

# Mental Health First Aiders and their importance in the Workplace

Delivered by

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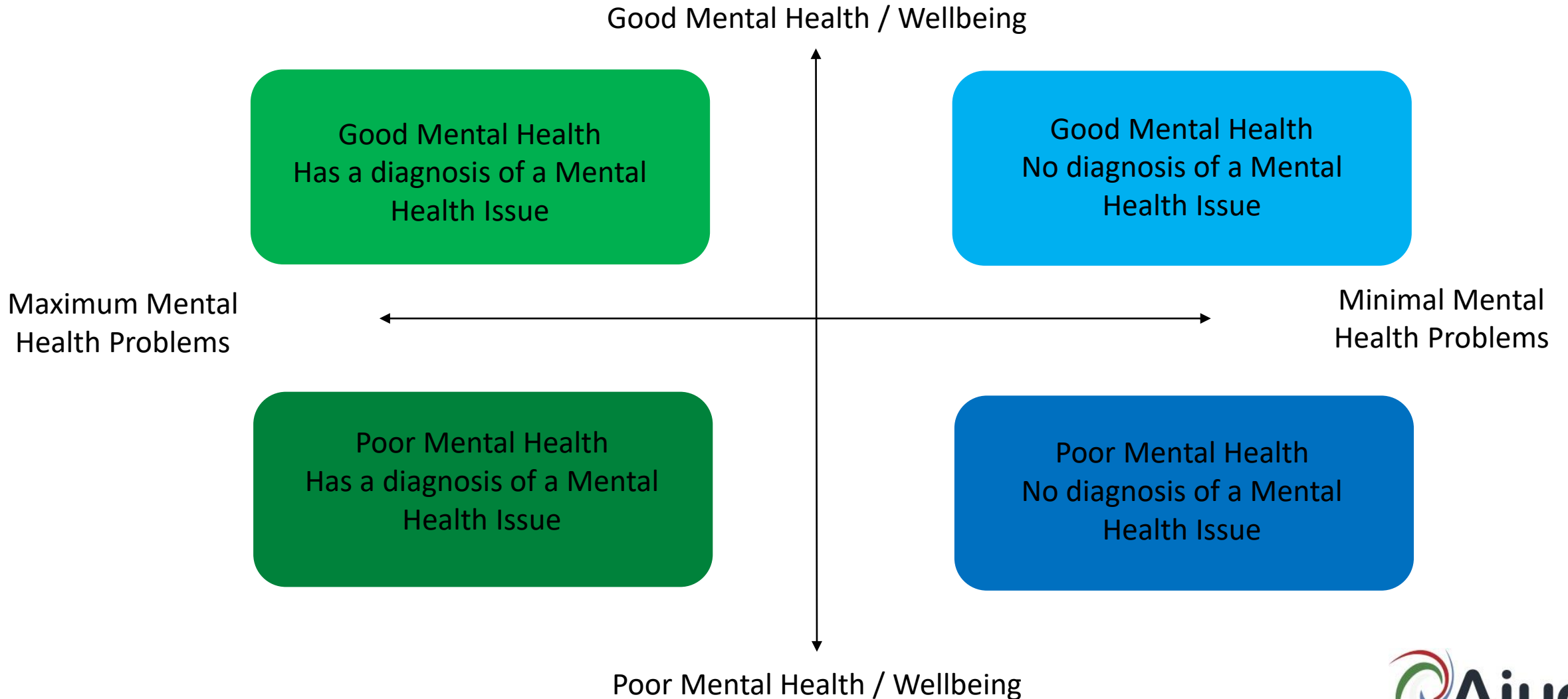
# Mental Health Facts

- Nearly 70 million working days are lost per year due to mental ill health
- 1 in 6 people will experience a mental health problem in the workplace ref MHFA Wales
- Most people would not know what to do when faced with a mental health issue in the workplace
- Stress and mental ill-health costs UK businesses £30 billion and the economy as a whole, £70 billion each year in terms of loss of productivity and absence. HSE

# Our Responsibilities in the workplace.

- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, an employer has a responsibility to protect the Health & Safety and Wellbeing of employees.
- The Dept of health states that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of people in the UK will suffer with mental ill health at some point, so it is good for business to have an open policy about talking and helping mental ill health.

