

ERASMUS + TRAINING COURSE FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Mental health at work : how to
understand psychosocial risks at
work and build suitable work
environments ?

DECEMBER 2023

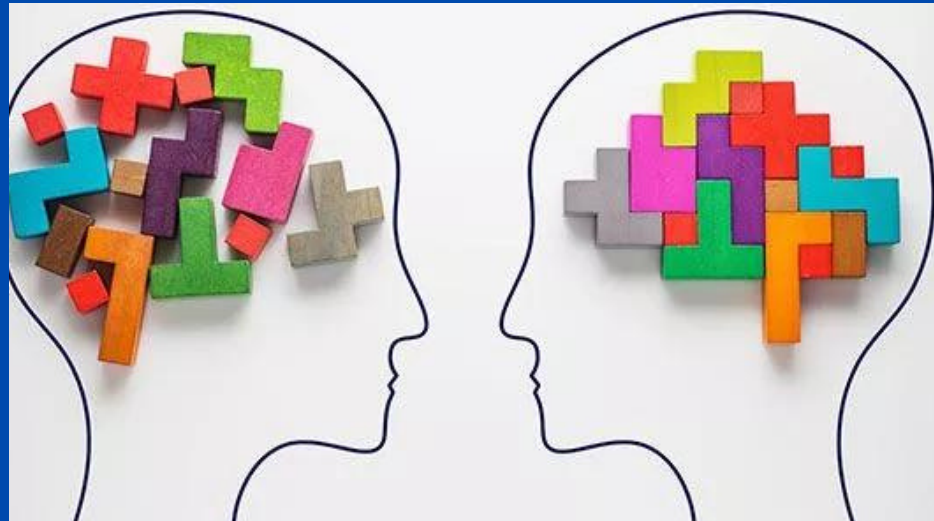


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PREAMBULE

The Mental Health at Work training course was funded with the support of the European Commission in the frame of the Erasmus+ programme.

This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The content of this booklet was created by the participants of the Training Course "Mental Health at Work" and relies on the information they gathered through the sessions, during workshops, discussions and on the internet.

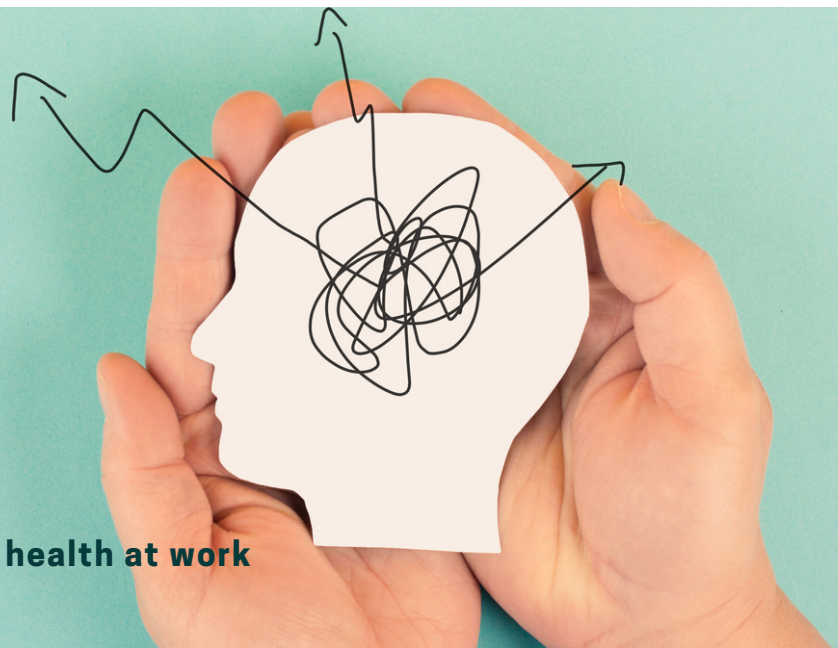


HISTORY OF OUR PROJECT



Comité de Liaison Diagonal France and Youth Association Droni organised a one week training course for youth workers between 27 of November and 2nd of December 2023 in Rustavi, Georgia on the topic of mental health and psychosocial risks prevention within the workplace. The aim of this project was to make our 24 participants more aware about the topic of mental health at work and to give them tools and strategies to prevent psychosocial risks within the workplace and promote suitable work environment toward mental health. During the week, they took part in different workshops and one visit in Tbilisi.

This booklet is the result of their participation to this training course and aspires to spread the set of skills and knowledge we acquire during this week. It gathers general information and strategies to build healthy and caring workplace for everybody's mental health.



Mental health at work

MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS AND HISTORY



1200 BCE

Ancient Chinese medical texts, dating back to 1200 BCE, discussed the connection between emotions and health.

Ancient Chinese medicine emphasized the importance of balance in all aspects of life, including emotions, for the prevention of illness.

The texts recognized the profound connection between the mind and body, highlighting that emotional well-being was integral to overall health.

500 BCE

Hippocrates, an ancient Greek physician, introduced the idea that mental disorders were caused by imbalances in bodily fluids.

