologies, such as the Implementation of Autonomous Systems and Foundations for AI in Mining projects. Discussions about requirements and challenges were heavily featured throughout GMG Forums in 2019. The 2020 Forum Series, under the theme of "Building a Better Future," along with a number of interactive online events planned throughout the year, will feature content on the tools and strategies for building the workforce of the future. For further information on GMG initiatives in this area, contact GMG at info@gmggroup.org
REFERENCES AND RESOURCES


SOFT SKILLS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is a series of self-reflection activities based on the content of the MECA Symposium workshops. They aim to help you develop your soft skills. Leaders can also use them as activities in team development sessions.

TOOLKIT 1: Connecting with People through Engaging Conversations

DEFINE COMUNICATION FOR YOU

1. What is your definition of communications?

2. How do you want to feel when you are communicating with someone?

3. How do you want to feel when you are listening to someone?

Communication is an essential part of engagement. Miranda Rocca-Circelli, CEO of Creative eLearning Design, shared nine communication keys that will lead to engaging conversations. Think of a recent conversation that you have had and reflect on each of the nine questions below. What did you do well? How can you improve?

1. Were you authentic and vulnerable?

2. Did you set your intention?
3. Did you start with a question?

4. Did you say thank you?

5. Did you acknowledge and recognize the person?

6. Did you express the benefits (i.e., "what's in it for me")

7. Did you ask them how they feel?

8. Did you treat the person with kindness and respect?

9. Did you give the person the opportunity to ask questions?
TOOLKIT 2: Influence without Authority

As organizations evolve to be flatter and more team-based, the responsibility for results still exists without the formal authority of a position or title to make it happen. Stephanie Deschenes – Senior Manager, Learning & Development at Science North and Program Manager, Northern Leadership Program – walked participants through ways to approach influence, whatever your job title is.

Do you have an important meeting or conversation coming up where you would like to be influential? Set yourself up for success by filling out the reflection activity below. This activity is based on the six steps outlined by Cohen and Bradford (2017) in their book, Influence without Authority.

1. ASSUME OTHERS ARE ON YOUR SIDE

1. What if I decided to not go in defensively?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What if I approached this as an opportunity to get on the same page? How would things change?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How can I control my reaction?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
2. HAVE CLEAR GOALS AND PRIORITIES

1. What are the must-haves?

2. What are the nice-to-haves?

3. What are the common goals?

4. What does success look like?

3. UNDERSTAND WHERE THE OTHER PERSON IS COMING FROM

1. What are they going through?

2. What are their priorities?

3. Do we have different priorities?

4. What forces are shaping their reactions? Is there something that I could do to minimize their reactions?
4. IDENTIFY WHAT MOTIVATES OTHERS

“Currencies” refer to what motivates people, these are:
- **Inspiration-related** (motivated by excellence, inspiring others)
- **Task-related** (motivated by meaningful work, sharing information, learning)
- **Position-related** (motivated by recognition, visibility, importance)
- **Relationship-related** (motivated by support, inclusion, understanding)
- **Personal-related** (motivated by gratitude, ownership, self-concept, comfort)

1. What is my currency (note: it can be more than one!)?

2. What is the other person’s currency?

3. Am I devaluing the other person’s currency?

4. How do our currencies affect our values?

5. How can we exchange our currencies?
### 5. MANAGE RELATIONSHIPS

1. What kind of relationship do I want?

2. How would my world be different if the relationship was better?

3. What can I do to improve the relationship?

### 6. GIVE AND TAKE TO HELP EACH OTHER

1. What can I give?

2. What can I take?

3. How can I build trust?
TOOLKIT 3: Distress Tolerance

In today's fast-paced work environment with looming deadlines and constant pressure to adapt, we can experience an unhealthy amount of strain. Bill Richardson, President of The Perdix Group, offered some practical advice on distress tolerance, which is the ability to overcome obstacles.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT
(from Bill Richardson, The Perdix Group)

In terms of your job and workplace, place an X below in the frequency that best describes you. If many of your choices are around “always” and “mostly” – congratulations! You have high distress tolerance. If your responses fall more to the other side, you may be struggling to tolerate distress. Things can improve! While you may not have control over your external environment, there are many ways that you can build your distress tolerance. Some techniques and resources are outlined on the next page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  When given a complex problem at work, I can’t rest until I find the answer.</td>
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<td>2  When a complex problem arises, I continue to seek information until I understand it fully.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3  I can spend hours on a single problem because I feel a need to find an answer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4  I work relentlessly to find answers to complicated questions at work.</td>
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<td>5  I enjoy and often find my mind continues to work through complex problems outside of work.</td>
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<td>6  I get excited thinking about experimenting with different ideas.</td>
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<td>7  At work, I seek out opportunities to expand my knowledge or skills.</td>
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<td>8  I seek out work tasks where I have to think in depth about something.</td>
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<td>9  When work is anxiety-provoking, I tend to explore rather than avoid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 The possibility of being distressed does not impact my motivation to work on new projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 I do not shy away from the unknown or unfamiliar even if it seems scary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 When probing deeper into a project that interests me, feeling anxious does not derail me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 It is important to listen to ideas from people who think differently.</td>
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<td>14 I value colleagues with different ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 I like to hear ideas from colleagues even if they are different from my current line of thinking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Even when I am confident in my approach to a problem, I like to hear other people’s opinions</td>
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BUILDING DISTRESS TOLERANCE

Practice mindfulness
The brain is reactive and may be sending deceptive messages. Ask yourself the following questions:

• Why is my brain reacting to the environment in the way that it is?
• What would be the wrong reaction?
• What would be the right reaction?


Find the right balance
There needs to be a certain level of stress in order to motivate you to be engaged. When there is too little stress, you may become bored or inactive. When there is too much stress, you have distress, which negatively impacts your engagement. Ask yourself the following questions:

• How do I define my optimal zone for engagement?
• What has pushed me to the stress zone?
• What steps can I take to return to the balance zone?


Manage your energy
Energy is essential to engagement. Ask yourself the following questions:

• How can I consciously build in rest time?
• How can I manage interruptions?
• What emotions am I feeling right now?
• What are my energy levels right now?

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