

Teaching Management of Mental Health Problems

at the Linz Academy of Occupational
Medicine and Safety

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Referring to contributions by **Herbert Friesenbichler**
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What to expect from an OP

- Look at work with an OPs eyes – main question: If they continue to work the way they do – is anyone likely to get harmed?
- Interfere with poor risk assessment
- Regarding known factors – set up systematic coping procedures on (appropriate) company level
- Look for persons already affected, and act

Dealing with STRESS

- Company system understands role of working conditions / environment
- Company system undertakes systematic steps to lower stress and increase resources
- Workers get support to cope with stress and - if necessary - individual help

Why focus on STRESS

- Stress – generally experienced to be negative
- Various known negative health effects
- Persons under stress tend to take higher risks
- Often voiced as lack of time/workers

Background

- Occupational Physicians' 'prevention time' is linked to * number of workers, * type of work, * distribution of prev time among OHS specialists
- Thus in most companies an OP would be present for consultation between a few hours per week and a few hours per year
- OP's are by law requested to assist a company system to become 'healthier'

Prevention time per worker/year

- 1,5 hours – industrial type of work
- 1,2 hours – office type of work
- Min 40% Safety / 35% OP
- <50/<20/<10 workers: 4 hrs per year, 2 hrs per year, 2 hours per 2 years, extension possible
- PLUS health surveillance required

Training sequence STRESS

- 1. Perception of STRESS (own)
- 2. Concepts useful in OH work
- 3. Guide for exploring STRESS in interviews with workers
- 4. Practical run + compilation of results
- 5. What to communicate to a company
- 6. Practical tool and what its properties are
- 7. Trial run of that tool
- 8. Conclusions and further tasks for participants

Teaching STRESS I

basic issues

- Collect experiences with and perception of stress among participants (young physicians)
- Introduce the Karasek stressors/ressources/ control model
- Introduce known negative health effects of stress, and collect factors that might help to remain healthy

Teaching STRESS II

stress in a work system

How to look for items indicating the presence of stress at work:

- Participants derive a concept for exploring stress at work by interviewing workers
- Pairs of participants conduct 1 hour interviews with 1 worker each
- Results are being sorted, reported to the plenary, discussed

Teaching STRESS III

How to introduce the results into a company system:

- Approaches towards decisionmakers
- Reporting (written reports, committee meetings)
- What if company systems requests action / help???

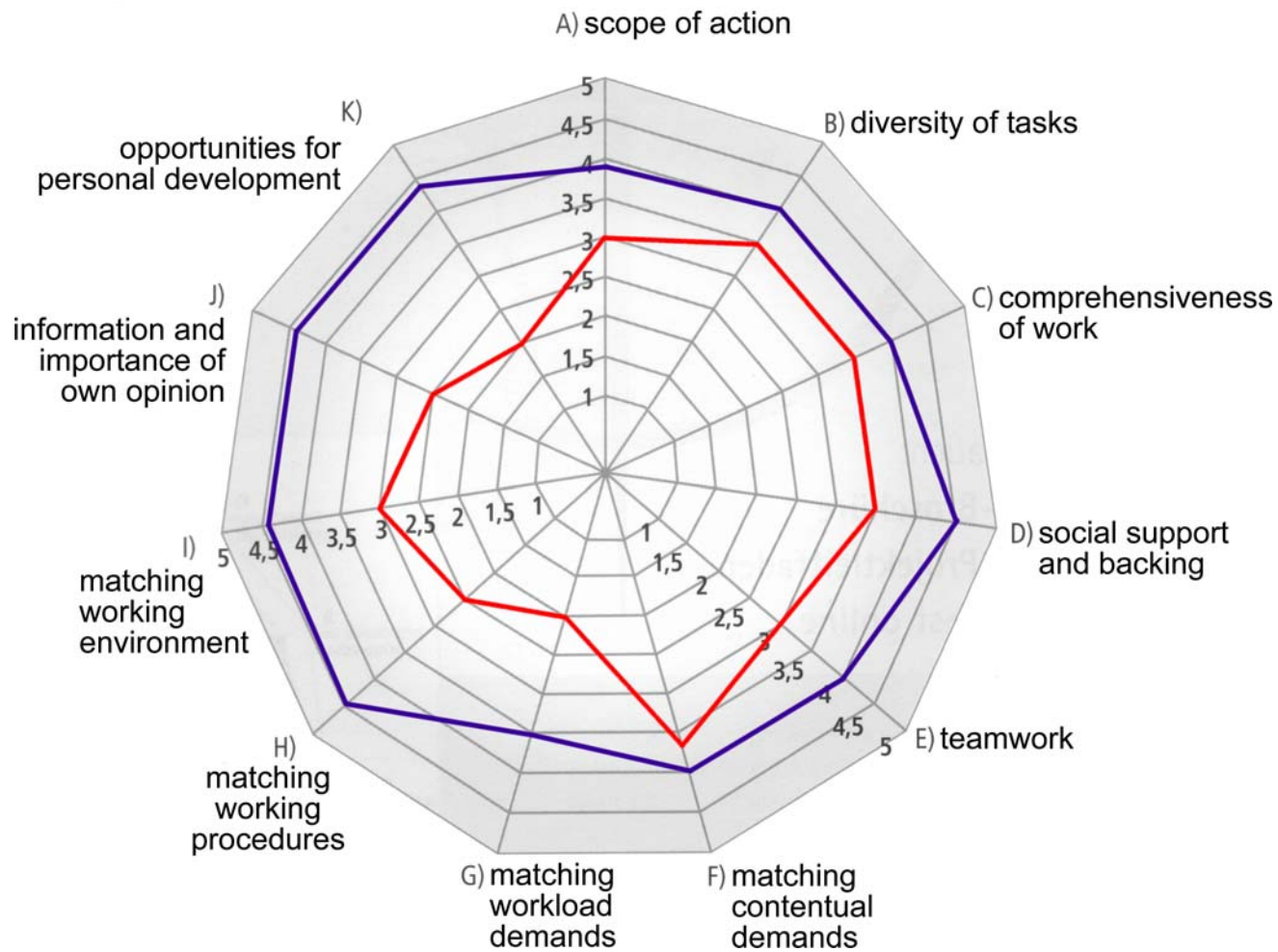
Dimensions of intervention

	Problem solving	Structural Support
Individual	Medical & psychological help	Training progr; Career plans
Collective Level	Improve Communication etc	Health Prom; Mgmt Systems

Teaching STRESS IV

Tool: *Impuls Test*

- Tool to assess stress on individual and collective level
- How it works: questionnaire – 2 or 3 questions
- What results we get
- How to deal with results
- Why this tool



Teaching STRESS VI

accompanying elements

- Regional working teams: take up stress and mental health in general when visiting companies
- Try bring up the issue during visits
- Document and reflect what happens
- Discuss it with mentor
- Document results of work in regional team for intranet

Thank you!

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