





# Management Practices that Promote Workplace Mental Health









HOW CAN A BALANCED WORKLOAD BE ACHIEVED?

MARCH 2024

Workload is a concept that is difficult to define, and involves more than the amount of work prescribed by an employer. It includes a subjective dimension: the workload that is experienced by the employee is just as important as the workload demanded of the employee. It needs to be approached holistically, taking into account the complexity of the work that is actually performed, the formal and informal demands made on workers, the resources and tools each person has at their disposal for accomplishing their work, the time available, and the sometimes unforeseeable factors that have an impact on workload.

Work intensification is an increasingly prevalent phenomenon, resulting from major changes in the ways that work is organized. This phenomenon is characterized by a constant increase in workloads and greater demands placed on workers' intellectual, psychological and physical capacities. Workload is a significant risk factor for health. Several studies have shown links between the combination of high demands and low decision autonomy and mental, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular problems.

Courses of action	Concrete practices	Objectives or ideas for other practices
 <p><b>1. Sketch a detailed portrait of the actual workload</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I talk to employees to find out how they perceive their workload</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I pay particular attention to unforeseen factors that increase workload</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I ensure that the distribution of roles and tasks is clear and fair, and allow employees to manage their work priorities, to a certain extent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I compare official job descriptions with the actual work described by employees</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I update these job descriptions to produce a more realistic portrait of the workload for each job category</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>2. Plan work and anticipate periods when workloads will fluctuate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I identify the periods when workload is generally heaviest</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I make sure I have the staff and resources needed during these periods</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I plan for a temporary increase in workload when a change is imminent</li> </ul>	

Courses of action	Concrete practices	Objectives or ideas for other practices
 <p><b>3. Prioritize tasks and regulate new requests for work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I list tasks in order of priority</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I clearly communicate priorities and explain to employees why these tasks are prioritized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I consult employees to get their perspective on the prioritization of tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I draw up a list of tasks that are neither high priority nor essential and validate it with employees</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I question employees to understand why certain tasks are carried out, even if doing so was unplanned</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I negotiate new requests using facts as justification</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>4. Implement solutions adapted to actual work situations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I separate work “irritants” from tasks that employees prefer doing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I consult employees regarding possible ways of reducing work “irritants” and non-essential tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I ask them what they feel they need to be able to perform quality work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I perform an in-depth analysis of the causes of a heavy workload to find effective and sustainable solutions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I take the time to consider all options, drawing on the perspectives of both employees and upper management</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>5. Take skills and experience into account</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I entrust more complex mandates or responsibilities to employees with greater experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I make sure that people have the skills needed to meet the expectations placed on them</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I verify with employees whether they feel sufficiently experienced or competent to perform their tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I balance the quantity and complexity of the work assigned with each person’s abilities and interests</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>6. Manage crisis situations quickly</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I regularly reassure employees that I am aware of the situation and that I am working to find solutions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I inform upper management of the situation so that they too can be involved in the search for solutions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I refer to the list of prioritized tasks and temporarily put aside anything that is not essential</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I assess the possibility of other departments or units taking on some of the tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I borrow resources from other departments or rely on employment agencies to add extra staff</li> </ul>	

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