

THE WELL-BEING ZONE

A guide to discussing well-being and stress with individual employees

- when you want to focus on well-being and stress prevention

Before the one-on-one

Let all your staff know that, at the moment, you are focusing on well-being and stress prevention in your department/unit. Hand out/forward AU's leaflet on stress to your staff and inform them that you will be inviting them individually to a short one-on-one about well-being and stress prevention in the near future. After this, book your employees for a one-on-one meeting. Ask all your employees to read the leaflet in preparation for the meeting and, if relevant, to reflect on the following question:

- In relation to promoting well-being and preventing stress in my working life, what is particularly important to me?

During the one-on-one meeting

Frame the discussion by making the reason for it clear. For example, you might say something like: 'The reason I invited you to this dialogue is to help me as your manager learn more about how we can work together as a unit to promote well-being and prevent stress.'

You might also wish to point out that the discussion is confidential, but that there may be some general/overall themes that emerge from the one-on-one discussions with the entire team that you will bring up at a staff meeting in connection with a shared initiative to promote well-being.

It can also be a good idea to spend some time at the beginning of the discussion on establishing a shared understanding of what kinds of stress constitute a problem that needs to be addressed. In this regard the 'WRF' model that distinguishes between stress in the well-being, risk and danger zones can serve as a useful point of departure (see AU's stress leaflet).

Next, ask the staff member to share their reflections on the question they were asked to think about before the discussion. Use their response to lead into a dialogue about the questions below (feel free to select the questions you find most relevant):

Signs of well-being and reactions to unhealthy stress

1. What are the signs that you are enjoying your work and thriving in the workplace? ☑ How can I or your colleagues see/sense that you are thriving and feeling good?
2. What are the signs that you have been under pressure or stressed at work for a longer period of time?
 - a. How can I or your colleagues see/sense this in you?
 - b. What or who might be able to help you in finding balance again?

- c. As a manager, how can I best help or support you to return to your well-being zone?

Protective and triggering factors

1. What specific factors and circumstances in relation to your work can contribute to protecting you against stress
 - a. In the specific work assignment – for example balancing expectations, framing, prioritising?
 - b. In how we organise our work in our unit/in your team – for example leadership, prioritisation, coordination, meeting formats and physical surroundings?
 - c. In how we work together on our tasks in our unit/in your team – for example collaboration, relationships, communication?
2. What specific factors and circumstances in relation to your work can contribute to triggering stress for you
 - a. In the specific work assignment – for example balancing expectations, framing, prioritising?
 - b. In how we organise our work in our unit/in your team – for example leadership, prioritisation, coordination, meeting formats and physical surroundings?
 - c. In how we work together on our tasks in our unit/in your team – for example collaboration, relationships, communication?
3. What are you currently doing yourself that improves your well-being and protects against stress?
4. What could you do even more of?
5. As your manager, what can I do to help improve your well-being and reduce your risk of stress?

Rounding off the discussion

Summarise what you have heard during the discussion and, if relevant, make agreements with your staff member if the dialogue has resulted in concrete initiatives. It would also be natural to follow up on this discussion about well-being at your next one-on-one dialogue.

After the one-on-one

After you have conducted all of the one-on-one discussions, it might be a good idea to follow up at a staff meeting, at which you share your overall impressions from the discussions and share general themes that emerged from them.

This is also a chance to discuss whether there is a need to follow up on the issues raised by the discussions with concrete actions or agreements for the entire department/unit.

*This guide has been made with inspiration from:
Martini M, Tøttrup, CA & Krarup, M (2017). Lederens stresshåndbog: Styrk dine stresskompetencer, når
det gælder stress.
Dansk Psykologisk Forlag.*