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How to create a strategy for a green care wellness program?

Key elements and formulation of actions
aligned with the principles of green care
and mental health

Guidelines for Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Strategy



Step 1 Define Your Vision and Goals

•Questions to ask:

- What do you want to achieve with this Green Care Wellness Program?
- How does nature-based care support the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of employees?
- How will this program align with your organization's culture and values?

Key Action: Set clear, measurable objectives that integrate green care principles (connection with nature) with mental health improvement.

Good resources:

- [Establishing a Workplace Wellness Initiative](#)
- [Workplace Wellness Policy and Procedures](#)

Guidelines for Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Strategy



Step 2 Understand the Needs of Your Employees

•Questions to ask:

- What are the main stressors your employees face (e.g., workload, work-life balance, etc.)?
- What mental health challenges or support gaps currently exist?
- How can nature-based solutions specifically address these needs?

Key Action: Conduct surveys, focus groups, or individual interviews to identify the specific mental health and wellness needs of your workforce.

Good resources:

- [A toolkit with recommended effective program implementation tools](#) (Unit 3)
- [How to Design a Corporate Wellness Plan That Actually Works](#)

Guidelines for Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Strategy



Step 3 Identify Key Green Care Practices

•Questions to ask:

- Which nature-based practices can you integrate into the workplace (e.g., outdoor breaks, gardening, green spaces)?
- What types of green activities will resonate with your employees (e.g., walking meetings, meditation in natural environments)?
- How can these practices improve mental health, reduce stress, and foster well-being?

Key Action: Develop a list of green care wellness activities such as forest walks, outdoor mindfulness sessions, or on-site gardens.

Good resources:

- [Wellness Programs Guide](#)
- [Employee Wellness Programs Examples](#)

Guidelines for Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Strategy



Step 4 Engage Stakeholders and Build Support

•Questions to ask:

- Who are the key decision-makers and influencers that need to support this program?
- How can you communicate the benefits of Green Care to leadership, HR, and employees?
- Are there local partners or external experts in Green Care who can help design or facilitate the program?

Key Action: Present the benefits of Green Care in relation to employee well-being and business outcomes to gain buy-in from leadership and stakeholders.

Good resource:

- [Stakeholder Engagement: The Foundation of a Successful Workplace Health and Performance Strategy](#)

Guidelines for Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Strategy



Step 5 Develop an Implementation Plan

•Questions to ask:

- What are the resources (time, budget, personnel) needed to launch and sustain the program?
- What training or education will employees need to understand and engage with Green Care activities?
- How will you integrate these practices into daily work routines?

Key Action: Create a step-by-step plan outlining how Green Care practices will be implemented, who will be responsible, and timelines.

Good resources:

- [Corporate Wellness Guide](#)
- [What Makes a Successful Corporate Wellness Program?](#)

Guidelines for Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Strategy



Step 6 Monitor and Adjust

•Questions to ask:

- How will you track the success of the program (e.g., employee participation, stress reduction, feedback)?
- What metrics or KPIs will you use to measure improvements in employee mental health and well-being?
- How will you collect feedback to continuously improve the program?

Key Action: Establish regular check-ins and use employee feedback to adapt and refine the program over time.

Good resources:

- [10 Examples of Health and Wellness Programs in the Workplace](#)
- [Monitor and evaluate](#)

Assignment: Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Plan



Objective:

You will develop a strategic plan for a Green Care Wellness Program tailored to an organizational setting. This program should incorporate nature-based practices to support mental health and well-being at work.

Instructions:

1. Define the Vision and Goals of the Program

- Identify the primary outcomes you want to achieve with your Green Care Wellness Program.
- Consider how the program will improve mental, physical, and emotional health through nature-based activities.

Deliverable: Write a clear vision statement and list 2-3 measurable goals.

Assignment: Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Plan



Instructions:

2. Assess Employee Needs

- Conduct a needs assessment to determine the current mental health challenges or stressors in the workplace.
- Identify how green care wellness practices can address these challenges.

Deliverable: Develop a brief report (1 page) summarizing key findings from your assessment, either hypothetical or based on data collection.

3. Design Key Green Care Practices

- Choose at least three nature-based practices or activities that can be implemented within the organization (e.g., outdoor meditation, garden areas, walking meetings).
- Explain how each practice will support employees' mental health and well-being.

Deliverable: Create a list of green care activities, including a brief description of how they align with wellness goals.

Assignment: Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Plan



Instructions:

4. Engage Stakeholders

- Conduct a needs assessment to determine the current mental health challenges or stressors in the workplace.
- Identify how green care wellness practices can address these challenges.

Deliverable: Draft a stakeholder engagement plan, including strategies for communicating the program's benefits and securing buy-in.