# Mental Health Continuum



# Common stressors

- Work pressures including an excessive workload, having to give a presentation or 'office politics'
- Relationship problems, separation and divorce
- Having children
- Money worries
- Job instability
- Home instability
- Family problems
- Illness (either yourself or a loved one)
- Bereavement
- Physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse
- Legal problems
- Being the victim of a crime
- Fears
- Feeling unproductive or not good enough
- Worrying about the future

# Common Mental Health Conditions

- Depression
- Generalised anxiety disorder
- Panic disorder
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



## How to spot Poor Mental Health at Work

- Social withdrawal and being emotionally distant
- Struggling to concentrate
- Hard to engage in conversation
- Noticeably quieter or overtalkative
- Unusual tiredness and apathy
- Exaggerated emotional reactions and irritability
- Changes in appetite and weight
- Changes in alcohol and caffeine consumption
- Start missing deadlines, indecision, overworking, changes in confidence to carry out role and unexplained irritability with colleagues


# ALGEE

1. Approach , Assist and ask them if they want to talk
2. Listen to them no judgementally
3. Give support and information
4. Encourage appropriate professional help
5. Encourage other supports



# We need to change

- Remove the Stigma
- Feel more equipped to start Wellbeing Conversations and support with those dealing with a mental illness.
- We need to be more understanding of mental illness, and the impact it can have.
- We need to Build an awareness and understanding of The role of the workplace Mental Health First Aider
- Feel more equipped to start Wellbeing Conversations and support with those dealing with a mental illness

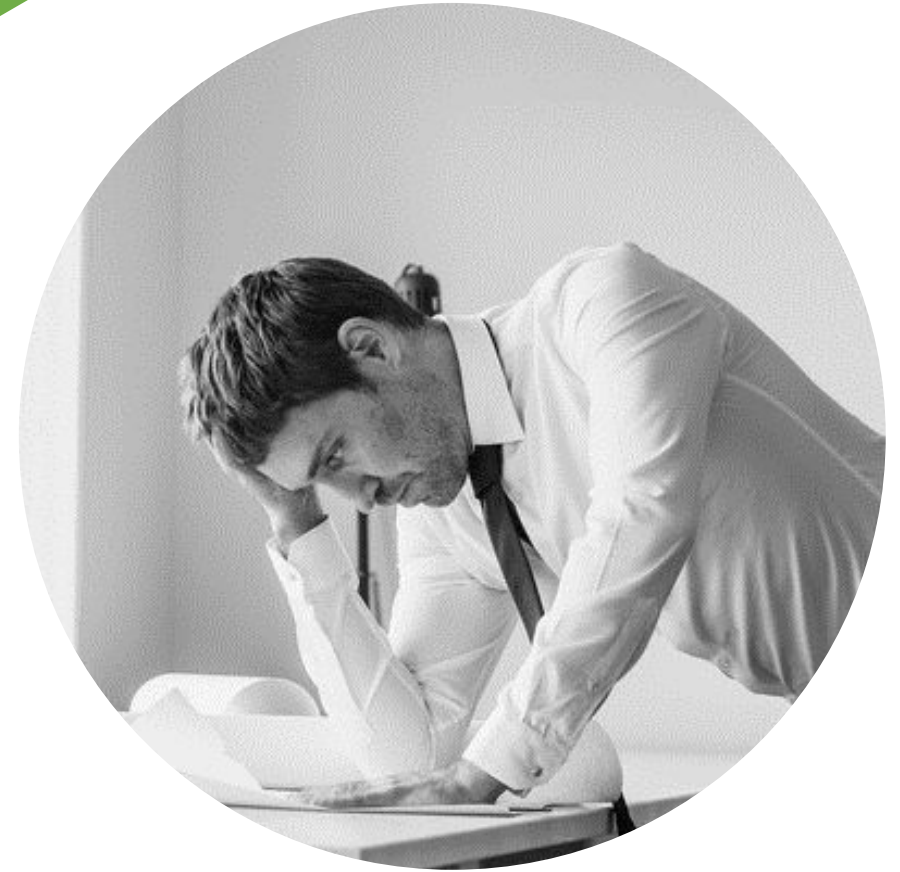


# The Importance of Mental Health First Aid in the workplace

- Mental health can be a taboo subject but professional help is not always immediately available to someone in distress.
- A mental health first aider you can offer comfort and support in a crisis until help arrives.
- Mental health problems are not as frightening as most people think.
- When a person has a mental health problem what they need most is someone who can:
  - Listen calmly to their feelings and fears
  - Give some simple information
  - Signpost them where to get appropriate help

