

# Mental Health, Beyond Awareness

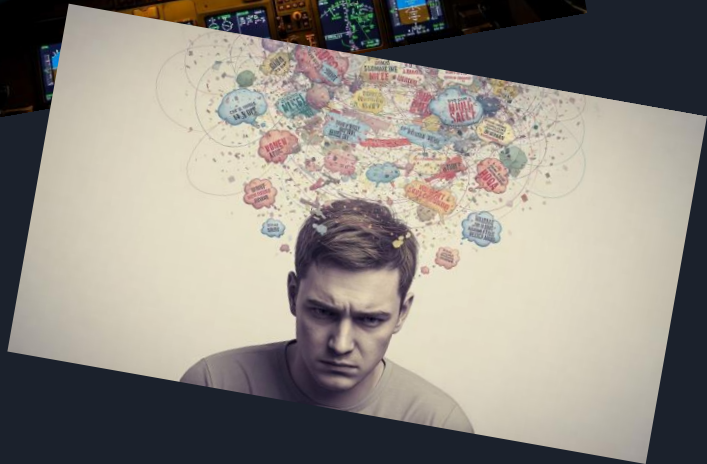
The Real Impact of Aviation Mental Health



# Who are they, and Why are they in our workspace?



## FOUR EVENTS



Live from the Flight Deck | golfcharlie232



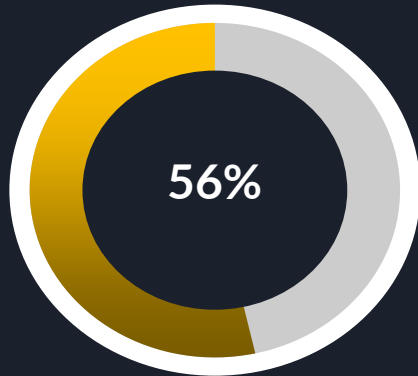
# Understanding the problem.

- 01 Ever sought informal medical advice from other than ME or GP for fear of losing medical status?
- 02 Ever carried out duties despite experiencing a symptom that you felt should have been evaluated by a physician before operating?
- 03 Ever taken a prescription medication not prescribed to you for a symptom you felt should've been evaluated by a physician before operating?
- 04 Ever misrepresented or withheld information on a written healthcare questionnaire for fear of losing your operational status or Medical Certificate?

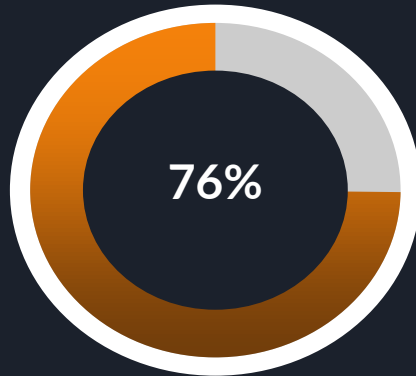


# Healthcare Avoidance:

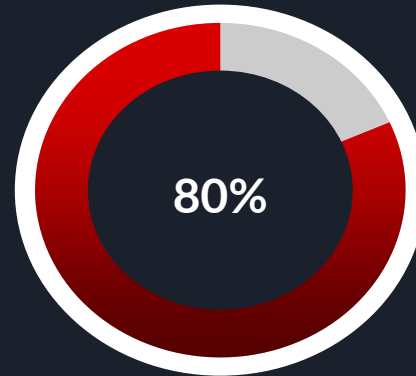
- Personnel avoid seeking medical care or disclosing health information due to the perceived risk of aeromedical certificate loss.
- Yes to any one or more of the 4 Questions.



NORTH  
AMERICAN



NEW ZEALAND

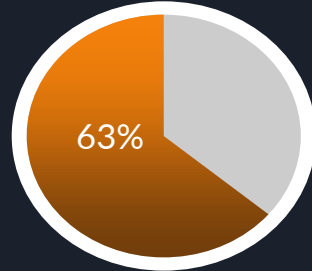


NEW ZEALAND  
ATCOs

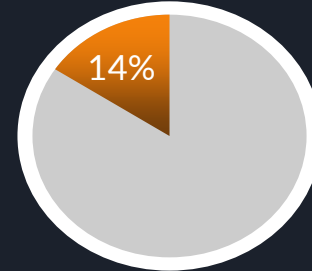
# So Why the Difference Between Studies?