One of the central concepts introduced by Hippocrates was the theory of humors, which suggested that the human body was composed of four fundamental fluids: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. According to the theory, good health depended on the balance and proper proportion of these humors within the body. Hippocrates proposed that an imbalance in the four humors could lead to various diseases, including mental disorders. The term "melancholia" was used to describe a condition associated with an excess of black bile, believed to be linked to symptoms of depression and sadness.

1247 Foundation of the Bethlem Royal Hospital in London

During the Middle Ages, the prevailing belief was that the mentally ill needed to be confined for the protection of society and sometimes for their own safety. Bethlem, like many other asylums of the time, adopted custodial care practices, where patients were essentially housed and restrained, but little attention was given to treatment or understanding the underlying causes of mental illness.

1487

In the *Malleus Maleficarum* ("The Hammer of Witches"), a witch-hunting manual published in 1487, mental disorders were linked to witchcraft, reinforcing the belief in supernatural causes for mental illness.

1792

Philippe Pinel, a French doctor, in 1792, advocated for the humane treatment of psychiatric patients in France. One of Pinel's most well-known actions was the removal of chains from patients. He famously ordered the removal of chains from the patients at La Bicêtre (a parisian hospital).

1796

William Tuke, a French businessman, opened the York retreat in England. The York Retreat was based on the principles of moral treatment, which emphasized a holistic approach to the care of individuals with mental disorders. Patients at the York Retreat were treated with dignity and respect. The emphasis was on understanding the individual's background, addressing their needs, and providing a therapeutic environment.

19th century

Dorothea Dix's was an American reformer, teacher, and advocate for the mentally ill. Her advocacy in the mid-1800s led to improvements in mental health care facilities in the United States. Dorothea Dix's advocacy laid the foundation for the establishment of more humane and specialized mental health care in the United States. Her work had a lasting impact, influencing the trajectory of mental health care and contributing to the development of more compassionate and therapeutic approaches in the treatment of mental illness.

20th century

Early labor legislation focused primarily on physical and safety issues. Laws aim to protect workers from physical dangers, but mental health aspects are largely neglected.

Psychoanalysis, developed by Sigmund Freud in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, became a prominent approach to understanding and treating mental disorders.

1919

Creation of The International Labor Organization (ILO) - In 1946, The International Labor Organisation (ILO) became the first specialized agency of the United Nations. In 2022, the Organisation brings together 187 Member States. Its headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland.

The ILO acts as a global force to promote decent working conditions, including the protection and promotion of mental health at work through standards, programs and initiatives aimed at improving working conditions for workers around the world.

ILO's means of action are :

- International labor standards ;
- Promotion of decent working conditions ;
- Awareness and training programs ;
- Research and data collection ;
- Collaboration with other organizations ;
- Technical assistance to member countries ;
- Implementation of decent work principles.

1930

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) was introduced as a treatment for severe mental illnesses in Italy. ECT has been a subject of ethical and human rights debates, particularly concerning its use without informed consent and concerns about potential long-term cognitive effects.

Post-World War II

War-related trauma led to a growing awareness of mental health issues. However, most labor laws still focus on the physical aspects of safety.



1948

Creation of the World Health Organization (WHO) - The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations Public Health Organization. Its headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland.

The WHO plays a vital role in promoting mental health at work globally. It engages in initiatives and programs aimed at improving the mental health of individuals, including in the professional context.

Means of action :

- Development of policies and guidelines ;
- Awareness and education ;
- Data collection and research ;
- Collaboration with other organizations ;
- Development of mental health programs ;
- Response to crises and emergencies.

1949

Creation of the Council of Europe - The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organization established in 1949.

It constitutes an international organization which brings together approximately 675 million nationals from 46 Member States, through legal standards in the areas of the protection of human rights, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law in Europe.

The Council's actions contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the protection of human rights, including the right to mental health at work. Member States are encouraged to take these principles into account in their national legislation and professional practices.

1961

The European Social Charter is adopted by the Council of Europe - The European Social Charter, adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996, sets out social and economic rights. Although it does not specify mental health at work, it recognizes the right to fair working conditions and a safe working environment :

- Protection of health and safety at work ;
- Work-life balance ;
- Non-discrimination at work ;
- Consultation of workers ;
- Access to remedies and justice.

1981

International Labor Organization, Occupational Health Convention (No. 155) - This convention does not explicitly address mental health but it sets out general principles aimed at ensuring the protection and promotion of workers' health. It encourages Member States to take appropriate measures to prevent occupational risks and provide occupational health services.





1970s-1980s

Labor movements and researchers begin to draw attention to problems of workplace stress and harassment. Early discussions around mental health in the workplace are emerging, but legislation remains largely focused on physical safety.

1989

European Union Council Framework directive on health and safety at work (89/391/EEC) - The framework directive sets out the general principles of health and safety at work in the European Union. Although the directive does not specifically address mental health, it states that employers must take steps to protect the physical and mental health of workers in all work-related aspects.

1990s

Countries begin to recognize the importance of mental health in the workplace. Anti-discrimination laws extend protection to workers with mental disorders, but specific legislation remains limited.

10 October 1992

The World Mental Health Day is celebrated for the first time. It is the result of a global advocacy and awareness program started by the World Federation for Mental Health.

1994

Creation of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work - The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, EU-OSHA is a Community agency created on July 18, 1994 by a Council regulation. It is based in Bilbao, Spain.

