New Zealand Psychological Society
Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

INSTITUTE *of* ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Te Kāhui Mātai Hinengaro ā te Wāhi Mahi

Institute of Organisational Psychology Symposium

Massey University Albany Campus

Thursday, 19 November 2026

	Institute of Organisational Psychology Symposium		
	Health, Safety and Wellness SNW2.35	Organisation Development SNW100	Coaching & Development SNW.32
08.15	Registration SNW100 and tea and coffee/muffin in SNW2.36		
08.45	Opening SNW100 • *Welcome from Associate Professor Hone Morris, Office of the DVC Māori* • *Welcome from Joel Majer, Chair Institute of Organisational Psycholology*		
09.15 09:50	*Key Note* **Keeping Humans in the Loop: Trust, Judgement and Safety in the Age of AI** SNW100 Dr Megan Blakely is a human factors and organisational psychology researcher, lecturer and consultant specialising in how people interact with complex systems and emerging technologies. Her work focuses on human-AI interaction, trust, workload, wellbeing and the health and safety implications of AI at work. She brings together research, industry practice and a systems perspective to help organisations introduce technology in ways that work for people.		
10.20	Morning Coffee SNW2.36		
10.50	Beyond Resilience: Designing Safe Systems of Work for Staff Exposed to Objectionable Material *Courtenay Brawley*	Can leaders make it green? Four behaviours shaping employee sustainability and wellbeing *Dr. Jennifer HK Wong; Dr Anahí Van Hootegem*	The Impact of a Strengths Focus in Coaching *John Eatwell*
11.25	Invisible Injury, Visible Impact: Creating Workplaces That Support Concussion Recovery *Ione Dennis*	Building Change Capability in New Zealand National Sporting Organisations: An Action Research Study of Psychologists, Change Consultants and Leaders Working Together *Byron Huntley*	There are None So Blind as Those Who Do Not See *Dr Michelle Shields*
12:00	Neurodiversity isn't scary when you utilise best practice *Benjamin Williams*	The Reality of Transformation: Balancing Delivery, Governance and People Outcomes *Megan Jenkins*	Coaching the Executive: Where Research Meets the Realities of Senior Leadership *Dr Ann Hutchison*
12.30	Lunch SNW2.36		
1.30	Is it workload? *Paula MacKenzie*	Enhancing incident and emergency management practitioners' decision making *Dr Peter Hayes & Associate Professor Chris Bearman*	Coaching the Shift (Virtual Presentation) *Clifford Morgan*

	Organisation Development SNW2.35	Organisation Development SNW100	Coaching & Development SNW.32
2:05	Why Teams Are the Missing Unit of Change *Helen Zink*	Moving Beyond Assessments: Developing Deeper Capability for Emergency Management Advisors *Skee Joseph and Mike Gillooly*	Thinking Like an Organisational Psychologist. Developing professional judgement and identity in Aotearoa *Joel Majer and Katharina Näswall*
2.40		Can AI Score What Humans Score? Validating AI-Rated Video Interviews Against Human Raters at Scale *Jamie McEwan*	Training Psychologists for the Fight: Developing Cognitive Flexibility for the Human Domian *Juliet Battersby*
3:10	Afternoon Tea SNW2.36		
3:40	The Hard Part Comes After the Survey: Implementing Psychosocial Change in Complex Organisations *Josh Darby*	The Hidden Cost of Not Belonging at Work: Belonging as a System *Dr Ayesha Arshad*	Schema Coaching: An interactive workshop *Iain McCormick*
4:15			
4:50	"Beyond the EAP": Reimagining Organisational Wellbeing Design *Rajna Bogdanovic*		
5:20	Close SNW100		
5.30-7pm	Drinks and nibbles, Food For Thought Café, Massey University Student Amenities Centre (Building 4, Albany Campus). RSVP to stewart@fxc.co.nz		

Abstracts

Beyond Resilience: Designing Safe Systems of Work for Staff Exposed to Objectionable Material

