

# ENHANCING WELL-BEING THROUGH THE ENERGY WELLNESS PROGRAM

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## Abstract

The innovative Energy Wellness Program addresses the pressing need for mental, physical, and environmental wellness in today's demanding professional world. This program was designed after the WHO named stress the 21st century's worst health issue. The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 backs it. The approach reduces urban life and job stress with green care. Modern professionals are more disconnected from nature, which increases stress and lowers well-being. The Energy Wellness Program offers 30 courses to boost energy, reduce stress, and improve well-being. It emphasizes mental wellness with mindfulness, stress management, and emotional resiliency classes. Well-rounded fitness requires a variety of exercises, from hard cardiovascular workouts to mild stretching. Green care activities like woodland bathing and nature treks help people reconnect with nature and find healing.

The Energy Wellness Program's VET-based approach meets the unique needs of adult learners. The methodology for forming the Wellness Program involved a comprehensive study examining well-being practices, stress sources, and preparedness for health improvement among professionals from Greece, North Macedonia, Lithuania, Spain, and Italy. This study engaged 125 participants, with a gender distribution of 67% females and 33% males, who provided valuable insights into their workplace stress experiences and strategies for maintaining well-being. Despite ongoing efforts to manage stress, respondents strongly desire to engage in mental and physical health activities to improve their well-being. The participants' preferences varied, highlighting the need for customized interventions tailored to individual requirements. Participants were willing to allocate 1-3 hours per week for an educational program.

The Energy Wellness Program aims to help individuals and businesses manage workplace stress and create a healthier, more productive workplace. The program promotes environmental awareness and sustainable living to improve mental and physical health, immunity, and social unity. Online access allows professionals to integrate health practices into daily activities without interruption. Every course includes brief videos, micro assignments, guidelines, self-evaluation tools, and journals to track progress and form new habits. Participants learn practical methods from professionals to improve their overall health. The holistic method integrates vitality, self-confidence, receptivity, joy, contentment, and compassion perfectly harmoniously with nature.

The EU-funded Energy Wellness Program aims to transform professional stress management and wellness. This well-rounded approach ensures that students obtain theoretical information and practical skills for real-life situations. Its ultimate purpose is to boost individual and organizational productivity and pleasure.

**Keywords:** Digital Education, Building Healthy Habits, Mental Health, Physical Health, Coping Stress, Green Care, Wellbeing.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The increasing prevalence of work-related stress has emerged as one of the most significant challenges in the modern professional landscape, as highlighted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) which labelled stress the “health epidemic of the 21st century.” [1] The pervasive demands of work, coupled with the rapid pace of urban living, have led to a decline in mental, physical, and emotional well-being for many employees. [2] This decline is particularly evident in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where resources for addressing employee wellness are often limited. Larger enterprises typically have dedicated human resource departments and wellness programs, but SMEs face distinct challenges, lacking the infrastructure to support employee well-being effectively. [3]

Wellness and well-being practices in health sciences encompass a multifaceted approach that integrates physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions. There are two important aspects to the definition of wellness (Wellness Institute, n.d) [4]. First, wellness is not a passive or static state but rather an “active pursuit” that is associated with intentions, choices and actions as we work toward an optimal state of health and wellbeing. Second, wellness is linked to holistic health—that is, it extends beyond physical health and incorporates many different dimensions that should work in harmony. Moreover, wellbeing-oriented human resource management practices positively impact employee performance and wellbeing at work, with wellbeing playing a mediating role in this relationship (Pagán-Castaño, Maseda-Moreno, & Santos-Rojo, 2020). [5] Nevertheless, the importance of academia-practice partnerships in developing well-being policies that address health and social inequalities, suggesting that effective policies must incorporate both data and the perspectives of underserved populations (Tahnee, Klaser, Armine, 2023). [6] La Placa et al. further elaborate on the complexity of well-being, proposing a framework that extends beyond individual assessments to include community and societal contexts, thus enhancing the development of health interventions (Placa, et al., 2013). [7] Moreover, it is important to speak about the interplay between well-being and uncertainty in healthcare, advocating for strategies that help professionals navigate uncertainty to improve their own well-being (Riya et al., 2019). [8]

The Energy Wellness Program was conceived in response to this critical issue, offering a holistic approach to managing workplace stress through a blend of mental, physical, and environmental wellness strategies. It aligns with the European Union’s Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and prioritises green care as a sustainable solution to the stress crisis affecting professionals. [9] The innovative program includes 30 tailored courses that aim to boost energy, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being. These courses span from mindfulness and emotional resilience to physical fitness and green care activities such as nature treks and forest bathing. By reconnecting professionals with nature, the program seeks to counter the disconnection from the natural environment that has been shown to exacerbate stress and diminish well-being.

