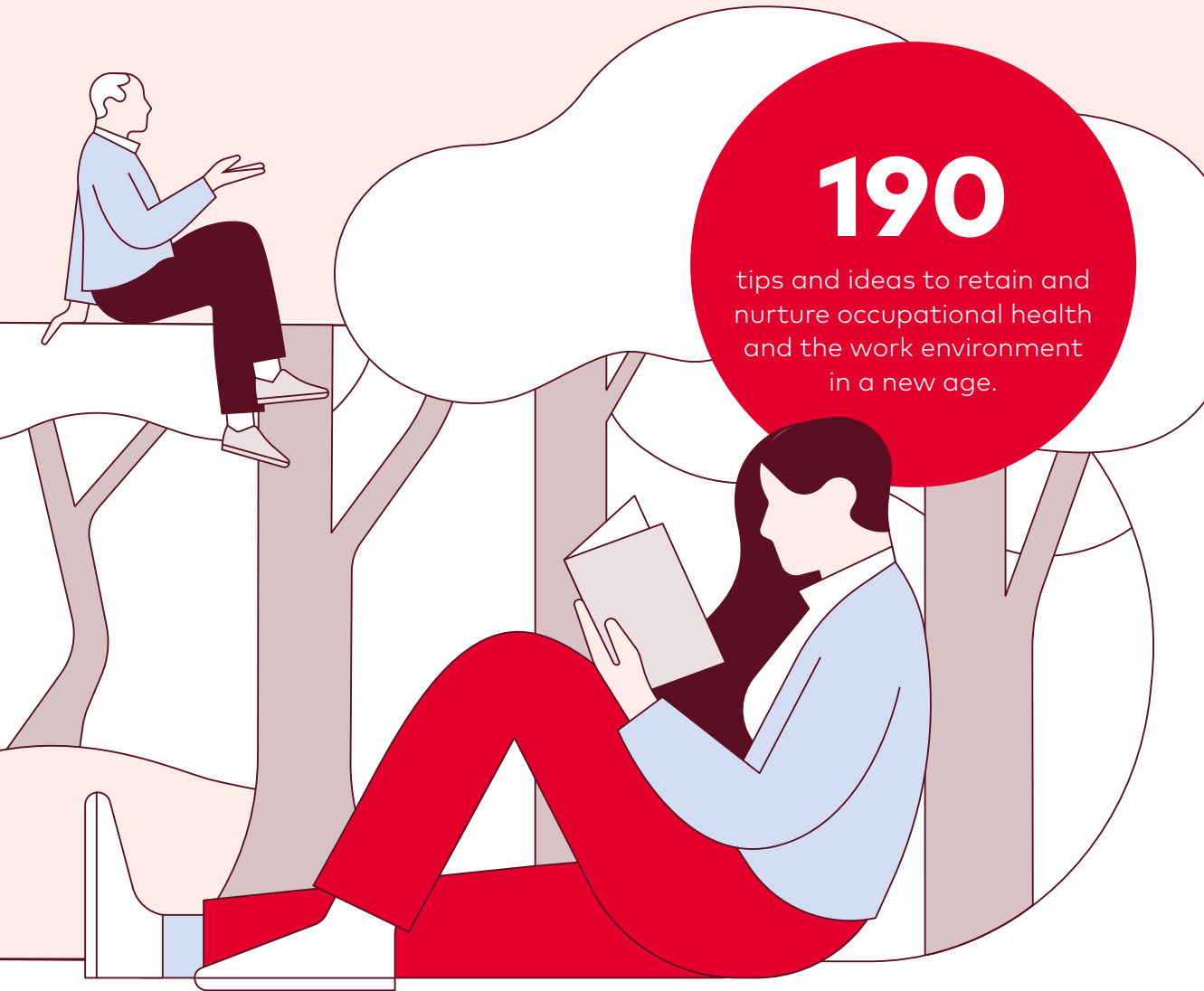


2022

Handbook for a Sustainable Working Life

190

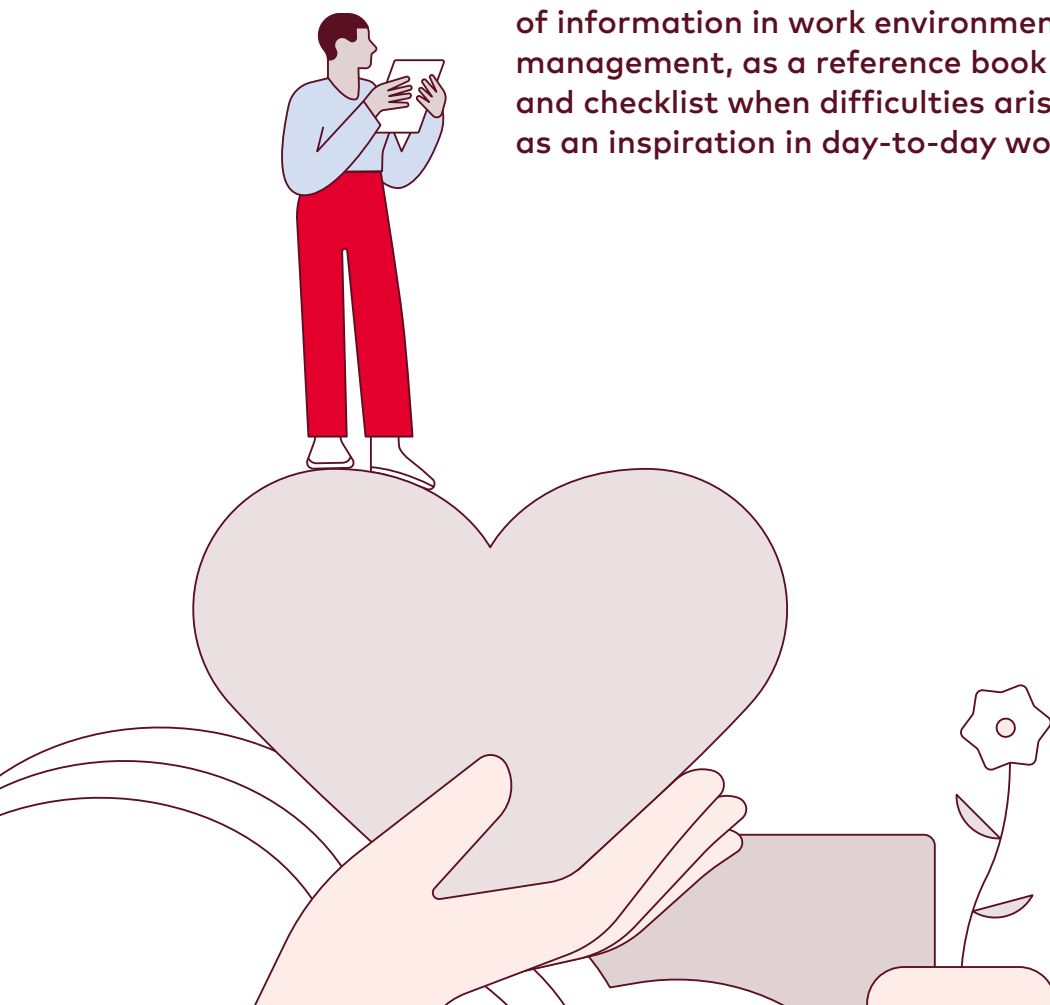
tips and ideas to retain and
nurture occupational health
and the work environment
in a new age.



FALCK

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Handbook for a Sustainable Working Life 2022 contains 190 tips and suggestions on how workplaces can develop and retain health and a good work environment. The tips are divided into five areas of the work environment, each of which contains a number of subsections with tips. The handbook can be read from start to finish as a source of information in work environment management, as a reference book and checklist when difficulties arise or as an inspiration in day-to-day work.



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Orders

To order or download a copy of the handbook, visit www.falcksverige.se/handbok

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Hello

Changes in working life are happening quickly. Both accelerating digitalisation and the years of pandemic have brought about some major steps towards more digi-physical work. They have also brought with them new working tools and methods. In a hybrid working life, the workplace is an important social hub, but not necessarily the place where all work is performed.

Our new "normal" sets high demands for leadership and organisation. There is also a clear trend for employees to increasingly expect sustainable, value-controlled workplaces that offer flexibility and opportunities for a good life balance.

Being an attractive workplace means offering a work environment that lives up to this. The fact is that a good work environment is now the most important criterion for choosing an employer. It is ranked ahead of an attractive salary, interesting duties and security of employment. And every year, the work environment is prioritised more highly by employees.

Falck is the leading health company in the Nordic region. We help workplaces to ensure good health and sustainability in working life. We are more than 1000 experts who work on the work environment and health day in, day out – all across Sweden. This is an enormous skills base, which we want to share with others in this challenging new age. That is why we asked our experts to gather together their best tips and advice.



Every year, the work environment is prioritised more highly by employees.

This publication is the result. A handbook filled with 190 genuine tips. The handbook can be used both as a reference work when difficulties arise but also as a source of inspiration for reaching our common goal: A sustainable working life and private life for all.

Carina Reidler
CEO

Previa becomes Falck

Previa is changing its name and brand to Falck. Falck, which started as a rescue and recovery company in Denmark, is today a global health business with a full range of health services. Running as a constant through all the business areas is a desire to help people.

Previa has been part of the Falck group since 2014 and is the group's largest business in terms of corporate services for a sustainable working life. The change of brand is taking place during 2022 and will be completed by the start of 2023.



FALCK < *Previa*

A sustainable working life 2022



A good working environment is now what ranks highest when employees state their most important criterion for choosing a workplace. But what is the working environment? To put it briefly, it is everything that affects what life is like at work.



All of society wins when more workplaces develop health and good work environments.

In 2022 there are some clear work environment issues on which to focus, so as to strengthen and maintain health and sustainability - as well as to be an attractive workplace with a good work environment and strong commitment.

Leadership that gives security and encourages commitment

In a complex and fast-changing world, ever greater demands are placed on leadership while changing circumstances nudge us to seek out security. Managers need to act as leader for the entire team and indicate direction. Good leadership means paying attention to employees, leading by example and clarifying expectations.

Organisation for hybrid work

Many businesses have reorganised as hybrid workplaces, where work can be performed both at the workplace and remotely. Hybrid and remote work means greater flexibility but also new challenges when it comes to creating the right conditions for a good physical, mental and social work environment. The whole organisation needs to be shaped on the basis of the new norms that have grown up.

Update systematic work environment management

When operations or working procedures change, it is extra important to make sure that your work environment management keeps up. Its purpose is to prevent risks and promote good health on both an overarching level and at the group/individual level, and it must encompass the physical, the social and the organisational work environment. Establish concrete, realistic and measurable goals for improvement. Isolated actions are not enough – it is necessary to take a systematic approach and to let work environment issues permeate the entire organisation.

The mental, social and organisational work environment

Happy and healthy individuals are better able to generate good results and contribute towards a positive corporate culture. With a complete health mindset that permeates the organisation, the workplace can create a culture of sustainability that is equally alive and active for both the hybrid and the traditional workplace. Learn to spot the early signs of mental illness and work to prevent and reduce its occurrence.

Unsustainable stress and workload

A third of Sweden's employees experience high stress levels or high-risk stress. Short periods of stress are not harmful, but long-term, unhealthy workloads without time for recuperation is damaging and can lead to health problems, diminished working capacity and sick leave. With active work environment management that enables regular dialogue, the signs and signals can be noticed.

Long-term sustainable workplaces are no accident. Our ambition with this handbook is to help more people to create sustainable corporate cultures and workplaces which promote good health. All of society wins when more workplaces develop health and good work environments.

1,000

With experts all over Sweden, Falck is the country's most competent and complete supplier of services for health and the working life.

We have wide-ranging expert knowledge, with specialists and services within health promotion strategies, systematic work environment management, organisational and leadership development, crisis and personnel support and within rehabilitation. Together, we help to ensure sustainable workplaces and a long working life in all industries and professions.



The road to a sustainable organisation

Systematic work environment management	10
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Systematic work environment management (no matter whether the office is physical or remote), concrete ways to engage employees, a health-promoting mindset and the prevention of sick leave are all key to creating a sustainable organisation in the long term. Below are our top tips on how to achieve this.



Systematic work environment management

A sustainable workplace is one which creates the very best conditions for employees to perform their best with the lowest possible risk of injury or illness. Isolated actions are not enough – it is necessary to take a systematic approach and to let work environment issues permeate the entire organisation.

1

Take a holistic approach

The purpose of systematic work environment management is to prevent risks and promote good health both on an overarching level and at the group/individual level, and it must encompass the physical, the social and the organisational work environment. A successful approach will require employees to be on board from the very beginning. The employer bears ultimate responsibility, but the best results come when employees are engaged. Employees also have a responsibility to report any shortcomings they discover in the work environment.

2

Map out your present situation

All workplaces are different and an overview of your current

situation is always a good place to start. A work environment inspection or safety inspection is a good way to get a grip on things, no matter whether your work environment is a workshop or an office. It can also yield answers to what specific regulations apply at the workplace in question; for example if there are any requirements for medical check-ups, etc. The objective is to identify areas for improvement in the workplace and to lay a foundation for their implementation.

3

Take the pulse of your health situation

Invite employees to take part in a work environment and health survey to develop a solid basis for further work on the social and organisational work environment. The survey can be undertaken both physically and/or digitally and should be as exhaustive as possible to give a good overview

of the total health situation.

The overall values of the group are the most important outcome here and show where special focus is needed.

4

Perform a risk analysis

Based on the layout of the workplace and your employees, perform a risk analysis which pays regard to both physical and organisational/social aspects. Lighting, noise, ergonomic strain and chemical health risks are just some examples of things which have a bearing on the physical work environment. Stress, relationships and work tasks are all things which can affect the organisational/social aspect of the work environment. Begin by listing what can be found on site and what works before then considering what changes may be needed in order to minimise the risk of illness.



When working procedures change,
it is even more important to
make sure that work environment
measures keep up



5

Pay even more attention when undergoing change

When your business or working procedures change, it is even more important that your work environment management keeps up. Increased homeworking in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic creates new risks as employees are now working from their own homes and must take greater responsibility for their work. Transitioning to an activity-based office or introducing new tools are examples of changes which should be accompanied with updated risk assessments to consider whether the change works for employees.

6

Take action where necessary

Establish concrete, realistic and measurable goals for improvement. Irrespective of whether this means remedying factors in the physical or in the social work environment, it is important to be clear about what must be done, who is responsible and when action is to be taken. Such an action plan must also be followed up on and checked off so that whatever is decided actually gets done.

7

Educate managers

It is the manager who bears ultimately responsibility for the work environment, no matter whether their staff are in the office, the workshop, working from home or on a customer visit. Each manager thus has a key role to play when it comes to work environment management. Make sure that all managers possess the fundamental competencies, understand their roles and act as role models and as leaders in their approach to systematic work environment management.

8

Engage employees

Employees have a responsibility to report shortcomings in the work environment. It can be easier to point out physical shortcomings than it can to bring up failings in the social and organisational work environment, and so it is important to encourage staff to engage themselves in the work environment. Managers need to communicate that the work environment is a top priority and a responsibility we all share. Management must be clear that ambitions are high and that everyone can help improve occupational health.

