

Finnish Institute of  
Occupational Health



# Work Resources and Workload Factors

## Workshop facilitation instructions without a digital tool



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# Work Resources and Workload Factors – Workshop facilitation instructions

These instructions are intended for the workshop facilitator. The following material contains instructions on the workshop and material to be printed for the workshop.

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# Resources and workload factors - why are they important?

## Resources

The work resource factors support well-being at work, help the employees succeed and motivate them to do their work well. By strengthening resources, the harmful effects of psychosocial strain can also be reduced.



## Workload factors

If they persist for a long time, workload factors can cause stress, exhaustion and depression. Factors causing stress should be reduced so that they do not harm the health of workers.

# What are resources and workload factors?

## Resources

At the workplace, resources manifest themselves, for example, so that there is a good atmosphere in the work community, people always get support and assistance when they need it, and everyone's work is appreciated.

Good leadership and management are also a resource factors. It is visible in how the management and supervisors listen to and take into account the employees' opinions and offer them an opportunity to influence matters. Everyone is also treated fairly.

Resources increase job satisfaction, work engagement, motivation and commitment. Identifying and reinforcing resources is important, as they protect against the harmful effects of strain and also help in coping with crises or unexpected situations.

## Workload factors

Strain at work may be caused by factors related to the content of work, work arrangements and the functioning of the work community.

A heavy workload and a fast pace of work can be stressful when they persist for a long time if there are not enough possibilities for recovery. An uncontrolled flood of information and continuous interruptions of work are common workload factors. It is also strenuous if the objectives of work are unclear, unrealistic or subject to conflicting expectations.

Psychosocial workload factors are not the problem of an individual but concern the entire work community. Workload factors are always linked to work or working conditions, regardless of who does the work. Long-term strain can lead to stress, burnout, reduced work ability and reduced commitment. Therefore, it is important to reduce it.

# Phases of the workshop

**1**

**Preparation phase before the workshop**

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**2**

**Starting the workshop**

**3**

**Identifying resources and workload factors**

**4**

**Discussing resources and action plan for strengthening one resource**

**5**

**Discussing workload factors and action plan for reducing one workload factor**

**6**

**Summary and ending the workshop**



## Preparing for the workshop

### Before the workshop

- Book a suitable space and enough time (2–3 hours).
- Organise a workshop at a time that is suitable for as many people as possible.
- Send an invitation to the event well in advance.

#### Sample message for workshop invitation

Hello team members!

We are organising a workshop to discuss the resources and workload factors of our work. The objective is to identify the things that help us cope at work as well as those that burden us.

You have the best knowledge of our everyday work, so everyone's participation is important. The aim is to discuss things together and agree on what kind of development measures we should take.

Best regards, team supervisor

### Explore the content of the workshop

- Pages 20–26 contain the titles of the themes discussed in the workshop.
- Print the themes for the workshop on large sheets of paper so that you can, for example, post them on the wall.
- If you wish, you can select only some of the themes to be discussed if you are already aware of certain challenges, based on an employee satisfaction or well-being survey, for example.
- Plan the workshop schedule. The next page provides an indicative schedule that can be used.



## Starting the workshop

”

### **In the following, an example of how you can start the workshop**

I'm very delighted you could join this workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to

1. discuss what resources we have that increase well-being at work
2. and which factors cause strain at work
3. We will also agree on which of these we will set out to develop and how.

Let's start with everyone taking a turn to tell us what has delighted you or surprised you positively over the past week.

### Agenda

The presented timetable is indicative. You can spend as much time on each phase as you find necessary.

- Objective of the workshop and an icebreaker discussion: e.g. round of everyone sharing their thoughts about something that made them happy at work (approx. 15 min)
- Identifying resources and workload factors (approx. 15 min)
- Discussing resources
  - Discussion on choices and selecting the most important resource (approx. 30 min)
  - Setting goal and action plan for strengthening the selected resource (approx. 30 min)
- Discussing workload factors
  - Discussion on choices and selecting the most significant workload factor (approx. 30 min)
  - Setting goal and action plan for managing the selected workload factor (approx. 30 min)



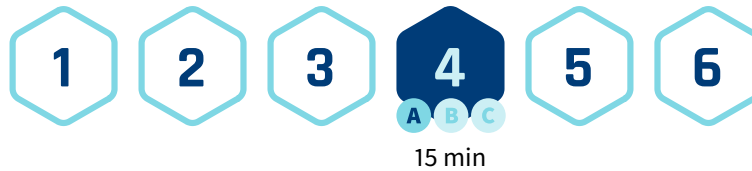
15 min

## Identifying resources and workload factors

Ask the participants to first read through all the themes and consider what is the most important resource and the most significant workload factor for them.