The fundamental foundation of the Energy Wellness Program is its methodology based on vocational education and training (VET), specifically tailored to address the distinct requirements of adult learners. This methodology was based on comprehensive research conducted with 125 professionals from Greece, North Macedonia, Lithuania, Spain, and Italy. The study aimed to investigate their encounters with work-related stress and their methodologies for maintaining good health. The survey identified primary sources of stress, such as overwhelming workloads, stringent time constraints, and difficulties in achieving a harmonious balance between work and personal life. Despite the use of time management and physical exercise techniques by many participants, a considerable proportion of them still suffered from elevated levels of stress and emotional fatigue. [10]

The results of this study emphasize the criticality of implementing thorough and customized therapies that not only target the manifestations of stress but also encourage long-lasting well-being behaviors. This gap was addressed by the development of the Energy Wellness Program, which equips professionals with practical tools and strategies to effectively handle stress, enhance their mental and physical well-being, and cultivate a more balanced work-life balance. Through the incorporation of health practices into everyday schedules and the utilization of a digital platform for ease of use, the program guarantees that participants can embrace these techniques without significant interruptions to their work life.

In this paper, we examine the structure and impact of the Energy Wellness Program, exploring how it can serve as a model for improving both individual well-being and organisational productivity. By focusing on the interconnectedness of mental, physical, and environmental health, this program

presents an innovative, sustainable approach to addressing one of the most pressing health concerns of our time.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

A paper should contain the description of your study and should be structured in different sections such as: Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, Results, Conclusions, Acknowledgements (if applicable) and References. Please note that title and authors list should be coincident with the accepted abstract.

The development of the Energy Wellness Program was grounded in a comprehensive methodology designed to address the mental, physical, and environmental well-being of professionals across various European countries. To ensure the program's relevance and effectiveness, a multifaceted approach was employed, combining data collection, analysis of best practices, and the design of innovative learning modules based on vocational education and training (VET) principles.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The foundation of the Energy Wellness Program was a detailed study aimed at understanding the well-being habits, stressors, and work environments of professionals. The research focused on participants from Greece, North Macedonia, Lithuania, Spain, and Italy, gathering insights from a total of 125 individuals (67% female and 33% male).

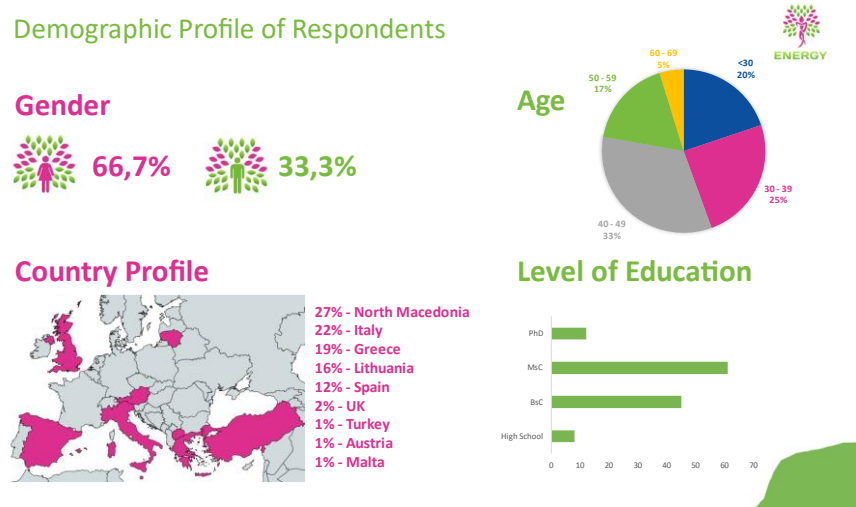


Figure 1. Profile of the participants in the survey.

The objective was to identify the key stressors in their professional lives, their current strategies for coping with stress, and their willingness to engage in programs that improve well-being. The findings of the study revealed several common stressors, such as excessive workloads, tight deadlines, lack of recognition, difficulties maintaining work-life balance, and the pressures associated with uncertainty and change. Despite using time management and physical activity strategies, over half of the respondents reported feeling emotionally depleted and unable to disengage from work, underscoring the need for tailored wellness interventions.