9

Apply the law

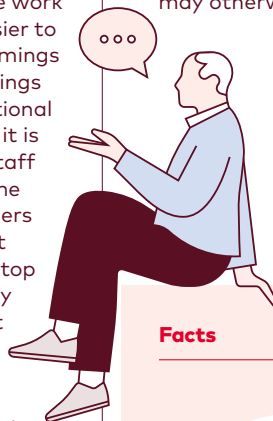
The Swedish regulation on systematic work environment management is a foundation and a support in your work. Go to the Swedish Work Environment Authority's website or speak to your occupational health service to learn what statutory requirements and

recommendations apply to your business. Be careful not to let the law become the norm – it establishes a minimum baseline. A higher level of ambition will be needed in order to contribute towards strategic business development and to create a long-term sustainable workplace.

10

Get outside help

Laws and regulations change, as does medical and scientific knowledge. Continuous collaboration with your occupational health service will give you a partner in your strategic work environment management. The experience and outsider perspective of an occupational health service can help open your eyes to both opportunities and risks that may otherwise be missed.



Facts

84%

feel that the work environment in general is good

Engaging employees – motivation even in uncertain times

The skills and engagement of each and every employee are critical to your organisation's sustainability, creativity and effectiveness. Employee wellbeing is crucial if your staff are to remain and develop in their job.

1**Clarify objectives and goals**

Make sure that all employees are clear on the purpose of what you do. The clearer the focus on customer and society benefit, the easier it will be for them to do a good job. Establish clear and relevant goals for both the short and medium term. Break down the goals to the level where the employee can exert a direct influence. Good goals should be concrete, realistic and measurable – and they should be often followed up. Always celebrate when goals and sub-goals are met.

2**Generate participation**

Ask your employees how they would like to see the business develop in order for you to reach established goals together. A change plan developed solely by management and managers will risk coming up against resistance while the same plans developed on the basis of staff participation will have greater chances to succeed. Be clear regarding where responsibility and decision-making powers lie for each issue so that participation is not mistaken for consensus and veto rights for all. Exploit the creativity which emerges when different perspectives meet and from the space between different backgrounds and interests.

3**Have high expectations**

Countless surveys show that our performance is heavily influenced by the expectations put on us both by ourselves and by others. Assume that every employee always does their best and takes great responsibility for their work. Trust also that everyone can acquire new skills and become more than what they are today. Seek out hidden talents and encourage colleagues to make the most of each other's knowledge. Do not miss an opportunity to confirm your high expectations through generous praise.

4

Delegate responsibility

Employees who feel that their employers and managers give them freedom and responsibility are often more satisfied at work and tend to perform better. Make sure there is clarity around who bears the primary responsibility for important tasks and processes. Shared responsibility risks becoming nobody's responsibility and an employee who has a mandate on paper but no actual powers will quickly lose their will.

5

Be generous in giving praise

Praise is an effective way of spreading joy and a powerful tool for exerting impact. Things which you praise highly and often will become reinforced, especially if you place focus on specific actions and behaviours. It is also important to be clear about things which do not work quite as well, but make sure that criticism constitutes just a fraction of your feedback. Stick to problems which the individual or group is actually able to influence and never criticise an individual employee in front of their colleagues. Encourage employees to share feedback with one another as well.

6

Highlight good examples

Find ways to regularly and systematically spread the word about good examples. For example, make this a regular fixture of your personnel meetings or weekly newsletter. You may want to focus on efforts which are in line with your established values, on employees who have

tried out a new approach or who have managed to fix a problem. Promote a culture where employees themselves highlight and praise both their own efforts and those of their colleagues. Discourage modesty and celebrate individual achievements.

7

See everyone

All employees are unique individuals with unique skills and needs. A new employee will need a different kind of leadership compared to their newly promoted colleague or another employee who's got stuck in a temporary rut. Show interest in how your employees work, how they think and how they perceive your management. Make listening one of your most important activities.

8

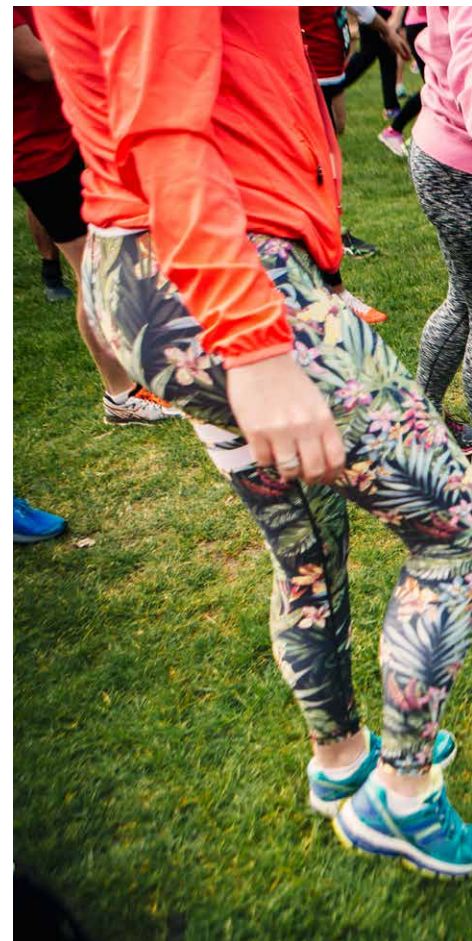
Learn every day

Organisations and companies which manage to incorporate learning into their daily procedures are more likely to succeed in the long run. Make sure there is space in the schedule to teach each other and to evaluate completed projects and other efforts. Encourage employees to share their specialist skills, perhaps in the form of a mini presentation over lunch or coffee. Within any learning organisation, employee participation on external courses is naturally a given but only a part of the overall learning process which goes on each day.

9

Draw up individual development plans

Sit down with each employee and formulate some long-term goals that they can strive towards. Be sure to also document strengths and areas for development and discuss what support they would like. By focusing on a number of concrete measures and clear points to consider, you will be able to put together an individual development plan that you can both refer to in employee appraisals and pay reviews. Restrict the number of points for improvement to a manageable amount.



10

Provide support to managers

Leaders and managers also need to be given the best possible chance to do a good job. This means a reasonable workload: just the right size of group to lead and enough time to combine the role of manager with other duties and tasks. In order for a manager to develop and win confidence, they will need training in how to think strategically, take far-sighted actions and make well-considered decisions. Make sure that managers have the support they need in the form of training, skills development and coaching.



Facts

2/3

experience a positive and healthy level of energy



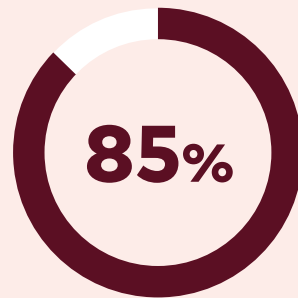
8/10

often or always feel motivated in their work. 2/10 are sometimes, rarely or never motivated.



3/4

feel that they can influence what they do in their work.



know exactly what is expected of them in their work.

4/10

say that they never, rarely or sometimes receive information in good time regarding important decisions, changes and future plans in the workplace.



A health-promoting workplace

Systematically working on health is a way to create a long-term sustainable workplace full of healthy employees who love what they do. Celebrate things which promote good health and encourage initiatives that grow from the ground up.

1

Set high ambitions

A successful, health-promoting workplace requires lofty ambitions and management needs to be clear: Work must contribute to better health because employee health is a crucial success factor for the entire organisation. Management needs to prioritise health efforts, however the specific measures for a health-promoting workplace should be formulated in collaboration between employees and management.

2

Ask about wellbeing

With employees working from home, it can be more difficult to check in on their health and this increases the need for communication between managers and staff. Make sure that your regular calls are not

just focused on work duties. Take time to ask about health and wellbeing. Ask questions like: "how do you find it working from home?" rather than simply "how are you?"

3

Take stock of the health situation

Invite all employees to take part in a work environment and health survey performed by occupational healthcare. This can take either a physical or digital form and will give you a good overview of the total health situation. Individual results should only be shared with the employee concerned at a health-coaching session. The overall values of the group are the most important outcome here and show where special focus is needed. Any initiative to take stock of employee health will arouse expectations, so be prepared to act on your findings.

4

Identify 'fit factors'

Based on your health study and joint discussions with staff you can then go on – preferably with the support of an outside perspective on your company – to begin formulating what relationships, processes, habits and routines help your staff to thrive and feel fit, both mentally and physically. Remember to see the entire person: body and soul together as one. Begin by listing things which work to promote good health before then going on to discuss what changes might improve health even further.

5

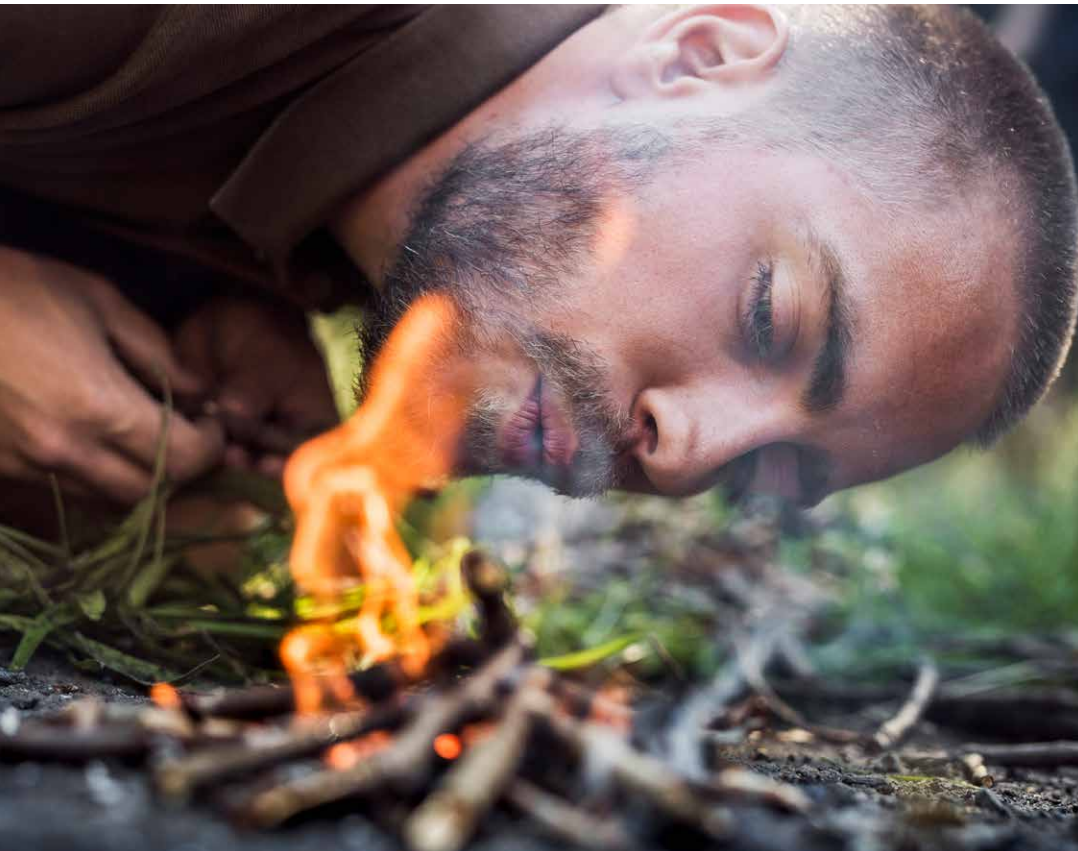
Draw up an action plan with clear goals

Establish concrete, realistic and measurable goals for your health promotion work. This might be to push up the numbers in your





Asking about health and lifestyle habits at all employee appraisals will help to give your health promotion work a boost in the workplace.



occupational health surveys, to reduce sick leave, decrease overtime or help more employees quit smoking. Once you have established goals for your health promotion work, you should then summarise these in the form of a concrete and chronological action plan. Decide what is to be done, when it is to be done and who should assume responsibility. Conceptualise your action plan as a living document which needs to be updated regularly.

6

Educate managers

Each manager has a key role to play in your health promotion work, both as a role model and as a crucial component of their employees' working environment. Make sure that each manager has fundamental health competencies and that they understand their responsibilities both as a role model and as a manager.

7

Appoint health champions

In order to turbocharge your health work, appoint health champions – employees with

a special mandate to inspire their colleagues to adopt a healthy lifestyle, for example by developing initiatives such as group walks or digital exercise classes held remotely. Make sure that your health champions get adequate training, mandate and time for the task. Clearly demarcate between the responsibility of your managers and health champions and make sure that these two roles support one another in their efforts.

8

Support health activities

Take full advantage of your options to offer employees a fitness or wellness allowance for exercising, e.g. in the form of an annual membership card to a gym or leisure centre. Activity or step challenges and group exercise classes are other good ways to inspire more physical activity. A generously filled fruit basket is another way to encourage healthy snacking and better dietary habits. Buns, cakes and sweets increase the risk of ill health and leave us feeling sluggish and apathetic.

9

Talk about health and lifestyle at employee appraisals

Asking about health and lifestyle habits at all employee appraisals will help to give your health promotion work a boost in the right direction at both the level of the individual and the workplace. This will give managers a natural arena to address issues relating to lifestyle, diet, exercise, alcohol and tobacco. At the same time, it will transform the employee appraisal into a platform to identify so-called fit factors and impediments to good health at the workplace.

10

Get help

Make use of external help to develop your health work. Within occupational healthcare there are many different roles, from safety engineers, behavioural scientists, occupational health physicians and nurses through to health promoters, organisation consultants and ergonomists, all with experience within different specialisms and areas of expertise.



Facts

1/10

find that their knowledge or skills are not being correctly used in their work.



Following up and acting on sick leave

Long-term sick leave is often comprised of many repeated periods of shorter sick leave. By adopting a structured approach and constantly following up on sick leave, you can increase your chances to intervene at an early stage. Work needs to be undertaken both at an organisational and at an individual level.

1

Map out the health situation and work proactively

Take stock of the current health situation among your employees at regular intervals. Highlight and encourage so-called fit factors within your own business. Engage all managers and employees in working and acting proactively. This might be stress management, health coaching or other tools which support employees, managers or the organisation as a whole.

2

Set guidelines and keep them up to date

Document all workplace guidelines, policies, processes and procedures for the entire chain of events, from initial sick leave through to the employee's return

to work. Example: How is absence managed, how is it followed up on and by whom? What is the procedure for medical certificates? What risk factors and fit factors are there at the workplace? What is the process for reassigning ongoing tasks to a new manager when somebody goes off sick?

3

Keep responsibility close and ensure skills

Responsibility normally lies with the immediate supervisor. HR is an important support for managers. Ensure that the responsible manager has the right tools, competencies and the time to fulfil their responsibility. If the immediate supervisor is based at another location, appoint somebody close to the employee who can take care of ongoing tasks and provide a mandate to act. Be clear as to who bears ultimate responsibility.

4

Keep an eye on repeated sick leave

By taking note of repeated sick leave, regardless of length, it is possible to identify and deal with ill health at an early stage. Hold a meeting with an employee once they have been on sick leave more than three times in a single six-month period. Intervene early! Ask questions such as: "how are you feeling?" or "is there anything that you need help with?" Be sure to also document conversations in writing and draw up an action plan which you can jointly follow up together.

5

Keep in contact

Keep in continuous contact with employees on sick leave. Ensure regular communication at regular intervals appropriate to the reason for the sick leave.



This will keep the process active and forward-looking. Document all contacts or attempted contacts.