EU-OSHA plays a vital role in promoting mental health at work in the European Union by providing information, resources, practical tools and awareness-raising initiatives. It thus contributes to encouraging safe and healthy working environments, integrating mental health into the overall management of safety and health at work.

Means of action :

- Information and awareness
- Campaigns and events
- Research and publications
- Practical tools and resources
- Training and Education

2000s

Increased awareness of mental health disorders in the workplace occurs, in part due to studies showing the negative economic impact of stress and psychological problems at work. Some countries are starting to adopt specific laws to protect workers against psychological harassment.

2005

World Health Organization, Charter for the Promotion of Mental Health - Although this charter is not specifically focused on work, it highlights the importance of promoting mental health in various contexts, including workplaces. It highlights key principles for creating environments that promote mental health.

2008

World Health Organization, Global Program on Mental Health - WHO launched a Global Program on Mental Health which highlights the importance of promoting mental health in all policies, including those related to work. This program highlights the need to create healthy work environments and raise awareness of mental health issues among employers and workers.

2010s

The World Health Organization and other international organizations begin to emphasize mental health at work as a global priority. The notion of work-life balance is becoming a major topic of discussion.

2010

International Labor Organization, Recommendation on HIV/AIDS and the world of work (No. 200) - Adopted in 2010, this recommendation does not specifically address mental health, but it highlights the importance of taking into account the psychosocial aspects of HIV/AIDS in Workplace. This highlights the need to consider the mental and social dimensions of worker health.

2019

World Health Organization, Guidance on Mental Health in the Workplace - WHO has published a Guidance on Mental Health in the Workplace which offers practical advice for promoting mental health at work. It addresses themes such as stress prevention, awareness, and the promotion of a positive work environment.

International Labor Organization, Convention on Harassment and Violence (No. 190) - Adopted in 2019, this convention and its associated recommendation (No. 206) explicitly address the issue of harassment, including psychological harassment at work. Although this does not cover all aspects of mental health, it highlights the importance of creating respectful work environments free of psychological violence.

2020's

Recognition of mental health issues in the workplace continues to grow. More and more countries are integrating specific provisions relating to mental health into their labor laws. Some governments are implementing national strategies for mental health at work, and companies are adopting internal policies to promote a healthy work environment.

2020

World Health Organization, Launching of the Global Coalition for Mental Health at Work - Although this coalition is not directly linked to standards, it illustrates the efforts of WHO and other organizations to promote mental health at work on a global scale. It aims to mobilize businesses, governments and other stakeholders to promote mental health at work.



2021

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic - The pandemic highlights the importance of mental health in the workplace as many workers face challenges such as social isolation, stress related to job security, and balance between work and personal life.

European strategy on health and safety at work 2021-2027 - The European Commission has published a new strategy which focuses on preventing occupational risks and promoting mental health at work. This strategy encourages Member States to adopt comprehensive approaches to addressing psychosocial risks.

2023

European Commission comprehensive approach to mental health - This Communication is an important first step in putting mental health on an equal footing with physical health and ensuring a new cross-sectoral approach to mental health issues. It does not deal specifically with Mental Health at work but about Mental Health in general.

In a context marked by significant technological, environmental and societal changes that the population is struggling to cope with, EU action on mental health will be structured around three guiding principles:

- adequate and effective prevention ;
- access to quality and affordable mental health care and treatment, and ;
- reintegration into society after recovery.

This comprehensive approach addresses the issue of mental health across all policies in order to recognize the multiple risk factors for mental illness.

Conclusion of the European Union Council on the close links between mental health and employment, with a focus on precarious work - The European Council recognized that Mental health and work are closely correlated. Mental health is of great importance for work ability and productivity and, conversely, psychosocial risks at work can be detrimental to mental health. In particular, precarious work, which includes low-paid and unprotected jobs, can lead to disorders such as anxiety and depression.

The Council invited Member State to:

- promote quality employment policies to combat precariousness ;
- strengthening public systems that preserve mental health at work ;
- promote research on mental health at work ;
- support the recruitment or reintegration of workers with mental health problems ;
- helping self-employed workers and SMEs prevent psychosocial risks at work.

Looking to the future

There is a trend towards increased awareness and more specific legislative action regarding mental health at work. Prevention initiatives, awareness programs and corporate policies focused on mental well-being are gaining importance.



WHAT ARE PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS ?

Psychosocial risks are potential for harm to employees' psychological well-being and social interactions in the workplace. They arise from the interaction between the social and organizational environment and individual factors. They are more likely to arise from poor work design, organisation and management as well as poor social context of work. They can have negative effects on mental health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being.

Their main causes are

Excessive workloads ;
Conflicting demands and lack of role clarity ;
Lack of involvement in making decisions ;
Poorly managed organisational change, job insecurity ;
Ineffective communication and lack of support ;
Psychological and sexual harassment, third party violence.



Their main consequences are

FOR WORKERS

Impaired Mental Health : Exposure to psychosocial risks can lead to mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout for individuals.

Reduced job satisfaction : Psychosocial risks can result in decreased job satisfaction, impacting the overall well-being and happiness of employees.