5. Develop the Implementation Plan

- Outline how the program will be integrated into the work environment, including the timeline, budget, and any training or resources needed.
- Include a step-by-step approach for launching the program.

Deliverable: Write a brief implementation plan, highlighting key actions, timelines, and resource allocation.

Assignment: Creating a Green Care Wellness Program Plan



Instructions:

6. Create a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

- Identify how you will measure the success of the program (e.g., surveys, participation rates, employee feedback).
- Set up metrics and KPIs to track improvements in mental health, well-being, and employee engagement.

Deliverable: Present a monitoring and evaluation plan, outlining key metrics and feedback mechanisms to adjust and improve the program.

Submission Guidelines:

- **Format:** Submit your assignment as a written document (4-5 pages) or a presentation (10-15 slides).
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Your plan will be assessed based on the clarity of goals, the relevance of green care practices, stakeholder engagement strategies, the feasibility of implementation, and how well you integrate monitoring and evaluation methods.



Developing Green Care Wellness Program for Professionals with Highly Stressful Jobs



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Module: Facilitators

UNIT 3.4: Energy recommendations for Work Standard

Project partners



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Energy Recommendations for Work Standards

1. Introduction

Using the main stress management areas identified by the HSE, below are summarized the objectives and the role of green care wellness practices for stress management, <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg430.pdf>).

2. The role of green care, mental health and physical health interventions on the 6 stress areas of work

Table 1: The role of green care, mental health and physical health interventions on the 6 stress areas of work

Areas	Stress Management Objectives	The role of green care	The role of mental health (stress coping)	The role of physical health
Areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence				
Demands Includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment	Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.	Green care and nature-based interventions at the workplace trigger psychological detachment (mental disengagement from work, attentional recovery) because humans are predisposed to pay attention to natural environments (according to evolutionary perspectives). Work-related stress exposure is reduced, and attention is directed away from job demands toward natural stimuli, which might allow the renewal of work-related attentional capacity.	According to the Job Demand-Resource model, strain arises when job demands exceed the employees' belief in their capability to cope with them. Demanding work activities can lead to mental fatigue and negative emotional states as well as to impairments in cognitive and physical performance. Positive psychology, good mental health and stress resilience strategies, could increase positive emotions at the workplace and thereby offer a pathway toward optimal functioning and well-being for employees.	The mental benefits of physical exercise have a neurochemical basis. Exercise reduces levels of the body's stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol and stimulates the production of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that are the body's natural painkillers and mood elevators. Thus, physical exercise can act as a personal resource against job stress, buffering the detrimental effects of job demands on burnout symptoms.
Control How much say the employees have in the way	Employees indicate that they are able to have a say in the	Green care and nature-based interventions at the workplace can improve attention and awareness and the capacity to faster return to a baseline following an emotional peak	Good stress management positively impacts attention, increasing resources for controlling how employees develop their work.	Physical exercise can reduce fatigue, improve alertness and concentration, and enhance

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they do their work.	way they do their work; Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.	which fosters a greater ability to focus on the task, without being caught up on emotional spirals or cognitive rumination. Also, the enhancement of cognitive capacity is linked with higher creativity and better problem-solving skills, both important on formulating how to work effectively.	Stress management courses empower employees with strategies for prioritizing tasks, setting realistic goals, and managing their time efficiently allowing for better control over their jobs. This can also help ease tension and make work more enjoyable for everyone, helping people balance their work and personal lives.	overall cognitive function. As a result, employees can better control the way they develop their work.
Support Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organization, line management and colleagues.	The organization, line management, and colleagues adequately encourage, sponsor, and provide employees with the resources to do their work.	Implementation of green care practices at work could calm people down and elevate their mood, which is beneficial for relationships with others and for improving interpersonal support. This, in turn, increases self-awareness and social awareness, making people better able to identify their own problems, ask for help when they need it, and recognize the problems of others.	Stress management can help to develop increased empathy and awareness to own and others' needs, promoting receiving and providing support.	Employees to develop increased empathy and awareness to others' needs, promoting receiving and providing support, by contacting with natural environments available as part of a mindfulness practice.
Relationships Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with	Positive working conditions are promoted to avoid conflict and deal with unacceptable behaviour.	Green care practices at work could lower depressive states and heighten soothing reactions. These effects then heighten social awareness, enabling people to interact with others more assertively and resolve problems in a constructive manner.	Stress management can help in acknowledging emotions, engaging in self-care, as well as improves self-efficacy and the development of socio-emotional competencies. This can support workplace harmony by dismantling stereotypes and raising awareness of the problems of colleagues, thus contributing in good workplace relations.	Physical activity serves as a stress outlet, allowing employees to release tension and frustration in a healthy way improving workplace relationships as it contributes in minimizing conflicts. Also, group fitness activities can foster teamwork and camaraderie among colleagues,