### Benchmarking of Best Practices

To further refine the program's structure and content, a benchmarking analysis was conducted to identify best practices in existing wellness education programs. This analysis focused on adult learning programs that were either offered online or in blended formats, targeting mental health, physical fitness, and sustainable living. In particular, emphasis was placed on programs that integrated nature-based care (green care) as part of their wellness strategies, given its proven benefits for mental and physical health. The benchmarking exercise included a thorough review of the methods used in training, as well as the topics covered. Programs that demonstrated successful engagement with participants through micro-learning, gamification, and project-based learning were prioritised in the analysis. These findings informed the decision to structure the Energy Wellness Program as a series of short, interactive courses, each designed to promote long-term habit formation and practical application.

### **Program Design**

Based on the insights from both the well-being study and benchmarking analysis, the Energy Wellness Program was developed using a VET-based approach. The program was designed to be accessible, flexible, and effective for busy professionals, with a focus on breaking down the content into manageable, bite-sized modules.

## **3 RESULTS**

The methodology employed by the Energy Wellness Program guarantees that the material is not only grounded on factual evidence and best practices, but also customized to address the particular requirements of professionals aiming to enhance their well-being. Through the integration of empirically supported knowledge with an adaptable, learner-focused structure, the program offers a strong foundation for tackling work-related stress and encouraging healthier and more efficient lifestyles. Through its holistic approach, the Energy Wellness Program is positioned as a comprehensive solution for organizations seeking to improve employee well-being, increase productivity, and cultivate a culture of sustainability and resilience.

### **3.1 Results and recommendations from the analysis**

The analysis of workplace well-being among professionals in Greece, North Macedonia, Lithuania, Spain, and Italy revealed several significant findings related to stressors, coping strategies, and the overall state of employee well-being.

#### **Key Stressors**

The most common sources of stress identified by the 125 participants (67% female, 33% male) included:

- Excessive workload and tight deadlines
- Insufficient planning
- Lack of relationships and appreciation
- Difficulties in maintaining work-life balance
- Uncertainty and change in the workplace



difficulty in disconnecting from work. This emotional depletion significantly affected their mental well-being.

### Coping Strategies

The study also revealed diverse coping strategies among participants.

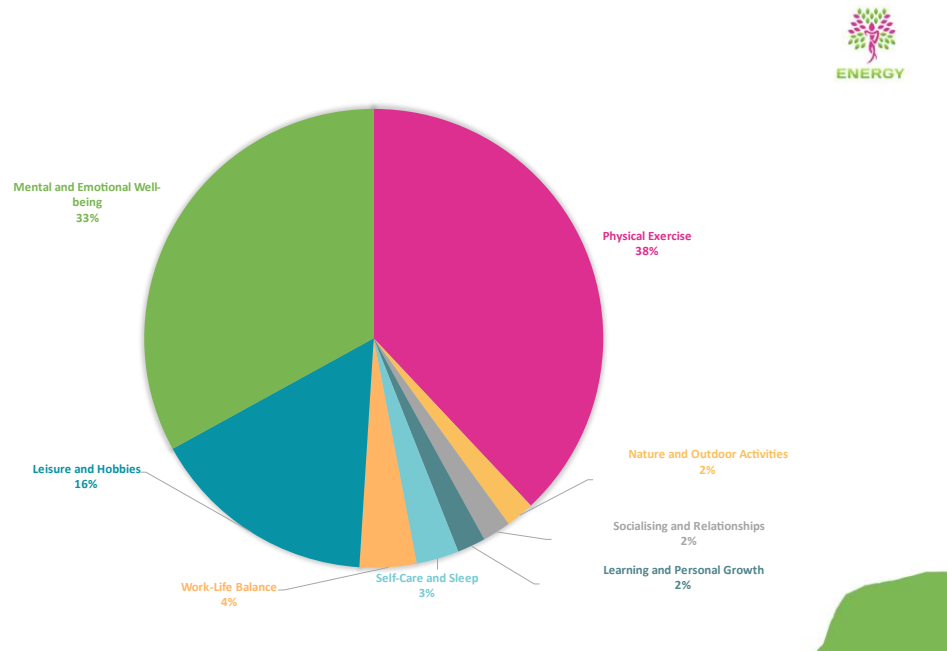


Figure 4. Tools or resources respondents use to promote wellbeing.

