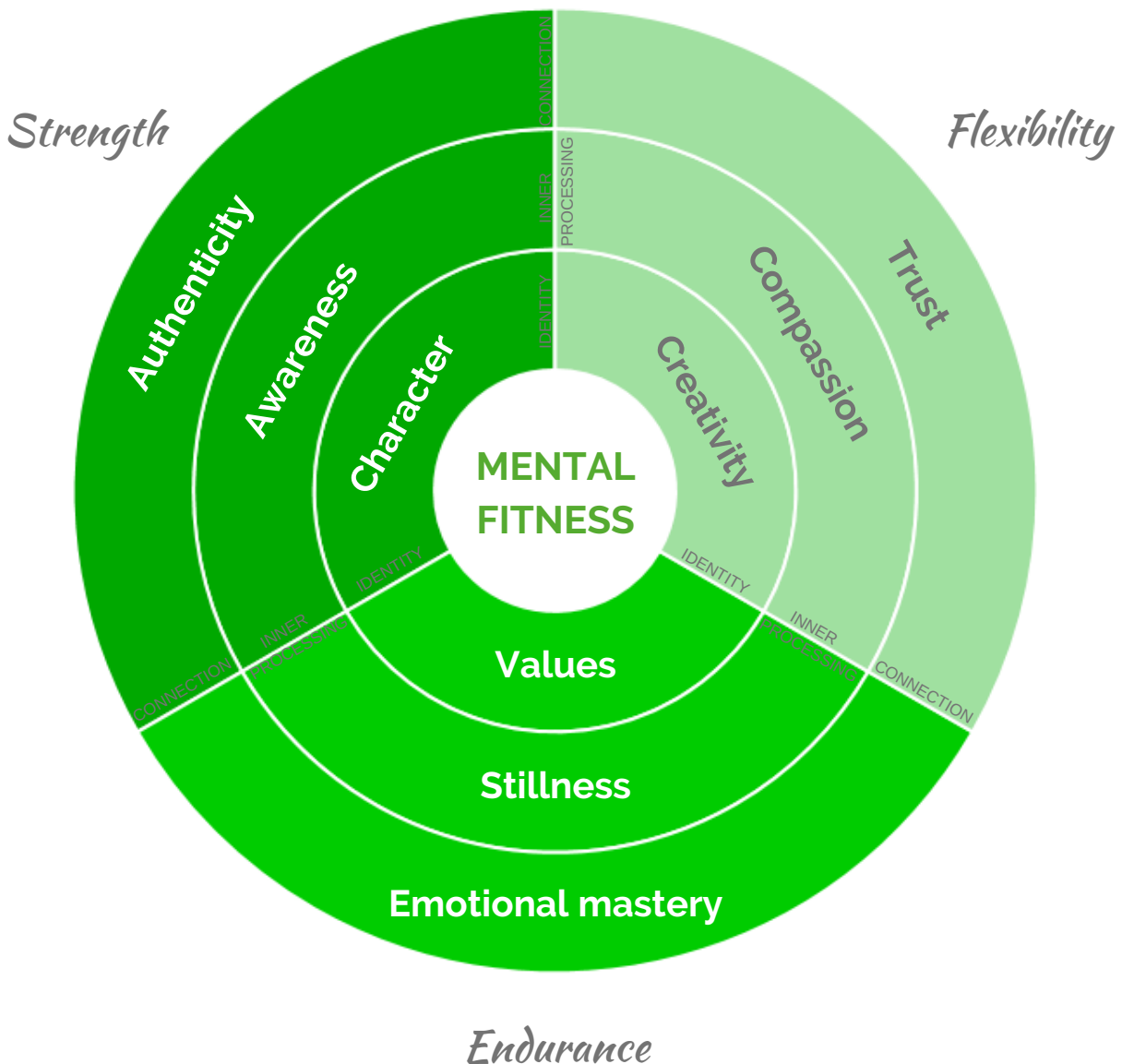


Welcome to the Smith and Wellness framework for mental fitness! This document offers you a quick visual tool you can use to reflect on the barriers we experience (in **grey**) that detract from our mental fitness, and the strategies we can use (in **green**) that help. In the following pages you'll find a definition of each component, plus practical exercises for individuals and for groups. For more information contact Bek (bek@smithandwellness.com), or visit [www.smithandwellness.com/resources](http://www.smithandwellness.com/resources) to access our online learning modules.



# Mental Fitness

Shifting us from struggling  
 ... to thriving





## *Mental strength - being clear with and about ourselves*

Sub-components:

- *Identity* - **CHARACTER**. Our character reflects our thinking habits and the personal values we put into action. Understanding and using our character strengths is linked with better mental health and performance outcomes, as well as improved relationships.
- *Inner processing* - **AWARENESS**. The ability to be aware of our thoughts, as well as our surroundings, is a vital skill for self-regulation and for mastering our thinking and behaviours.
- *Connection* - **AUTHENTICITY**. This is about being genuine, real, and expressing our character and our thinking in a way that allows people to connect with us more. Authenticity can be practiced as a strategy for enhancing wellbeing between people.