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unacceptable behaviour.				enhancing the workplace environment.
Role Whether people understand their role within the organization and whether the organization ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.	Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.	Green care practices at work could aid in cognitive function restoration, in role clarification, in the develops self-awareness and self-management abilities. These factors, in turn, aid in a more thorough understanding of each person's position and duties.	Stress management can support cognitive performance boosting awareness, cognitive flexibility, and self-management skills, which in turn contribute to the perception of own role within an organization.	Exercising can reduce stress hormones and improve concentration and memory contributing in better perception of own role. It can also boost confidence and help employees ask for clarifications in case of conflicting roles.
Change How organizational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organization.	Employees indicate that the organization engages them frequently when undergoing an organizational change; Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.	Green care practices at work could assist in the reduction of psycho-physiological activation during stress reactions, shielding people from the effects of external stresses brought on by changes, while also boosting social awareness and making appropriate decisions to better handle change.	Reducing the intensity and duration of the stress reaction has an impact on how well people adjust to new circumstances and effectively control their anxiety when faced with actual or projected change. Stress resilience practices encourage the unbinding of cognitive schemas and wider options for thinking and action, free from the constraints of previous schemas, by reducing the usage of automatic brain processes.	Promoting fitness and physical exercise can create a culture that values physical well-being will undoubtedly reap the benefits of reduced absenteeism and enhanced employee satisfaction. This can contribute to reduced anxiety and less resistance to change.

2. Management Practices to achieve the standards

Work design area	Management standards		Management actions to facilitate Green Care Wellness Practices
Demands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs. Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns. 	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are able to cope with the demands of their job. Work expectations are compatible to the hours they work. Their skills and abilities are matched to the demands of their job. Concerns about their work environment are addressed. 	Employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow regular breaks. Consider changes to start/end times. Hold regular meetings to discuss anticipated workloads. Provide training to help employees prioritize. Notify employees in advance for unplanned tight deadlines/ long work hours. Say no to work if your team is already at full capacity. Consider the introduction of a work/life balance policy. Assess the risk and impact of environmental hazards Provide training to help employees deal with and defuse stressful situations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are policies installed to reduce unwanted distraction, disturbance and noise levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of natural elements within offices (e.g., the view from a window, indoor plants, flowers, landscape paintings) for psychological detachment (i.e. disengaging mentally from work) and relaxation. Allow the use of Nature “Apps” (e.g., nature sounds and images). Allow the use of nature-based mindfulness apps. The provision of a garden at work that can either be viewed from the offices or accessed by employees and families. Provide outdoor gym equipment. Nature-based activities and programs in ‘wilder’ environments. Allow the use of pets. Promotional campaigns via company media to highlight and encourage engagement of employees with natural environments and the potential health benefits.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide educational workshops to motivate employees adopt healthier lifestyles to cope with workload. ▪ Train managers to set realistic targets for their employees and redistribute workloads. ▪ Allocate support roles to managers so that employees can talk to when a stressful situation at work arises. ▪ Develop team building activities to improve team morale, emotional intelligence, and communication as well as resilience and problem-solving skills.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexible Work Policies: Encouraging short breaks for stretching or walking can help employees refresh their minds and reduce sedentary behavior. ▪ On-site Fitness Facilities: Providing gym facilities or organizing group fitness classes at work encourages employees to engage in physical activities. ▪ Promoting Active Commutes: Encouraging walking, cycling, or using public transport can integrate physical activity into daily routines.

Work design area	Management standards		Management actions to facilitate Green Care Wellness Practices
Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work. Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns. 	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees have control over their pace of work. Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work. Employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work. Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken. Employees are consulted over their work patterns. 	Employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the development of suggestions by employees on the way their work is organized and undertaken during project meetings, one-to-ones and performance reviews. Hold regular discussions and meetings before and during the introduction of new working methods. Allocate responsibility to teams rather than individuals to take projects forward. Allow employees some control over the pace of their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers allow and promote the individual inclusion of nature elements (e.g. plants, stones, etc.) on employees' working space. Managers allow employees discretion over what to plant and how to tend to plants in available plots. Allow outdoor work breaks, lunch break.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop resilience training programs which also include improving communication skills. Support managers to support employees with stress. Train managers on available strategies, empathy and compassion to know what to do when needed and to understand that a supportive organizational culture on mental health issues can build employee loyalty, dedication, which ultimately benefits everyone.