# Causes of Mental Health

- Overworking
- Taking on far too much workload
- Carrying problems for other people
- Trauma
- Bullying
- Having a baby
- Work related accident
- Bereavement



# Signs of poor Mental Health

## Physical Signs

- Weight Changes
- Headaches
- Stomach Upsets
- Indigestion
- Tiredness
- Panic attacks
- High Blood pressure
- Heart Disease

## Emotional Signs

- Difficulty retaining new info
- Feeling Depressed
- Feeling Anxious
- Feeling irritable
- Feeling tearful
- Feeling emotional

## Behavioral Signs

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in eating pattern
- Becoming withdrawn
- Avoiding social gatherings
- Drinking more alcohol
- Smoking or taking drugs
- Becoming more aggressive



# Work place Adjustments

- Flexible approach to work patterns
- Phased return to work after absence
- Allow the possibility to work from home at times
- Temporary reallocation of some tasks
- Physical environment - provide a quiet space
- Offer a reserved parking space
- Support with workload and prioritising their work

# How you can help

- By educating your workforce
- By showing support to staff
- By providing well being activities in the workplace
- By encouraging healthy eating in the workplace
- By training nominated personal as a workplace Mental Health First Aider



# The role of the Mental Health First Aider

- To understand the important factors affecting mental ill health
- Identify the signs and symptoms for a range of mental health conditions
- Use ALGEE to provide Mental Health First Aid to someone experiencing a mental health issue or crisis
- Listen non-judgementally and hold supportive
- Signpost people to professional help

# Wellbeing Conversations:



What can we do to become more aware of how others are feeling and acting?

- Actively look for the signs and symptoms
- Think about the timing and environment
- Think of gentle examples of why you want to talk

**I've noticed that....**



# How can you effectively connect with someone?

- Using a non-judgemental approach - it's not as easy as you think
- Think of body language - eye contact, remaining attentive, open body position and non confrontational seating
- Being emotionally genuine and showing empathy

# Ways of keeping the conversation going

- Listen without interrupting
- Use open ended questions
- Briefly summarizing what has been said
- Using verbal prompts or phrases
- Silence can encourage opening up
- Beware of giving advice
- Beware of “I’m fine”





# Offering Help

- Offering reassurance and emotional / practical help during the conversation
- Asking about professional and workplace help
- Who can/could they talk to in their social and family networks?
- What else helps them?

# It is important to look after our wellbeing, particularly in times of stress.

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- These include:
- **Nutrition** - our diet plays a huge part in how we feel
- **Activity** - exercise and movement promote physical and emotional wellbeing
- **Sleep** - good quality



# 4 E Approach

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**Environment** safe place to have a conversation without any disturbances

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**Effective communication** –body language  
tone of voice open questions

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**Empathy** –when assisting sign posting use empathy try understand feel how the other person is experiencing

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**Engagement** – offer listening ear empathy and being approachable can really assist with assisting someone with mental health

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# MHFA ACTION PLAN

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Approach , Assist and ask them if they want to talk

L

Listen to them no judgementally

G

. Give support and information

E

Encourage appropriate professional help

E

Encourage other supports



# Help & Resources:

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GP Referral

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NHS Direct – 0845 46 47

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Samaritans - [www.Samaritans.org](http://www.Samaritans.org). Tel: 116 123

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No panic – [www.nopanic.org.uk](http://www.nopanic.org.uk)

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Anxiety uk – [www.anixetyuk.org.uk](http://www.anixetyuk.org.uk)

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Mind – [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

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Help me quit – [www.helpmequit.wales](http://www.helpmequit.wales) 0808 163 129

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Talk to Frank – [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com) 03001236600

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Alcoholics Anonymous – [www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk)

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Al- Anon – [www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