Courtenay Brawley

A growing workforce across security agencies, law enforcement, and digital safety contexts is exposed to objectionable and distressing material (e.g., child exploitation, sexual abuse, violent extremism, and graphic depictions of violence) as a core function of their role. Organisational responses often default to individual-level interventions such as resilience training and EAP support, which places the burden of protection on exposed staff. This presentation reframes exposure to objectionable material as a psychosocial hazard requiring systems-level control, consistent with obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and the guidance of ISO 45003 and WorkSafe New Zealand. Organisational psychologists often have a dual role in this space: supporting individuals in how they understand and respond to exposure, while also protecting them and the organisation by ensuring work is designed to be supportive from the outset. Drawing on applied consulting experience within the New Zealand public sector, the session presents a practical architecture for safe work design: diagnosing what an organisation actually needs through exposure profiling, applying a tiered stepped-care model of psychological support, and translating research and good-practice guidance into implementable interventions. The session offers transferable lessons for any setting where distressing content is an unavoidable feature of work, so the work is safer and staff are well supported.

"Beyond the EAP": Reimagining Organisational Wellbeing Design

Rajna Bogdanovic
Optimally

Traditional Employee Assistance Programmes remain a default feature of workplace wellbeing strategy, yet industry-wide utilisation sits at just 3-5%. This gap is a signal that the model itself under-delivers, treating psychological wellbeing as an isolated, reactive service rather than one genuinely integrated with the biological systems that drive stress, performance, and long-term health. This talk presents a practitioner case study from Optimally's work embedding an integrated psychology-precision medicine model, coupled with organisational psychology principles around systems design and culture within professional services firms where utilisation has reached 21-42% - up to ten times industry norms. Drawing on real programme data, including session efficiency, re-book rates, and outcome improvements reported by clients, this session unpacks what a genuinely evidence-based, organisation lead, biopsychosocial wellbeing model looks like in practice, and why psychological support alone is often insufficient to address the physiological realities of chronic occupational stress. Attendees will explore the organisational principles behind this model - from evidence informed intervention design to the practical mechanics of embedding various clinicians into the programme — and how this integration drives both

higher engagement and more meaningful, measurable outcomes than the traditional EAP model. Practical takeaways include a framework for designing high impact programmes, evaluating why psychology-only wellbeing models plateau, principles for integrating biomedical and psychological care in organisational settings, and outcome data practitioners can use to build the case for more sophisticated wellbeing investment. Ideal for practitioners and organisational psychologists interested in the intersection of psychology, physiology, and applied organisational practice.

Building Change Capability in New Zealand National Sporting Organisations: An Action Research Study of Psychologists, Change Consultants and Leaders Working Together
Byron Huntley
Sport New Zealand

National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) in Aotearoa New Zealand are operating in an environment of financial pressure, generational differences, and volunteer attrition. Digital transformation, governance reforms, evolving funding expectations and changing stakeholder needs require organisations to adapt while continuing to deliver value to athletes, members, volunteers and communities. This action research study examines change initiatives across 8 richly varying New Zealand National Sporting Organisations. The study focuses on the relationship between organisational psychology, change management and organisational leadership, and explores how these perspectives combine to build change capability and support organisational adaptation. Drawing on project documentation, stakeholder feedback, workshops, surveys and implementation outcomes, the study explores how behavioural insight, structured change practices and leadership influence were integrated throughout multiple initiatives. Particular attention is given to the interaction between organisational psychologists, change consultants, CEOs, programme leaders and senior managers responsible for leading change within their organisations. Findings suggest that successful change outcomes emerged when psychological expertise, practical change methods and active leadership involvement were combined. Common themes included leadership partnership, stakeholder-centred design, continuous learning and balancing organisational objectives with the human experience of change. The study contributes to organisational psychology by demonstrating how change capability can be developed through collaborative leadership systems. It offers practical insights for organisations seeking to build adaptability and achieve sustainable change in complex, stakeholder-rich environments.