Then ask everyone to mark

1. the most important resource for them using, for example, a green sticker/marker.
2. the most significant workload factor for them using, for example, a red sticker/marker.



## A. Selecting the most important resource

### 1. Discussion on resources

- Discuss the resources that received votes.
  - How is the resource and its impacts visible in everyday work?
  - Why is the resource important from the perspective of well-being at work?

#### **Make sure that**

everyone has the chance to say what they want to say about the matters they consider important.

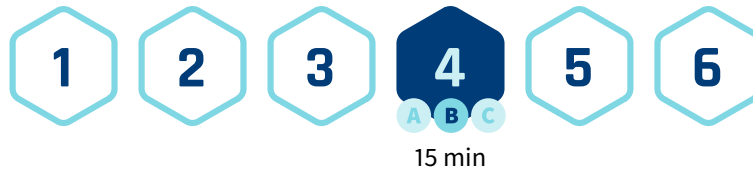
### 2. Choose one of these resources that you want to strengthen further

- You can also agree that you will prepare an action plan for other resources some other time.

#### **You can base your selection on any criteria you wish:**

- Received the most votes
- Most significant impact
- A matter the team can influence

To develop this resource, you agree on the goal and measures to achieve it (pages 10–11).



## B. Setting a goal to strengthen the resource

### 1. Brainstorming the goal

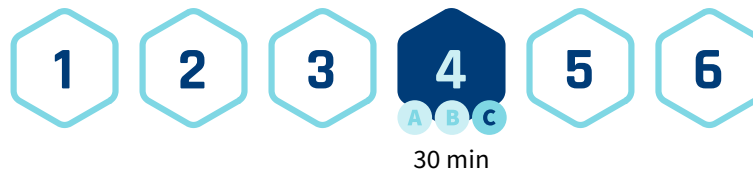
What would the matter you have selected be like at its best? Imagine that everything would be possible. Everyone writes their views independently on post-it notes.

### 2. Potential challenges

Discuss what challenges can be encountered in achieving the goal and how they can be overcome.

### 3. Go through everyone's suggestion for the goal.

### 4. Agree on the common goal to strengthen the resource.



## C. Measures to achieve the goal to strengthen the resource

### Proposals for action

Ask every participant to write their own answers to questions 1 and 2 on a post-it note, for example.

1. What concrete things can you do to promote the matter yourself?
  2. What do you want from colleagues, supervisors, the management?
  3. Review the proposals together and select the most important actions you decide to take. Record them in a table (table template on the next page).
- Is it possible to take some of the actions exactly as proposed?  
→ Include them directly into the action plan.

#### When discussing ideas, consider the following:

- Can some ideas be combined into a single entity?
- Can some ideas be further developed?

## Actions to be taken: strengthening the resource

You can fill in the table electronically and print the page

What actions shall we take?	Responsible person(s)?	When?	Follow-up (when, how, who)

# Break

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**You can take a break at this point.**



## A. Selecting the most significant workload factor

### 1. Discussion of workload factors

- Discuss the workload factors that received votes.
  - How is the workload factor and its impacts visible in everyday work?
  - Why is it important to reduce or manage the workload factor from the perspective of well-being at work?

#### **Make sure that**

everyone has the chance to say what they want to say about the matters they consider important.

### 2. Select one of the workload factors you want to reduce or manage

- You can also agree that you will prepare an action plan for other workload factors some other time.

#### **You can base your selection on any criteria you wish:**

- Received the most votes
- Most significant impact
- A matter the team can influence

To develop this workload factor, you agree on the goal and measures to achieve it (pages 15–16).



## **B. Setting a goal to reduce or manage the workload factor**

### **1. Brainstorming the goal**

What would the matter you have selected be like at its best? Imagine that everything would be possible. Everyone writes their views independently on post-it notes.

### **2. Potential challenges**

Discuss what challenges can be encountered in achieving the goal and how they can be overcome.

### **3. Go through everyone's suggestion for the goal.**

### **4. Agree on the common goal to reduce or manage the workload factor**



## C. Measures to achieve the goal to reduce or manage the workload factor

### Proposals for action

Ask every participant to write their own answers to questions 1 and 2 on a post-it note, for example.

1. What concrete things can you do to promote the matter yourself?
  2. What do you want from colleagues, supervisors, the management?
  3. Review the proposals together and select the most important actions you decide to take. Record them in a table (table template on the next page).
- Is it possible to take some of the actions exactly as proposed?  
→ Include them directly into the action plan.