Here are some of the findings in relation to coping strategies: 14% of respondents did not use any well-being measures. The majority engaged in activities such as regular physical exercise, relaxation techniques, and building supportive relationships to maintain their well-being. However, 77% of respondents reported using detrimental coping strategies, such as excessive physical activity or unhealthy eating habits, which further compromised their well-being.

### 3.2 Design of Energy Wellness Program

The analysis underscores the need for more tailored, effective wellness interventions that address both mental and physical health challenges. Participants expressed a desire for structured programs, with most willing to dedicate 1-3 hours per week to engage in activities aimed at improving their well-being. These findings informed the design of the Energy Wellness Program, which focuses on green care, stress management, and holistic wellness practices. The program aims to provide a comprehensive set of tools to help professionals better manage stress, improve work-life balance, and enhance their overall well-being.

The complete Energy Wellness Program comprises three main pillars: Mental Health, Physical Health, and Green Care, which aim to cater to the varied requirements of participants in effectively managing workplace stress and improving their overall well-being.

- **Mental health:** The program comprises a sequence of mental health courses specifically developed to facilitate participants in their investigation of mindfulness, stress management, and emotional resilience. These workshops provide practical techniques to develop inner tranquillity and emotional equilibrium, equipping participants with the abilities to efficiently handle stress and enhance mental health. This training equips participants with strategies that

promote calmness and enhance their ability to manage the emotional challenges of contemporary work life.

- **Physical health:** The Energy Program integrates a range of indoor and outdoor workout routines to encourage a well-rounded and dynamic exercise regimen. These activities encompass a wide spectrum of both high-intensity cardiovascular workouts and mild stretching exercises, specifically designed to accommodate different fitness levels and preferences. The physical health component is specifically developed to not only significantly increase energy levels and promote fitness, but also to strengthen participants' physical resilience and ability to cope with stress.
- **Green care:** Acknowledging the therapeutic advantages of reestablishing a connection with nature, the Green Care component of the program provides participants with the chance to participate in nature-oriented activities such as forest bathing, nature walks, and outdoor meditation. The intended purpose of these activities is to alleviate stress and facilitate emotional rejuvenation by enabling participants to fully engage with natural surroundings. The therapeutic potential of nature is utilized to augment both psychological and physiological well-being, therefore establishing a comprehensive state of wellness.

Each of the 30 courses within the program is structured to provide a 4-hour workload for participants, combining theory with practical exercises. The content is delivered through a variety of engaging formats, including instructional videos, guided readings, practical exercises, and self-assessment tools. The program emphasises hands-on activities that allow participants to apply the wellness strategies in real-life contexts, promoting sustainable well-being practices.

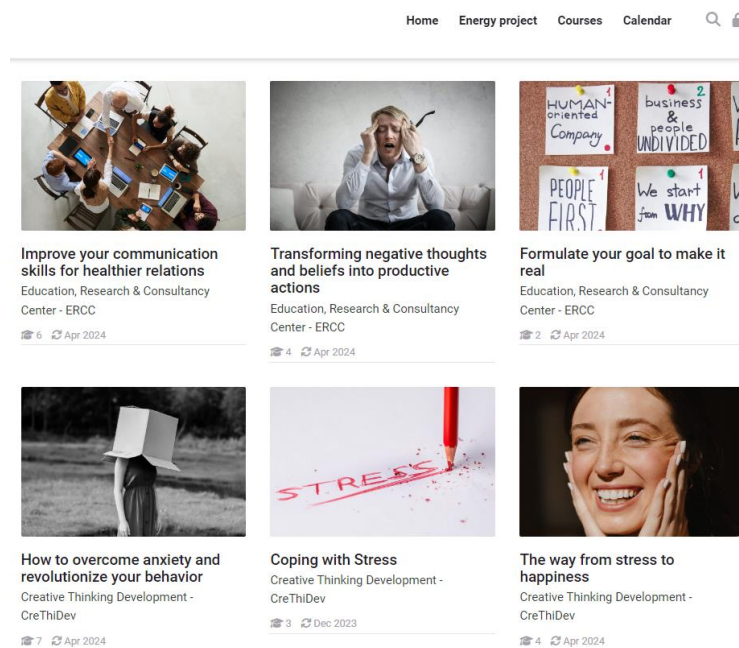


Figure 5. The Energy Wellness Platform.