Work design area	Management standards		Management actions to facilitate Green Care Wellness Practices
Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns. 	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it. Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job. Employees receive regular and constructive feedback. 	Employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organization has policies and procedures to adequately support employees. Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff. Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers suggest and facilitate the creation of small flower beds/vegetable garden within company's space. Managers provide external resources to install and care for natural elements in the company, such as flowers or fountains.
			<p>■ Team-based Green Care Activities: To foster team cohesion and stress relief, organize regular team-building sessions focused on nature-based activities, such as outdoor mindfulness walks or garden projects.</p> <p>■ Green-Care Mentorship Programs: Implement mentorship programs where experienced staff can offer guidance and support through green wellness approaches, helping employees navigate challenges by integrating nature and work.</p>
			<p>■ Accessible Green Resources: Ensure employees have access to green-care resources, such as nearby parks or green workspaces, and encourage their use for personal reflection or relaxation during work hours.</p> <p>■ Nature-inspired Support Systems: Create nature-inspired spaces or quiet zones for employees to</p>

			<p>retreat to when needing mental or emotional support, reinforcing that both peer and supervisor support are available in these calming environments.</p> <p>■ Supervisor Training on Green-Care Practices: Train managers to incorporate green-care wellness approaches into their support of employees, fostering a culture that values mental health through sustainable practices like nature breaks or green-care check-ins.</p>
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Work design area	Management standards		Management actions to facilitate Green Care Wellness Practices
Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviors, e.g. bullying at work Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns. 	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees share information relevant to their work. Employees are provided with training to help them deal with and defuse difficult situations. Employees have buddying systems and work shadowing to improve understanding of roles across the team. 	Employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organization promotes positive behaviors at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness. The organization has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behavior. Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behavior. Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers promote social gatherings outdoors for employees and families. Managers encourage collective ownership of small flower beds/vegetable garden within company's space. Managers opt for team building activities within nature, (e.g. walking, biking with co-workers, sport activities). <p>■ Nature-Based Conflict Resolution Workshops: Organize workshops in natural settings where employees can engage in team-building exercises and learn conflict resolution techniques through outdoor group activities. This promotes open communication and helps to address interpersonal challenges in a relaxed, neutral environment.</p> <p>■ Outdoor Peer Support Circles: Facilitate regular peer support gatherings in outdoor settings, where employees can share concerns and experiences in a safe, informal environment. Being in nature helps to lower tension and promotes a more open and positive dialogue.</p>

			<p>■ Outdoor Social Responsibility Projects: Managers can lead initiatives where teams participate in local environmental or community service projects, such as park clean-ups or tree planting. These activities foster collaboration and strengthen relationships while reinforcing respect for each other.</p> <p>■ Nature Retreats for Bullying Awareness: Host team retreats in natural environments to focus on awareness around workplace behaviors, including sessions on preventing bullying, fostering respect, and creating a supportive community culture.</p> <p>■ Green-Care Buddy System: Create a nature-inspired buddy system where employees can take part in joint green-care activities, such as lunchtime walks or garden maintenance. This fosters strong interpersonal relationships and provides informal opportunities for employees to look out for one another's well-being.</p>
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Work design area	Management standards		Management actions to facilitate Green Care Wellness Practices
Role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities ■ Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns. 	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employees are given a thorough introduction into the organization and its policies and procedures. ■ Employees are given detailed Job Descriptions. ■ All team members know who is doing what and why. ■ Employees agree on specific standards of performance for individual tasks. 	Employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The organization ensures that the different requirements placed upon employees are aligned to their role. ■ The organization provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities. ■ The organization ensures that the requirements placed upon employees are clear. ■ Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Managers promote moments of restoration to foster employees' roles awareness in natural contexts (outside the company or in the resting spaces with natural elements). ■ Natural Role Visualization Spaces: Create quiet, nature-inspired workplace spaces where employees can reflect on their role and how it aligns with their personal values and company goals, encouraging role awareness through a nature-centred approach. ■ Role Awareness through Outdoor Team Learning: Conduct team learning or training sessions outdoors, where employees can participate in activities that emphasize their contributions to the team's overall goals, reinforcing role clarity in a collaborative and natural setting. ■ Role Clarity Workshops in Nature: Organize workshops or role clarification sessions in outdoor settings, allowing employees to reflect on their responsibilities while immersed in nature. This fosters a deeper connection to their role in a relaxed, rejuvenating environment. ■ Nature-Based Role Reflection Breaks: Encourage employees to take short nature breaks in designated green areas (e.g., garden spaces or green work lounges) to reflect on their roles, goals, and tasks, providing clarity through moments of calm.