General  
Aviation

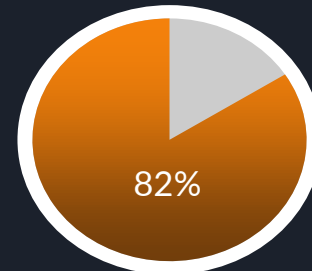
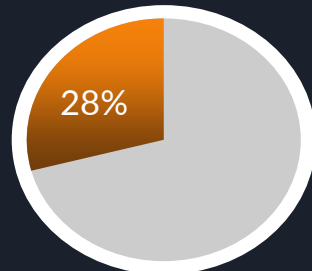
North  
America



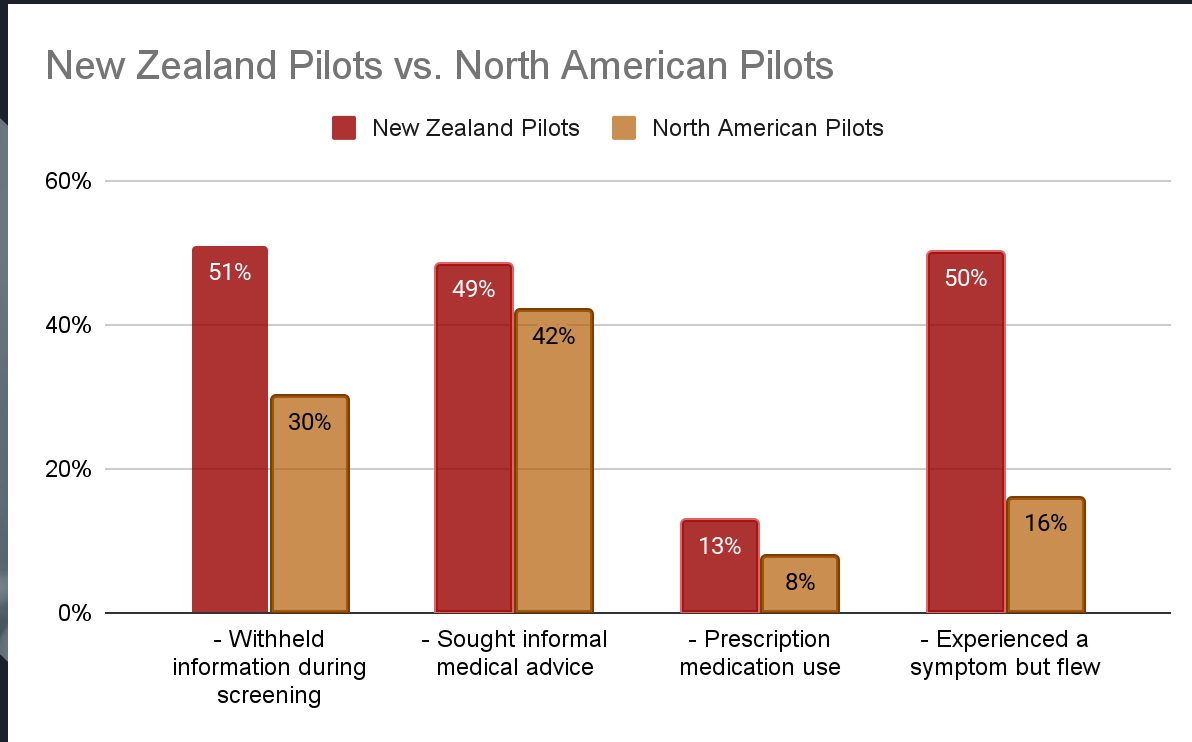
New  
Zealand



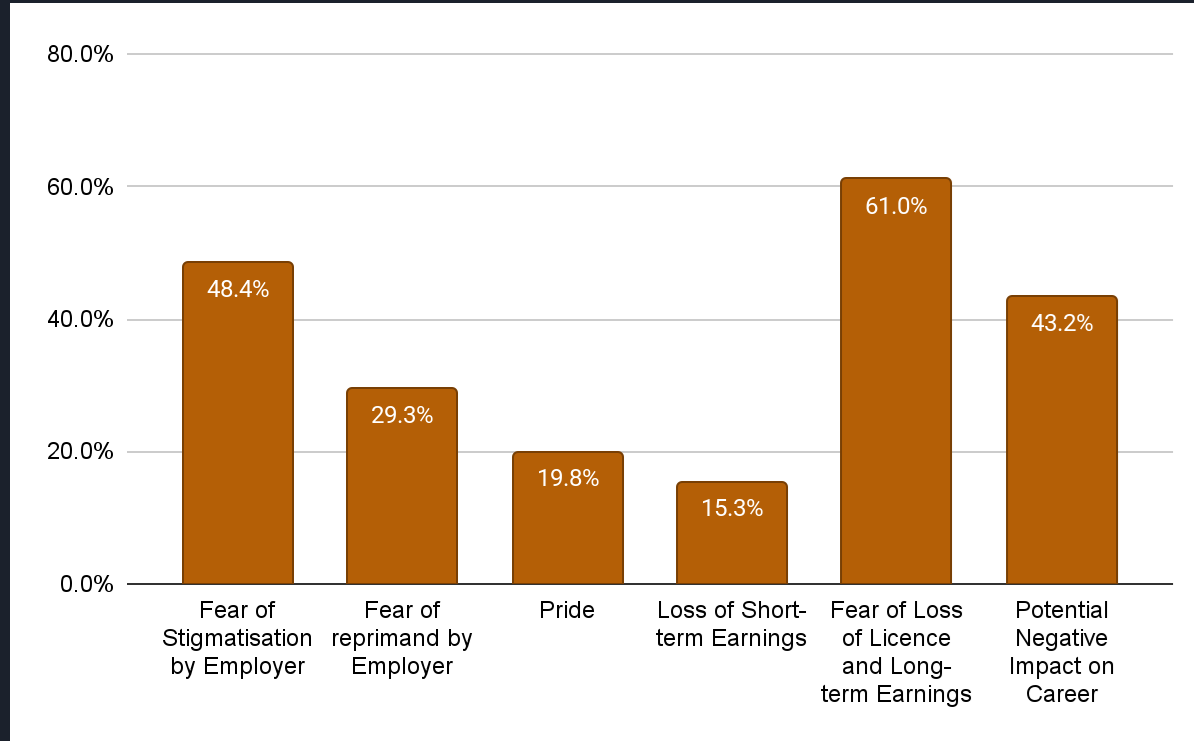
Airlines &  
Commercial



# What Behaviours Feature



# Reasons for non-disclosure of a Mental Health issue to your Employer.



Cahill et.al 2019, (n= 734)