6

Develop a plan for a return to work

For bouts of illness which last longer than 30 days, by no later than day 60 the employer should draw up a plan for returning to work. A limited number of exceptions apply. The plan should be developed in consultation with the employee concerned. It should then be followed up on continuously and maintained up to date. The plan should contain information about ordinary duties, measures which could facilitate the employee's return to work or allow them to partially remain in work, measures at the workplace and needs for contact or cooperation with other stakeholders.

7

Workplace adjustments

The employer is responsible for workplace adjustments within the employee's work environment. This means individual measures taken within the physical, organisational and social work environment which aim to help employees with a reduced working capacity to perform their ordinary work to continue their work or to return to work. Such adjustments might be temporary or long-term. Always document what you agree on and follow up on any agreements reached. Problems often arise when something which was conceived as a temporary workplace adjustment, designed to be in place for a limited time only, persists despite not working for the business at large.

8

Follow up

Follow up regularly and continuously with ongoing individual processes. Ensure contact is maintained between managers and the employee concerned. Evaluate all efforts made on the basis of the goals established. Plan for continued actions which are positive for the employee's capacity to work.

9

The importance of documentation

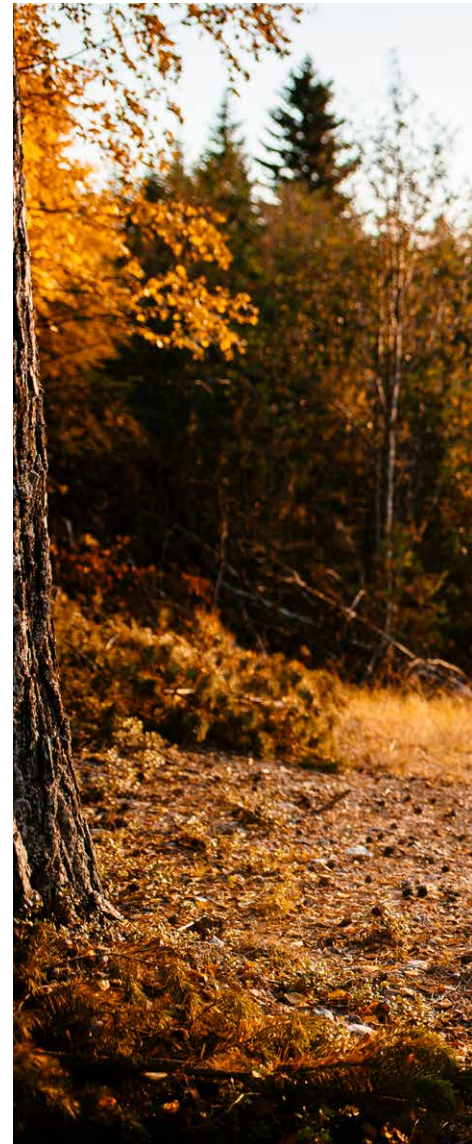
Document all instances of contact, occurrences and decisions from start to finish throughout the sick leave and rehabilitation process. Documentation should follow the employee throughout the entire process and must always be fact-based. Store all such documents in line with GDPR and your obligations for confidentiality and secrecy.

10

Get help from a rehabilitation coordinator

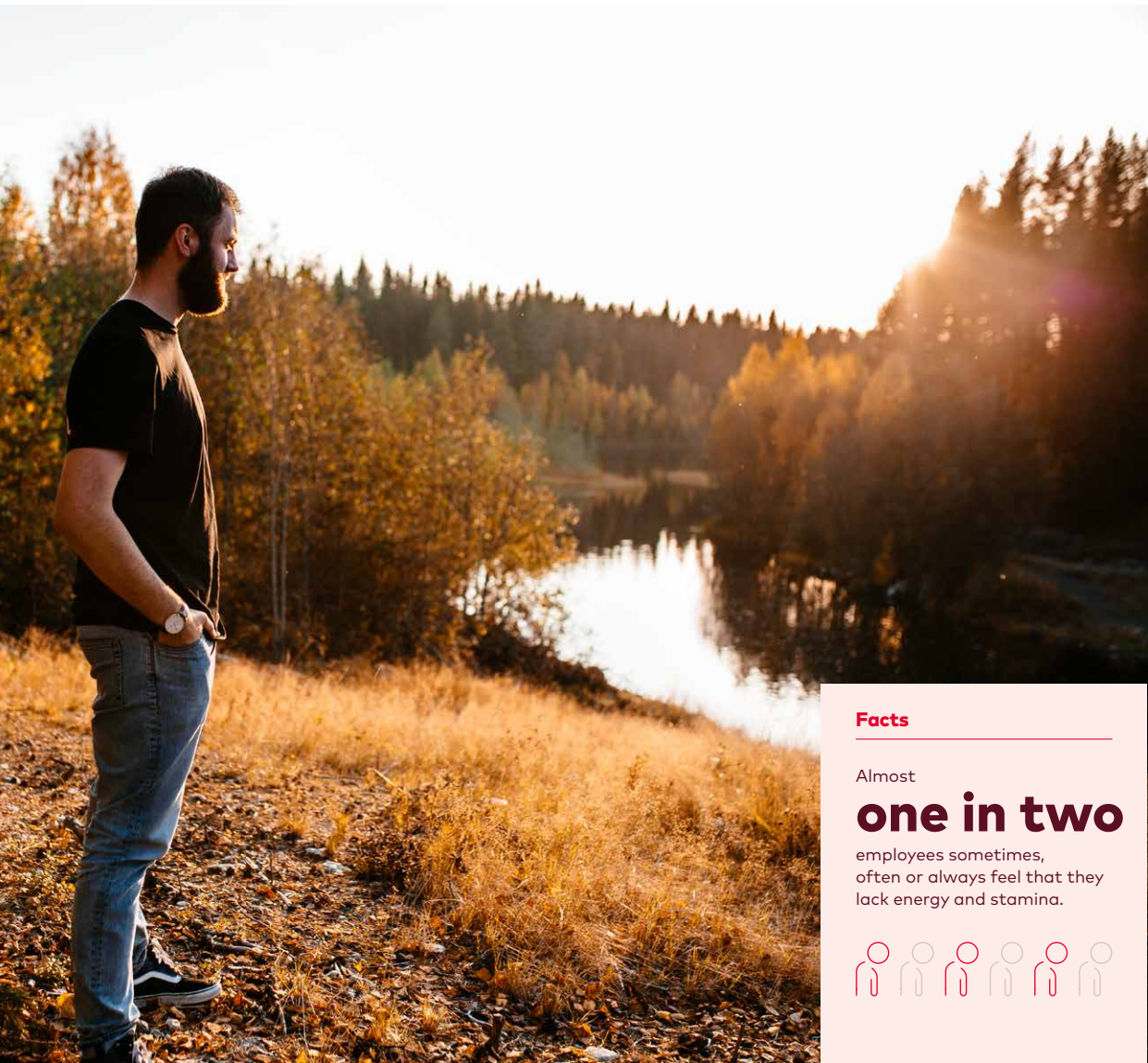
A rehabilitation coordinator can guide HR, the manager and the employee by acting as an independent expert resource which can coordinate efforts and collaborate with external parties such as the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the healthcare sector. This is to ensure an effective and active process for sick leave, rehabilitation, workplace adjustments and the employee's return to work. Rehabilitation coordinators are experts in the entire sick leave and rehabilitation process.

They have ample knowledge about the laws and rules which apply and they know who is responsible for what.





By taking note of repeated short-term sick leave, it is possible to identify and deal with ill health at an early stage.



Facts

Almost
one in two
employees sometimes,
often or always feel that they
lack energy and stamina.



2

The social, physical and digital work environment

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The work environment is much more than just the physical workplace. Placing focus on having a good social work environment, on limiting digital strain and on maintaining a healthy balance between work and leisure time are all crucial components when creating a sustainable workplace.



The social work environment

A good social and organisational work environment with friendly colleagues is crucial when candidates are to select their employer. The social climate at a workplace affects everything from creativity and self-esteem to efficiency and delivery reliability. With more and more remote working, we need new ways to keep our social work environment intact.

1

Say hello

Friendly co-workers and good relationships at work are crucial health factors for the vast majority of employees. Nurture coffee breaks and other opportunities for social interaction. At a time when many of us are working from home, it is important to create social routines which work digitally, like coffee breaks on Skype or breakfast meetings over Zoom. We are each other's work environment and an open climate between colleagues will make a huge difference. Develop a culture where it is normal to see smiles and where it feels natural to say hello the first time you meet each day.

2

Do meaningful things

Research has shown that our health is affected by whether or not we consider our work to be important. And perhaps that is not so surprising – after all, who thrives when doing a job that feels meaningless? Pay is rarely enough of a motivational factor for employees to thrive in their work. By being clear about the company's overarching objectives, management can do their bit to help boost employee health and wellbeing. Financial gains for the company can provide incitement, but try to formulate your company's goals in terms of how your business and employees help to make society a little better.

3

Put things in context

By placing your company's aspirations towards an overarching goal within a wider perspective, you can create a better framework for improving health among your employees. Describe the historical background, outline your vision for the future and compare yourself to your competitors or to similar companies. Make sure that all employees are familiar with and understand what role they can play towards your vision and be sure to balance requirements and resources accordingly.



Regular feedback is necessary in order for employees to feel seen and acknowledged



4

Build up a culture of feedback

Managers often play a key role when it comes to feedback, but praise and constructive criticism among colleagues are also crucial to any organisation. Regular feedback is necessary in order for employees to feel seen and acknowledged. Encourage employees to show each other appreciation and to support colleagues in their development.

5

Circulate information

Lacking information is a common cause of stress-related illness, not least in connection with change. Establish procedures and make sure that all employees are provided with adequate and intelligible information. During times of change and uncertainty, it is often especially important to communicate even if it is just to say that there is no new information at present.

6

Balance work and life

Make sure that your organisation, working times and procedures are, as far as possible, adapted to the world outside your company's four walls: nursery pick-ups, hobbies, older parents and everything else that has a bearing on how we feel. Avoid a culture of overtime, late-night emails and other habits which make it more difficult to recoup from a demanding day's work. Establish guidelines for work-life balance when working from home.

7

Recognise differences

Collaborating with people who seem just like us can feel reassuring and within our comfort zone. But a diverse and equal workplace made up of people with different genders, ethnic origins and with varying backgrounds and skill-sets will be much more dynamic, creative and competitive in the long run. Be sure to fully exploit the strength that diversity brings to the table when setting up working groups or units.

8

React fast to bullying

Bullying and discrimination are serious problems at the workplace which require a swift response from supervisors and management. Those affected risk suffering from deep and far-reaching consequences. Be observant and notice when certain individuals are often alone or left out of conversations. Watch out for the development of affectionate vulgarities or 'banter' – it may not be appreciated by all. Don't hesitate to bring in external help if you are unable to solve the problem on your own.

9

Emphasise responsibility

Somebody who destructively criticises their colleagues, the business or management needs to be told that this sort of behaviour damages the work environment for others and cannot be tolerated. Do not let your willingness for dialogue and resolution be confused with

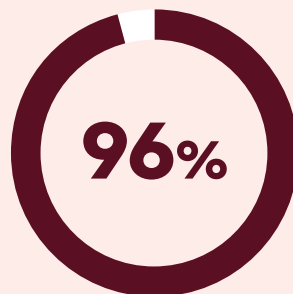
a passive approach to rumour spreading, harassment or an unwillingness to accept decisions. Calmly and clearly explain that you need and expect the person to act more constructively. If the problem persists, you may need to examine how you can help this person to leave the workplace and find another job where they can thrive better.

10

Have fun together

Make sure that work is not just work, but also create space for fun and humour. We all need to take a load off and laugh together every now and again, not least when times are tough. Showing a bit of heart and warmth to each other is also an important driver of creativity. Organise activities which help your employees to get to know different sides of each other and to develop stronger relationships.

Facts



think that the atmosphere between work colleagues is good.

The physical work environment

The employer has the ultimate responsibility for promoting health and for reducing the risk of injuries and accidents at work, but managers and employees also need to collaborate to create a sustainable work environment – even when work is done remotely.

1

Take a systematic approach

Regular, systematic follow up is the key to achieving effective work environment management. As a manager, it is important to know what rules and laws apply, both in the physical workplace and when employees work remotely. Every accident, incident and period of illness which can be prevented will save both money and strife. Regularly carrying out risk assessments and establishing action plans that are actively used and followed up will mean more employees who feel great and can perform better.

2

Vary the work

Repetitive strain injuries caused by prolonged strain on the body is still a huge scourge in many professions. Packing, sorting

and lifting work are typical jobs that risk leading to injuries that creep up slowly and take a long time to heal. Even static loads, as when working at a computer, increase the risk of injury. The key to prevention is varying the positions, tasks, tools and tempo. Also investigate your options to do away with the most monotonous of tasks.

3

Correct and easy lifting

Back injuries caused by heavy lifting are common. There are no exact limits for how much you can lift; this depends on many factors, such as distance and how easy a load is to grasp. If possible, avoid lifting below knee height and above shoulder height, lift close to the body, use lifting aids and trolleys and help each other with heavy lifts. Within the healthcare sector, the ambition should be for staff to always

move a patient with some kind of aid. Be sure to teach staff good practices for movement and ergonomic lifting right from the very beginning of their employment so that things are done right from the start.

4

Let in some fresh air

Pollutants and dust in the air can easily cause discomfort and irritation, especially in those who are allergic or hypersensitive. Make sure that your ventilation and air purification systems are working and adapted to your business, the workspace and the number of people who work there. Keep an eye on the temperature, too. Having to work in a draughty or overly warm environment will reduce both mood and performance. If needed, ask a safety engineer at your occupational health service for advice.



Most of us move our bodies too little in order to feel good and perform to the best of our ability.



Facts

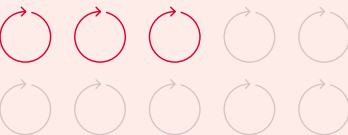
1/5

have a high level of muscle and joint pain.



3/10

have a job that involves repetitive, one-sided movement.



4/10

are exposed to disturbing sounds from machines, computers or colleagues' telephones at work.



5

Refurnish

Ensure that the employees themselves know how they can use the furniture and equipment in the best way. This promotes health and variation and is especially important in flexible work environments where it must be possible to be able to vary between different workplaces. Some employees may also need special work equipment and tools. Do not try and save money by doing away with simple aids which make a big difference; every mouse arm out of action will cost you dearly. You could enlist the aid of an ergonomist for training and advice.

6

Turn up the lights

Make sure that everyone has good lighting for their job. The lights should be on, flicker-free and not too harsh. Encourage employees to go outside in the sunlight on their lunch breaks, especially during the darker months. Be sure to also consider screen and desk ergonomics so that eyes are not put under excess strain. Offer computer glasses and adapt the resolution and display size of employee computer screens. Ask employees if they need any additional aids.

7

Turn down the volume

All undesired sound is noise and a good sound environment is an important part of the work environment. Try to take action on the sources of noise, whether from machines or people. In an office environment, it is often

human speech that causes the greatest disturbance. Review the acoustics in light of the function of the premises and provide sound-damping material as needed.

Ensure that there are functional and attractive quiet areas in activity-based offices and follow up to ensure that the different zones function as intended.

8

Stand up – and sit down

Research shows that sitting still too much can pose a health risk, even for people who exercise regularly. But working a long shift in a standing position can cause static ergonomic loads, and for those who spend much of their working day standing or walking it can instead be important to sit down and rest their legs and feet. Using a height adjustable desk and changing regularly between a sitting and standing position gives the body important variation. A rule of thumb is that the next work position is the best.

