

Understanding digital fatigue to limit its effects on employees' health and well-being

REFERENCE GUIDE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES



What is digital fatigue?

The fatigue, anxiety and exhaustion related to the overuse of virtual communication platforms.

What are the causes?

Neurological and psychological

- Presence/absence dissonance (person on screen/not really there)
- Higher level of concentration
- Processing of a lot of information

Social

- Loss of human connection
- New ways of interacting
- Difficulty interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language

Ergonomic

- Reduced mobility and breaks
- Inadequate work environment and equipment
- Prolonged screen time

And what are the consequences?



PHYSICAL

Musculoskeletal problems, headaches, nausea, low energy, drowsiness, chronic fatigue.



PSYCHOLOGICAL

Stress, anxiety, depression, exhaustion, lack of concentration and memory issues.



RELATIONAL

Loss of human connection, lack of informal exchanges.



ORGANIZATIONAL

Loss of job satisfaction, overload, short-term and long-term absences, disengagement.

As a human resources manager, what can you do to limit the effects of digital fatigue in your organization?

- ➔ Establish policies for virtual meetings to define meeting criteria and guidelines:
 - Appoint a facilitator and a timekeeper.
 - Set schedules, e.g. do not plan any meetings between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.
 - Plan 25- or 50-minute meetings instead of 30- or 60-minute meetings.
 - Explain how to decide whom to invite to avoid having participants who are not affected by the meeting.
 - Set clear objectives and specify what is to be accomplished by the end of the meeting.
 - Allow employees to decline some meetings and set aside time slots when they are not available.
- ➔ Train managers and employees on how to attend/lead virtual meetings.
- ➔ Support and encourage management practices ...
 - ... that promote employees' decision-making autonomy in carrying out their duties.
 - ... where the workload will be discussed regularly to make sure it is under control.
 - ... that promote work-life balance.
- ➔ Promote good digital habits:
 - Establish and make people aware of the guidelines.
 - Equip and make employees aware of how to practise good digital hygiene (see the reference guide for employees).
- ➔ Assess the ergonomics of workstations at home and teach employees about adjusting their habits, for example:
 - Assess workers' workstations and their needs.
 - Provide the appropriate equipment and connection services.
 - Train people about ergonomics.
 - Train managers to better support their team in terms of technology.
- ➔ Raise awareness of and promote a healthy lifestyle and self-care (see the reference guide for employees).

Ten references from scientific and grey literature were consulted in the creation of this reference guide.

We encourage you to review:

- The reference guide for managers
- The reference guide for employees

An additional tool:

- [Working, socializing and relaxing online ... Are you techno-stressed?](#)

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