The following slides contain preliminary data from an industry survey conducted with airline pilots and air traffic controllers (ATCOs).

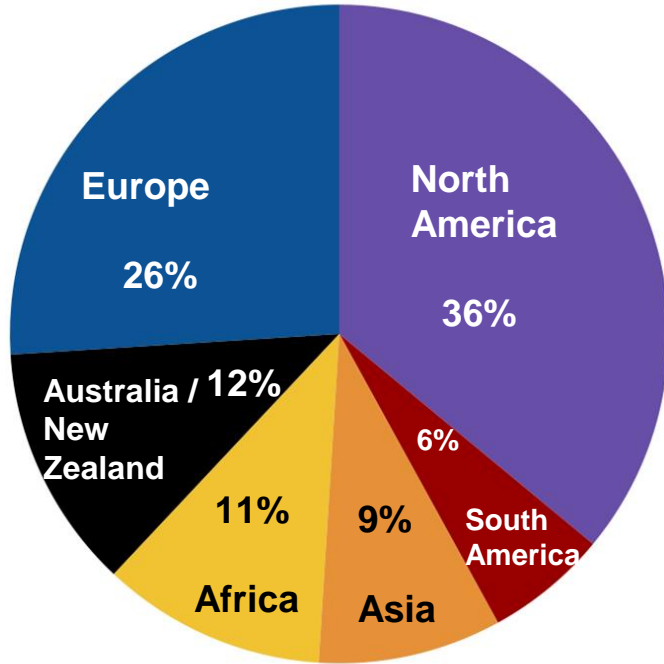
The study is led by Research Scientist Kimberly Perkins, Ph.D. with IRB approval through the University of Washington.

**n = 1815**

Prepared by Madeline Clinton, Jessica Cao, Tiffany Yan, and Lomash Sharma through a Directed Research Group.