Can AI Score What Humans Score? Validating AI-Rated Video Interviews Against Human Raters at Scale
Jamie McEwan
Talegent

Video interviews are widely used for competency-based candidate assessment, but manual scoring is time-consuming, costly, and subject to rater variability. This presentation reports on a proof-of-concept investigating whether large language model-based scoring of

interview transcripts can reliably replicate human ratings across two core competencies: Customer Focus and Teamwork. Drawing from a large dataset of human-rated video interviews, we benchmarked AI-generated competency scores (1–5 scale) against existing human ratings. Given the ordinal nature of the rating scale, Spearman's rank-order correlation was adopted as the primary accuracy metric, with a threshold of $\rho \geq .60$ per competency, chosen to reflect typical human inter-rater reliability for competency-based interview scoring. Supporting metrics include 95% confidence intervals to assess the precision of observed correlations, and fairness effect size evaluations through subgroup analysis across demographic groups to detect any adverse impact. Beyond accuracy, we examined the quality and consistency of AI-generated reasoning summaries accompanying each score, including how explanatory detail should vary with score level and how phrasing can be kept natural for user experience. This talk will present background research, scoring methodology, validation results, and a discussion of what they reveal about the feasibility of AI-assisted interview scoring as a scalable, defensible extension to established assessment practice, and share practical lessons for organisations considering similar AI validation projects. These include where AI performance met, fell short of, or exceeded human-rater benchmarks, and what this means for responsible deployment in real hiring contexts.

Can leaders make it green? Four behaviours shaping employee sustainability and wellbeing

Dr. Jennifer HK Wong; Dr Anahí Van Hootegem
University of Canterbury

Climate change is one of the most prominent threats to society and our existing way of life. Organisations are increasingly recognize their role both in contributing to and in addressing the climate crisis. Organisational psychology research has shown that leadership can encourage employee green behaviours and shape employee wellbeing in relation to climate concerns. In our own research, we identified four core leader green behaviours: engaging employee green attitudes (providing opportunities and resources that facilitate employee green behaviours), individualising employee green attitudes (tailoring engagement to the needs and motivations of individual employees), authenticity (the leader's genuine, visible involvement in green initiatives), and advocating for employee green participation (enabling employees to take part in green action). In this talk we will show how these leaders' behaviours drive employee motivation, behaviour change, and wellbeing. As well, we will share our findings on what happens when green leadership is undercut by poor organisational commitment to sustainability. This talk offers an evidence-based overview of what we know about green leadership and employee outcomes. We recognise that in practice a leader's influence has varying limits, and that ultimately organisations carry their own corporate social responsibility for sustainability outcomes. We invite practitioners to join the discussion on how organisations can achieve genuine alignment in support of employee green behaviours and environmental sustainability.

Coaching the Executive: Where Research Meets the Realities of Senior Leadership
Dr Ann Hutchison
Planarius Coaching

Executive coaching involves helping a senior manager lift an aspect of their performance or wellbeing. Generally, it will be done individually, although it can be done in groups; and it often involves the organisation sponsoring it. The executive coaching industry has exploded over the last two decades. It is now seen as a key technique for helping executives develop. Yet, it is an unregulated industry, and the current practices executive coaches use in New Zealand may or may not be grounded in good research. The body of research behind executive coaching is, in fact, still young and developing. That said, a number of international studies have been done on executive coaching, primarily in the UK and USA. These studies sit within the field of 'coaching psychology' and have much to offer the industry. This presentation will draw on a review of those studies to present what coaching research tells us, and where it falls short, when the person being coached is a senior executive. In presenting these findings, the following features of executive work will be considered: (1) Top management team dynamics are challenging, (2) Executive roles are lonely, (3) Governance is weighty, (4) Strategic thinking is required, and (5) The executive lifestyle is one where wellbeing becomes paramount. The above features of executive work call for coaching psychology to be applied thoughtfully to the executive context. This presentation will rise to that challenge in presenting a practical guide to implementing good quality executive coaching.

