



## **Teleworking: The Mental Health Dimension**

Studies highlight the significant impact of the work environment on shaping well-being, subsequently affecting productivity and overall success.

In the realm of remote work, or 'telework,' it becomes evident that the conditions associated with this mode can intensify the influence of the work environment on employee well-being. The nature of telework has the potential to magnify the connection between work environment and well-being, with far-reaching implications for job satisfaction and performance.

**To understand and enhance teleworkers' well-being, our focus groups engaged 117 participants from diverse occupational**

**sectors across the consortium's four countries.** These sessions delved into physical activity, dietary perceptions, stress levels, and absenteeism. **Following the insightful discussions, we developed three learning modules centered around physical, mental, and nutritional health.**

The second issue of [MENTOR+](#) newsletter presents the **Mental Health Module**, focusing on the critical theme of work stress during telework. We start by exploring the basics of stress, its causes, symptoms, types, and the serious consequences leading to burnout.



## Stress and work-related stress

Stress can be a dynamic process involving both environmental and individual variables, and occurs when a person assesses a situation as threatening. Work-related stress is the reaction a worker may have to demands and pressures at work that do not match his or her knowledge and skills, and which test his or her ability to cope with the job. It can be triggered by a variety of situations: High, or low, workloads, lack of control at work, lack of support, lack of skills to deal with work, poor adaptation to change, unclear orders or explanations, lack of communication, poor working conditions and harassment at work.

### Types of work related stress:

- ▶ **Instability stress** tends to occur when there is a lot of competition at work, and **dissatisfaction stress** is one of the most common. It is caused by dissatisfaction with working conditions, either because of inadequate pay or lack of recognition.
- ▶ **Overload stress** is caused by an excessive overload of tasks that the worker cannot cope with.
- ▶ **Apathy stress** is a feeling of mental and creative blockage of the worker at work.
- ▶ **Distress stress** is when a person is unable to separate personal and work life and a direct relationship is created.
- ▶ **Eustress stress**, in contrast to the rest, is a positive and controlled type of stress that helps to solve problems and achieve goals.



## Preventing and Managing Work Stress

Additionally, the Mental Health Module contains practical measures in relation to prevention and management of work-related stress, and **it covers issues like crisis intervention, handling criticism, and encouraging creativity and self-realization at work. It also contains several stress prevention techniques, like:**

- ▶ Taking care of your diet: although it may not seem to have much to do with it, it is important.
- ▶ Exercise: it is a form of stress prevention, as we release serotonin.
- ▶ No alcohol, caffeine or nicotine, which, although many people use to prevent stress, actually worsen the stress response.
- ▶ A good sleep habit: the less sleep we get, the higher our stress level is.
- ▶ Finally, practising mindfulness or other techniques can be very beneficial.

## Emotional Self-Control & Cognitive Techniques

The Mental Health Module introduces **Emotional Self-Control Techniques**, featuring easy-to-follow steps for each method with engaging videos. Techniques include imagination/visualization, assertive training, breathing control, time management, and relaxation.

**Cognitive Techniques** include step-by-step instructions in videos. Techniques like troubleshooting, thought-stopping, stress inoculation, covert awareness, and Ellis's rational emotive therapy provide valuable tools for managing cognitive stressors.

This innovative training content pertaining to mental health in teleworking environments (Mental Health Module), along with psychophysical exercises (Physical Health Module), and advice on nutrition (Nutrition Module) will be part of the MENTOR+ Well-Being Program.

The widespread reception of the Program will be made through the MENTOR+ app, which will be developed by the end of March 2024.

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### **Next steps:**

► **The training program's pilot application will take place in February in Valencia, Spain.**

► The impact analysis of MENTOR+ will start in the summer of 2024 and will be completed on October 2024.

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info@proleptis.gr

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