Work design area	Management standards		Management actions to facilitate Green Care Wellness Practices
Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employees indicate that the organization engages them frequently when undergoing an organizational change ■ Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns. 	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs ■ Employees are aware of timetables for changes ■ Employees have access to relevant support during changes. 	Employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The organization provides employees with timely information to enable them understand the reasons for proposed changes. ■ The organization ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Managers choose to communicate change in events held outdoors. ■ Managers organize work meetings or inaugurations close to nature rather than in inside. ■ During large change periods, managers reinforce employees' participation in social gatherings close to nature.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outdoor Change Briefings: Managers can hold change-related briefings or updates in outdoor settings, such as gardens or parks, creating a relaxed environment that encourages open communication and reduces stress during times of transition. ■ Nature Walks for Change Discussions: Organize walking meetings where employees can discuss upcoming changes in a more informal, natural setting, helping to ease concerns and promote a sense of inclusion in the change process.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change Awareness Through Outdoor Gatherings: During periods of significant organizational change, organize outdoor social events or team-building activities to foster community, boost morale, and ensure employees feel connected and informed about the upcoming transitions.

3. References

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg430.pdf>

Managing the causes of work-related stress: A step-by-step approach using the Management Standards HSG218 (Second edition) HSE Books 2007
ISBN 978 0 7176 6273 9

Working together to reduce stress at work: A guide for employees Leaflet INDG424
HSE Books 2008 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6320 0)
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg424.pdf

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Toolkit

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ENERGY Toolkit

Introduction

The goal of this unit is to provide Facilitators with a Toolkit, that includes a set of standardized tests, self-assessment tools, questionnaires, guidelines, etc. to help them support employees in fighting and reducing work-related stress and use the tools included in the platform effectively.






This Toolkit:





- Presents a collection of standardized and adaptable resources that enables Facilitators to learn about Green Care Wellness and identify approaches for addressing it.
- Assist Facilitators in getting a quick start on key activities for improving green care health and wellness in work environments. Select the topics most relevant to your goal to see several key resources.
- Supports Facilitators in improving green care health and wellness in work environments by:
- Inspire Facilitators to develop and implement a Green Care Wellness program for Professionals with Highly Stressful Jobs to make improvements by combining different tools and approaches.

Resources and tools in this Toolkit:







1. Standardized tests to identify which areas you and your workplace team would like to focus on.
2. Self-assessment tests to discover where you stand in your path towards workplace health and wellness.
3. Exercises to engage on based on the test's outcomes.
4. Guidelines that provide you with a pathway to achieve your priorities by identifying key activities to focus on.






1. GREEN CARE




	<p>PRACTICING MINDFULNESS "CONNECTING" WITH NATURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ How to Practice Mindfulness □ How to measure mindfulness and restorativeness interventions at work: Toronto Mindfulness Scale; Nature Contact Questionnaire; Perceived Restorativeness at Work Scale □ How to promote mindfulness in nature □ Indoor Mindfulness with Nature □ Individual actions to practice and use mindfulness in nature □ Introduction to Mindfulness and Nature Based Practices for the Work-environment
	<p>MANAGE YOUR PERSONAL ENERGY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Green Care Practices Self-Assessment Questionnaire
	<p>DEVELOP NEW HABITS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Rituals Related to Green Care Practices
	<p>ENERGY FACILITATORS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Organisational Climate Questionnaire
	<p>BOOSTING YOUR ENERGY LEVELS THROUGH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Activity: "Emotional Intelligence Forest Bathing Reflection"

	<p>GREEN AND MENTAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE FOR STRESS REDUCTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Activity: Green Cities Research □ Green Care Practices for Well-being □ Green and Sustainable Habits □ Real-Life Examples of people helped by nature □ Green Care Strategies to Control your Stress □ Green Care Stress Management Self-Assessment Test
	<p>POSITIVE GREEN MINDSET</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Positive Psychology and Green Care
	<p>PROFESSIONAL RESILIENCE AND FLEXIBILITY FOR SUCCESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Work-related Stress and Green Care □ Introducing 10 Green Challenges in the Workplace
	<p>SOCIAL AND GREEN (RE)CONNECTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ How can Green Care help me overcome Social Anxiety? □ How to Individually Reconnect with Nature? □ How to Collectively Reconnect with Nature? □ Unplugging and Reconnecting

2. MENTAL HEALTH

	THE WAY FROM STRESS TO HAPPINESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How to find your life's purpose? <input type="checkbox"/> The Subjective Happiness Scale <input type="checkbox"/> Oxford Happiness Questionnaire
	HOW TO OVERCOME ANXIETY AND REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR BEHAVIOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are you using Avoidance and Safety behaviors? <input type="checkbox"/> What can you do? <input type="checkbox"/> How? Attack each ineffective behavior one at a time and use small steps! <input type="checkbox"/> How to overcome avoidance behavior in the workplace
	COPING WITH STRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Big Five Personality Test <input type="checkbox"/> How vulnerable are you to stress? <input type="checkbox"/> COPE scale <input type="checkbox"/> My Stress Diary <input type="checkbox"/> Sample stress diary
	HOW TO DEAL WITH ANXIETY AND FEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A relaxation technique
	MANAGE YOUR PERSONAL ENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Ryff Scales of Psychological Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Self-assessment – How are your energy levels? <input type="checkbox"/> Self-assessment tool on the levels of energy
	THE POWER OF ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment - The VIA Character Strengths Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment on Flourishing <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment Gratitude Quiz

