

Thinking Ahead

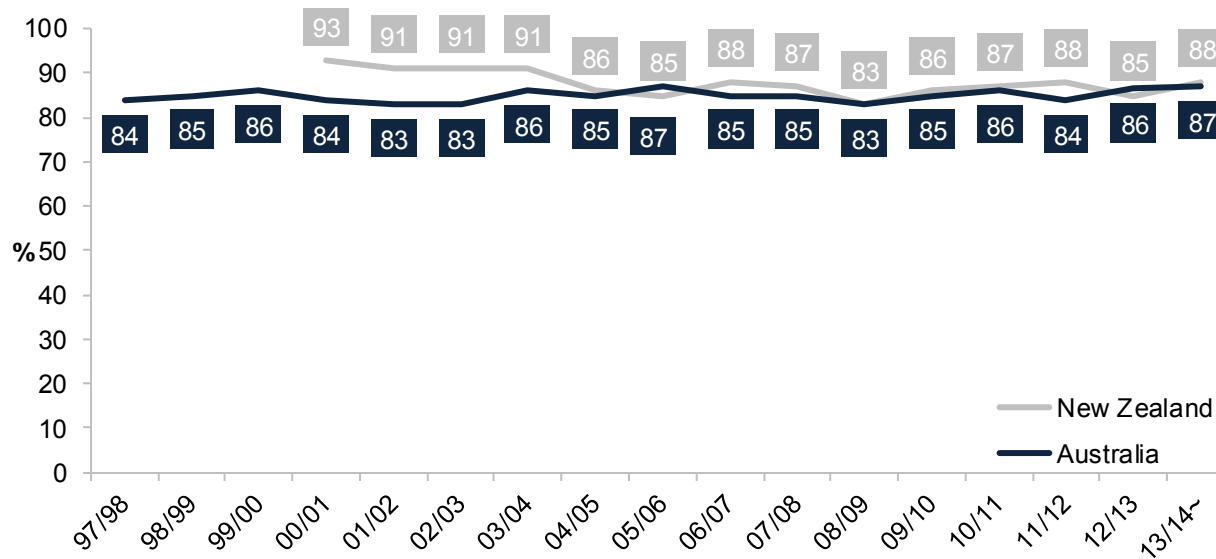
“The Brain that Changes...” claims outcomes

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Change is needed

RTW rates – 1997 - 2014



Source: Safe Work Australia, (2014), Return to Work Survey, 2013/14
Summary Research Report (Australia and New Zealand)

Some people recover as
expected...some with similar
injuries spiral down into
despair and dependency

- *If we reduce that problem, we can impact the 20% of claims creating 80% of the costs*



To make things work better:

- We need a bit of understanding of what the injured person experiences
- And how they process that information



The brain is the *original* parallel processor

- To focus attention, we have to select from all the input
- When we focus repeatedly, we change the way we process information



We learn almost everything this way

- Speaking
- Playing music or sports
- Habits (like driving)
- Our role and identity