9

Encourage movement

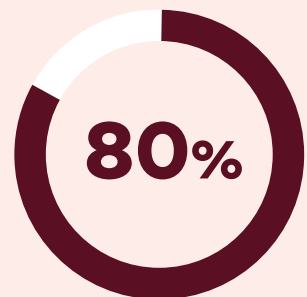
Most of us don't move about enough to feel good, perform well and to meet the needs of our bodies and brains. We need at least half an hour's moderate exercise every day. If you work at home, movement may need to be deliberately planned because many natural elements, such as getting yourself to work, disappear. Sitting still should be interrupted every 30 minutes, because movement increases the brain's ability to focus and effectiveness. Activate the larger muscle groups and do the "opposite movements" to the positions you adopt while working.

10

Work from home

Working fully or partly from home has become a natural part of many organisations. Working from home can lead to reduced stress, increased efficiency and help sort out life's puzzles, but it can also increase the risk of loneliness and reduce the cohesion of the group. Clear guidelines and policies from management are important, as is dialogue within the group and between managers and employees.

Facts



have a job that involves sitting still for more than half the day.

Hybrid and remote work

Many businesses have reorganised as hybrid workplaces, where work can be performed both at the workplace and remotely. Hybrid and remote work means greater flexibility but also new challenges when it comes to creating the right conditions for a good physical and mental work environment.

1

Create clarity and structure

A clear framework and policies for hybrid work are necessary preconditions for a sustainable work environment. Base them on the organisation's needs, in dialogue between employees and managers. What tasks can be done in the office and remotely, when and for how long should employees be in place and what is the policy for equipment in the home?

2

Evaluate and follow up

For many businesses, hybrid work is something new. New frameworks and conditions need to be followed up, evaluated and

adjusted if needed. Remember that one model doesn't suit everyone, but needs to be adapted to the activities and employees. Evaluate systematically and control the responsibility for different issues, so that it is clear who is responsible for what.

3

Include everyone in hybrid meetings

Have a clear policy for meetings, a meeting culture and how decisions are made, so that everyone can participate on equal terms. Hybrid work requires functional technology and digital solutions, both in the office and remotely. Check meeting rooms and areas for digital meetings in the office on the basis of the organisation's needs.

4

Separate work and leisure

Hybrid work can help sort out life's puzzles, but there is a risk that the border between work and leisure can be eroded. Being clear about what is expected of the employees, when they should be accessible and how communication is to occur is important for preventing stress. With remote working, it is a good idea to establish procedures so that the working day has a clear beginning and end. Draw up a schedule with a lunch hour and breaks.

5

Check out the ergonomics at home

Put a cushion in the curve of the back if you are sitting on a normal chair and sit on a cushion if the

chair is too low. Your forearms should be able to rest on the table without your shoulders being hunched. Look around at home; are there any other places where you could work? For example, a shelf or a chest of drawers might be able to double as a standing desk.

6

Adjust your screen

A laptop is good for a short while, but it increases the load on the neck and upper back. A simple and easy solution that works for both sitting and standing work is to use a separate keyboard. Raise your laptop up and place the keyboard in front. The best solution of all is to connect to a separate screen.

7

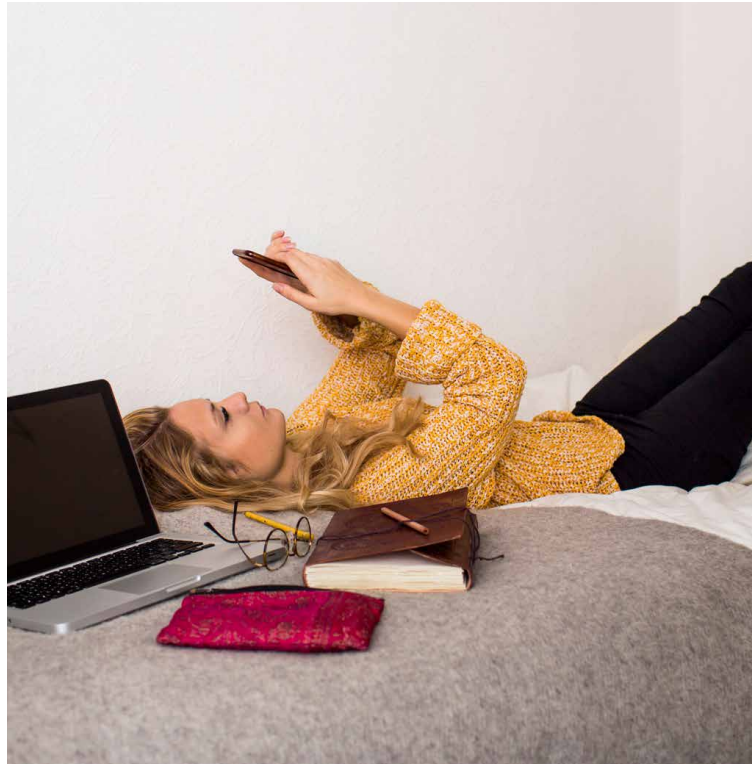
Take breaks from sitting still

Variation is important and should ideally happen every half hour. This can easily be forgotten when working at home because there are fewer natural interruptions. Stand up for phone calls or online meetings, or move to the sofa for a while. If possible, walk around during meetings and phone calls. Avoid checking the phone between meetings, to give your neck, eyes and brain a break.

8

Rest your eyes

Many digital meetings increase strain on the eyes. The eyes and the neck muscles work together, which means that vision is a common cause of neck problems. So give your eyes a rest, preferably every 20 minutes, by turning away from the screen, looking out through a window and holding the gaze for 20 seconds.



9

Think about lighting

Ensure there is good light for work, ideally with several light sources and no dazzle. Avoid having the screen in front of a window, but place yourself with the daylight coming from one side. If there is dazzle, it must be possible to screen off the light, both at the office and when working remotely.

10

Plan common time

New ideas and collaboration are often made easier by physical meetings. Have a strategy for when and how the group is brought together. Base this on the needs of the organisation and the group. It can be valuable for the group to see each other once or twice a week.

Facts

9/10

have a positive experience of working from home



The digital work environment

Digital tools increase productivity and flexibility in the business, but the digitalisation of our working lives also requires new approaches in order to keep digital stress at bay.

1

Develop a policy for digital availability

Develop a policy for email and text messaging. Define timeframes for when emails and text messages should be answered. Clarify your expectations in relation to digital availability outside of ordinary working time.

2

Be mindful of the risks

Constant availability can blur the boundary between work and leisure time and cause concentration difficulties. Watch out for early warning signs. If possible, try and vary the working day so that employees are not available online all the time. Encourage short screen breaks throughout the day.

3

Carry out digital safety inspections.

Think of the digital work environment as a part of the overall work environment. Carry out digital safety inspections. Investigate, risk assess, remedy and follow up. Organise employee observations in order to identify any sources of strain in the support systems used. This means getting a system operator to sit with your employee and watch how they use digital tools in practice as part of their daily work. You will be able to identify shortcomings in your systems and whether there is a need to provide further training or support.

4

Create a functioning meeting culture

Set up clear guidelines for how meetings should take place and be run. Which meetings should be physical and which digital,

what is expected of participants, when should cameras be on. Digital meetings should not be booked as "meetings in meetings"; set clear rules for timing and hold them so that there is a short break between meetings. Have breaks in longer meetings.

5

Ensure that the technology works

For many, being able to create a more varied working life and work in different places with the aid of technology is a freedom. It is important that the technology works wherever the employee is, so as to reduce stress and inequality between work groups. Make sure that different systems are integrated and in synch with each other and that support systems are adapted to the employees' needs.

6

Adapt the workplace

Vision controls our working position and we often adjust our position so as to see the screen. If you use a screen and laptop, check how they are positioned so that you can work in a straight position. Raise your laptop up so that the screens are at the same level. Use a separate keyboard. Move the screens so that you can see well, but can still sit or stand close to the desk.

7

Spread knowledge about the digital working life

It is important to ensure that all employees know about the present position and that they are all updated on what is needed in today's working life. For example, it is important to inform employees information about how digital stress occurs and about people's mental ability to gain a positive effect from digitalisation.

8

Put your mobile phone away

Checking your phone between meetings causes further strain on the neck, vision and brain. The head weighs about five kilos. When it is bent 60 degrees forward, the load on the lowest disc of the neck increases almost five times. Instead take an active break with movement between meetings. This gives your neck variation, it rests your eyes and gives your brain fresh oxygen.

9

Get up and move

Digitisation can mean that we spend more time sitting still while we work, often in static and unbalanced positions. Variation is important and can soon be forgotten if there are few natural interruptions. Encourage employees to move around, to use height adjustable desks and to change their working positions.

Walk around during meetings and phone calls.

10

Rest your eyes

The eyes are most comfortable when we view things at a distance and are strained by focusing on things that are close; and when work is done digitally, screen time is increased. The eyes and the neck muscles work together, and vision is a common cause of neck problems. Give the eyes a break by looking away from the screen, looking out of a window or looking in a different direction. Even a short break is good for the eyes. Offer computer glasses if needed.



Activity-based workplace

More and more workplaces are migrating from traditional office set-ups into activity-based workplaces. Particularly now that more and more of us are working from home. When switching to an activity-based workplace, it is important to be receptive to the needs of both the business and your employees

1

Put employee needs front and centre

With hybrid working, a remote workplace can be seen as a separate activity area. Plan the office in terms of what areas will be needed when the employees are in place. Perform a consequence analysis into both the overarching needs of the business and the individual needs and daily tasks of your employees. This should cover all activities performed, approaches taken and the needs which exist. How many quiet rooms and meeting rooms do you need? Are new areas needed for digital meetings?

2

Consult and explain

Inform your employees as to what is going to change and

why. Be unambiguous. If the only reason for introducing the change is to bring down costs then there is a huge risk that the new set-up won't work. Focus instead on the set-up itself and the many opportunities it will offer. Becoming fixated on costs will place your focus in the wrong direction and prevent you from prioritising important aspects, such as the need for quiet spaces. Let employee needs set the course.

3

Change takes time

It takes time to convert to new conditions and to change ways of working. Encourage employees to try out areas and actively select working areas based on what is best suited to the task to be done.

4

Facilitate movement

Create a variety of spaces with different functions so that changing places gives added value. Use furnishings to give clear signals about what type of activity and behaviour suits each place. Create quiet areas that are attractive and will be used. Moving from one work station to another needs to be simple. The technology must work and there must be a sufficient number of workplaces. It is also important that tables and chairs are easy to adjust as needed.

5

Take note of a changed corporate culture

Changing to an activity-based office is a major change that can affect the corporate culture. Many can find that there is a shorter distance between employees and management as managers now move around in the same space as their employees. Collaboration between departments is often better, but can sometimes affect working groups. Create solutions for how to maintain the group community and collaboration.

6

Evaluate

Regularly follow up on the work done and how employees are getting on and responding. Did things turn out as we imagined? If not, what do we need to change?

7

Prioritise a good sound environment

Overheard conversations and ringing phones are often reported as the most disturbing office sounds. Take a look at the function of different areas and don't spare the soundproofing material when it is needed. Areas for collaboration must be clearly separated from places for concentrated work. Cognitive ergonomics is also disturbed by impact sounds and movements in the line of vision. Also think about the sound environment in meeting rooms.



8

Review your work environment management

An activity-based workplace will mean radically different conditions for the work environment and the employer will need to risk assess changes to physical factors such as noise, acoustics, light, lighting and ventilation. Moreover, the new set-up may also have an impact on organisational and social health factors. Make sure that your systematic work environment management is adapted to the new environment.

9

The important role of managers

Managers need to show engagement in order to get staff on board with the change. Management and managers are role models who need to embody

and exemplify new approaches and behaviours. Because an activity-based workplace can mean employees being more spread out, it is also important that the manager has a strategy for how they can meet with their employees and work to retain that feeling of being part of a team.

10

Agree on common rules

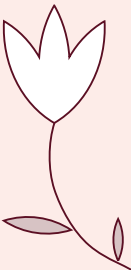
Decide on and document what rules will apply at the workplace. Clearly define what is allowed and what is not. Educate your staff as to what exactly an activity-based workplace entails in practice. Listen to those who complain about disturbances.

3

Managers and leadership

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Few will question the importance of a functioning leadership, but as our working lives change and develop, managers must face up to new challenges. Developing leadership both at the physical workplace and remotely is crucial in order to retain and develop sustainable workplaces – and it is important to recognise that even managers need support.





Developing leadership

In an increasingly complex and fast-changing world, ever greater demands are placed on leadership. Managers need to be up to speed on how to deal with physical illness, rehabilitation and crises, and also on how to create an open and flexible work environment populated by motivated employees.

1

Let values guide you

Clarify the overall objectives of the business as well as its fundamental values and how employees contribute to the whole. This will create a solid foundation and help to make work meaningful while also making it easier for everyone to focus on what matters. Reflect on your own driving forces and values in your work. Tell your employees clearly and often what is important for you and for the organisation. If you discover any gaps between your values and those of the organisation then you need to reflect on how these came about and how you can bridge them.

2

Focus on the goal

Establish clear and achievable goals and analyse what behaviours and skills your

employees can bring to the table in order to meet your most important objectives. Encourage these behaviours through praise, rewards and suitable remuneration. Ask employees who have excelled at a project to hold a presentation for their colleagues. Be concrete and specific in your recognition: What did the employee do well and why was this so good?

3

Embrace change

Society is changing at an ever faster pace and many find that working life is undergoing constant processes of reorganisation. If you welcome change and view it as a chance to do things even better then it will be easy to implement. Be a driving force for constant improvements to the business and engage employees. By asking for proposals and creating opportunities to exert influence, you will help your staff to see the

possibilities. At the same time, be clear as to when employees are actually able to influence a decision. Only ask for opinions when you are prepared to take them on board.

