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Monitoring and Evaluation of a Programme of Psychosocial Support at Workplace

Enterprise Level



Information toolkit on psychosocial support at the workplace in war and post-war times



It is important to carry out monitoring and evaluation (M&E) on a continuous and regular basis, not only at the beginning and at the end of the action plan implementation. There should be regular monitoring of a psychosocial support (PSS) programme to observe changes and identify trends. The data should be consolidated and analyzed in a general year-end report, and the findings should be used to formulate a new action plan of the PSS Programme.

► 1. What do we evaluate?

The following should be evaluated during the PSS Programme implementation:

- **factors which influence** the staff's psychological well-being and mental health (for example, a worker may show psychological resilience to war but feel stressed because of a toxic atmosphere in the team or due to workload, and, vice versa, consequences of war may hinder their productivity. Assessment of psychosocial risk factors will help determine which measures should be prioritized for implementation. Assessment of psychosocial (PS) risk factors before and after the implemented measures will demonstrate an effectiveness outcome. See an example of PS risk factor assessment below;
- **measures already being taken and planned** at your enterprise for staff support (monitoring of the measure implementation and evaluation of results will show what works well and whether that should be continued, and what is not effective and why – is it worth abandoning that or, perhaps, improving);
- **staff perceptions** (how a worker perceives their psychological state, what their satisfaction with their job is, how they perceive the enterprise's policy, communication with their supervisor, support from colleagues and supervisor, their working conditions, etc. To ensure effectiveness of the measures implemented, it is important to evaluate the perception level before and after them).

► 2. What can be a source of data?

- **staff feedback**;
- **reports and feedback from persons concerned** (psychologist, authorized person for PSS or OSH at the enterprise, unit managers, trade union leaders, clients/partners/students/apprentices, etc.);
- **staff data** (days-off, turnover) and other data (mistakes in work, accidents, etc.);
- **programme work plan** (data on activities implemented and coverage).



▶ 3. How to collect data?

Data collection should not be difficult. Perhaps, you already have a M&E system – for example, staff survey for feedback analysis, or staff data on working days lost, etc. An established M&E system, which already works well, can be complemented with questions concerning the PSS Programme indicators. A M&E system is not necessarily a single measurement and analysis tool, e.g. a general questionnaire containing all key questions. A M&E system may consist of different tools:

- observation and a structured post-report;
- feedback questionnaire survey;
- perception pulse survey;
- specific target focus group on a certain topic;
- interview (individual or group).

Think how you can use what already exists and works well at your enterprise concerning M&E tools. Or, choose the tools you think will be the most convenient and cost effective but at the same time will meet your Programme goals. An IT expert should be involved in the process of the M&E system development or integration of additional questions and tools into the existing system.

Structural unit managers may shape a positive organizational culture and at the same time measure the “temperature” of support in their teams.

Thinks of your management style:

- Do you know what support staff expects from you?
- Do you regularly ask your staff how they are doing?
- Do you create an atmosphere of trust, regularly seeking feedback on the support you provide?
- Are you sure that deadlines for the tasks are reasonable to your staff?
- Do you know what psychological climate is there in your team?

Control of the support “temperature” can be built into the enterprise’s organizational culture both at individual and team levels, for example during personal meetings and team gatherings in the course of work. Tools to collect data on these indicators can include both anonymous surveys and focus groups, interviews and observation. The M&E system for the PSS Programme may be supplemented with such a tool as a checklist for structural unit managers concerning the above-listed five questions.



Purposes of such a survey can be as follows:

- draw line managers' attention to your management style to increase the psychosocial support level.
- collect data before and after the implemented PSS measures;
- compare data of that survey (before and after introduction of changes) with data on staff turnover, days-off, sick lists, frequency of mistakes in work, etc. (if such data are regularly collected at your enterprise).

▶ 4. Key steps of elaboration of a PSS programme monitoring and evaluation system

Before taking planned actions to improve mental health at work, it is important to decide about the M&E strategy: "How will we learn whether our actions have achieved intended results?".