Physical health issues : Prolonged exposure to psychosocial risks may contribute to physical health problems, as there is a known link between mental and physical well-being. It includes : cardiovascular issues, immune system suppression, gastrointestinal problems, musculoskeletal disorders, sleep disturbances, endocrine system disruption, weight gain or loss, increased risk of chronic diseases, etc.

Burnout : Chronic exposure to psychosocial risks can contribute to burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion and a sense of reduced accomplishment.

Strained personal relationships : The stress and negative emotions from psychosocial risks may spill over into individuals' personal lives, affecting relationships outside of work.

Impact on work-life balance : Psychosocial risks can disrupt work-life balance, making it challenging for individuals to manage responsibilities at work and home.

Decreased job performance : Individuals facing psychosocial risks may struggle to perform well in their roles, impacting their job performance and career advancement.

Feeling of isolation : Poor workplace relationships and a lack of support can contribute to feelings of isolation and loneliness for individuals.

Feelings of difficulty concentrating : Psychosocial risks may make it difficult for individuals to concentrate and focus on their tasks, affecting their ability to perform effectively.

FOR THE WORKPLACE

Decreased productivity : Employees experiencing psychosocial risks may be less focused and less productive, affecting overall organisational output.

Higher turnover rates : Unhealthy work environments can lead to increased employee turnover, resulting in recruitment and training costs for the organisation.

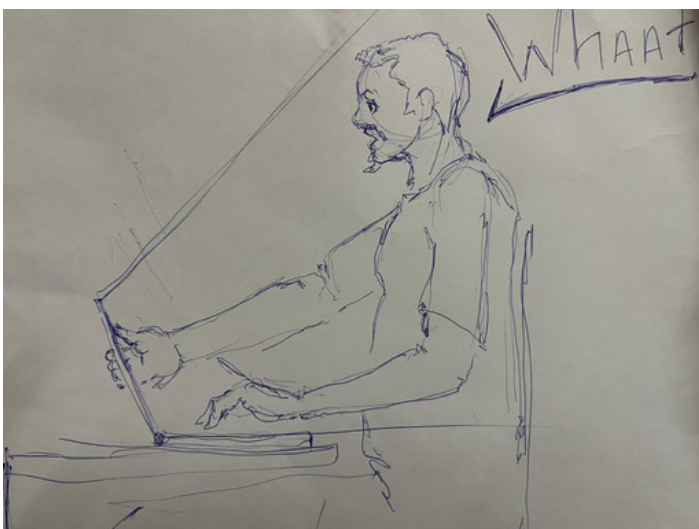
Negative impact on organisational culture : A workplace with high psychosocial risks may develop a negative culture, hindering collaboration, innovation, and employee morale.

Increased absenteeism : Psychosocial risks can contribute to higher rates of absenteeism, impacting the organisation's ability to meet its goals and deadlines.

Decreased organisational reputation : A workplace with a poor psychosocial environment may suffer damage to its reputation, affecting its ability to attract top talent and clients.

Reduced employee engagement : High levels of psychosocial risks can lead to decreased employee engagement, affecting motivation and commitment to organizational goals.

Lower innovation and creativity : Stressed and dissatisfied employees may be less likely to contribute innovative ideas, hindering the organization's ability to adapt and innovate.