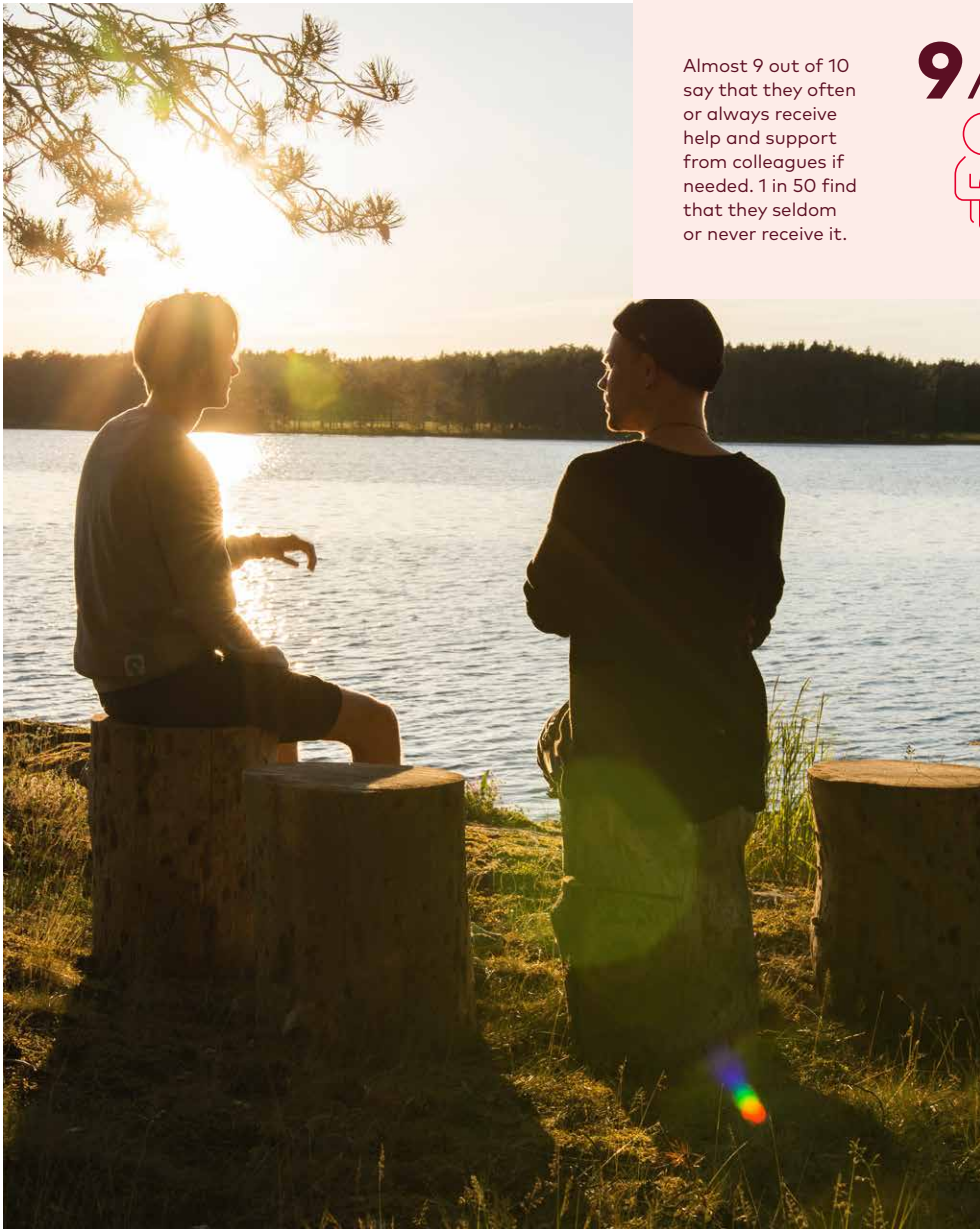
4

Delegate responsibility

An organisation in which the manager alone makes all crucial decisions is a weak organisation. Delegate powers and responsibility and show your employees that you trust them. Be mindful not to overrule decisions that you previously delegated. The cost to job satisfaction and future initiative-taking of such an action will often outweigh whatever it is you consider that you have to gain in the matter.



An organisation in which the manager alone makes all crucial decisions is a weak organisation.



Facts

4/5



Four out of five employees say that they often or always receive help and support from their immediate manager. One in 20 find that they seldom or never receive support.

Almost 9 out of 10 say that they often or always receive help and support from colleagues if needed. 1 in 50 find that they seldom or never receive it.

9/10



5

Listen

Join in at group coffee breaks and spontaneous conversations, be visible at the workplace and leave the door to your office open. Ask questions and let employees express challenges and solutions in their own words. We often believe that others understand exactly what we are saying, but this is not always the case. A lot of misunderstandings can be avoided simply by asking employees to relay their understanding of a conversation.

6

Give constructive feedback

Focus on what has been done well and be generous with praise and encouragement. Use “five times more love” as your rule of thumb: Dedicate at least eighty percent of your feedback to positive remarks. Give praise in front of the whole group and save criticism for private chats. Be concrete, specific and clear in both your positive and negative feedback. Speak in terms of actions and behaviours rather than qualities. Criticism often entails important opportunities for development and improvement. Frame criticism as an opportunity for change.

7

Unlock engagement

The manager's role is not to serve as a battery which gives energy to their staff. Employees have their own sources of motivation and your job is to encourage their engagement. Ask what your employees find enjoyable and challenging about their jobs. Delegate by giving staff free reign within clear boundaries.

Find out what is preventing your employees from performing to the best of their abilities. Be sure to clear away obstacles – for example, unclear mandates, inadequate equipment or rewards which are not in line with your organisation's values. Ask your employees how you can support them in doing an even better job.

8

Remunerate fairly

Establish clear guidelines for salaries and other benefits and make sure that these are followed. Create uniform and clear procedures for determining salary and conducting pay reviews. When individuals feel their salaries are fair, whether on the basis of measurable criteria or assessments, this will become an important tool for coaching and development while the opposite situation will poison even the best relationships at a workplace. The same goes for rewards, praise and celebrations.

9

Be a role model

Demonstrating the way you would like your employees to behave is one of the best ways to influence things in the right direction. Not least when it comes to how you act towards each other: Show concern, give praise and constructive criticism and take responsibility for everyone's wellbeing in shared spaces. Dare to be open, take time to share your experience and strive to be consistent in both what you say and do.

10

Look after yourself

Focusing on the business can lead you to forget about your own needs. Our desire to do a good job can lead to constant overtime, non-existent recuperation and a failure to prioritise our own motivations. This kind of lifestyle is out and out bad for our health. Moreover, stress is contagious. Stressed managers beget stressed employees. Take care to speak calmly, relax your body language and demonstrate a happiness in your work. Ask for feedback on your own stress management. Regularly discuss your employment terms with your own superior.



Remote leadership

When more and more work is done remotely, conditions for the managers also change. Remote leadership requires clarity, perceptiveness and continuous dialogue with employees. Looking after yourself and your own needs as a manager also becomes more important than ever.

1

Take care of the practicalities

Make sure that your employees have access to the tools and equipment they need to do their job remotely and that they are confident with the technologies. Do not assume that your staff can sort things out on their own. Ask if you are unsure.

2

See the group – and the individual

Hold recurring online meetings where the employees in a working group can check in with each other. Begin by going round the team and giving everyone a few minutes to talk about where they are at and what they are working on. If weekly meetings are your norm, it may be a good idea to hold meetings more frequently during periods of remote working to keep social cohesion tight.

3

Be perceptive

It takes time to transition from having a designated work station to a shared workspace. New mindsets are required. Encourage your employees each week to carefully think through and plan for the week ahead: What am I going to do this week? What kind of work station will I need to use?

4

Facilitate movement

Touch base with your employees often – this does not need to be in the form of long meetings; just shorter phone calls or emails to see how the person is doing, whether or not they are happy, and if there is anything at all that they need.

5

Involve your employees

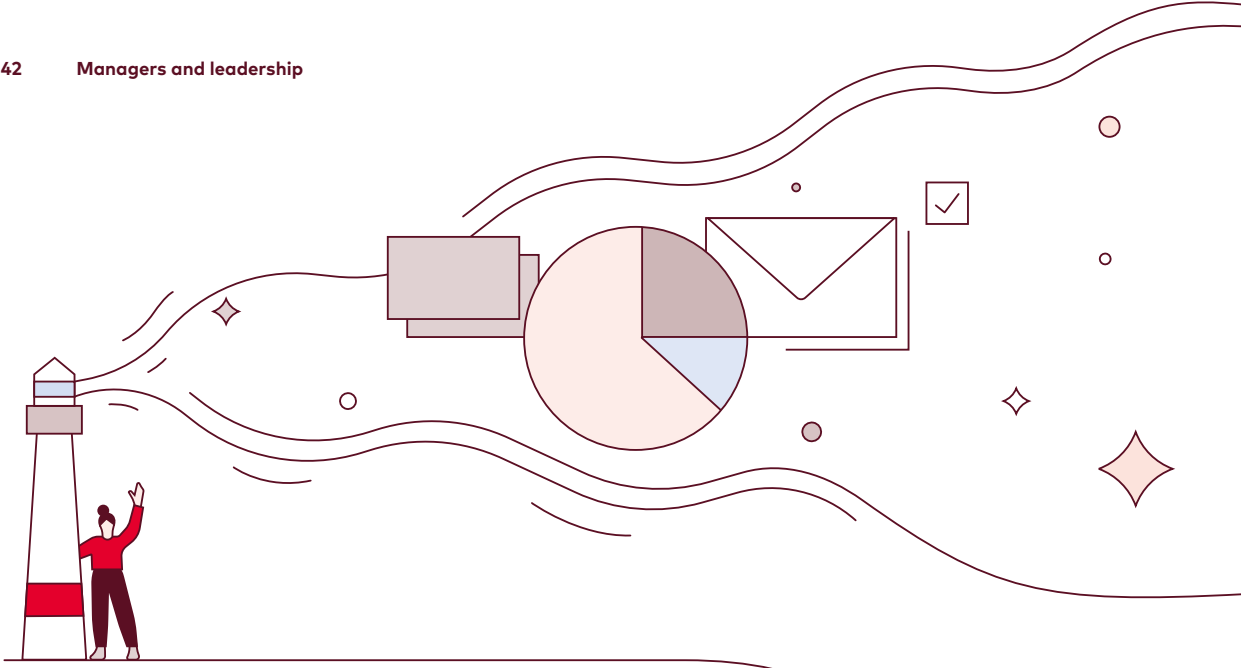
Ask questions at group meetings such as: What do you think is working well? Is there anything we ought to change? And listen to the answers. Encourage participation. Necessity knows no law, as the saying goes, and for many, a challenging situation can spark great creativity. In this regard both managers and employees can learn from each other.

6

Honesty is the best policy

Meet concerns with honesty. No manager has all the answers. During such times of change it is only natural that projects will get postponed or even shelved, and changing circumstances often generate speculation and set the rumour mill into motion. Honesty is one way to clamp down on this. Be clear about





the organisation's short-term goals and directives. And make sure to flag up what is working well.

7

Encourage socialising

Small talk at lunch or on coffee breaks is more important than you would think. Set up coffee breaks via Skype or Teams at determined times so employees can check in for small talk. Encourage staff to meet up for walking meetings where possible.

8

Watch out for early signals

People are all different. Some like working remotely while others yearn to get back to the workplace. Some employees will find it tougher to motivate themselves when working on their own. Watch out for early signs that an employee's performance is dropping. Offering early support can make a huge difference.

9

Be a role model

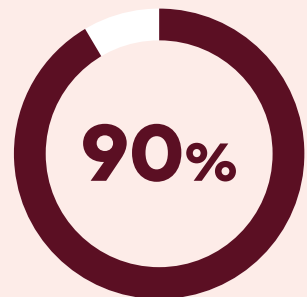
Managers ought to be a role model when it comes to rest and recuperation. Take breaks. One risk of working from home is that the boundary between work and leisure time begins to blur. Remember to disconnect. Draw a clear line between work and leisure. It is especially important for managers to make and visualise this delineation when working remotely.

10

Look after yourself

Managers are expected to take good care of their staff, but it is also important they take care of themselves. Be sure to establish good routines and interweave work with concrete activities. Use the time you save on commuting to and from work to do things that you want to do – play an instrument for a while, read a book, try out a new recipe or take a long walk. There are also heaps of apps out there for yoga, exercise and mindfulness which are well worth a go.

Facts



think that dialogue with their immediate manager works well when working from home.

When managers need support

Being a manager today means high requirements and expectations from both management and employees. At the same time, the line between work and private life gets blurred and it becomes possible to be constantly available. Even managers can need support at times in order to achieve a sustainable workplace themselves.

1

Prioritise from the top down

The manager bears ultimate responsibility for work environment management, but priorities need to be set from the top down and owned by everyone in the organisation. When work environment management starts in the upper tranches and involves the entire organisation, concrete behaviours can emerge as a result. Encourage employees to get involved in work environment management.

2

Ensure support

Make sure managers are able to receive support, feedback and help setting priorities from their own superior.

3

Break the isolation

Break the isolation by setting up a managers' network for support and the exchange of experience. Allow time for the managers' network to meet regularly. Develop a mentorship programme so that experienced managers can support their newer colleagues.

4

Unburden managers

Many managers take on new tasks without relinquishing others. Review responsibilities and workloads annually. Review the size of staff groups if workload has increased or if the manager's conditions and ability to lead the group have changed. Unburden managers of many administrative tasks.

5

Prepare for conflicts

Conflicts are draining and it is best to stop them before they arise if possible. One way to do this is to develop agreements which determine how employees behave towards one another. Involve employers in the process and discuss: How do we address one another? How do we behave towards one another?

6

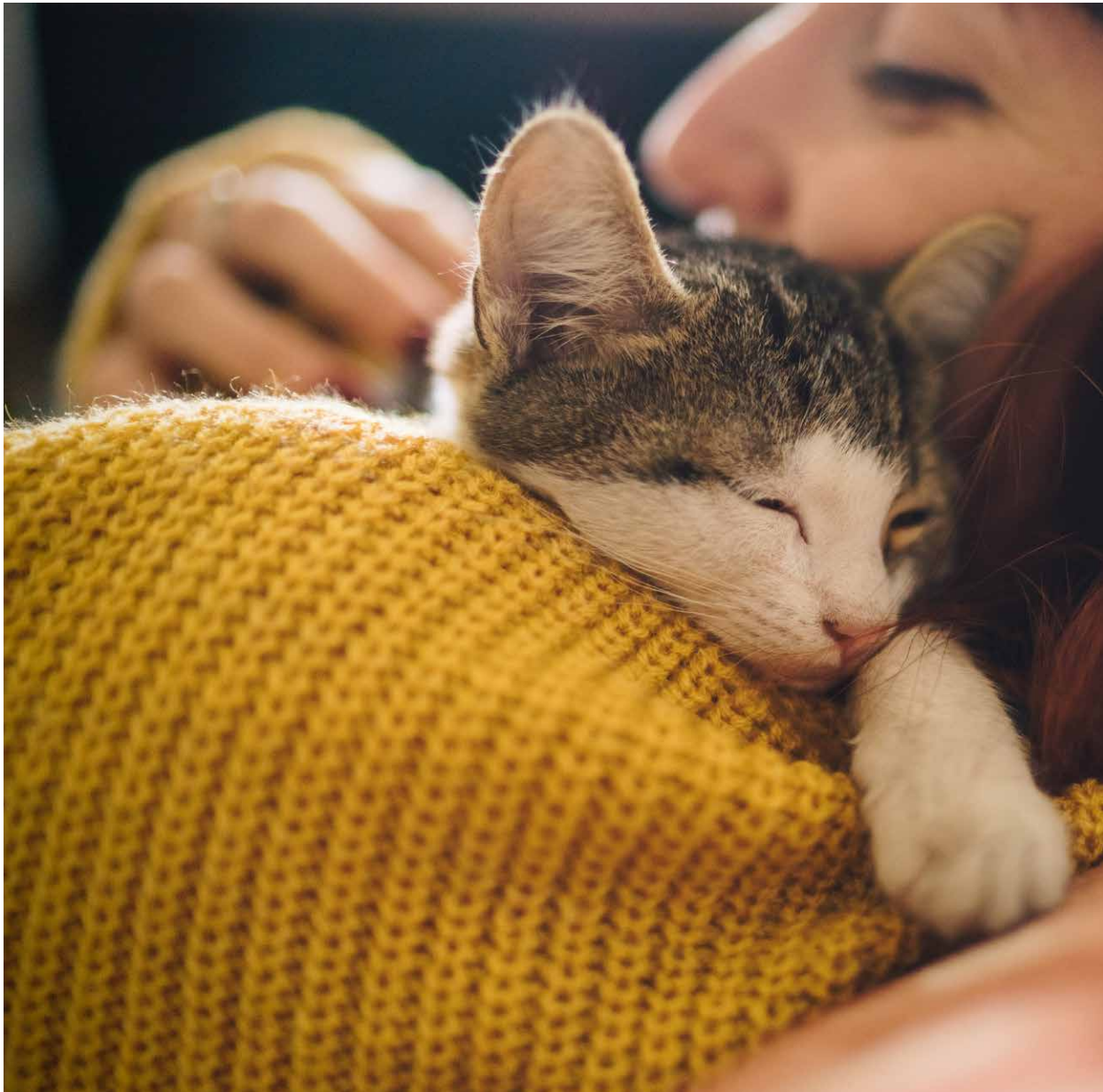
Delegate responsibility

The latest leadership research points to the importance of a communicative and transformative leadership whereby leaders set direction, provide an overarching framework and delegate responsibility without micro-managing or exerting control. Give responsibility





Give responsibility and powers to employees and avoid micro-managing in operational matters.





and powers to employees and avoid micro-managing in operational matters.