	<p>DEVELOP NEW HABITS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Self-assessment - What is your level of self-control? □ Habit Tracker
	<p>UNLOCKING YOUR SUPERPOWER WITH FOCUS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Concentration Self-Assessment
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Developing Green Care Wellness Program for Professionals with Highly Stressful Jobs

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Management Standards and ENERGY alignment

1. Introduction

Stress continues to be a concern for individuals and organizations alike and stress management is a key part of overall health and wellness. Stressful situations and a lack of stress management make employees more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors. And this is the reason why recent research has shown a trend towards incorporating stress management as a component of workplace wellness programs.

Management Standards present a systematic approach to tackling work-related stress developed by Health and Safety Executive. These standards have been selected because it has been acknowledged that although it is important to teach individual coping strategies such as cognitive-behavioral skills training, mediation, and exercise, we must also focus on the work itself.

Management Standards constitute a good practice and they include a step-by-step risk assessment approach which allows assessment of the current situation in organizations and the promotion of active discussion between employers and employees to help decide on practical interventions that may help support employees' mental health and wellbeing by tackling stress.

They cover six key areas of work design which have been identified as the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health, lower productivity and increased accident and sickness absence rates:

Demands – this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment since employees often complain of unrealistic expectations and increased job demands.

Control – how much say the person has in the way they do their work.

Support – this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organization, line management and colleagues.

Relationships – this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behavior.

Role – whether people understand their role within the organization and whether the organization ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

Change – how organizational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organization.

For each work area, a set of statements about good management practices for organizations to work towards have been identified, see figure below.



Demands

Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

The Standard is that:

- employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- the organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;
- people's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

Figure 1: An example of a work area and the accompanying Work Standards conditions, (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indq430.pdf>)

To effectively implement the Management Standards approach it is essential for Facilitators to ensure that resources, support and infrastructure for the project is in place in the organization, (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>).

2. Steps for applying the Management Standards for increasing mental health and wellbeing

BEFORE STARTING.

How Facilitators could prepare the organization and top management

Gain senior management commitment and understand the organizational drivers.

Employees are more likely to be involved if they realize that senior managers are committed to managing the causes of work-related stress and foster wellness and green care practices at work.

However, if the senior managers are reluctant in getting on board, you should communicate clearly the goals and possible advantages of the program to convince them and reach an agreement in line with organizational values. Examples of organizational values can include integrity, innovation, respect, teamwork, and accountability.

Nowadays, values are aligned around a guiding philosophy to respect and serve employees, customers, and the broader community. So, organizations, which have traditionally focused on wellness programs as a way to reduce health care costs, are now beginning to think about wellness initiatives more as a way to create an environment and culture that is more health conscious and focused on overall employee well-being that is also supported by the social and political changes that have occurred in the last 2 decades.



Create the steering group

Set up a group to oversee the risk assessment to employees' mental health and wellbeing at work according to the size and type of the company. Possible members of this group are: senior managers, employee representatives, trade union representatives, health & safety managers to increase the probability that the project will deliver real improvements and lead to a culture change within the organization.

The key activities implemented by the steering group are:

- Project naming;
- Project management;
- Planning and allocating resources;
- Marketing/communications;
- Monitoring progress;
- Approving action plans;
- Generating and approving management reports.

Prepare employees

Promote actions to improve knowledge about green care wellness programs to cope with stressful situations at work, the causes of stress and preventive strategies as well as create awareness about their (employees) own role in the process through a communication strategy.

Create awareness about stress at the workplace, communicate about stress prevalence, causes, consequences, and prevention strategies.

Create awareness about the benefits of practicing green care wellness methods by making clear, from the beginning, the goals and possible advantages of the program.

Promote workers involvement and participation in the program, informing them on how their input can influence the design of the program and showing how important their role and active participation is.

2.1 Wellbeing risk assessment at the workplace

2.1.1 Gather data to identify wellbeing risk factors

Use a number of sources and look for relationships within the data to get a more accurate view of the current state in your organization. Existing data sources such as sickness absence data, productivity data, staff turnover and performance appraisal, can be used to help identify, in broad terms, whether work-related stress is a potential problem.



Often, for a wellbeing risk assessment, employees are required to agree to a complete health screening program that includes questionnaires about their lifestyle, stress or physical health. Since privacy is a concern and there are laws, in many countries, that generally prohibit employers from using information about workers' own health conditions, wellbeing risk assessment in ENERGY project focuses on the organizational practices that need to be modified and the introduction of green care wellness programs to grow positive experiences and help employees prevent, cope, and manage stress.