An effective M&E system has the following characteristics:

- **practical**, i.e. meets expected results, easy to perceive and analyze, cost effective;
- **flexible**, i.e. adapted to your enterprise and available resources;
- **continuous**, i.e. uses a constant quality improvement approach when staff feedback is provided over time and used to adapt/improve measures within the PSS policy and programme framework.

▶ Step 1. Define criteria against which you will evaluate the Programme and action plan

The following can be taken as a basis:

- **Extent to which the activities and, consequently, the Programme have been implemented** – determining whether all the activities have been implemented according to the workplan and the deadlines have been met.
- **Extent to which expected results have been achieved.** Based on expected results for each activity under the Programme, you can determine percentage of results achieved and not achieved.
- **Presence of concrete changes** – immediate and those which will manifest themselves with time. It is about the changes defined as priority ones for the organization (e.g. reduction of absenteeism, stress, complaints; labour productivity increase; effective team interaction, etc.).
- **Factors that promoted and prevented achievement of results**, and possible corrections in response to them.



- **Cost effectiveness** – analysis of the ratio of efforts and resources invested and results achieved.
- **Staff involvement** – determining the extent of staff's participation in the development and implementation of the activities planned within the Programme framework, receiving feedback and proposals for improvement of the Programme and activities from them.
- **Sustainability of the Programme**, i.e. the possibility to implement the Programme and consolidate the positive results and changes amid a volatile environment and inner changes (e.g. if a worker who coordinated the implementation of the psychological first aid provision programme as part of the enterprise's policy quits, will it be possible to appoint another one who understands the subject and does not need any training for this task "from scratch").

In any project or programme, we must understand what short- and long-term results we expect. It is important because it impacts the design of a monitoring and evaluation system and, most essentially, the motivation of the initiative team itself to maintain programme sustainability.

► **Short-term results of a PSS programme may be as follows:**

- A policy and programme of activities adopted
- Staff's awareness of mental health support raised
- Cooperation with a qualified psychological aid service set up
- The number of workers and their family members accessing various services under the PSS programme increased
- Workers trained to provide PFA and/or having become mental health ambassadors at the enterprise (newly trained, or upgraded their skills)

► **Possible long-term results of a PSS programme:**

- Psychological safety culture shaped
- Stigma caused by mental diseases reduced
- A psychosocial risk assessment and management system set up

Changes may require time. If we focus on long-term results only, we can lose motivation for a PSS programme implementation. Short-term results provide quick feedback and are generally easier to measure.

We can measure changes that have occurred at individual and organizational levels. First, we should decide what kind of change we expect. For example, a result can consist of a reasonable adaptation that has led to stress level reduction and is an example of psychosocial support. Or, workers have become more open, i.e. we have seen that they have started to offer their ideas within the PSS policy and programme framework, and to talk with each other and their supervisor about mental health conditions. One can try to analyze the number of complaints, trancies, mistakes in work before and after implementation of certain Programme activities.

All changes are a result and can be seen by means of an observation, survey or focus group.



► Step 2. Define key “data informants” or data sources

- Every Programme activity (action) has a goal, hence a certain result is planned that should be recorded by some of the staff in a preset form. Depending on the Programme activity, there can be different data sources. For example, if the enterprise has a contract with a provider of psychological services for workers, then M&E data are supplied to the enterprise by that provider anonymously, i.e. only the data which will help perform quantitative and qualitative analysis of such a resource for the staff in general rather than for an individual worker.
- If the goal is to evaluate quality of communication on mental health in vertical terms, the data are provided separately by structural unit managers and staff of certain units in an anonymous form. It requires deciding how the data will be collected, i.e. will it be a periodic survey by a designated person at the enterprise or a feedback system designed by IT specialists for continuous feedback collection, which will act as a source of data for subsequent analysis.

► Step 3. Analyze results

Use findings of a short-term evaluation for improvement of the Programme (action plan). It is important to approach the analysis of the M&E findings critically and include both successes and problems/failures/weaknesses of the programme. The report should be interesting and accessible to every worker at the enterprise. It can have different forms: booklet, video coverage, slide presentation.