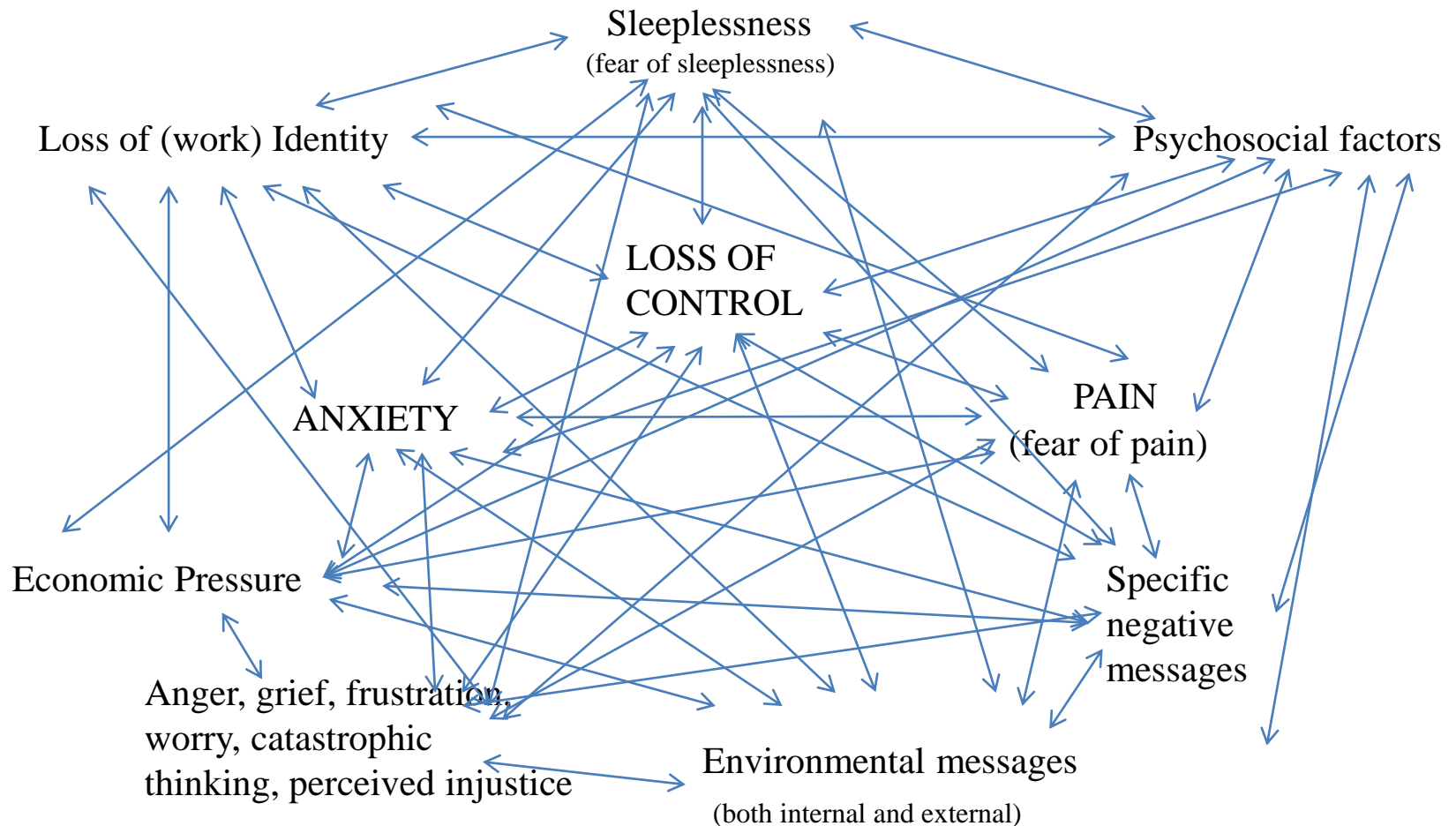


Repetition of the message

- *Some messages have more impact*
- *“Self-talk”*



The “Web of Disability”



There are three possible reactions to overwhelming loss of personal sense of control

- Disengagement
- Secondary psychological injury
- Adoption of another identity that is more consistent with the experience





Our cultural environment often suggests the role of “Disabled Person” to the injured

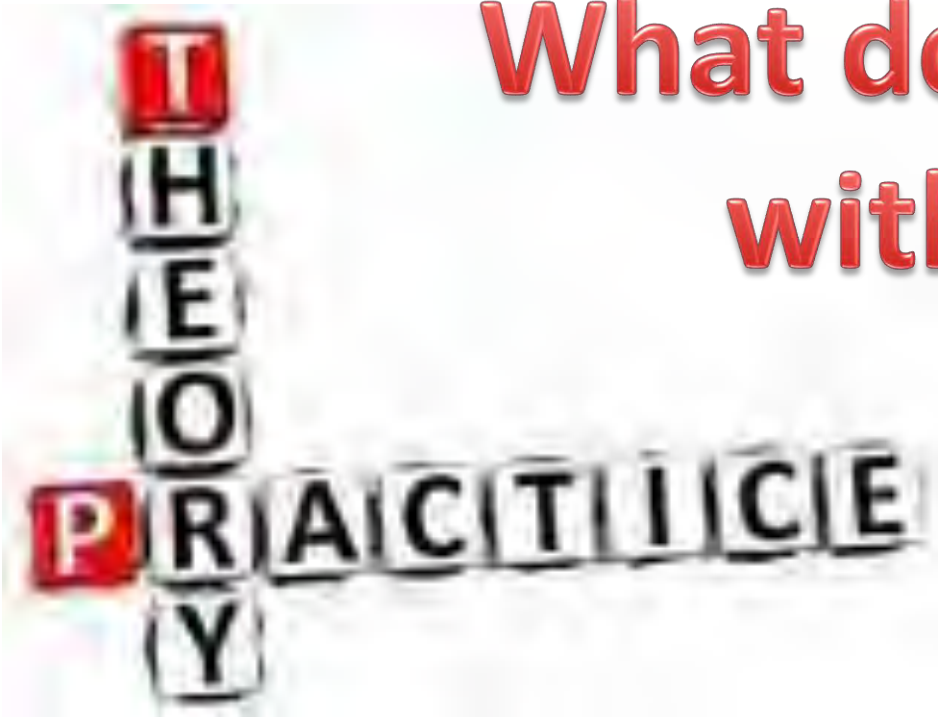
This way of looking at things makes sense of a LOT

- Correlation studies linking factors to good and bad outcomes
- The things that we know work, like early intervention and return to work
- Our everyday experience of injury management – *including how it affects YOU*



NICE THEORY....