7

Deputies in the case of absence

Make sure to appoint a deputy with a mandate to step in and take action when a manager is absent.

8

Collaborate with HR

The close and active support of an HR department can support and aid the working situation of managers through clear structure, procedures and processes.

9

Policy for digital availability

Providing leadership in a digital context or to employees who are working remotely entails a greater degree of complexity. Digitalisation also means that the manager's own work environment becomes more and more boundless. Clarify norms and develop policies around availability both during and after ordinary working time. Time for recuperation is just as important as time for work if we are to remain efficient in the long term.

10

Follow up continuously

Provide continuous feedback on the work environment and stress factors at the workplace and respond directly to any signs of illness.

4

Stress and mental illness

Stress and unhealthy workloads
Mental illness

48
51

Mental illness exists all throughout our society and is an ever greater challenge in working life. By making active efforts at the workplace it is possible to prevent stress and mental illness, and the right action at the right time will help struggling employees to overcome difficult situations more quickly.





Stress and unhealthy workloads

A high workload can cause job-related health problems. Short periods of stress are not harmful, but long-term, unhealthy strain without time for recuperation are damaging and can lead to diminished working capacity and sick leave.

1

Generate participation

Engagement and participation counteract stress just so long as there are clear and reasonable goals for the business. In order to feel happy at work, we need to have influence over our duties and work environment. Provide quick, clear and sufficient information about goal attainment, financial results and changes. Ensure that all employees have clear and reasonable goals and balance between their responsibilities and powers. Follow up and provide feedback – often.

2

Educate managers

A good manager needs to be able to handle both their own workload and that of their staff constructively. A manager who takes regular breaks, exercises and refrains from working overtime will make for a good role model and a positive fit factor on the job. Managers need to understand that their own behaviours can risk becoming a source of stress for their employees. Concretely what this means is refraining from emailing or ringing employees outside of ordinary working time and respecting lunch breaks.

3

Encourage breaks

Neither the brain nor the body benefits from working for long periods without a pause. Make sure that your schedules, procedures and culture all enable and encourage short breaks throughout the day and that everyone takes a proper lunch break. Creating a pleasant staff room can help facilitate this. Even as the day goes on, our bodies and brains need a varied tempo and a range of different tasks in order to feel happy and content. Intensive periods in the day and the year need to be followed by quieter moments which allow us to recuperate.



Learn to recognise the early signs of mental illness. These can include frequent sick leave or mood swings.



Facts

1/3

experience high stress levels or high-risk stress



4

Establish boundaries for work

Being motivated and eager to help can sometimes make it difficult to set up boundaries for our own engagement in the workplace. Support employees in taking control over their working situation and having the courage to say no. Organise your staffing and operations so that the workload is manageable and so that overtime will only be needed in exceptional cases. Actively reject jargon and culture which encourages working overtime. Offer help to prioritise what needs to be done immediately and what can wait until later. Help employees to set clear goals and delimit duties and responsibilities where necessary.

5

Encourage breaks

As IT develops at an ever faster pace, it creates better opportunities for both more efficient work processes and for greater individual freedom. At the same time, constant connectivity has moved our work lives more and more into our private spheres. It has become increasingly difficult to switch off from work and get the recuperation and rest we need – not least in the form of a good night's sleep. This is especially important to consider if employees are working from home. Establish a clear policy for availability and try to avoid sending emails or making work calls outside of office hours unless doing so is absolutely necessary. Encourage your employees to switch off push notifications on their computers and phones.

6

Dare to make mistakes

One of the most common causes of stress is the fear of not being good enough and of failing. A permissive attitude will create space for open communications, taking initiatives and expressing different opinions. A good manager gives concrete feedback on both failures and successes and supports their employees through both the good times and the bad.

7

See the entire person

Stress levels and our abilities to handle pressing work situations are also influenced by how employees spend their time outside of work. Friends, family and meaningful hobbies will all help with recuperation and perspective. Conversely, interpersonal conflicts, divorce and sick relatives or bereavement can all zap energy levels and put your employee out of step at work. A good manager offers support to employees who go from work to a problematic or difficult personal life. Sometimes it is enough to simply ask a question that shows you care while other times a more professional support meeting may be required.

8

Exercise

A sure-fire way to combat stress is to exercise daily. Even just a brisk half-hour walk each day is enough, for example on the way to or from work. Keeping active also improves our sleep at night. Offer tax-free wellness contributions and encourage your employees to cycle or walk to work.

9

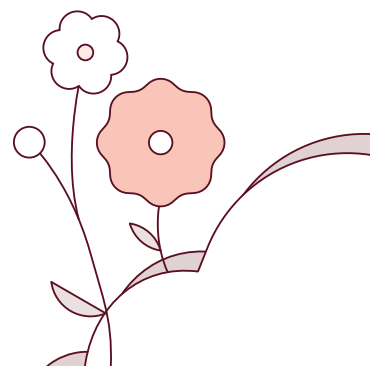
Look out for on the warning signs

An excessive workload can affect both the body and the mind. By looking out for common signs of stress, you will be able to ask the right questions and if necessary review the work environment. Early signs include fatigue, difficulties sleeping, headaches, heart palpitations, impaired memory, concentration difficulties, mood swings or increased susceptibility to infection. Good managers regularly ask how their employees are feeling.

10

Get help

Employees who display the signs of long-term stress need help. If the problem cannot be solved in the short term by the employee themselves with support from their manager then you will need to take things further and solve the problem in another way. Long-term stress risks costing both the individual and the organisation in the form of strife, impaired performance and sick leave – often with long-term absence as the result. Get help from others in your organisation or contact your occupational health service. The right action could be anything from dietary advice and exercise to reconnecting with nature, reviewing your IT environment or changing the employee's tasks.



Mental illness

Mental illness is one of the most common causes of sick leave. As a manager, in many cases you will be able to contribute towards changes which can combat sick leave or accelerate rehabilitation.

1

Be proactive

A good social climate and preventative actions which combat stress are the best way to prevent mental illness in your employees. Among other things, this means a clear distribution of duties and making sure that responsibilities and powers are in line with one another. Ensure that all employees have a say when it comes to their tasks and duties and that they are involved in the change and development work undertaken.

2

Develop competencies

The more conscious a person is of mental health, the better equipped they will be to look after themselves. Be proactive and organise competence-raising lectures and talks on stress and mental illness. Encourage employees to exercise through wellness contributions and offer staff with sleeping difficulties the opportunity to attend a sleep school. Be sure to also raise

awareness around the importance of recuperation in order to perform well over time.

3

Reduce stigma

Work towards a common set of values whereby everyone is treated with respect. Try and develop an open climate where employees feel confident to say when they are feeling down or going through a tough spell. Being able to speak about mental health experiences within an accepting environment can feel liberating and bring relief. Offer support at individual employee appraisals. Speak to each other, not about each other.

4

Notice the early signs

Learn to recognise the early signs of mental illness. These can include more frequent sick leave, fatigue or a marked drop in performance. Employees who begin showing up late or who more often work longer hours at a slower and unmotivated pace may also be in the risk zone.

Other early signs of mental illness can include radical mood swings, headaches or the person losing their sense of humour.

5

Do not be afraid to ask

If you notice the signs that an employee is not doing so well, take the initiative to start a conversation. Be supportive and ask open questions without judgement. The most important thing is to listen, not to offer up an oven-ready solution immediately. Remind employees about their options to find reliable information online via websites such as 1177, Vårdguiden or the national Hjärnkoll campaign.

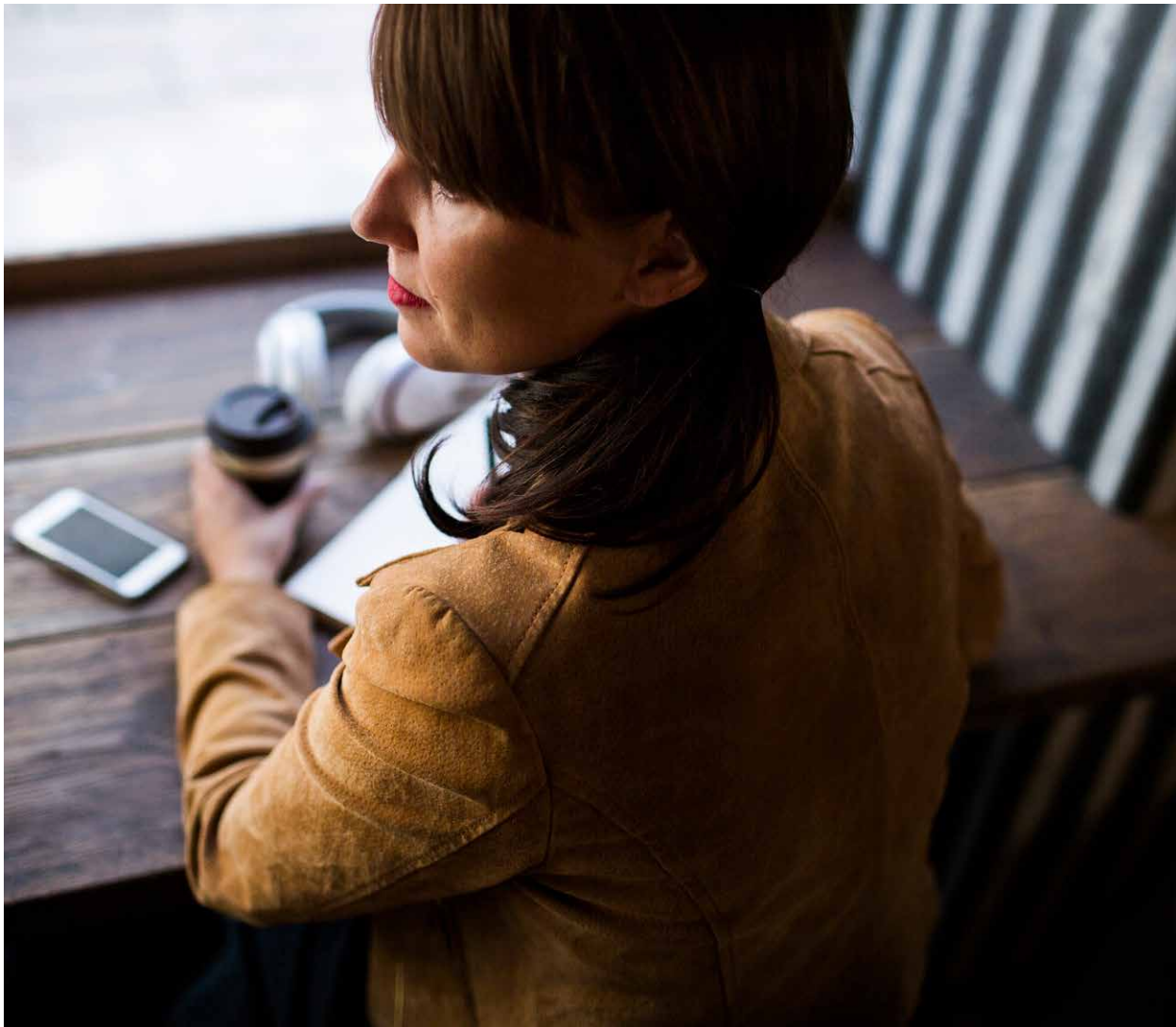
6

Do not forget your colleagues

Keep in mind that when one employee suffers from mental illness, the whole group is often affected. This kind of situation can give rise to anxieties and difficult social situations if one person's impaired performance



If you notice the signs that an employee is not doing so well, take the initiative to start a conversation.



spills over onto the workloads of others. At the same time, friendship and concern from colleagues can be an important resource on the affected individual's road to recovery. Be open and honest with the group, but without breaching the confidentiality of the person concerned.

7

Keep in contact

If mental health difficulties lead to sick leave, it is important for the employer to take smart action to prevent the absence from being longer than necessary. The most important thing of all is to keep in contact from the very beginning. Show that you still consider the employee to be a part of the group by continuing to invite them to conferences and social activities. Agree a time when you will next get speak or meet and proactively reach out if the employee does not make contact on their own initiative.

8

Appropriate support

Early action will facilitate a return to work. For milder episodes of depression or anxiety, your occupational health service or primary care provider can normally offer adequate support. Deeper states of depression and other symptoms of mental illness may require the involvement of specialised psychiatrists. For advice and an initial assessment on what help might be needed, you can get in touch with the rehabilitation coordinator at your occupational health service.

9

Collaborate on support

Be sure to set up a direct line of contact with the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, your occupational health service and any other care providers. After an initial assessment, the rehabilitation coordinator at your occupational health service can coordinate efforts involved in the rehabilitation process. Draw up a joint plan for how all of the parties involved can best work together and individually in order to best help the person concerned to feel better. Remember, of course, that the employee is the protagonist here. Depending on the situation, it may also be a good idea to maintain cultivated contact with the family and other relatives of the person affected.

10

Support the employee's return to work

A diagnosis alone will not tell you all there is to know about what an employee can manage. How an employee finds and manages their mental illness and how much support they need is something which varies from person to person. As the employee begins to feel better, you can start jointly making plans for their gradual return to work. If they have been on long-term sick leave then it may be a good idea to begin with a few social visits to the workplace. Find out what adjustments they will need in order to make their return to work as easy as possible.

Facts

Almost

one in two

employees sometimes, often or always feel that they have difficulties in disconnecting.



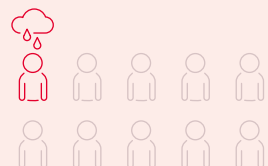
4/10

More than 4 out of 10 have some form of sleep problem.

Every

tenth

employee often or always feels emotionally exhausted.