A key innovation of the Energy Wellness Program is the integration of micro-exercises—short, focused activities that participants can complete in small increments of time. This approach ensures that learners can progress through the program at their own pace, without requiring significant interruptions to their daily routines. Additionally, the courses include a mix of green care activities, such as nature walks and forest bathing, to reconnect participants with the natural environment and promote mental and physical rejuvenation.

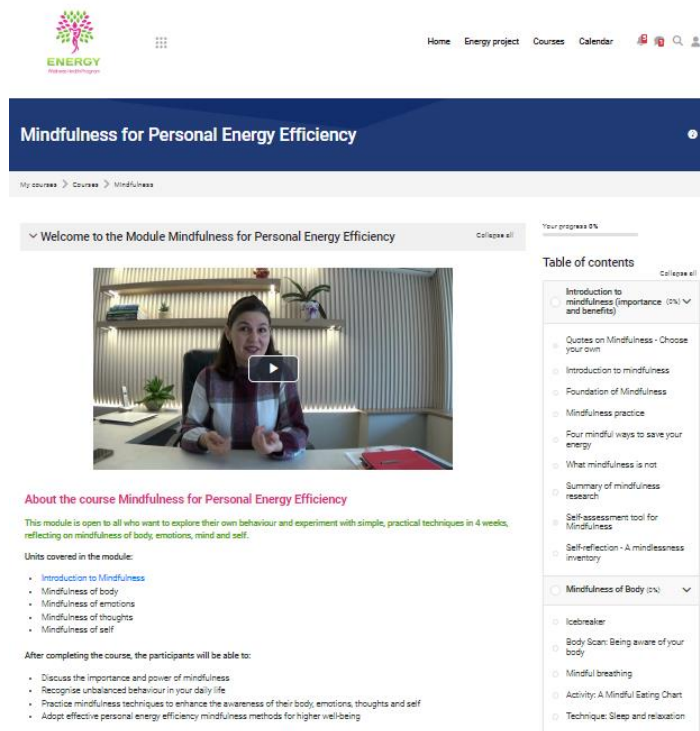


Figure 6. Outlook in one course on the Energy Wellness Platform.

Each module within the program incorporates reflective journaling and self-evaluation tools, allowing participants to track their progress, set personal wellness goals, and create sustainable habits. The use of gamification techniques, such as achievement badges and progress tracking, further enhances engagement and motivation.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Energy Wellness Program provides a unique blend of mental health assistance, physical exercise, and green care activities, offering a holistic and novel response to the growing difficulties of job stress and impaired well-being. By amalgamating these three fundamental elements, the program tackles the psychological, physiological, and ecological dimensions of well-being, therefore fostering a more harmonious and satisfying way of life for professionals. The program's focus on mental health provides participants with vital skills to effectively handle stress, promote emotional resilience, and develop mindfulness, so improving their capacity to handle the demands of contemporary work life. Engagement in physical health activities enables individuals to enhance their general physical fitness, energy levels, and ability to manage stress, therefore promoting their long-term health and vitality. The inclusion of green care facilitates a reestablishment of a relationship with the natural environment, a practice that has been empirically shown to decrease stress levels, enhance cognitive well-being, and stimulate emotional rejuvenation.

The Energy Wellness Programme provides adaptable, vocational education and training (VET) based, online courses to promote accessibility for professionals who must manage challenging work schedules and personal health requirements. This level of accessibility, together with the inclusion of small, realistic activities, enables folks to effortlessly incorporate wellness habits into their everyday schedules. Through its creative use of digital learning platforms and microlearning strategies, the program empowers participants to develop enduring healthy habits in a methodical yet flexible way. Overall, the Energy Wellness Programme provides a valuable opportunity for individuals and organisations to adopt a healthier and more balanced approach to stress and well-being management, resulting in long-term advantages for mental, physical, and environmental health. By virtue of its scalable capacity and



pragmatic usefulness, the program is poised to have a substantial beneficial influence on workplace wellness and general health results.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Education, Research & Consultancy Center – ERCC, Lithuania
- Institute for Research in Environment, Civil Engineering and Energy – IECE, North Macedonia
- Creative Thinking Development – CreThiDev, Greece
- INDEPCIE SCA, Spain
- European culture and sport organization – ECOS, Italy
- Basketball Federation of North Macedonia – BFNМ, North Macedonia

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