Methods for risk assessment

Which methods to choose for data gathering depends on the characteristics of the organization: size, type of activity, work organization, task specific requirements, previous knowledge about stress issues, level of awareness of the top management, diagnosis or intervention objectives (e.g. in a company with workers working outdoors, an online questionnaire may not be a good solution, while in a big multinational company with many employees working remotely, it might not be easy to organize a face-to-face focus group).

Usually, in small-sized companies a qualitative approach is recommended. In medium and big-sized companies, as a complement, a quantitative approach should be conducted as well. This will provide a better general sense of what is happening in the workplace.

For the **qualitative assessment**, organizations can use:

- direct observation to assess risk factors at the workplace (e.g., integrated on the regular risk assessment procedures),
- individual interviews with workers and supervisors (e.g. integrated on regular consultation of occupation health) about potential stressors, excessive demands, difficulties and strategies to cope, stress symptoms), or
- collective techniques as holding regular team meetings, have informal talks to staff, have talking toolkits, and Focus Groups, either to assess work-related stress or the effectiveness of existing wellness practices.

For a **quantitative assessment**, an indicator tool/survey tapping stressors would be a good option in trying to have an integrated idea of priority areas that may need further discussion. Using this questionnaire would allow organizations to measure how they are currently performing against the standards. If using a new survey is an additional task for the organization (e.g. because they have already several surveys at the same time), some dimensions/items of these questionnaires can be integrated into already existing consultation tools (e.g. internal satisfaction survey, health and working conditions survey).

There are several validated instruments translated in several languages that can be used by organizations to assess work-related stress, such as: the Stress Indicator Tool from HSE – Health and Safety Executive (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/assets/docs/indicatortool.pdf>), or the COPSQ – Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire designed for the assessment and improvement of psychosocial conditions in workplaces (available at <https://www.copsq-network.org/assets/Uploads/COPSQ-network-guidelines-an-questionnaire-COPSQ-III-180821.pdf>).

To check whether your risk assessment approach is suitable and sufficient, you can visit: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/assets/docs/checklist.pdf>.



2.2 Evaluate the wellbeing risks

After gathering all the data, risk should be evaluated, problems should be explored, and solutions should be discussed. Evidence should have been already gathered on:

- Areas of good performance,
- Existing knowledge about the identified problems,
- Correlation between data sources,
- “Hot spots” and priorities for intervention.

To evaluate the risk, employees need to be consulted. As the employees are often closest to the issues identified, they can be invaluable sources of knowledge and if involved in this process they are the first in line to guarantee the success of any agreed actions. In addition, it is often the case that during the meetings/focus groups with employees, solutions are also found.

2.3 Develop and implement an action plan for a green care wellness program

The outputs from the identification and the evaluation of work-related stress factors based on the different sources of information collected need to be captured in an action plan for management intervention to potential sources of stress and promotion of employees' wellness. This plan must include goals, priorities, and demonstrate that the organization addresses employees' concerns regarding stressful situations at the workplace while it also should provide alternatives promoting employees' well-being, motivating incentives, and engagement.

This plan, should include:

Time frame: monitor the actions in your plan to ensure they are having the desired effect in the appropriate timescale.

Level of the intervention: it should be outlined whether the actions are aimed at a team (micro), a department or directorate (macro) or the whole organization (strategic);

Responsibility: it should be defined the team/number of the individuals who will take responsibility for each action and will report the work progress. Studies show that integrating employee health promotion and wellness with traditional programs to protect worker safety and health e.g. by the HR department, could be advantageous.

As a general rule, it is imperative that employees are kept informed of the progress at regular intervals. This activity needs to be part of the organization communication plan.

Deal with employees' concerns and non-motivation to participate

Usually, wellness programs effectively manage workplace stress through a variety of mental health courses and physical activity and exercise. For example, workplace wellness activities



like walking meetings, mindfulness breaks, and fitness classes can provide employees with a healthy outlet for stress during the workday. In addition, such activities can make individuals feel better physically, and as a result employees are more likely to be happier with their jobs and create a positive attitude towards their organization. However, there are employees who choose to participate in wellness programs and others who do not.

Surveys, focus groups or other assessment methods may identify that some individuals are experiencing problems that others are not. It is important to develop ways for employees to raise their concerns. These could include the following:

- Create an environment where employees are encouraged to talk, both formally and informally, about the stressful situations they might be experiencing and about their concerns regarding participation in wellness programs, e.g. fear that the organization will acquire personal health history data or introduce penalties on individuals who do not participate in wellness programs.
- Make sure to clearly and consistently communicate the goals, benefits, and steps for participating in the program.
- Design inclusive programs that everyone can join in, no matter their work schedule, role, or physical abilities.
- Seek periodic feedback and ideas from employees and wellness champions to create a customized program the employees feel comfortable about.
- Streamline program management effectively. The ENERGY Platform can be the epicenter of program operations as it consolidates all program information and resources in one easily accessible location.
- To increase engagement, offering incentives can be very effective, but is important to ensure simple but meaningful rewards, and align the awards with the program's goals.
- Engage qualified health professionals as coaches to empower participants to make informed decisions about their well-being.