# Survey Demographics and Location of Respondents



Pilots and ATCOs

70% male / 30% female

Ages 27-61



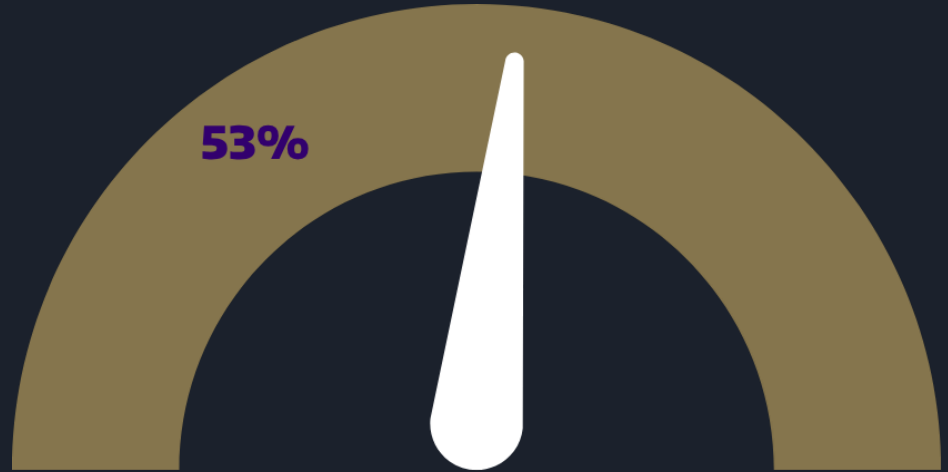
88% of respondents said that mental health issues are a significant or major concern in our industry (n=1466)


Only 2% (25 people) said that mental health was not a concern at all.



HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN & ENGINEERING  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

53% disagree with their regulator's mental health policies.





65% avoid using mental health tools or seeking assistance at all because of concern for negative career implications

53% believe they can compartmentalize their mental health concerns

54% do not trust the confidentiality of the resources



# Key Initial Findings

Even with a near unanimous opinion (88%) that mental health is a serious industry concern, Most will not seek help.

54% does not trust confidentiality and 65% avoid any assistance tools, silence becomes the safer option

The numbers are clear:  
For support systems to be used,  
trust needs to be built.

# Excluded

!!!!

# Pilot Mental Health Campaign (PMHC)



# What are The Consequences of the Status Quo?

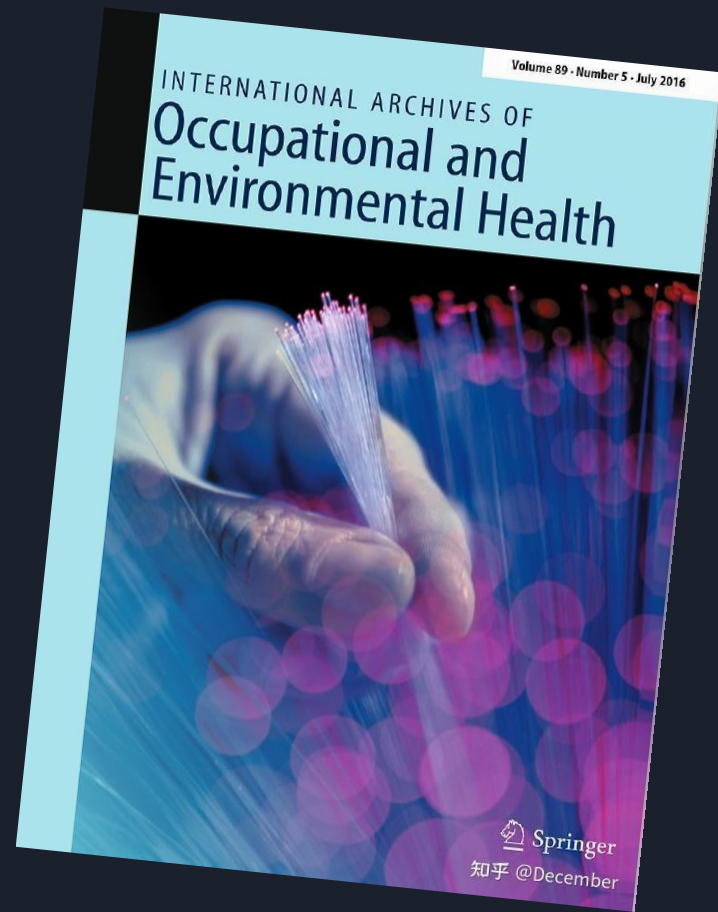
Associations between:

- psychological distress
- workplace failures

For those experiencing moderate psychological distress, lead to an odds ratio increase of:

- 40% for workplace accidents.
- 130% of failures.