► Questions important to answer

1. What monitoring and evaluation tools will you use during implementation of the PSS programme at your enterprise (questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, observation, etc.)?
2. Decide how you will evaluate every activity in your programme plan. If it's a questionnaire (survey) then of what kind? What is its goal? For example, to collect staff feedback on a given activity, determine its staff coverage, analyze if knowledge on the subject has improved (if it's a training) and/or if the level of willingness to apply for specialist psychological aid has increased.
3. If it's a focus group then how, when and who will hold it and what question is planned for analysis.
4. If your M&E system envisages the use of standardized questionnaires for mental state self-assessment, for example to evaluate the distress level or PTSD, etc., indicate in your programme action plan where exactly they will be used and for what purpose.
5. Besides, the Programme M&E system must include a tool for general evaluation of implementation of the policy and action programme. A report on this evaluation should be compiled at the end of implementation of all the planned programme activities. Therefore, a source of data should be provided for in the action plan so that it can be then used for general analysis and for a report on the entire Programme. The M&E system should also provide for analysis of difficulties in implementation of activities to be able to draw conclusions and recommendations for improvement of the PSS policy and programme for the next year.



► What is the purpose of using the tests for the staff's self-assessment of their own stress level?

Such tools are used to increase staff motivation to care of their own mental health and realize the need in individual qualified psychological counselling.

Such tests are not intended to collect data to assess the overall stress level in a team in relation to of implementation of programmatic and organizational measures.

The perceived stress scale (PSS-10) <https://www.samopomi.ch/get-tested/perceived-stress-scale-pss>) is a questionnaire designed in 1983. It is used to assess the level of stress you are feeling. Unlike other stress measurement techniques, this tool relies on a respondent's own perception of stress. The questions focus on the person's mental state rather than on events (stress factors).

This questionnaire is an example. In the framework of the PSS Programme at the workplace, you can use any scientifically proven questionnaires for self-assessment of mental and physical health. Anonymity and confidentiality are a mandatory condition.

► An example of assessment of psychosocial risk factors

Psychosocial risks are risks likely to affect mental health and mental well-being of workers.

Stress can be caused by many factors, both related and not related to work. Stress outside the workplace can be entailed by disasters, war, family and personal problems. Work-related stress is determined by psychosocial hazards identified in such aspects of work as:

- work organization;
- workplace design;
- working conditions;
- relations in a team (vertical/horizontal).

To find out whether your staff feel stress related to these aspects of work, you can use the following questions for anonymous survey:

Assessment of job requirements

- I am required to do tasks hard to combine
- I am confronted with unfeasible deadlines
- I have to neglect some tasks because I have too many things to do
- I cannot make sufficient breaks
- I am forced to work overtime
- I have to work very quickly
- I always feel lack of time to do my job



Assessment of workload control

- I can decide when to take a break
- I can say about my own speed of work
- I have a choice in deciding how I will be doing my job
- I have a voice concerning my working conditions

Assessment of support from management

- I am supported by the management's feedback on my work
- I can rely on my manager
- I can talk to my manager about what made me sad or angry
- I feel support from my manager when doing a difficult task
- My manager encourages me at work

Assessment of support from colleagues

- If work becomes difficult my colleagues will help me
- I feel respect from my colleagues
- My colleagues are ready to listen to my work-related problems
- I am exposed to bullying by a colleague (colleagues)

Assessment of understanding of the functional role clarity

- I clearly understand what they expect of me at work
- I know how to do my job
- I clearly understand my duties and responsibilities
- I clearly understand my unit's goals and objectives

Assessment of psychological safety

- I can always provide feedback concerning any changes and activities at work
- I have enough opportunities to question the management about changes at work
- I can always apply to the management concerning any work problems
- I can always talk to my manager to adjust my work if I have mental or physical health problems.

These questions are an example. You can use them in your staff survey to assess availability of psychosocial risk factors such as overload, conflicting job requirements, lack of support from management, staff having no right in decision-making, practices of discrimination, violence and harassment, etc. After all, the level of stress related to war or other problem outside work can be aggravated by hazards the worker may encounter at work. Therefore, their monitoring and evaluation is also important.