# Reason for having MHFA for the Workplace

1. Ask meaningful questions
2. Listen non judgmentally
3. Encourage healthy eating
4. Have positive conversations
5. Be kind
6. Open body language
7. Encourage Take regular breaks
8. Encouragement
9. Acknowledgement
10. Educate develop your team's knowledge in MHFA

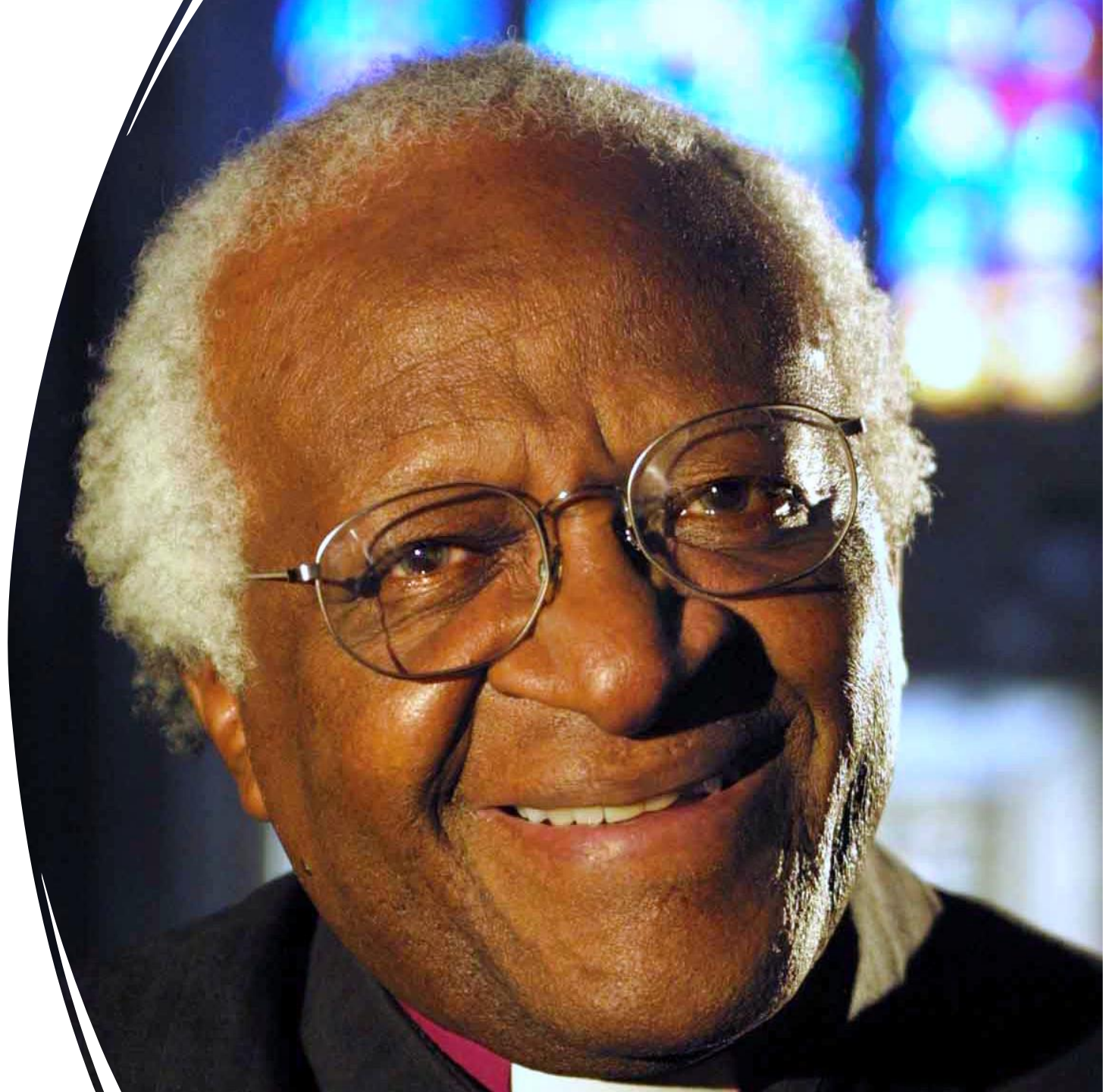




“There comes a point when we need to just stop pulling people out of a river”.

“We need to go upstream to find out why they’re falling in”.

Desmond Tutu



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