Michael F. Hilton • Harvey A. Whiteford, 2010  
(n= 60,550)





# Where is the Distress ?

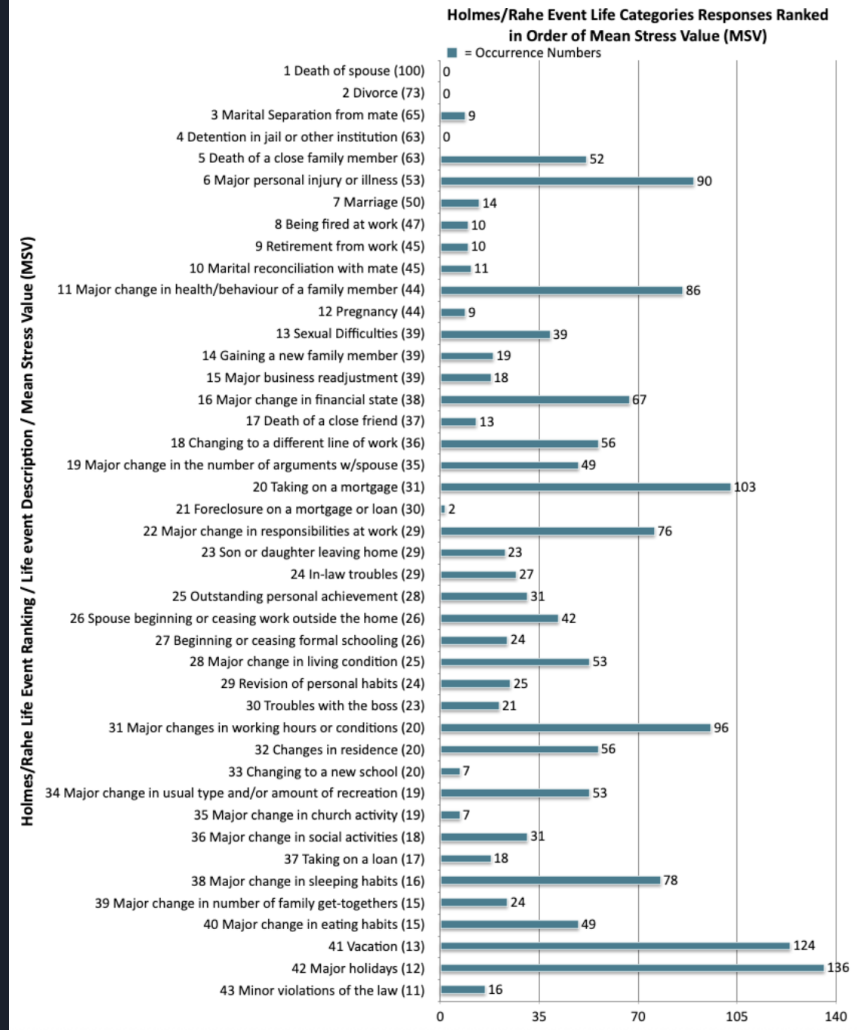
>150 = 50% chance of major health breakdown in the next 2 years.

Average Study Life Stress Score  
= 182

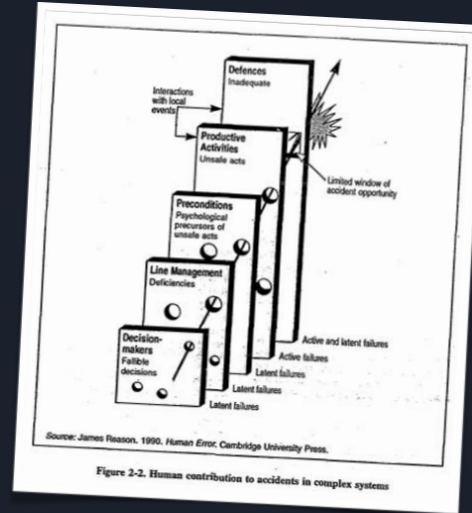
>300 = 80% chance.

Those who disclosed HCA were  
**2.7** times more likely to score  
>150 than those who did not.

Bongers 2025, (n= 277)



# How Big is The Problem?



ERRORS

IMPAIRED MENTAL  
WELLNESS ?