Coaching the Shift
Clifford Morgan
College of Organisational Psychologist - Australian Psychological Society

Across technical, engineering and program-intensive organisations, leadership pipelines routinely stall after high-performing specialists are promoted into leadership roles. Traditional explanations focus on gaps in management capability. This presentation argues the deeper issue is psychological: the failure to transition identity from expert to leader. Technical experts build their professional identity around mastery, competence, and problem solving. Leadership roles require a fundamentally different identity — one centred on influence, accountability through others, and shaping collective performance. When this identity shift does not occur, newly promoted leaders remain anchored in expert behaviours. They continue solving problems themselves, struggle to delegate, and unintentionally constrain the development of capability within their teams. Drawing on identity theory, research on expertise and cognitive entrenchment, and applied coaching experience within complex organisational environments, this presentation examines the psychological transition required to move from competence-based identity to leadership-based identity. It explores the behavioural signals that indicate a stalled transition, the organisational conditions that reinforce expert identity, and the implications for leadership pipeline strength. The session will also examine how this transition may evolve in the future of work. As artificial intelligence reshapes knowledge work, two possibilities emerge: leadership roles

may narrow as AI augments technical capability and individuals revert to specialist expertise, or the shift toward leadership identity may become even more critical as human influence, judgement, and connection become the primary sources of organisational value in an AI-saturated environment. The presentation introduces a practical framework for understanding leadership identity reconstruction and outlines coaching interventions that support successful transition. The goal is to equip organisational psychologists with a deeper understanding of leadership transition psychology and its implications for developing leadership capability in the evolving world of work.

Enhancing incident and emergency management practitioners' decision making
Dr Peter Hayes & Associate Professor Chris Bearman
Appleton Institute, Central Queensland University

Effective decision making is a critical part of incident and emergency management (IEM) but can at times be challenging because of the dynamic, opaque, and high stakes nature of emergencies. The demands on IEM decision making are continuing to grow with increased community, political and media scrutiny, and as climate change leads to more frequent and challenging incidents. An aging workforce means that many highly experienced IEM decision makers will begin to retire in the next 5-10 years. While evolving technology provides new opportunities for improved decision support and training, it is also likely to increase the challenges relating to information complexity and reliability. Evidence from public inquiries, research and recent Natural Hazards Research Australia (NHRA) forums all highlight the need to enhance the sector's decision making capability to better support people now and into the future. To this aim the NHRA and Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) have funded research on enhancing decision making in emergency management. This research has adopted a human-centred design approach to work collaboratively with organisations and practitioners to co-develop a suite of products to enhance doctrine, training and the practice of decision making. This presentation outlines these products, discusses the new AFAC Australian National Operational Guidelines on Decision Making and unpacks how we make decisions based on the cognitive science of how the brain works.

Invisible Injury, Visible Impact: Creating Workplaces That Support Concussion Recovery
Ione Dennis
University of Canterbury

Concussion can be difficult to understand from the outside. An employee may appear well while experiencing fatigue, headaches, cognitive difficulties, sensory sensitivity, or fluctuating capacity that significantly affects their working day. For organisational professionals, supporting someone recovering from concussion therefore involves more than simply facilitating a basic return-to-work plan. Drawing on research with people with lived experience of concussion, and professionals involved in rehabilitation and workplace support, this practical session explores how organisations can better support employees throughout recovery and return to work. The session will explore what these experiences

can tell us about the role of the workplace in supporting people through recovery, and what this might mean for HR, People & Culture, and other workplace practitioners. Findings from the research will be used to consider how organisations can better understand the challenges associated with concussion and support sustainable participation at work while recovery is ongoing. Particular attention will be given to the challenges of supporting an invisible and fluctuating condition, where an employee's capacity may change from day to day and may not be apparent to others. Although the focus is concussion, the principles discussed have relevance well beyond concussion. Many employees experiencing non-visible or fluctuating health and wellbeing challenges face similar issues around disclosure, stigma, changing capacity, workplace adjustment, and returning to work. Participants will leave with practical, evidence-informed approaches for supporting employees through recovery and creating more flexible and inclusive approaches to return to work.