#### When discussing ideas, consider the following:

- Can some ideas be combined into a single entity?
- Can some ideas be further developed?

## Actions to be taken: managing a workload factor

You can fill in the table electronically and print the page

What actions shall we take?	Responsible person(s)?	When?	Follow-up (when, how, who)



## Summary and ending the workshop

- Agree on recording and distributing the action plans to participants.
- Agree on a follow-up meeting for the action plans.
- Evaluate how the workshop succeeded.

**Well done, now you know how to proceed towards the goals!**

# Workshop themes

**There are a total of 35 themes, some of which can act as both a resource and a workload factor.**

The purpose of the themes is to act as stimuli for thinking, to help you identify factors that you consider important and provide a starting point for discussion.

## Functionality of the work community

- Division of work
- Solving problems
- Co-operation
- Interaction
- Flow of information
- Roles and responsibilities
- Feedback
- Work climate
- Help and support
- Trust
- Appreciation
- Development atmosphere

## Leadership

- Opinions of the employees
- Well-being at work
- Preparedness
- Operational objectives
- Ground rules
- Decision-making
- Organisational development
- Supervisory work
- Fairness
- Confidence in the future

## Workload

- Conflicting expectations
- Occupational safety
- Amount of work
- Hectic work
- Interruptions
- Changes
- Fragmentation of work
- Manageability of information
- Resources
- Work equipment

## Work content

- Competence
- Remote work practices
- Working hours and flexibility
- Clarity of goals
- Inspirational value of work
- Orientation to work
- Empowerment
- Quality of work
- Meaningfulness of work

The theme cards on the following pages are intended to be printed out for the workshop (on A3 size paper)

# Print for the workshop

## **Appreciation**

Does your work community show appreciation for everyone's work?

## **Solving problem situations**

Are problem situations in your work community resolved constructively with the parties involved?

## **Help and support**

Does your work community provide help and support when needed?

## **Co-operation**

Is co-operation working well?

## **Roles and responsibilities**

Are everyone's roles and responsibilities clear?

## **Interaction**

Is interaction open, constructive and positive?

# Print for the workshop

## **Flow of information**

Is the information needed for the job available and shared to a sufficient degree?

## **Division of work**

Is the division of work clear?

## **Development atmosphere**

Does your work community have an encouraging attitude towards the ideas presented by anyone?

## **Trust**

Is there high level of trust in your work community?

## **Feedback**

Does your work community provide constructive feedback?

## **Operational objectives**

Does your work community discuss the objectives of work and their achievement regularly?

# Print for the workshop

## **Supervisory work**

Is supervisory work effective and does your supervisor enable you to succeed in your work?

## **Supervisory work**

Does your supervisor show appreciation towards employees?

## **Supervisory work**

Does your supervisor provide help and support when needed?

## **Ground rules**

Have the ground rules been agreed upon, and are they being followed?

## **Decision-making**

Are the decision-making authorities clear, and do they support getting work done?

## **Fairness**

Is everyone treated fairly in your work community?

# Print for the workshop

## **Foresight**

Is your work community prepared for any changes that may affect your work?

## **Organisational development**

Are the operations and procedures regularly evaluated and developed?

## **Opinions of the employees**

Does the management and supervisors listen to and take into account the opinions of the employees?

## **Well-being at work**

Do the management and supervisors look after the well-being of the employees?

## **Orientation**

Is orientation effective?

## **Empowerment**

Can we influence work-related issues?

# Print for the workshop

## **Competence**

Does our work community have the necessary competences and are they developed?

## **Remote work practices**

Have remote work practices been agreed upon?

## **Working hours and flexibility**

Do working hours and flexibility support well-being?

## **Clarity of work objectives**

Are the work objectives clear and achievable?

## **Inspirational value of work**

Do you have inspiring things in your work?

## **Changes**

Have the changes at work been handled well?

# Print for the workshop

## **Manageability of information**

Is the information you need in your work easy to find and use?

## **Fragmentation**

Does the fragmentation of work prevent you from focusing on one thing at a time?

## **Amount of work**

Is the amount of work appropriate?

## **Hectic work**

Does the hectic pace burden you at work?

## **Interruptions**

Can you work without interruptions?

## **Occupational safety**

Does your workplace take care of occupational safety in all situations?

# Print for the workshop

## **Conflicting expectations**

Does the work involve conflicting expectations from different parties?

## **Work climate**

Is there good team spirit in your work community?

## **Confidence in the future**

Can we trust the continuity of work?

## **Quality of work**

Is it possible to do the work as well as you wish?

## **Meaningfulness of work**

Is the work we do important?

## **Work equipment**

Are the equipment and systems functional?