# The Science of Mental Health in SMS is where Fatigue was 25 Years Ago.

“Was Cognitive Distraction or Overwhelm a Factor? [ ]”

< Back

Flight OSR  
4 May 2025, 03:56

DELETE

SUBMIT

Event Summary

Date/Time of Event (UTC) \*

Location \*

Report Confidential?

☐

Was Fatigue A Factor? \*

☐

Was Cognitive Distraction or Overwhelm a Factor

☐

Please describe event in detail:

Flight Details

Flight Number e.g. '1005

Departure Date (Port Local)

Flight Phase

Maintenance Log

Defect Log Number e.g. 00001

Log Details:

Additional Staff Requiring Response

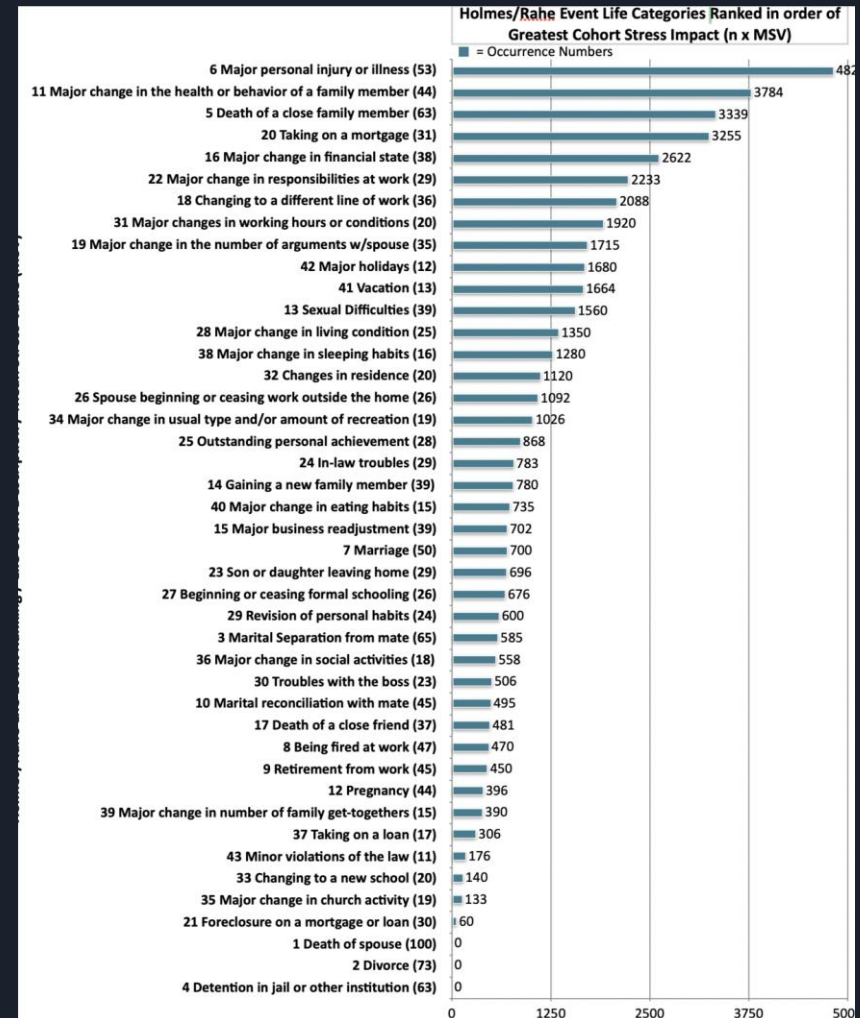
Employee ID

# Systems Level Solutions

## Addressing Stress Focused Programmes

Re-ranking stress events by [ $n \times$  stress score]:

- 1) Personal injury and family health, along with the death of a close family member.
- 2) Financial and major employment change.
- 3) Personal relationships



# Using AI Tools to Reconnect the Human.

- AI can Accurately Inform so as to:
  - Reduce Fear,
  - Correct Misinformation,
  - Connect to a Peer,
  - Regain Self Agency.



## Build Trust

International Peer Assist Aviation Coalition  
**IPAAC**



## Who Are They?

- They are us!

## Why are they in our workspace?

- We are Self reliant and Cautious!

## What are the consequences?

- Greater chance of serious health breakdown.
- More susceptible to error.

## What can we do?

- Improve available Tools and Data.
- Strong Advocacy for better regulation.