2.3.1 Follow up

Review of existing policies & procedures based on interventions. It is often the case that policies and procedures do not adequately reflect the current ways of working, due to the continuous change that organizations experience. This can increase the pressure experienced by employees, e.g. technostress. You may be required to repeat the Management Standards approach again.

Continuous improvement

It is critical to continuously keep on working with employees to identify and address the problems in the workplace that can lead to stress-related health problems and the barriers to use health practices and nature. So, regularly collect and analyze data to keep track of how many people are participating, how employees' health behaviors are changing, and how health outcomes are improving to identify room for improvement.

The Management Standards procedure is summarized in the following figure:

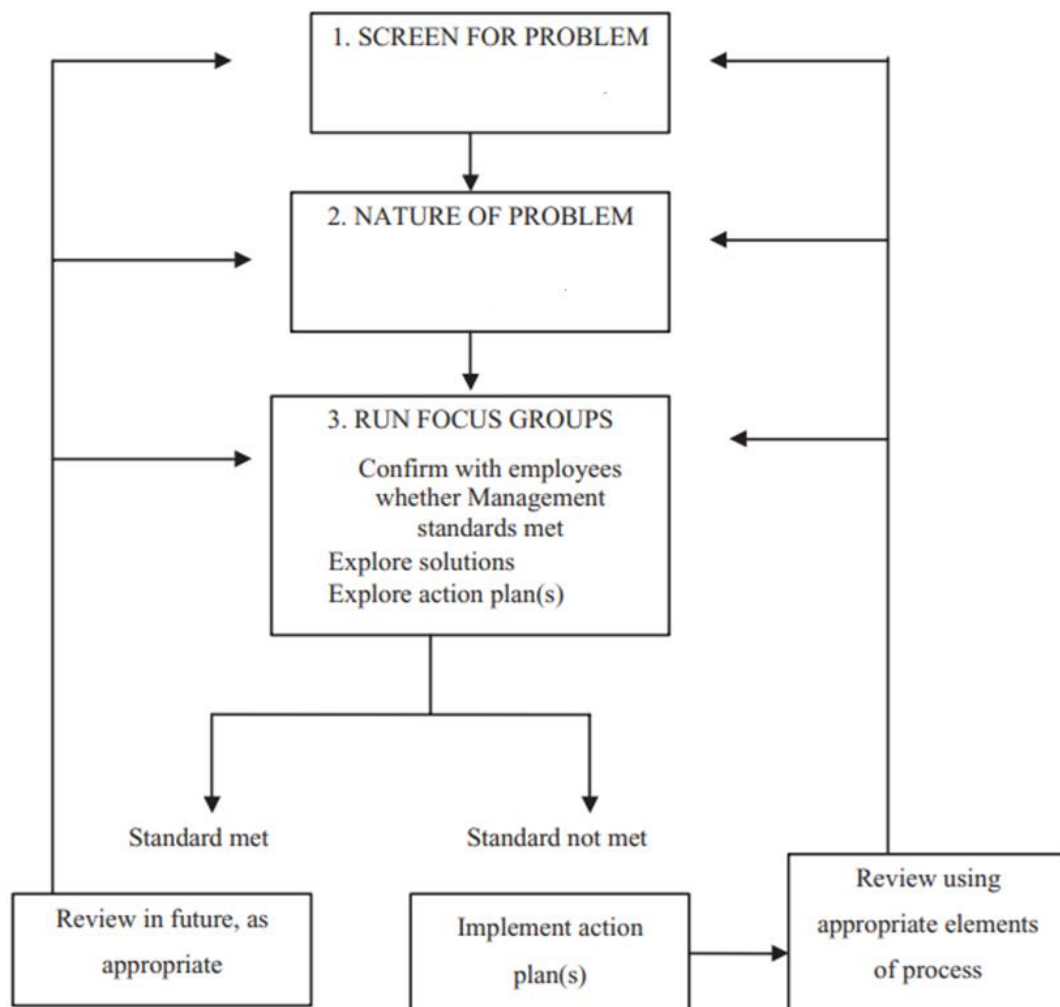


Figure 2: The Management Standards approach to work-related stress (adapted from COUSINS, R., MACKAY, CLARKE, KELLY, KELLY, & Mccaig, 2004)



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