Is it workload?
Paula MacKenzie
Z Energy

WorkSafe's research on work-related suicide suggested job demands and psychosocial risks from work design may contribute to significant harm. Paula's targeted her PhD research (in progress) on psychosocial risks from work design to find out more. When exploring the conceptual difference between job demands, workload, work pace, work schedules and work hours, it was discovered that researchers and practitioners may be using the term job demands to cover a range of risks. Survey insights have suggested workload is the most important risk for wellbeing. In this session, Paula shares key insights from her PhD, in a format which she has used to facilitate conversations with leaders to explore 'Is it workload?'

Keeping Humans in the Loop: Trust, Judgement and Safety in the Age of AI
Megan Blakely
University of Canterbury

AI is changing how people work, make decisions and manage risk. Drawing on human factors psychology, this keynote explores how AI can reshape workload, influence trust and weaken situation awareness, even when performance appears to improve. It offers practitioners practical considerations to preserve human judgement, support effective oversight, and build safer, healthier workplaces.

Moving Beyond Assessments: Developing Deeper Capability for Emergency Management Advisors
Skee Joseph and Mike Gillooly
H2R and National Emergency Management Agency

Regional Emergency Management Advisors (REMAs) are expected to hold technical credibility, political judgement, and calm executive presence, often while leading complex

responses with no formal authority over the people in the room. This talk tells the story of how the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and H2R moved beyond a psychometric profile to build that capability directly, through an integrated Development Centre.

Mike Gillooly (Team Leader, Regional Partnerships) opens with NEMA's role as the coordinating agency across Aotearoa's emergency management system, and why the REMA role is so hard to recruit and develop for. Skee Joseph (H2R) then walks through the design: two custom-built simulations — a multi-stakeholder Joint Committee meeting and a Ministerial briefing under pressure — evaluated against a ten-competency framework, with Hogan Personality Inventory data integrated to explain the behaviour observed. Three purpose-built learning modules gave the cohort a shared language before results were fed back, and individual and group reports translated directly into a staged coaching and development roadmap.

Together, the client and consultancy perspectives cover how capability gap is identified, addressed and developed through recruitment and development process, how it was assessed, and how the findings were built to drive team development as well as individual Professional Development Plans (PDPs).

For practitioners, the session offers a practical, tested model for combining simulation-based assessment, personality data and structured learning design into an integrated development pathway, and a case study in what capability development can look like beyond individual psychometric assessments.

Neurodiversity isn’t scary when you utilise best practice
Benjamin Williams
Vierstraete Consulting & University of Canterbury

More people are identifying as neurodivergent and asking for specific accommodations within work. Organisations are forced to adapt, but research is not fully consolidated, leaving practitioners to develop their own approaches. Key questions concern which conditions fall under the banner, effective support methods, reasonable accommodation, the role of organisational psychology, and what interventions produce meaningful change. Drawing on consulting work from a previous organisation (public sector, ~900 Full-Time Equivalent) as a case study, insights will be shared into applying best practice to build a neuroinclusive organisation, covering Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, and specific learning disorders. Reflections on which conditions to support, which accommodations to provide, and which systems to rework will be offered. The presentation will focus on: how the strategy and action plan were developed; the different workshops offered to increase capability; what areas of policies were modified; what additional resources were provided to staff; how employees were included in the design; and the effects of organisational factors, such as endorsement from the Chief People Officer and General Manager of People & Culture. Final points will cover broader thoughts on where organisations are headed,

emerging pitfalls, and future trends affecting the neurodiversity conversation. At each stage of the talk, the aim is to provide matters for reflection, not to dictate a specific approach. Audience discussion will be encouraged. Using a case study context for discussions, participants will leave with a firmer understanding of which conditions they need to accommodate and the different approaches being used.