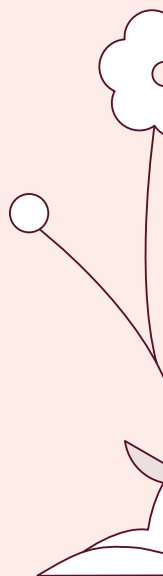


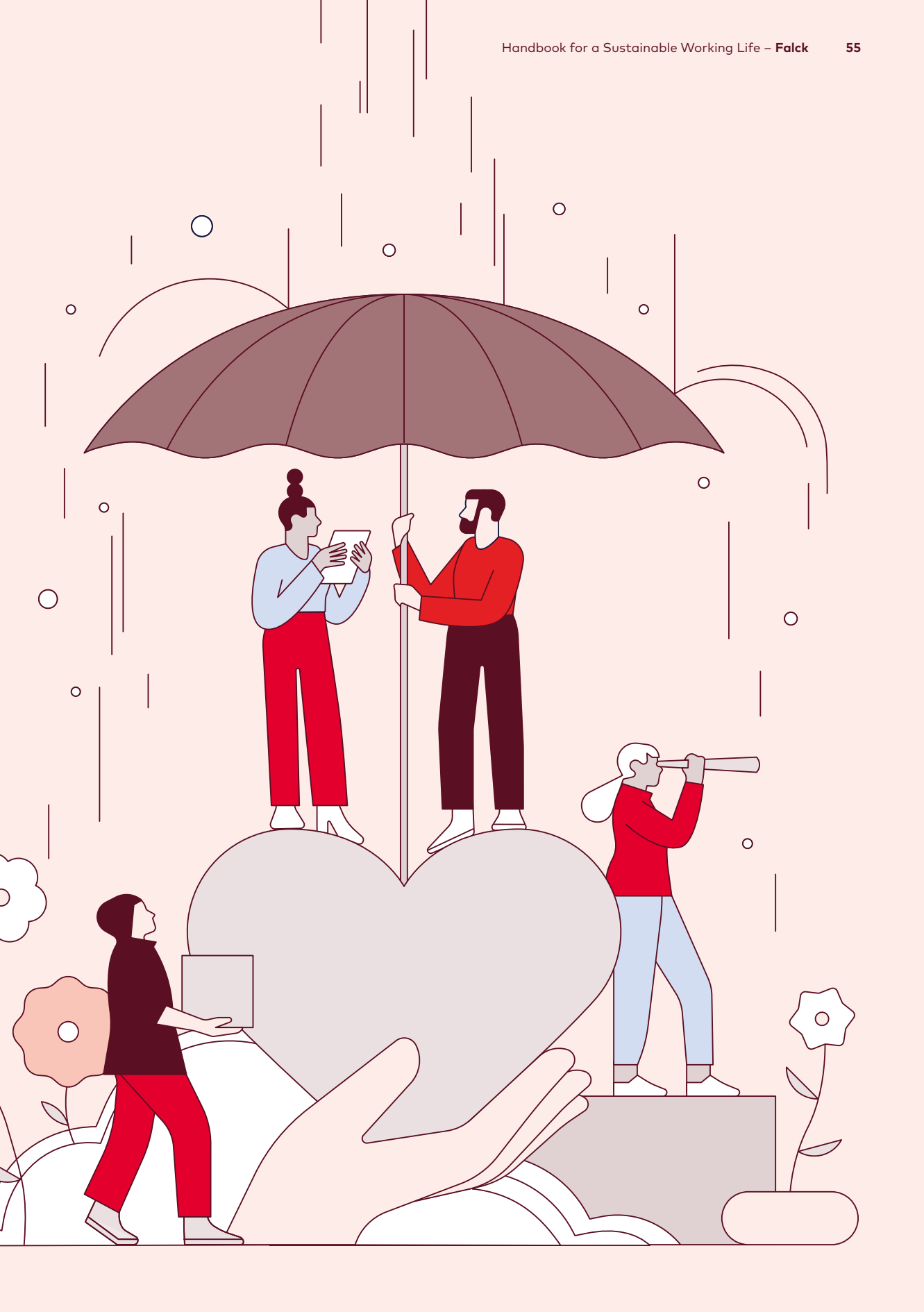
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Vulnerable situations and crises

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Difficult situations can take different shapes and forms. It is important to be prepared for the various different scenarios that can arise – no matter whether this be a rapid change to society, a case of personal issues concerning a single employee or an acute crisis which takes hold at the workplace.





Rapid reorganisations and changing circumstances

Rapid reorganisations and change have become an everyday occurrence at many workplaces. With the right knowledge and practice, it is possible to properly equip staff and managers for times of change.

1

Clarify expectations

Create the right expectations so that employees know what is important. Clarify what you expect from your employees and where responsibilities lie. A clear framework will provide security and make sure employees know what applies.

2

Describe the playing field

From an organisational perspective, it is important to establish a set of common values based on agreed behaviours and

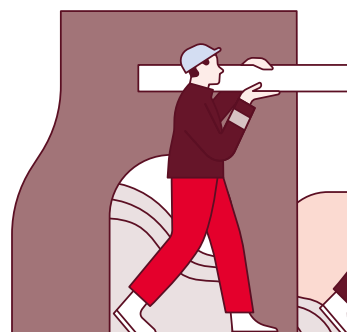
to create clarity around priorities in both the long and short term. With this in place, employees will know how to relate to their tasks and to their colleagues. This is especially important in times of uncertainty.

3

Be open to different reactions

Different people react differently to uncertainty and change. Some retreat. Others go into overdrive. Employees who normally perform well might not operate to the same standard when the context changes. In this regard it is important to be open and non-judgemental both to yourself

and to others. Speak with your employees before, during and after any kind of major change.



4

Cultivate an open culture

Employees have a responsibility to formulate and communicate their needs and they need to feel that they have the go-ahead to do this. In the same way, managers need to be open and try to create the conditions that their employees need in order to perform. Sit down together and see what may need to change – and what the employee can do for themselves and how the organisation can support them.

5

Meet difficulties with compassion

Meeting difficulties with acceptance and openness is often a good start which can create constructive solutions. Employees need to feel they can be honest about their fears and that they can air their concerns. This helps create sustainable behaviours. Stressed and fearful employees will struggle to excel.

6

Share both the good and the bad

Managers who share both the ups and the downs help to create an open and accepting atmosphere. Place focus on acknowledging mistakes and thinking of them as teachable moments. In times of change, many new reactions can affect our work – sharing experiences openly and with compassion can be a good way to better focus on our work.

7

Look through other eyes

Some find it easy to adapt to change and develop as a result while others seize up. Why is that? What kind of person am I? What do others see that I miss? Seeking feedback from outside of our closest circles can open up new paths. This is true both on the individual and organisational level. Don't be afraid to ask for other's perspectives. And listen carefully to what they have to add.

8

Highlight the common denominator

Formulating a why – internally to yourself and externally to the organisation – creates meaning and purpose. It serves to identify a common denominator in our work. Why are we doing what we do? What is my role in attaining our overarching goal? Try to get each and every employee to understand how specifically their efforts contribute to the whole.

9

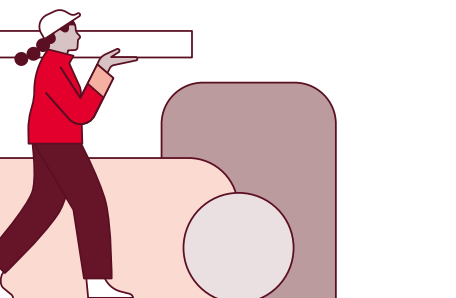
Focus on foundational stability

Times of change can require quick decisions and earlier decisions may need to be reviewed or overturned. Projects can end up getting postponed or shelved. This can reduce motivation and give rise to feelings of uncertainty which can make employees lose their initiative and become apathetic. A clear sense of purpose can counteract these feelings by providing security and foundational stability.

10

Create meaning

The creation of meaning is closely related to values and behaviours and in this regard it is crucial that values are clearly expressed in the company's identity. What are the purpose, goals and vision of the organisation? One example is to do this via storytelling – why do we exist as an organisation? Why do I work here? This approach will create a deep feeling of identity, context and community even in uncertain times.



Difficult conversations

Sometimes managers need to have difficult conversations with their employees. These can be giving sensitive criticism, taking up personal matters which are affecting the workplace or delivering negative news. Being well prepared will make difficult conversations easier for everyone.

1

Choose the right time

Don't put off conversations by more than is absolute necessary and have the talk as soon as you are ready. Make sure you can meet in a quiet room where you will not be interrupted or disturbed. Switch off your phone, partly to avoid disturbances but also to signal that you consider the meeting important. Make sure to set aside time after the meeting in case things run over and to give yourself space for reflection and mental recovery.

2

Think things over beforehand

Prepare what you are going to say by jotting down some points on a piece of paper. Remember that if somebody is upset they

may find it more difficult to take information on board with the risk being that only some of what you say gets remembered. With that in mind, limit yourself only to the most important aspects and stick closely to these even when faced with different questions and responses. Retain a calm demeanour and ask to get back to the employee with answers if you are unsure how to respond to difficult questions or criticism.

3

Get support

As a manager, you will need training in how to have difficult conversations. Always check what you are going to say with your colleagues or your own manager, preferably in the form of a simple role play. However, avoid involving colleagues of the person you will be having the conversation with as this can lead to conflicts

4

Ask somebody else to sit in

Sometimes it is a good idea to ask a third person to be present for support. Their role can be to provide support to the employee or to facilitate the conversation from a neutral position. If their role is to provide support to the employee then it should be up to the employee to decide if they want somebody present or not and if so, who. This may be a colleague, a union representative or a behavioural scientist from your occupational health service.

5

Be unambiguous

Get straight to the point and put your message across quickly and concisely. Refer to your policies or other formal documents which are relevant in the context. Try and stick to your key message and repeat it several times throughout the meeting. Seek out compromises but be clear on what your absolute requirements are.

6

Be constructive

Never lay down criticism which is based on things reported to you by others. Stick to what you know yourself through situations where you have been present. If this makes it too difficult to have important conversations, then this could be a sign that you need to change your current working situation in order to be more present as a manager. The criticism you put across should also be focused on concrete behaviours and actual occurrences. Avoid criticism which pertains to personality, opinions or morals.

7

Ask for a response

Ask for your employee's opinion on the matter at hand and on what you have said. Then ask the employee to put forward their own suggestions on how to resolve the issues discussed. It is often a good idea to suggest taking some time to reflect and agreeing to meet again later, especially if the subject gives rise to strong feelings. Put the employee in focus and keep your own emotions under control if you start feeling flustered.

The employee will never give comfort if you find your job tough.

8

Listen and confirm

Listen to your employee without interrupting them and make a note of things that you may want to comment on or ask more about. Confirm what the employee says by concisely summarising their viewpoints in your own words and asking if you have understood correctly. Focus on feelings and needs: How do you feel in your current work situation? How do things feel right now? What things are important for you to discuss right now and after this meeting? Keep in mind that sensitive conversations can lead to tears.

9

Summarise the conversation

End the meeting by summarising what has been said. Ask if you both agree on the summary and if there is anything else the employee would like to address.

Agree a time for a follow-up meeting, but make it clear that you are also available for further discussion and clarifications even before that meeting should the employee need to discuss things further.

10

Document and follow up

Follow up the conversation by making your own notes on what was said. Also consider sending short annotations in the form of things you have agreed on or as a to-do list to the employee in question. If you want to formally document the conversation by recording it on your phone or another device, you must first ask for the permission of everyone present. Be prepared for strong reactions at a later stage. Offer the employee support from a professional such as a behavioural scientist or a psychologist from your occupational health service if necessary.



Conflicts and unfair treatment

Workplaces must be equipped to deal with conflicts between employees. Knowledge and clarity are key when it comes to ensuring zero tolerance for conflicts, harassment and bullying.

1

Expect some rows

Clear roles and an open culture which encourages constructive feedback will reduce the risk of conflicts and harassment. Make sure you are prepared and be clear on what applies. This will make it easier to act quickly and consistently whenever conflicts do arise.

2

Be clear about what applies

All workplaces need a clear policy which sets out information and procedures concerning unfair treatment, bullying and harassment. Make sure that all employees – both managers and employees – know what goes.

The policy should also provide information on who to contact if an employee is affected by these issues or suspects that one of their colleagues might be. Make the policy as specific as possible – spell out exactly what you are referring to.

3

Take action directly

Act directly as soon as you suspect that a conflict may be emerging or an employee is being treated wrongly. The sooner you act, the easier it will be to find a constructive solution. It costs nothing to ask one question too many, but holding back for fear of acting too hastily can end up costing the company dearly. Document everything that comes to light.

4

Be observant

If you notice that somebody is behaving differently or negatively in relation to how they normally act, this may be an early warning sign. Do not be afraid to ask what is going on and if you can help. Be prepared to follow up if necessary.

5

Do not be afraid to talk about culture

When it comes to sexual harassment and unwanted contact, people often have different opinions in terms of what they consider to be okay and not okay. This is a complex issue which has a considerable impact on the workplace.

Involve employees and discuss:
What goes at our workplace?
How do we address one another?
How do we behave? Be clear
around what kind of language
is acceptable and what is not.

6

Promote openness

It can be very tough for a victimised employee to discuss what they have experienced. Sexual harassment or bullying often leads to feelings of shame and guilt and it is not uncommon for the victims to blame themselves for what happened. Encourage employees to have the confidence to come forward; for example, by addressing the topic at employee appraisals and in surveys. Promote a culture of openness at the workplace.

7

Be attentive

Employers have a duty to take action even if the person affected does not report the abuse. If suspicions arise – whether due to rumours or observations – that somebody is being subjected to harassment or bullying (e.g. in the form of insults, social ostracism or sexual harassment), then the employer has a duty to investigate whether or not this is the case.

8

Investigate what has happened

The first step is to put together a clear picture of what has happened by talking to everybody involved and to any witnesses. Be clear about what shape the process will take. It is important that the investigation is discreet and conducted with consideration and respect to those involved.

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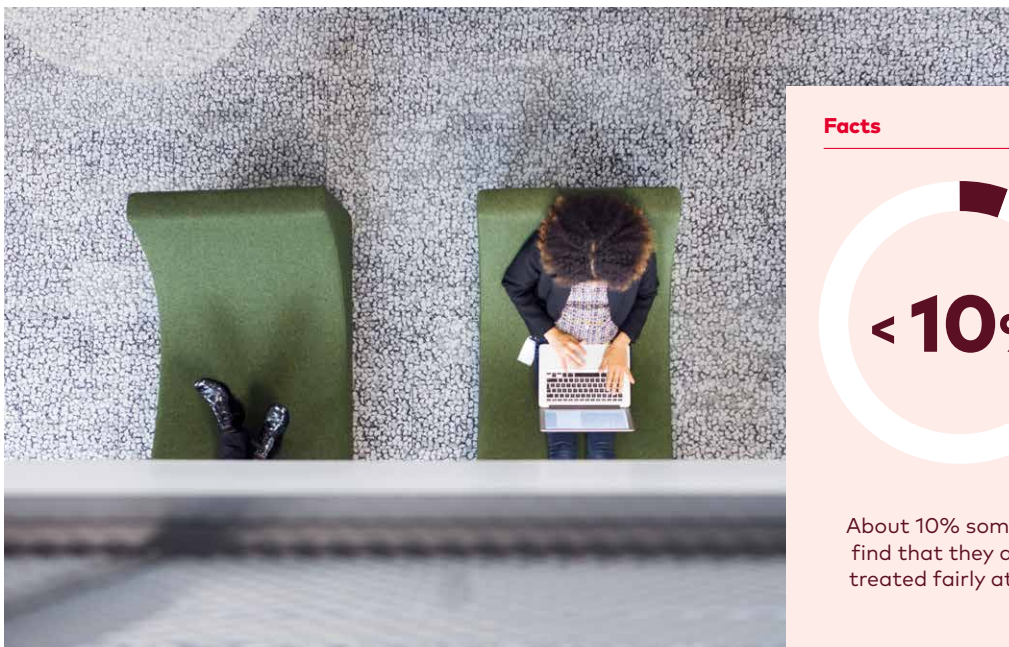
Offer support

Being accused of having acted inappropriately towards somebody else can come as a shock to an employee. It is important that everyone is able to have their say and put forward their version of events. Offer support to all parties concerned.