**What do we DO
with it?**





You have a choice

Contribute to the harm

- Unnecessary repetition
- Poor information sharing and communication
- Surprise
- Restricting choices
- Messages of distrust, unimportance and lack of care



Contribute to Healing

- Help recovering people to “change their story”
 - Create positive expectations
 - Reframe to positive
 - Help them regain the critical sense of personal control



Putting the new understanding to work

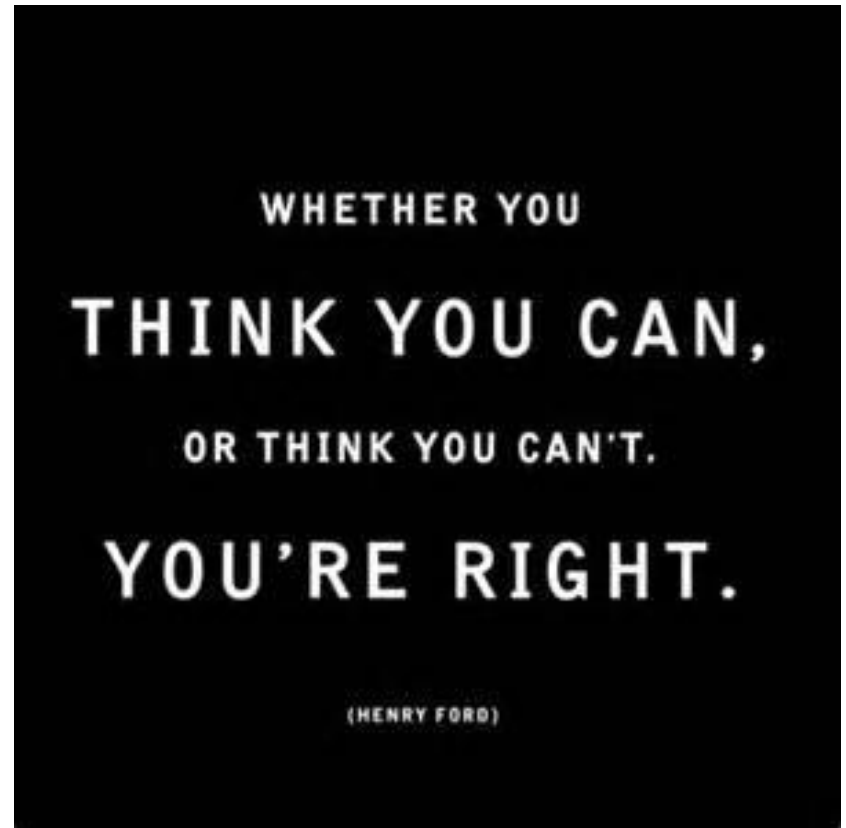
A few examples....

Reframing

- What's the point???

—*Self-Talk
matters*

Restate the negative in a way that transfers the power to the speaker or states something positively



Examples

- I feel out of control and don't know what to do
 - *You're having a normal reaction to a new situation, and it will pass*
- I can't trust anyone
 - *You have a lifetime of experience with telling the difference between people who are helping you and people who aren't*
- You need an IME
 - *I'm concerned that the treatment you've been getting isn't helping as much as we'd like, and I'd like to help you get a second opinion*

Your turn

- “I’ll never work again
- “The doctors don’t know how to fix me”
- “My friends and family will abandon me”
- *“You should be healed by now”*
- *“The employer won’t assign you to a different supervisor”*
- *What are some other things you hear/say frequently?*

“Changing the Script”

- We make claimants repeat their stories, over and over
- Acknowledge, then refocus on the future
 - *Brief* acknowledgement should recognise the real impact of the injury and/or present concern
 - Refocusing can look to existing plans *or* explore possibilities



Distrust

- The first thing to recognise is that the worker may be justified...
- Distrust is about feeling at risk because of unequal power
 - Information is power, so give it freely
 - Align your power with their aims – you can do so *legitimately*



Remember:

"PEOPLE WILL FORGET
WHAT YOU SAID,
PEOPLE WILL FORGET
WHAT YOU DID,
BUT PEOPLE WILL
NEVER FORGET HOW
YOU MADE THEM FEEL."

—MAYA ANGELOU

Looking after yourself

- You (and your team members) are subject to all the things that we've talked about today
 - Presenteeism
 - Burnout
 - Forgetting that a human being is on the other end of the phone
 - Stress claims
- Understanding how we think allows a new approach to “resilience”

What is “resilience”?

- Academic focus
- Correlation studies
- One-size-fits-none advice



A functional definition

- What we call **“Resilience”** is really the ability to change, modulate or quiet negative self-talk



Resilience isn't just “one thing”



- We can test the profile of resilience skills you already possess
- By building your secondary skills, you can develop “defence in depth” from life’s challenges



**THERE IS SO MUCH MORE
TO COVER...**

**Can we talk more about
your specific needs?**

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