Schema Coaching: An interactive workshop
Iain McCormick

This session is a highly interactive practical guide on how to begin to use schema coaching in the workplace. It is based on Iain McCormick's book Schema Coaching: Overcoming Deep-seated Challenges (2025) and the 10 peer reviewed articles he has published in the area. Schema coaching, a new approach, has been developed by utilising the methods and techniques of schema therapy which have been applied to clients in the workforce. The term schema or what are called early maladaptive schema (EMS) are organised persistent patterns of thought and behaviour that typically develops in early childhood and is self-defeating or dysfunctional. For example, a client with the unrelenting striving EMS may be a highly trained and experienced professional but despite being extremely hard working and productive they are haunted by an underlying sense that nothing they do is good or fast enough or meets their demanding internal standards. Recently the idea of positive schema has emerged which are healthy, positive core beliefs about oneself, others, and the world. Working with these beliefs assists the client to develop helpful reframing of thoughts and self-care. Schema coaching can not only assist with long standing patterns but also short term mode or mood states. A focus is placed on building the healthy adult which is the mature, balanced part of the self that nurtures the inner vulnerable child, sets limits on unproductive thinking and behaviour, and promotes overall well-being. Schema coaching systematically integrates a range of techniques from cognitive behavioural therapy, psychodynamic therapy, attachment theory, mindfulness and gestalt therapy. This session includes a discussion on ethical considerations on who should undertake schema coaching. It also includes topics such as schema conceptualisation, psychoeducation and samples of live schema coaching. Considerable emphasis is placed on suitably trained and ethically adherent coaches staying within their scope of practice, being suitably supervised and being readily able to identify clients who need to be referred on to relevant clinical or counselling psychologists. This is a practical introduction to an evidence-based integrated approach that has been shown to be applicable to members of the workforce particularly partners of professional service firms and senior executives. Pathways for interested practitioners who want to develop further in this area will be discussed.

The Hard Part Comes After the Survey: Implementing Psychosocial Change in Complex Organisations

Josh Darby
Fire and Emergency, University of Canterbury

Employee surveys can identify psychosocial risks. The harder task is translating those findings into action that employees trust, leaders support and organisations can sustain. This applied case study examines that challenge through the Whanaungatanga Programme, a four-year programme of research and psychosocial intervention within Fire and Emergency New Zealand. Beginning with workforce findings in 2023, the programme combined three waves of survey data with engagement involving employees, leaders, unions and stakeholders. Rather than responding with a standardised wellbeing initiative, the programme used a participatory process to interpret findings within workplace contexts, establish priorities and co-design responses. This has involved more than 100 facilitated workshops and more than 20 initiatives addressing areas such as connection, trust, communication, recognition, leadership, the work environment and training. The presentation focuses on implementation after diagnosis: building credibility, converting broad findings into feasible actions, maintaining momentum within a challenging environment, and adapting interventions through feedback and repeated measurement. It will also explore the realities of implementation in a complex organisation, including competing priorities, differing needs across occupational groups, implementation fatigue, and the limits of locally led action when psychosocial risks arise from wider systems. Although grounded in emergency services, these implementation challenges are common across sectors. Participants will gain practical insights into moving from workforce data to action, using co-design as a principle of intervention development, and navigating the challenges of implementing and sustaining psychosocial interventions within a complex organisation. The case illustrates why the survey is only the beginning, and why implementation determines whether evidence translates into meaningful organisational change.

The Hidden Cost of Not Belonging at Work: Belonging as a System

Dr Ayesha Arshad
Health New Zealand

What happens before an employee becomes disengaged or decides to resign? Often, the shift begins much earlier before it becomes noticeable: the employee stops speaking up, sharing ideas, challenging decisions or feeling that their contribution matters. This will be an interactive 90-minute workshop to explore the hidden cost of not belonging at work through an organisational behaviour and systems-thinking lens. Instead of treating belonging as another HR initiative or an individual employee issue, this workshop will allow participants to examine how everyday leadership behaviours, organisational culture, team norms/values, power dynamics and organisational systems can create and reinforce patterns of belonging or exclusion. This workshop will encourage participants to challenge common practitioner assumptions—for example, that silent employees are not engaged at work, that treating

every employee the same creates fairness, or that HR is responsible for belonging. Through a case study, participants will examine and diagnose the behavioural and systemic factors behind an employee's disengagement and map the feedback loops that can turn small experiences of exclusion into silence, disengagement, and eventually turnover. Using a practical system diagnostic lens, participants will identify potential leverage points and distinguish between interventions that attempt to change the individual and those that change the conditions producing the behaviour. The workshop concludes with a plan for a 30-day practical experiment, enabling participants to translate their learning into an action they can test in their own workplace. This workshop will provide participants with a practical framework for observing, diagnosing, and intervening in workplace patterns, turning organisational psychology insight into everyday work practice.