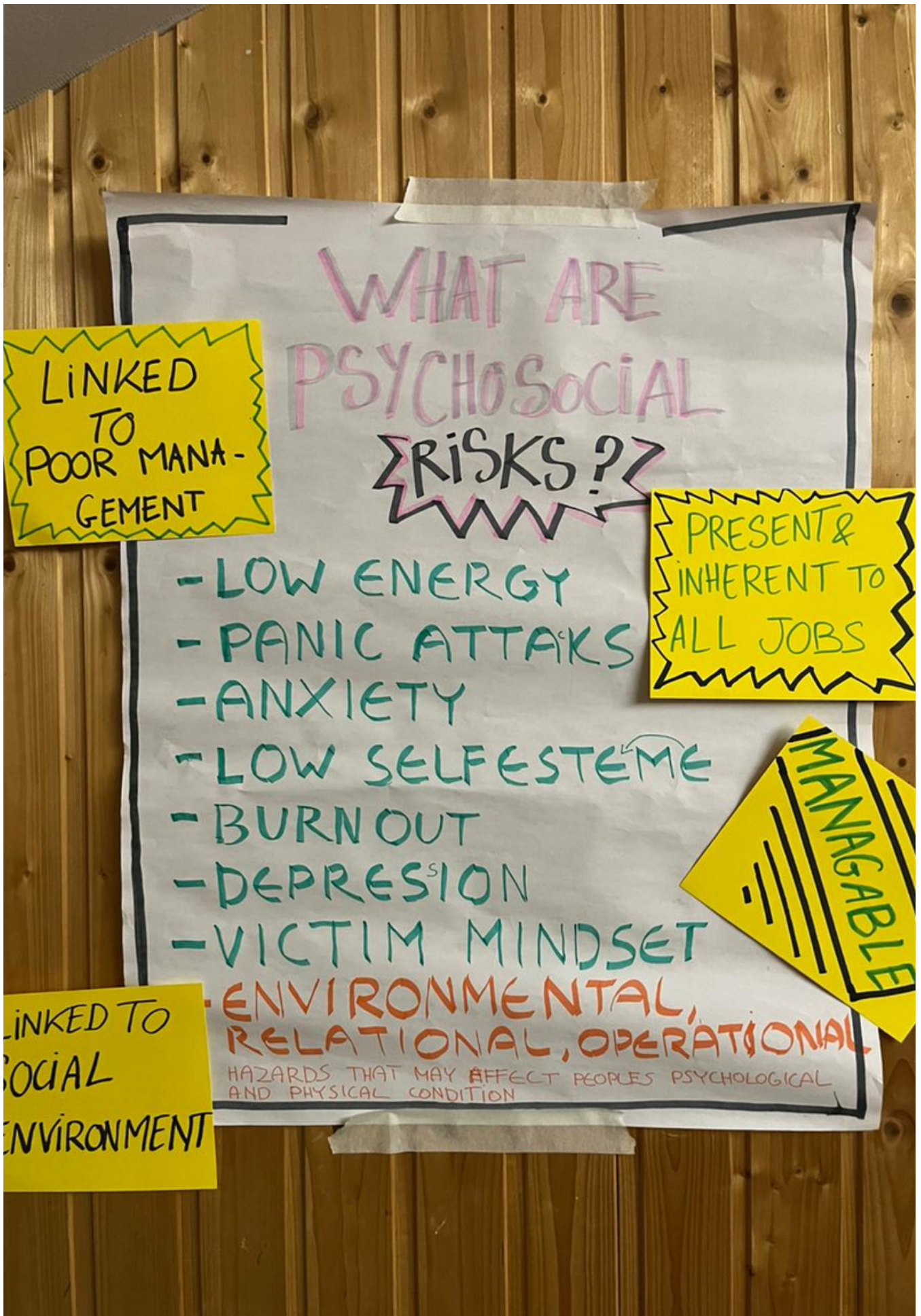


Illustrations made during the training by a participant



Psychosocial risks wheel made during the training by participants

Mental health work



A chart about psychosocial risks made by the participants during the training

Mental health work

YOUTH WORK AND NGO FIELD SPECIFICITIES

Each profession has its own specificities regarding Mental health and exposure to psychosocial risks. Here are some psychosocial risks specific to the youth work and NGO field.

Emotional exhaustion : Dealing with sensitive issues, such as poverty, human rights abuses, and disasters, can lead to emotional exhaustion. Constant exposure to suffering and trauma can take a toll on the mental well-being of NGO workers.

Burnout : The demanding nature of NGO work, often coupled with limited resources and high expectations, can contribute to burnout. Burnout is characterized by feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

Work-Life imbalance : NGO workers may face challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, especially when dealing with crises or working on projects with tight deadlines. Long working hours and high levels of commitment can impact personal relationships and overall well-being.

Job insecurity : Job Insecurity: Funding uncertainties and project-based employment can lead to job insecurity among NGO workers. This uncertainty about the future can contribute to stress and anxiety.

Trauma exposure : Those working in NGOs involved in conflict zones, disaster response, or human rights issues may be exposed to traumatic events. Witnessing or experiencing trauma can lead to mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Cultural and language challenges : Working in diverse environments may expose NGO workers to cultural and language challenges. Miscommunication, cultural misunderstandings, or difficulty in adapting to new environments can contribute to stress.

High expectations : NGOs often operate in challenging environments and are expected to deliver results in complex situations. The pressure to meet high expectations from donors, communities, and the organization itself can be stressful.

Lack of resources : NGOs, especially smaller ones, may operate with limited resources. Insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of support systems can contribute to stress and frustration among workers.



Mental health at work

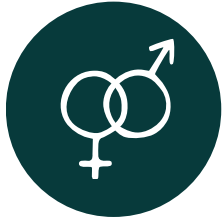
WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC NGO/YOUTH Work psychosocial risks?

1. Feeling lonely & isolated can effect on somones mental health.
Poor support, facing problems alone.
(scared, stressed, confused, agressive)
2. Work-life balance is broken.
 - isolated region work (far from the family)
 - ~~the~~ lack of your regular way of life.
(comfort, (sleep, food, climate, etc)
3. Low job control.
4. Lack of role clarity
5. Traumatic events, unexpected urgency
6. Diversity of culture & background.

A chart about psychosocial risks within the NGO field made by the participants during the training

SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

Those suffering from systemic discrimination face more challenges within the workplace toward their mental health. Here are some examples of systemic discriminations and some ideas to prevent their bad consequences on workers' mental health



Gender based discrimination

Gender stereotype are leading to mainstreamed gender based discriminations. Thus, in many workplaces male and female do not have the same opportunities and it affect the Mental health and self-esteem of female workers.



What can be done ?

- Identify specific areas where the glass ceiling and gender based discrimination is most detrimental in the workplace.
- Develop gender awareness and unconscious bias training for all employees.
- Establish a transparent and fair promotion process, with objective criteria and regular monitoring.
- Create a mentoring program for women, providing professional support and advice to overcome obstacles.
- Encourage diversity in management teams and ensure that women are represented at all hierarchical levels.



Invisible disabilities

Employee facing invisible disability need recognition and support for specific needs related to their invisible disability. In order to share their challenges they must feel comfortable and listened.