10

Bring in external help

Consider bringing in external help for an objective assessment. It can be easier for both the victim and the accused if an independent third party carries out the investigation.



Facts

< 10%

About 10% sometimes find that they are not treated fairly at work.

Crises and incidents

Good crisis management comes down to being prepared and taking a systematic and proactive approach. Enhanced organisational preparedness will contribute towards an organisation that can act fast in a crisis.

1

Prepare for the worst

Establish a crisis plan and make sure that both managers and employees know what it says. The most important aspect of any good crisis plan is the work done on the road to its creation. This involves generating insights by discussing what different crisis situations may affect your business and how you can prevent illness through clear procedures. Make sure that your crisis plan clearly describes how it will be regularly tested and updated and who will be responsible for ensuring this happens.

2

The organisation's responsibility

Formulate what specific risks may affect your organisation – on an individual, group and organisational level. Clarify the company's responsibility at all three levels.

3

Vulnerable workplaces

More and more workplaces are at an increased risk of threat and violence. Take a preventative approach by reviewing premises, alarms and accessibility in order to see if risks can be prevented. Train staff in how to respond to threatening behaviour.

4

Rapid support

From the perspective of recovery, rapid and supportive action from managers and senior management can play a crucial role. This conveys respect and confirms that the company has understood the situation and will provide help. Take on outside help in order to develop competencies and to provide support in acute situations, but do not offload responsibility elsewhere.

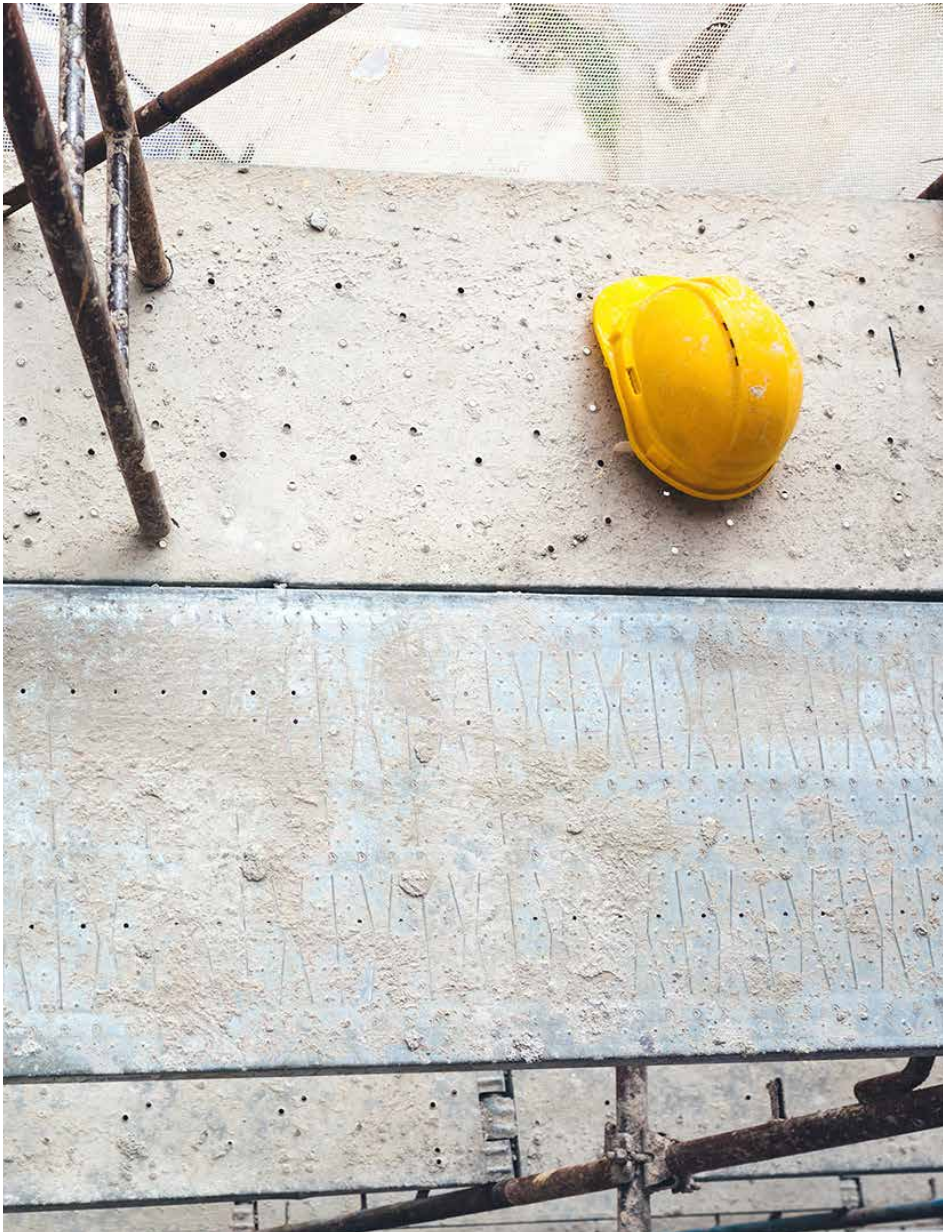
5

Understand the crisis

In order to briefly describe a complicated course of events we can divide crises into phases although in reality, we often move two steps forward and one step back. In the so-called shock phase, we protect ourselves from trauma by shielding ourselves off from it or denying it entirely. This can be misperceived as a sign that the person affected is not in need of help despite help being offered. Ask again! We can't be sure that the person even understood the question! During the response and processing phase, even stronger feelings will emerge, at first unsorted, perhaps guilt-laden, aggressive or despondent, and then later more reasoned. During the reorientation phase, we accept facts and take what happened as a point of departure for starting again. The process can often take as long as a year, sometimes longer in the case of dramatic losses.



No amount of information can be too much. A lack of information will increase uncertainty.



6

Provide information early and repeatedly

From the perspective of recovery, rapid and supportive action from managers and senior management can play a crucial role. This conveys respect and confirms that the company has understood the situation and will provide help. Take on outside help in order to develop competencies and to provide support in acute situations, but do not offload responsibility elsewhere.

7

Same information to all involved

No amount of information can be too much. Even repeatedly announcing that you have nothing new to announce can be important. Remember also to be consistent across different channels: email, text message, in staff meetings, when speaking one-on-one, on the Intranet, when speaking to those on leave and if necessary to the media. Bring in outside help when responding to critical questions from the media.

8

Gather those affected

Immediately call an obligatory crisis meeting where you can gather the group in a safe and private place. Begin by informing everyone what has happened and what form the plan will take. Provide space for employees to comment on what has happened – and retain an objective, supportive focus. Conclude by summing up the situation and the group's experiences and you can even provide information on common and standard reactions to a crisis. Crisis meetings and any voluntary relief meetings will help to create stability.

9

Make yourself available to those affected

The different phases of the crisis will need different kinds of support and often good support both from work and the private sphere will play a crucial role in helping those affected to recover. During the acute phase, the most important thing is to reassure the

person as best possible, and to show compassion on the terms of the person affected. Focus initially on human presence in time and space, food and drink and on generously solving practical issues for the person affected.

10

Let things take time

Be patient and follow up over a longer period of time simply by asking: "how do things feel now?" Always offer professional conversational support to the person affected. Simply just making the offer will help to improve the person's self-capacity.



Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol problems are widespread in society. Misuse affects the individual's health and can have a negative effect on the whole workplace. The same goes in cases where it is feared that an employee may be abusing narcotic substances or engaging in the non-medical use of medications.

1

Develop a policy for alcohol and drugs

Be sure to develop a clear policy for alcohol and drugs which establishes a set of rules for the workplace. This will help create a safe and secure work environment and to safeguard employee health.

2

Ask about alcohol habits at employee appraisals

Include questions about alcohol consumption as a natural part of your questions about lifestyle habits at employee appraisals. Encourage employees to be upfront about unhealthy habits by assuring them that the employer can offer support and rehabilitation if necessary.

3

Use surveys and check-ups

Make sure that work environment and health surveys and medical check-ups address issues relating to alcohol consumption and drug use in just the same way as they do other lifestyle habits. Asking these questions will give employees the opportunity to reflect and perhaps the motivation to take their first steps towards seeking help and support. It also serves to remind staff that alcohol and drug use are a work environment issue.

4

Offer counselling

Give employees the opportunity to contact the occupational health service themselves for counselling about their alcohol

habits without first needing their employer's approval. This can help encourage more to seek help and support. Make it clear to employees that unhealthy habits concerning alcohol do not constitute grounds for dismissal and that counselling is available as part of the company's systematic work environment management.

5

Raise awareness

Educate managers and safety representatives on how to spot the early signs of unhealthy alcohol consumption and drug use. Watch out for behavioural changes, an increase in the incidence of short-term absence due to sickness and impaired performance in individual employees. Organise inspirational lectures on health topics which cover alcohol habits as part of their natural remit. Increased



awareness will mean increased openness and an opportunity for well-meaning support.

6

Do not be afraid to ask and to be supportive

Daring to ask is daring to care. Trust your gut feeling if you suspect that a certain employee may have unhealthy habits concerning alcohol. Swallow your fear of being wrong and take up uncomfortable issues. Be well prepared and bring in professional support. Document your meeting with a focus on the facts. Offer professional counselling and do not blame the employee. Unhealthy alcohol habits are common and can be changed.

7

Conduct random tests

For activities subject to strict safety requirements such as driving in traffic, operating machinery, energy production etc., it is recommended that you regularly carry out random breathalyser and drug tests. You should also establish these tests as a standard part of your recruitment process. Consider installing ignition interlock devices on company vehicles.

8

Think carefully about parties

When organising parties and other social events related to work, make sure that it is possible for employees to remain sober without feeling uncomfortable. Be creative and come up with activities which do not revolve around alcohol. Restrict how much alcohol is offered at parties,

when entertaining clients and at gatherings/celebrations. Always offer a good alcohol-free alternative. Remember that you are a role model and have a special responsibility to exercise good judgement. Reflect on how you talk about alcohol in the lunch room, at coffee breaks and in other contexts. Be clear on your alcohol policy and action plan.

9

Don't forget medicines and narcotics

The use of banned substances such as narcotics is considerably less common than unhealthy alcohol habits. However, the risks to the work environment and to individual health are much greater. The abuse of medications is unfortunately commonplace and can cause addiction in much the same way as for traditional drugs, with serious consequences as a result. Be mindful of these issues and keep an eye out.

10

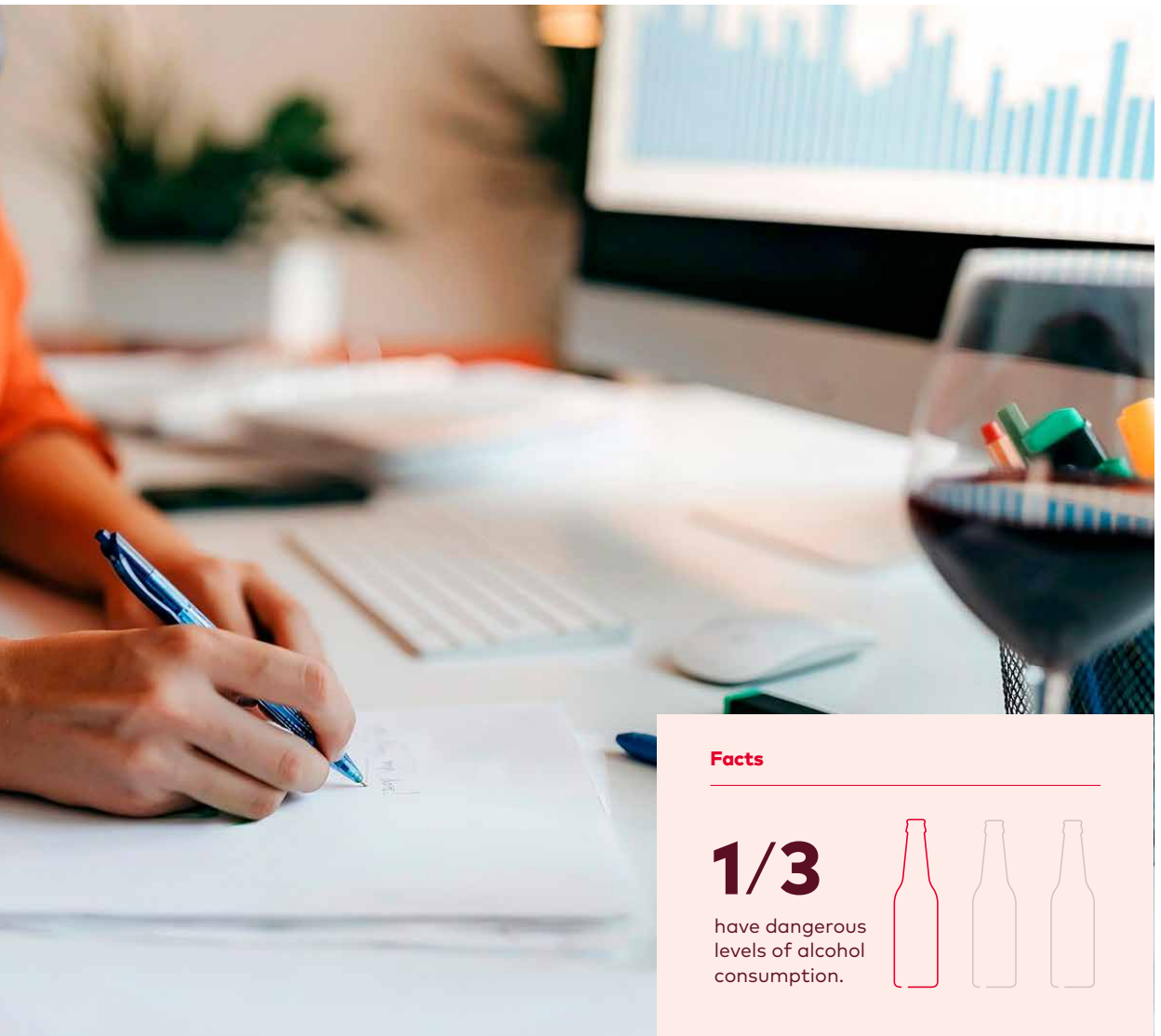
Get help

Enlist the help of professional counselling to offer support to both managers and individual employees. New lifestyle habits require follow-up, support and motivation. Rehabilitation takes knowledge and experience. Employee needs should determine what goals are established and what rehabilitation methods are offered. With the support of an occupational health service or another specialist, you can map out your situation, develop policy proposals and conclude rehabilitation agreements which clearly stipulate employee and employer responsibilities.





Daring to ask is daring to care. Trust your gut feeling if you suspect that a certain employee may have unhealthy habits concerning alcohol.



Facts

1/3

have dangerous levels of alcohol consumption.





Contains 190 tips and suggestions on how employers can develop and retain health and a good work environment. The handbook can be used both as a reference book when difficulties arise or as a source of inspiration in your daily efforts to create a sustainable working life for all.

Discover more tips at www.falcksverige.se

