Pressure, Stress and Performance

Understanding the “Pressure-Performance curve”

- Performance and wellbeing are directly related to pressure
- When we’re under the optimum amount of pressure for us, we will thrive, perform at our best and feel great. This is **positive psychological wellbeing**.
- When pressure exceeds our ability to cope = **stress and burnout**
- When we’re not under the right kind of pressure, or not enough pressure, and feel disengaged and de-motivated = **rust out**
- Optimum level of pressure differs for everyone – important to understand what your level is
- Our position on the curve is fluid – we will move along the curve depending on the pressures we’re under and how we’re coping.
- Short periods of time in the burn-out or rust-out zones are not generally detrimental to our long term health, but when these periods become significant and / or prolonged, this is when negative effects on our physical and psychological health will occur
- Objective is to spend as much time in the positive **psychological wellbeing zone** as possible, bouncing back quickly from periods of **burn-out** and **rust-out**

Useful Questions

- Where are you sitting on the curve at the moment? Think about what your current pressures are and how you feel you’re feeling
- If you aren’t in the middle zone, what needs to happen in order to move there? Do you need to talk to your manager / anyone else about this?
- If you are in the middle zone, how can you ensure you stay there?