What can be done ?

- Educate all employees about invisible disabilities, by hosting awareness workshops and providing educational resources.
- Establish a training program for managers so that they understand the needs of employees with invisible disabilities and can provide adequate support.
- Establish a confidential communication channel where employees can discuss their accommodation needs and obtain the necessary support.
- Encourage the creation of support networks between employees with invisible disabilities to promote inclusion and sharing of experiences.
- Regularly evaluate and adjust policies and practices to ensure they meet the needs of employees with invisible disabilities.



Racist stereotypes

Workers can feel limited and judged according to racist stereotypes. Because of systemic racist biases, colleagues might not see a person's skills beyond his or her cultural background. Thus, it is crucial to promote mutual understanding, break down stereotypes and promote a culture of respect and equality within the workplace.



What can be done ?

- Implement cultural awareness programs to educate employees about the diversity of cultural experiences.
- Integrate training sessions on combating stereotypes into the ongoing employee training program.
- Establish clear policies against discrimination based on ethnic or cultural origin and implement mechanisms to report and address such incidents.
- Encourage the creation of support and mentoring groups for employees from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Regularly evaluate inclusion policies and practices to ensure they meet employee needs and adjust accordingly.



Homophobic stereotypes

LGBTQ+ employees might face difficulty to reveal their identity at work and totally be themselves. It could lead to having a double life which is a weight for the mental well-being of those employees. In order to feel comfortable to come out, LGBTQ+ employees need a comprehensive and a caring workplace toward this problematic.



What can be done ?

- Develop and implement explicit inclusion policies that protect employees from discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Hold regular training sessions on diversity, inclusion and LGBTQ+ awareness.
- Create resource groups for LGBTQ+ employees to provide mutual support and professional advice.
- Establish a mentoring network to connect LGBTQ+ employees with mentors who have successfully navigated their careers.
- Provide mental health support resources, including confidential advice and counseling services, for employees who may need them.

HOW TO IDENTIFY PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AT WORK ?

Identify individual mental health issues

It is crucial to understand what are the signs of the deterioration of mental health within the workplace to be able to identify personal or colleague's psychosocial risks.

Changes in Behavior

Withdrawal from social interactions
Increased irritability or mood swings
Uncharacteristic outbursts of anger or frustration
Changes in work habits, such as decreased productivity or increased procrastination

Physical Symptoms

Frequent headaches or migraines
Sleep disturbances, such as insomnia or oversleeping
Changes in appetite, weight loss, or gain
Fatigue and low energy level

Emotional Signs

Persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness
Frequent tearfulness
Increased sensitivity or defensiveness
Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

Interpersonal Issues

Increased conflicts with colleagues
Isolation from team activities
Avoidance of work-related events or meetings
Difficulty communicating or collaborating with others

Physical Health

Frequent illnesses or weakened immune system
Complaints of physical ailments without clear medical cause

HOW TO REACT ?

Address **your own** mental health concern within the workplace

Self-Reflection Begin by acknowledging your own feelings and understanding the specific mental health challenges you may be facing. Reflect on how these challenges are impacting your work and overall well-being.

Identify a Support System Reach out to trusted colleagues, friends, or family members to share your feelings. Having a support system can provide emotional support and help you feel less isolated.

Communicate with Supervisor or HR Consider having an open and honest conversation with your supervisor or the human resources department. Share your concerns about your mental health in a professional manner. Be specific about how it may be affecting your work and inquire about available resources or accommodations.

Request Accommodations If needed, discuss possible accommodations with your supervisor or HR to help manage your workload or modify aspects of your job that may be contributing to stress. This could include adjustments to deadlines, flexible work hours, or a modified workspace.

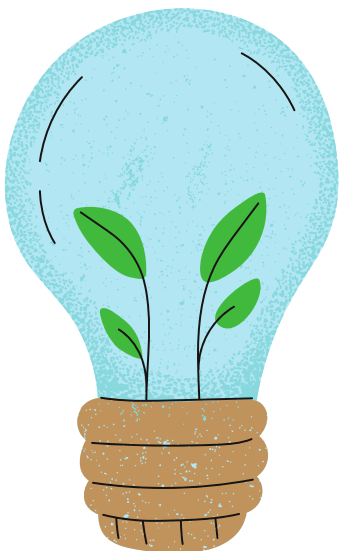
Self-Care Prioritize self-care practices to manage stress and improve your mental well-being. This may include taking breaks, engaging in physical activity, practicing mindfulness, and ensuring you get adequate sleep.

Seek Professional Help If you can consider reaching out to a mental health professional outside of the workplace. Therapy or counseling can provide valuable support and coping strategies. Many workplaces also have confidential counseling services through EAPs.

Establish Boundaries Clearly communicate your boundaries with colleagues and supervisors. Be honest about what you can handle and set realistic expectations. This may involve saying no to additional tasks when you need to prioritize your mental health.

Monitor Progress Regularly assess your progress and the effectiveness of the strategies you're implementing. If necessary, adjust your approach and seek ongoing support.

