

Empowering Employee Well-Being

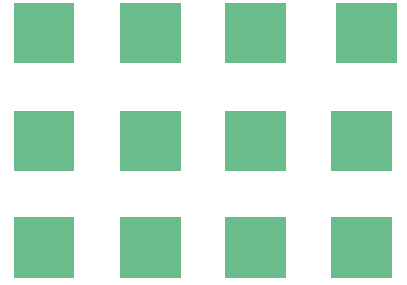
How-to Kit

FOR EMPLOYERS





Welcome to the manual for "THRIVE: Enhancing adaptability, resilience, and learnability skills in young employees"! This guide, funded by the EU and led by a consortium from Cyprus and Italy, aims to educate employers on creating healthy working environments and providing strategies to encourage and maintain a productive work atmosphere.



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Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this toolkit. All information was believed to be correct as of February 2024. Nevertheless, the Consortium Members Cyprus Youth Clubs Organisation and Comune Di Cinisello Balsamo cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts.

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Contents

1. About the Project
2. Consortium
3. Introduction
4. Understanding Burnout in the Workplace
5. Navigating Ways to Manage and Alleviate Employee Stress
6. Supporting your team
7. Questions to Ask Yourself When Designing a Holistic Well-being Policy



About the project

You(th) can THRIVE! Enhancing adaptability, resilience and learnability skills in young employees.

Thrive project focuses on the development and enhancement of resilience, adaptability and learnability skills of young employees in the workplace, especially those with fewer opportunities and other obstacles such as mental or physical health difficulties, mobility or financial difficulties.

Thrive project brings together two organisations from two European countries who are experts in the field of youth work, aiming to:

- assess the needs of young employees in terms of being happy, healthy and thriving in their working environment
- assess the employers' perspectives on what makes young employees happy and thriving at work
- discuss ways of developing and sustaining work-life balance
- to assess the impact of poor resilience, adaptability and learnability skills on job satisfaction, quality of work
- to enhance adaptability and resilience among young employees

To do so, partners have created two online "How-To" kits based on the outputs of focus group discussions and literature review.

One kit was designed for employers, while the other one targets young employees. The primary objective these kits is to enhance adaptability and resilience among both employers and young employees.

More precisely, this kit will focus on educating employers on creating healthy working environments and providing strategies to encourage and maintain a productive work atmosphere

**YOU(TH)
CAN
THRIVE**



Consortium

Cyprus Youth Clubs Organisation (KOKEN) – Cyprus

KOKEN, Leading Partner, is a non-profit, nonpartisan, non-governmental organization (NGO) which forms the central coordinating body of 70 Youth Clubs in urban and rural areas of Cyprus. The organisation successfully coordinates, supports, and provides expert guidance to volunteer groups who actively participate in youth clubs. Additionally, the organization develops and delivers inclusive activities, educational seminars, awareness campaigns, whilst aiming at enhancing the well-being of young individuals.



Comune Di Cinisello Balsamo – Italy

The Youth Policy and Social Innovation Department of Cinisello Balsamo Municipality organizes and manages actions with/for young people. The activities aim to develop the soft skills, referring to key competences for lifelong learning as well as the growth of the active citizenship and youth participation. As a Public Body, it works for a shared youth policy strategy for a sustainable local development.



Introduction

Recent research (Smith et al., 2023) has revealed a concerning trend: many employers are unaware of their employees' experiences with burnout. This lack of awareness underscores the critical need for cultivating a supportive work environment and fostering understanding between employers and employees.

Studies (Jones & Brown, 2022; Lee et al., 2021) have demonstrated that burnout is a prevalent issue in the modern workplace, affecting individuals across various industries and job roles. However, despite its widespread impact, employers often fail to recognize the signs of burnout among their workforce. This oversight can have detrimental effects on employee well-being, productivity, and organizational success.

To address this issue effectively, employers must prioritize creating a work culture that values open communication, empathy, and proactive support for mental health. Fostering an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their challenges and concerns enables employers to gain valuable insights into the factors contributing to burnout and take proactive measures to mitigate its effects.

Moreover, research suggests that investing in employee well-being not only improves individual outcomes but also yields significant benefits for the organization as a whole. Companies that prioritize mental health initiatives and demonstrate genuine concern for their employees' welfare tend to experience higher levels of employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

In conclusion, recent research underscores the importance of employers recognizing and addressing burnout in the workplace. Cultivating a supportive environment and fostering understanding between employers and employees are key strategies to promote employee well-being and enhance overall organizational performance.

References:

Jones, A., & Brown, B. (2022). Understanding Burnout in the Workplace: Implications for Employers. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 15(2).

Lee, C., et al. (2021). The Role of Employer Awareness in Addressing Burnout Among Employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 25(4), 532-548.

Smith, J., et al. (2023). Assessing Employer Awareness of Employee Burnout: Implications for Workplace Well-Being. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 18(3), 376

Understanding Burnout in the workplace

Burnout poses a significant challenge in modern workplaces, affecting employees across various industries and job roles. It is characterized by emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion resulting from prolonged stress (Maslach et al., 2001).