The Impact of a Strengths Focus in Coaching
John Eatwell
Strategic People Group

Niemiec and Casioppo (2024) argue that coaching and character strengths share an essential, inextricable interconnection, proposing that effective coaching practice is built upon the deliberate use, education, and activation of client strengths. Despite the intuitive and theoretical appeal of this position, empirical evidence testing whether a strengths focus meaningfully predicts perceived coaching quality and outcomes, above and beyond other established coaching competencies, remains limited. This article reports the results of a field study conducted across three cohorts (2023–2025, N = 90) of participants in an Agile and Innovative Leadership executive coaching programme delivered as part of a university MBA offering. Participants rated their coaches on seven quality dimensions, including the degree to which the coach helped them leverage and grow their four to five signature strengths, and on three outcome measures capturing recommendation, achievement, and goal progression. Correlational and multiple regression analyses indicate that a strengths focus was significantly associated with every other quality dimension measured and remained a unique, statistically significant predictor of perceived coaching outcomes even after accounting for trust, listening, questioning, accountability, and resource-sharing. These findings provide direct empirical support for the theoretical claims advanced by Niemiec and Casioppo, and offer practical guidance for coaches and coaching programme designers seeking to strengthen leadership development outcomes.

The Reality of Transformation: Balancing Delivery, Governance and People Outcomes
Megan Jenkins

Transformation doesn’t fail because organisations ignore people. More often, it struggles because organisations must balance people outcomes alongside commercial objectives, regulatory obligations, risk management, resource constraints and delivery commitments. Organisational psychologists create the greatest value when they understand and influence this whole system, not just the people components. Large organisations are operating in a continuous transformation environment, driven by technology, regulation, customer

expectations and productivity demands. While organisational psychology provides valuable insights into leadership, engagement and culture, practitioners need visibility of the complex delivery environments in which organisational change occurs. Drawing on real-world experience leading large-scale transformation programmes, this presentation provides an inside perspective on how organisations successfully plan, govern and deliver change. It explores the realities of prioritisation, funding, resource constraints, governance and risk management. The session highlights the critical role of people-focused disciplines in enabling successful delivery. It examines how organisations factor workforce readiness, capability, engagement and organisational capacity for change into transformation planning, while also managing psychosocial risks associated with sustained change and uncertainty. Participants will gain practical insights into:

- How large organisations plan, govern and deliver transformation
- The competing pressures that influence transformation decisions
- The role of organisational psychology in supporting both delivery and people outcomes
- How capability, engagement and psychosocial risk influence transformation success.

Rather than presenting an idealised view of transformation, this session offers a candid and practical perspective on how organisational psychologists can enhance both organisational performance and employee outcomes in complex, fast-paced environments.

There are None So Blind as Those Who Do Not See

Dr Michelle Shields
Fulcrum Associates/University of Canterbury

It is estimated that 70-90% (e.g., Korn Ferry) of leaders who participate in a 360-feedback process have blind spots – strengths they can not see or weaknesses that they are not fully estimated. But the level of leader and whether it's a strength or a weakness that they are less aware of depends. In this case study, the researcher examined 60 360-degree feedback assessments to see the percentage of those who underestimated their strengths and the portion of the population that underestimated their weaknesses at a level that was considered significant. Looking at three samples, a Senior Management group, a Middle Management Group and a Group of Emerging Leaders, the results for blind spots varied with Middle and Senior Managers being most self-aware (80 – 90% accuracy) on their strengths but just 65% awareness of weaknesses. For emerging leaders (those assessed with no direct reports) the results were striking. 90% of emerging leaders had strengths they did not see in themselves while only 60% had weaknesses they were not aware of suggesting they are more self-aware of their weaknesses. This case study will examine the implications for leadership development. For example, if 90% of emerging leaders have strengths they do not recognize, will this flow on to their confidence in going forward for leadership roles? This talk will collaborate with the participants to formulate theories for variations in self-awareness and implications of over/estimating strengths and weaknesses.