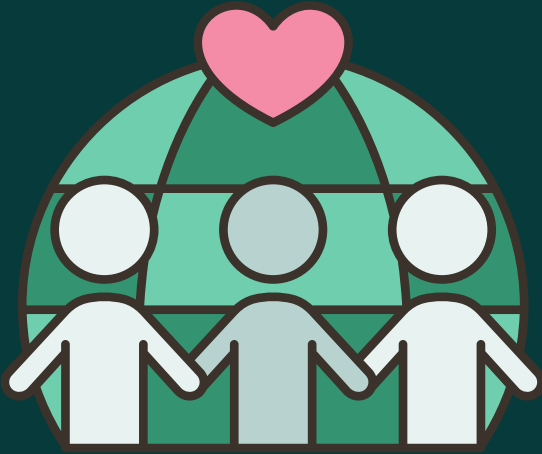
Know Your Rights Familiarize yourself with workplace policies regarding mental health and accommodations. Understand your rights and protections to ensure fair and equitable treatment.



Remember, seeking help for mental health concerns is a sign of strength, and taking steps to address these challenges can contribute to a healthier work environment for yourself and those around you.

Mental health at work

Address **your colleagues** mental health concern within the workplace



Express concern

Approach your colleague with empathy and express your concern for their well-being. Choose a private and comfortable setting for the conversation.

Offer help

Let your colleague know that you are there to support them. Offer assistance with tasks or suggest ways to alleviate their workload if possible.

Listen

Give your colleague an opportunity to share their feelings without judgment. Actively listen to what they have to say, and avoid interrupting.

Encourage professional help

If the issues seem severe, encourage your colleague to seek professional help, such as speaking with a mental health professional.

Maintain confidentiality

Respect your colleague's privacy and maintain confidentiality. Avoid discussing their situation with others unless they give explicit permission.

Promote a healthy work environment

Advocate for a healthy work-life balance and a positive workplace culture. Encourage open communication and foster an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their challenges.



If you suspect harassment, it's important to report it to the appropriate channels within your organization, such as human resources or a designated authority. Harassment is a serious issue that requires proper handling and intervention.

HOW TO PREVENT PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AND BUILD SUITABLE WORKPLACES ?

Step 1 Assessment

Assessing psychosocial risks at work is crucial for maintaining a healthy, productive, and sustainable workplace. It not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to the overall success and reputation of the organization.

Step 2 Action plan

From the assessment, an action plan must be developed to erase or prevent the psychosocial risks identified.

The assessment and the action plan must involve all the stakeholders : management and colleagues must collaborate to achieve sustainable and inclusive results.



Step 1 - Assessment

Employing tools such as **employee surveys, analyzing turnover data, and reviewing organizational policies** helps uncover potential issues. Regular health checks, workshops, and collaboration with professionals further contribute to a holistic assessment. By understanding and addressing psychosocial risks, organizations can create a positive work culture, enhance employee well-being, and ultimately improve overall performance and retention.



Renowned employee surveys to assess psychosocial risks

Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ): This questionnaire, developed by Robert Karasek, assesses job demands, job control, and social support / **Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ):** COPSOQ is a comprehensive tool that covers various psychosocial factors, including demands, influence at work, social support, and more / **Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) Model:** This model, developed by Johannes Siegrist, assesses the imbalance between effort spent at work and the rewards received/ **Demand-Control-Support (DCS) Model:** This model combines elements of the Job Demand-Control and the Job Demand-Control-Support models, focusing on job demands, job control, and social support / **Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) Questionnaire:** This tool assesses the extent to which an organization prioritizes and promotes employees' psychological health and safety / **Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Stress Indicator Tool:** This tool, developed by the UK Health and Safety Executive, assesses the impact of job demands, control, support, relationships, role, and change on employee well-being / **Karasek's Demand-Control Model:** This model focuses on job demands and control as key factors contributing to job strain

Step 2 - Action plan

Once psychosocial risks are correctly assessed and understood, it's time to elaborate an action plan to remove and prevent them and promote mental-health within the workplace.

Example of an action plan

Raise Awareness and Training : Develop and implement training programs to educate employees and managers about psychosocial risks / Focus on stress management, communication skills, conflict resolution, and promoting a healthy work-life balance.

Promote a Supportive Work Environment: Encourage an open-door policy to foster communication between employees and management / Establish support mechanisms, such as employee assistance programs (EAPs) and counseling services.

Implement Workload Management: Regularly review workloads and ensure they are reasonable and manageable / Encourage realistic goal-setting and prioritize tasks to avoid excessive pressure.

Flexible Work Arrangements: Introduce flexible work hours, remote work options, or compressed workweeks to accommodate employees' needs. / Foster a culture that values results over strict adherence to traditional working hours.

Promote Work-Life Balance: Encourage employees to take breaks and use vacation time. / Discourage a culture of overworking and set clear expectations for reasonable working hours.

Establish Clear Communication Channels: Ensure transparent communication about organizational changes and expectations / Create regular forums for employees to express concerns and provide feedback.

Monitor and Evaluate: Regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented measures through surveys and feedback mechanisms / Adjust the action plan based on emerging trends or issues identified through ongoing monitoring.

Leadership Training: Train managers and leaders in empathetic leadership and conflict resolution skills / Promote a leadership style that prioritizes employee well-being and fosters a positive workplace culture.

