

ASSESSMENT AND PREVENTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AT WORK: HOW TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS CHANGE WITHOUT BURNOUT

Psychosocial risks (PSR) are often subjective and can vary over time (e.g., workload assessment). So, how can we identify and prevent them without becoming overwhelmed ourselves?

Change Fatigue: A Psychosocial Risk in Itself

The identification of PSR and the implementation of an action plan to address them is one of those exercises that will require ongoing and sustained analytical work over time, which may consequently lead to change fatigue. Continuous changes, without periods of stability, can generate:



Uncertainties and stress regarding organizational consequences and personal workload

(Beaulieu et al., 2023; de Vries & de Vries, 2023; Lauzier et al., 2023)



Increased workload

(Beaulieu et al., 2023; de Vries & de Vries, 2023; Lauzier et al., 2023)



Individual consequences (loss of control, disengagement, stress, burnout, loss of sense of competence, feelings of incapacity, fatigue)

(Beaulieu et al., 2023; Cox et al., 2022; de Vries & de Vries, 2023; Wynen et al., 2019)



Organizational consequences, such as absenteeism, presenteeism, and decreased performance or success of change

(Beaulieu et al., 2023; Cox et al., 2022; Ouedraogo et al., 2024; Wynen et al., 2019)

It is therefore important to implement an action plan to manage continuous change in order to prevent change fatigue.

ONGOING PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING AND REDUCING PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AT WORK

The evaluation and prevention of psychosocial risks involve an ongoing change process that should typically follow these main steps...

1

Creation of a working committee

It is important to continuously examine and question the stakeholders who should be part of the committee, as well as the actions that can be taken.

2

Identification of psychosocial risks at work

Use the resources available to you to measure the main psychosocial risks (e.g., tools from the INSPQ).

3

Determination of an action plan

Develop an action plan to address the identified psychosocial risks, considering the enhancement of workers' resilience and capacity for change.

4

Implementation of the action plan

The action plan should be developed considering short, medium, and long-term actions to ensure a comprehensive view of the change process.

5

Continuous evaluation and adjustment

It is important to continuously check if the plan is working well and to think about ways to improve continuously.

Such a process of change and continuous adaptation requires...

- Flexibility according to changing needs
- Innovation and the implementation of new practices
- Collaboration among various stakeholders

REDUCING UNCERTAINTY AND TAKING ACTION: THE IDENTIFICATION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS – A NEW CHANGE, REALLY?

Different practices can help reduce change fatigue without generating more. It starts with being aware of its existence as the first step in risk reduction.



Identification of good practices already in place

The organization is already implementing several good practices, so it is important to identify what is being done well.



Participation and communication

The involvement of stakeholders and active communication are important levers to mitigate uncertainty (Cox et al., 2022; Wynen et al., 2019).



Available resources

Identifying the objective resources (e.g., time and materials) required to enable change, as well as the subjective resources for managing stakeholders' stress resistance, is essential for preserving them in the long term (Lauzier et al., 2023).



Identification of good practices already implemented

The organization is already applying several good practices, so it is important to identify what is being done well.

The objective of the action plan is therefore to identify all the necessary 'micro-adaptations' to comply with new requirements (or best practices) in managing psychosocial risks, without this workload itself becoming a psychosocial risk for the concerned parties.

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