

Newsletter #4

EXPERTS' RECOMMENDATIONS ON STRESS AT WORK

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➤ **Methodology:**

In order to identify the main characteristics of an effective training programme to fight stress which affects managers in their daily work, the FIT-MNG team has conducted interviews on 40 experts and researchers from fields such as: medicine, nutrition, sport, coaching, labour risk prevention, etc.

Experts from the 4 European countries participating in the project (Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Spain) were asked about the way managers should be trained in order to acquire and maintain good habits concerning health, sports, nutrition, attitudes, and in consequence to reduce their level of stress.

The answers will be used as a base to develop a training programme addressed to the needs of the target group: executive and middle managers.

➤ **First results:**

In each thematic the experts interviewed indicated the way to train managers.

Health:

In this thematic the experts agreed that managers should be taught how is stress generated physically, how stress causes health problems, relaxation techniques, preventive medicine, how and when should be the breaks at work, the role of the companies concerning the health of their workers.

Nutrition:

In this thematic the experts suggest to make a previous individual evaluation or a test on nutrition and then to make an individual guidance. Managers should be taught how to make healthy recipes and food. Tutorization in this thematic should be more intensive than in others.

Sports:

Experts said that trainers should evaluate the best physical activity for each individual. The physical activity must be daily, funny, available, along all life, independent and varied. The exercise could be individual, but doing it in a team improves social abilities.

Attitudes:

Some of the experts proposed a battery of attitudes that should be trained to reduce stress and to improve professional performance.



From the reports of all the countries, the following steps have been identified for the training:

1. Diagnostic of the current situation through a self-diagnostic-analysis;
2. Theoretical contents, including examples of extreme negative experiences and long term consequences;
3. Create the need of change, inculcating managers commitment, passion and spirit.
4. Guidance/tutorization: to facilitate awareness and responsibility of the manager and to identify solutions and further actions;
5. Continue the monitoring after finishing the training.

FOCUS: which structure for the training programme

The experts' interviews emphasize the general consensus on the importance to develop a training programme to help managers reduce stress at work through the acquisition and the maintenance of good health, nutrition, sports and attitude habits. However, there are still some divergences among experts on the content, the structure and the methodology of this training programme.

The percentage of theory and practice vary widely, but all experts agree to have more practical than theoretical contents. Concerning the methodology, experts recommend face to face sessions for the guidance, seminars, group sessions, and on-line for the theory, the communication with tutor, visual material, etc.