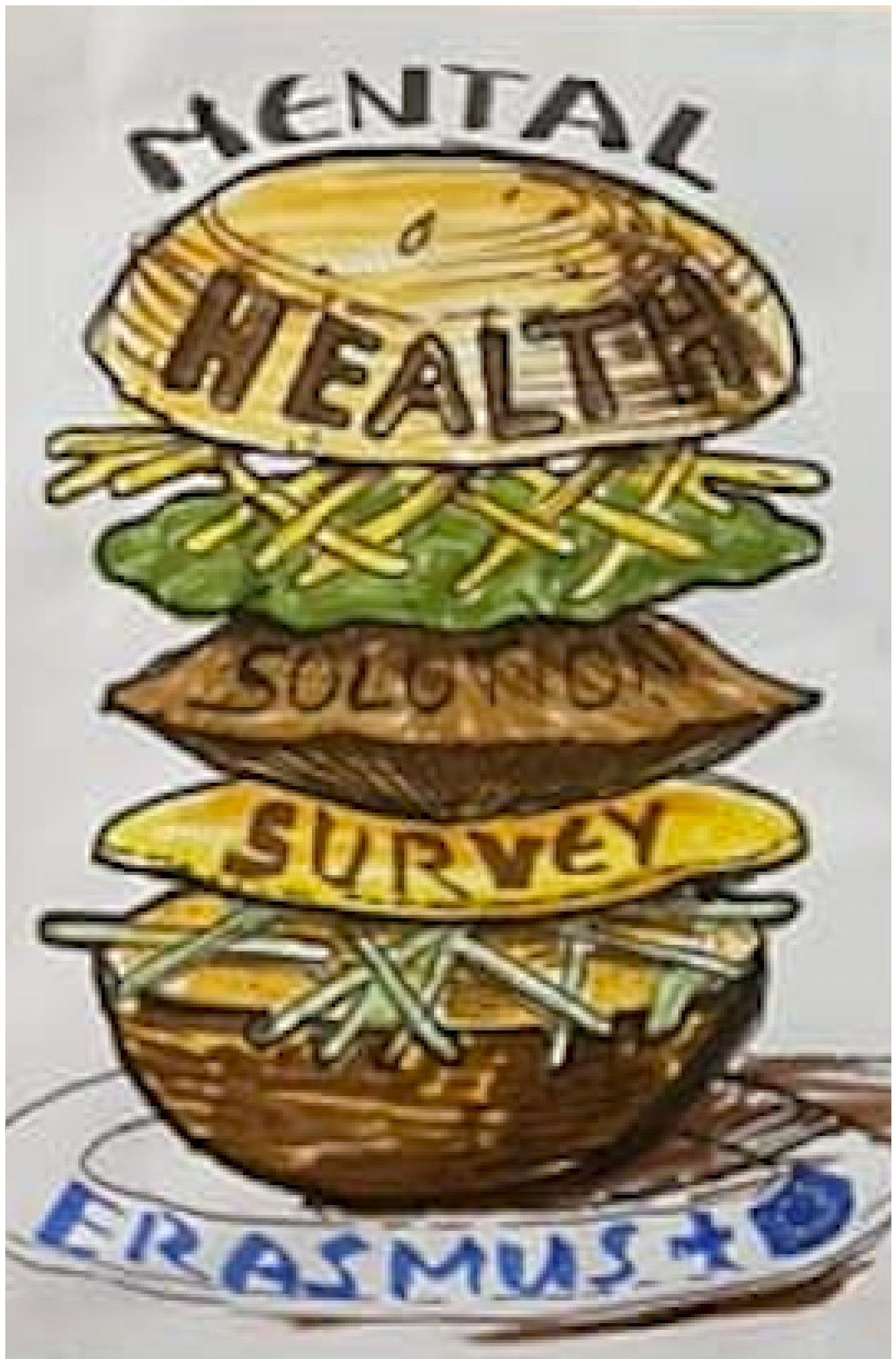


Illustration made by a participant during the training

STUDY VISIT

During this training, we had the opportunity to attend a study visit in Tbilisi Pride, a local organisation to discuss how the organisation deals with the mental health of its staff.

Tbilisi Pride represents the union of LGBTQ+ people and allies. They organise the annual pride week in Tbilisi. They advocate for policy changes and carry out social campaigns. They strive for human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. Tbilisi Pride's board members change regularly, in a perspective of equality, democracy and pluralism.

This experience gave us a glimpse of the work that is being done for the achievement of healthy work environment within NGO field and the challenges that NGO workers are facing. We believe study visits are a versatile tool to inspire organisational change and promote new practices.

As Tbilisi Pride is a LGBTQ+ organisation, we also had the chance to discuss systemic discriminations within the workplace toward LGBTQ+ community.

Paying attention to the organisation's staff mental health is crucial, since the nature of their work is emotionally challenging. The organisation is advocating for the visibility of LGBTQ+ people within the Georgian society, which is conservative regarding this topic. They regularly face violence (physical and verbal) and might face emotional exhaustion. The direction is very aware of this question and is promoting a suitable, friendly and proactive work environment toward mental health. It includes constant communication, waging therapy for members, boundaries understanding and constant assessment of staff mental health.

For more information, you can visit their website at :
<https://tbilisipride.ge/en-US>