Thinking Like an Organisational Psychologist: *Developing professional judgement and identity in Aotearoa*

Joel Majer , Katharina Näswall
University of Canterbury

What distinguishes an organisational psychologist from others working with people and organisations? Scientific knowledge, ethical commitments and practical techniques are shared with adjacent professions. We propose that an important part of our distinctive contribution lies in how we bring these together: the questions we ask, the assumptions we examine, and the professional judgement we exercise in context.

This session explores how that proposition has shaped the University of Canterbury's Postgraduate Diploma in Organisational Psychology. Building on Aotearoa New Zealand's history of professional training, the programme seeks to develop students' ways of thinking and professional identity alongside demonstrable competence. Explicit competency expectations connect with supervised organisational work, applied simulations, case competitions and a recurring emphasis on theory, practice and reflection.

We use Lefkowitz's scientist–practitioner–humanist model as a worked example. We explore the critique behind the model, its attention to the purposes and human consequences of our work, and how we introduce it to students. We also consider how reflective practice, feedback-informed development, cultural supervision and participation in a professional community can reinforce this orientation.

Participants will apply the model to a recent piece of work and discuss what it reveals, challenges or leaves unresolved. We invite practitioners, researchers and prospective students to test our approach and help shape its further development. Participants will leave with a reflection framework to use in practice or supervision, and a question for our profession: how do we sustain this development beyond registration?

Training Psychologists for the Fight: Developing Cognitive Flexibility for the Human Domian

Juliet Battersby
New Zealand Defence Force

As international conflicts increasingly extend into cognitive and cultural domains, NZDF psychologists must be prepared to operate within complex human systems where influence, decision-making, resilience, and adaptation are critical to New Zealand's mission success. This requires capabilities that extend beyond traditional clinical competence. This presentation explores how the NZDF develops cognitive flexibility as a foundational capability in military psychologists. It argues that preparing psychologists for contemporary and future operating environments requires deliberate development of adaptive thinking, professional versatility, and effective sense-making under conditions of uncertainty. Three interconnected components of capability development are examined. First, role clarity enables psychologists to understand and articulate their contribution to operational

readiness and human capability. Second, professional versatility supports effective practice across organisational, operational, performance, leadership, and mental health domains. Third, psychological formulation is presented as a structured sense-making process that integrates information across individual, team, organisational, and cultural levels to inform action in complex environments. The presentation proposes that role clarity, versatility, and formulation-based thinking provide a practical framework for developing military psychologists capable of operating effectively within the cognitive terrain of contemporary conflict. In an era where non-conventional threats increasingly target human perception, behaviour, and decision-making, preparing psychologists for the fight is less about teaching what to think and more about developing the confidence and competence to think and act adaptively across complexity. * We acknowledge the use potentially uncomfortable language like 'military, conflict, and fight'. This is intentional and part of the capability development through role clarity we will speak to.

Why Teams Are the Missing Unit of Change

Helen Zink
Grow to be Limited

Despite significant investment in organisational change, many initiatives continue to focus on changing individuals. Yet most work is completed collaboratively, with people operating across multiple teams every day. If teams are how work gets done, why do so many change programmes still expect change to occur one person at a time? This session challenges traditional approaches to organisational change by exploring why teams - not individuals – are a more effective unit for embedding sustainable change. Drawing on published research, practical experience and real organisational case studies, the session will examine why investment in teams can accelerate change, strengthen strategic implementation and create benefits that extend well beyond the teams directly involved. Participants will experience practical activities used with teams, explore examples of how team-based approaches have supported complex change, and discuss how these ideas can be applied within their own organisations. The session will also introduce the emerging concept of teams of teams and considering what happens when the focus shifts from improving individual teams to strengthening the connections between teams across the wider organisational system. Designed for organisational development professionals, change practitioners, coaches and leaders, this session offers practical ideas, honest reflections and immediately applicable approaches for anyone seeking to make organisational change more embedded, more collaborative and ultimately more sustainable.