## *Mental flexibility - managing and embracing uncertainty*

Sub-components:

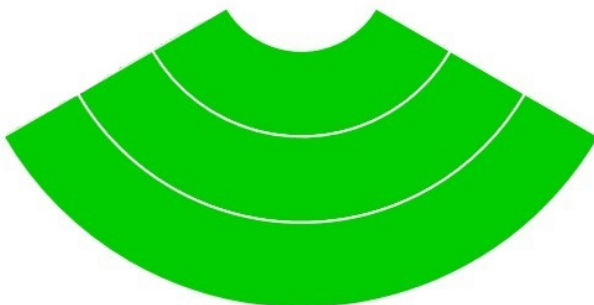
- *Identity* - **CREATIVITY**. Human beings are by nature creative, although we often mistakenly link creativity with art and can miss other opportunities for innovation and expression.
- *Inner processing* - **COMPASSION**. Extending compassion towards others as well as ourselves is a way of re-framing situations, is linked to awareness and helps us escape the traps of perfectionism.
- *Connection* - **TRUST**. This component is explored in the mental fitness model both as a way of trusting ourselves by accessing our intuition or "gut feel", and also developing trust between each other.

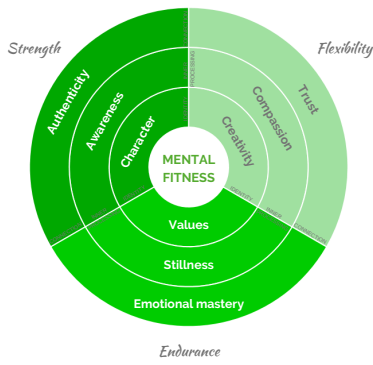


## *Mental endurance - playing the long game*

Sub-components:

- *Identity* - **VALUES**. These are our priorities or guiding principles in life, such as growth, respect, achievement, etc. Understanding our values helps us navigate difficult situations and make decisions.
- *Inner processing* - **STILLNESS**. The importance of rest both for our body and mind cannot be underestimated, and is confirmed by the strong links between mindfulness/meditation practices and positive health outcomes.
- *Connection* - **EMOTIONAL MASTERY**. Having both an awareness of our emotions and an ability to steer them productively helps us to energise ourselves & interact more effectively with others.





If you're thinking "ok that all sounds great in theory, but how can I DO these things?", congratulations... you're already stepping into the mindset of mental fitness. This is about pro-actively and deliberately taking action to shift our thoughts, emotions and behaviours into new patterns that are more helpful for us. Here are some suggestions:

### Instead of...

- thinking "I won't be able to, I can't, I'm not good enough" and feeling **insecure** about yourself...
- believing that others are more accomplished, more attractive, more *anything* in **comparison** to you...
- procrastinating and **avoiding** things which are hard and complicated...
- being emotionally **reactive** and stressed too much of the time...
- falling prey to **perfectionism** and getting stuck in thoughts of what "should" happen or what you "should" be doing...
- getting trapped in a cycle of unproductive **busyness**...
- people-pleasing, saying yes when you want to say no, performing or trying to prove yourself in an **inauthentic** way...
- getting stuck in your head or going in circles when trying to make decisions, and **doubting** yourself or others...
- being paralysed by **fear** and not taking action because you're scared of the process or the outcome...

### Try this...

- focus on your strengths of **character** such as your perseverance, kindness, honesty, curiosity (go to [viacharacter.org](http://viacharacter.org) for more)
- think outside the square of what is "right, good, desirable" according to the "norm" and **create** your own standards to live by
- get clear on your **values** and priorities, and explore how you can live by them more
- use the W.A.I.T. self-**awareness** technique; ask yourself "what am I thinking right now?"
- Notice, Name and Nurture - notice how you're feeling, name the feeling, and find a way to nurture and be **compassionate**
- pause, take a mindful breath, and embrace a moment of micro-**stillness**
- acknowledge when you're faking things and consider what you need to filter in or out to be more **authentic** and true to yourself
- learn to **trust** your subconscious decision-making and learn what the sensations of your internal yes / internal no feel like
- develop your **emotional mastery** by learning when negativity has a role to play, and how to balance it with positive emotion

You can unpack these ideas further in our online programs via [www.smithandwellness.com/resources](http://www.smithandwellness.com/resources)

## *THE most frequently asked question...*

This seems great for individuals... but how can we build mental fitness in our team / group / family / workplace?

Here are a few activities / exercises / tips to try in group environments to boost mental fitness:

- ✓ **CHARACTER**
  - give feedback through a strengths-based lens rather than focusing on improving weaknesses (for a free workplace performance review template email [bek@smithandwellness.com](mailto:bek@smithandwellness.com))
- ✓ **CREATIVITY**
  - host group brainstorming sessions to encourage innovative problem-solving, with all members welcomed to contribute
- ✓ **VALUES**
  - determine the values of the collective group, and discuss how the actions and behaviours of individuals can align with these
- ✓ **AWARENESS**
  - discuss a goal and what a successful outcome would look like, sound like, and feel like for the group
- ✓ **COMPASSION**
  - introduce the concept and language of generosity, not in terms of material giving, but in terms of making the most generous assumptions about each other's words, actions and intentions
- ✓ **STILLNESS**
  - adopt a "50 minutes on / 10 minutes off" approach for work sprints, activities or homework, encouraging short breaks to sustain cognitive and physical energy through the day
- ✓ **AUTHENTICITY**
  - encourage boundary setting and thank each other for saying "no", even when it means challenging each other's expectations
- ✓ **TRUST**
  - agree what it means to be reliable, accountable to each other, stay within one's integrity, and be non-judgmental
- ✓ **EMOTIONAL MASTERY**
  - actively and deliberately celebrate your accomplishments and wins as a group rather than dismissing them

Smith and Wellness run workshops on each of the above topic areas and can help you delve deeper to explore how these and other mental fitness practices will benefit you and your people. Contact Bek directly at [bek@smithandwellness.com](mailto:bek@smithandwellness.com) or send us an enquiry through [www.smithandwellness.com](http://www.smithandwellness.com).