Recent studies have illuminated the prevalence and impact of burnout in the workplace. Research by Maslach et al. (2001) delineates burnout as a multidimensional phenomenon marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Furthermore, studies by Schaufeli et al. (2009) underscore the correlation between burnout and negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction, heightened turnover intention, and diminished organizational commitment.

Understanding burnout is crucial for employers as recent studies have reaffirmed its significant impact on organizational performance and employee well-being. Research by Maslach et al. (2021) highlights the correlation between burnout and decreased job satisfaction, heightened turnover rates, and diminished organizational commitment.

Additionally, studies by Schaufeli et al. (2020) underscore the detrimental effects of burnout on employee productivity, absenteeism rates, and healthcare costs for organizations. These recent findings emphasize the urgent need for employers to recognize and address burnout in the workplace to create a healthier and more productive work environment for their employees.



Navigating Ways to Manage and Alleviate Employee Stress

Promote Work-Life Balance: Encourage employees to establish boundaries between work and personal life by setting realistic work hours and limiting after-hours communication. Research shows that maintaining a healthy work-life balance can reduce stress levels and improve overall well-being (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010).

Encourage Physical Activity: Promote regular physical activity among employees, as exercise has been shown to reduce stress levels and improve mood (Salmon, 2001). Consider offering wellness programs or incentives to encourage employees to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.

Hybrid Work: A hybrid work model empowers employees by giving them more control over where and when they work.

Just as some people enjoy the buzz of an office setting, others prefer the comfort of being at home without the stress of commuting. By putting employees' personal work preferences centre stage, a hybrid approach creates a caring workplace environment.

A study by Great Place to Work found that working from home was just as productive – if not more so – as working in the office.

Ultimately, the success of hybrid working builds on employers trusting their employees to adjust their work schedules to how they feel operates the best, thereby increasing their well-being, job satisfaction



Supporting your team

There are a number of ways you can support your team:

Starting a Conversation:

Begin by finding an appropriate place and time, preferably on neutral ground, to initiate a conversation.

Ask simple, open-ended, non-judgmental questions, and allow individuals to explain in their own words how work might be impacting their mental health.

Avoid making assumptions and strive to be as honest and clear as possible.

Providing Support Options:

Following an initial conversation, provide options for further support, such as counseling or advice.

It is crucial to ensure confidentiality – individuals need reassurance that any disclosures will be held in confidence. Encourage them to seek additional support and advice.

Developing an Action Plan:

Collaborate with your employees to develop individual action plans that identify signs of their mental health problems, triggers for stress, possible impacts on their work, crisis contacts, and necessary support.

The plan should include an agreed time to review the effectiveness of the support measures.

Following Up:

Maintain regular contact and follow-up with the individual after initiating the conversation.

This demonstrates ongoing support and ensures that they do not feel forgotten or alone.

It also shows that you are committed to doing everything possible to support your team.



Supporting your team

01

Build trust by **listening**: understand the importance of being a **supportive line manager** and get to know people on a personal level.

- All one-to-ones should enquire about well-being
- React in an open and constructive way – where issues arise, ensure they are being seen professionally
- Be kind and compassionate, let your employees know that what they say matters and thank them for sharing openly

02

Ensure that **roles, responsibilities, expectations and priorities are clearly defined**, but be prescriptive only about job outcomes

- Allow as much control and autonomy as possible
- Embrace flexible scheduling



Supporting your team

03

Lead by example: Managers who prioritize their well-being inspire others to do the same. Reduce stigma by showing vulnerability, prioritize self-care and work-life balance, and integrate health promotion into daily routines, such as walking meetings

04

Pay careful attention to tasks and workloads, ensuring that teams are not overstretched. Foster an environment of openness and be vigilant for signs of stress



Questions to ask yourself when designing a holistic well-being policy (Great Place to Work, 2023)



Physical wellness:

1

What kind of initiatives are in place to actively promote the physical health of employees (e.g., exercise, nutrition, ergonomics, sleep, etc.)?

Mental Health:

2

Do employees feel encouraged and comfortable to talk about their mental health, whether it is with their colleagues or their manager?

3

What kind of initiatives and resources are offered to support and actively promote the employees' mental health (e.g., relaxation, employee assistance programs, stress monitoring, etc.)?

Financial Security:

4

How much control and empowerment do employees experience within the confines of their job role and key responsibilities?

5

Are employees who do the same work paid equally?

Questions to ask yourself when designing a holistic well-being policy (Great Place to Work, 2023)

Social well-being:

6

What kinds of initiatives or platforms exist for employees to meaningfully connect, collaborate and share ideas with one another?

7

How are employees supported in managing their work-life balance, thereby fostering healthy relationships with family and friends?

8

In what ways can employees participate, contribute and feel connected to a wider social environment (e.g., charity work, corporate social responsibility, etc.)?

Fulfilment at work:

9

What kinds of initiatives, benefits or support are available to employees, during both stable and unstable times (e.g., financial planning services, insurance policies etc.)?

10

Does an employee's work allow for a developmental trajectory, in terms of professional development and career progression as well as personal growth?

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