

Newsletter n2

POSITIVE ACADEMY

February-March 2023

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Page 2

Study results: Mental health professionals and
professional burnout

Page 4

The beauty within

Page 6

Partners' meeting in Valladolid



Study results:

Mental health professionals and professional burnout

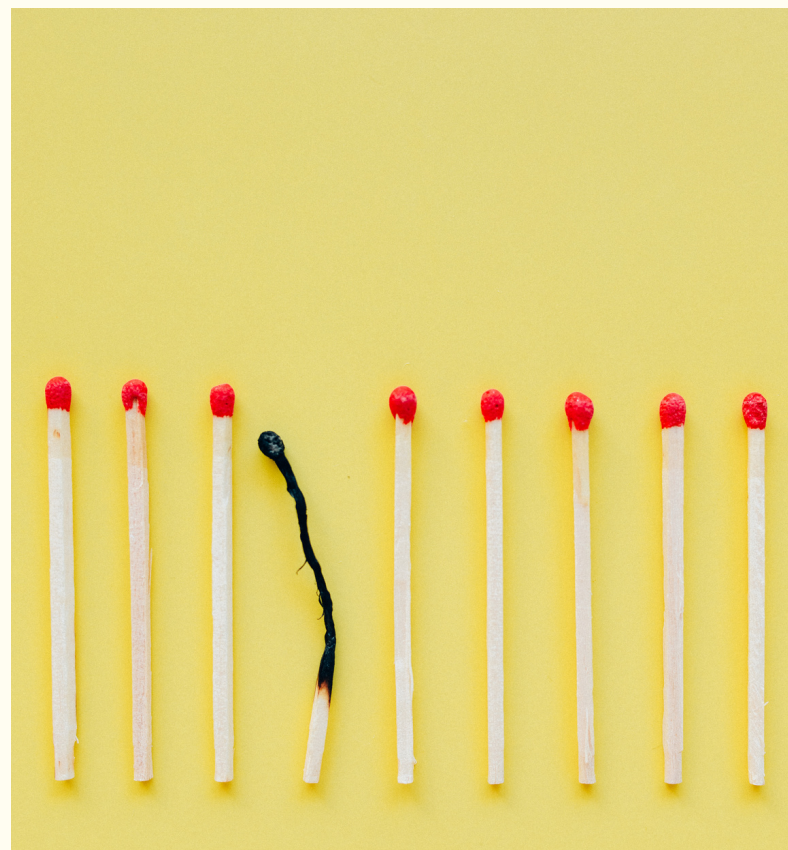
Stress and burnout have become major problems in today's working world. Dealing with complex or stressful situations has always been a big challenge, but due to the constant exposure to new stimuli, mental health problems related to this field have greatly increased during the last decades.

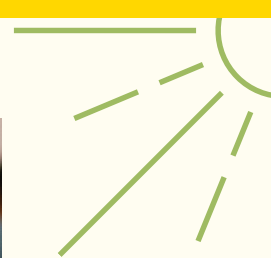
The MHPs, (Mental Health Professionals) are particularly affected by burnout, and this can inevitably cause repercussions regarding a lot of delicate problems.

We conducted an initial study among the target people to dig deeper into this topic. We decided to use six major concepts to evaluate the situation and here we reported a short overview of the results we reached.

First of all, it shows the importance of Positive emotions. All participants affirmed to believe that positive emotions have a positive impact on their well-being and professional relationships, helping them to cope with stressful situations.

Within the various topics that we took in exam, there was one which popped up: the importance of a solid team, general collaboration, and smart management. Sharing emotions and thoughts within a group of people allows our patients to feel more confident in dealing with unknown and challenging situations. Most certainly personality traits also play an important role in the management of stress-coping problems.





One of these roles is played by self-compassion, which is considered a fundamental quality in the well-being of a person, but it is often something people are unaware of. This highlights the importance of education on awareness about self-compassion (particularly for MHPs) which allows the workers to be kinder to themselves, familiar with the situation, and reduce guilt and self-criticism.

Innate motivation has also an impact on dealing with stressful circumstances.

Finding significance in work can be a refreshing good feeling that should not be ignored, for this reason, it is fundamental to encourage it and provide every worker with some related training.

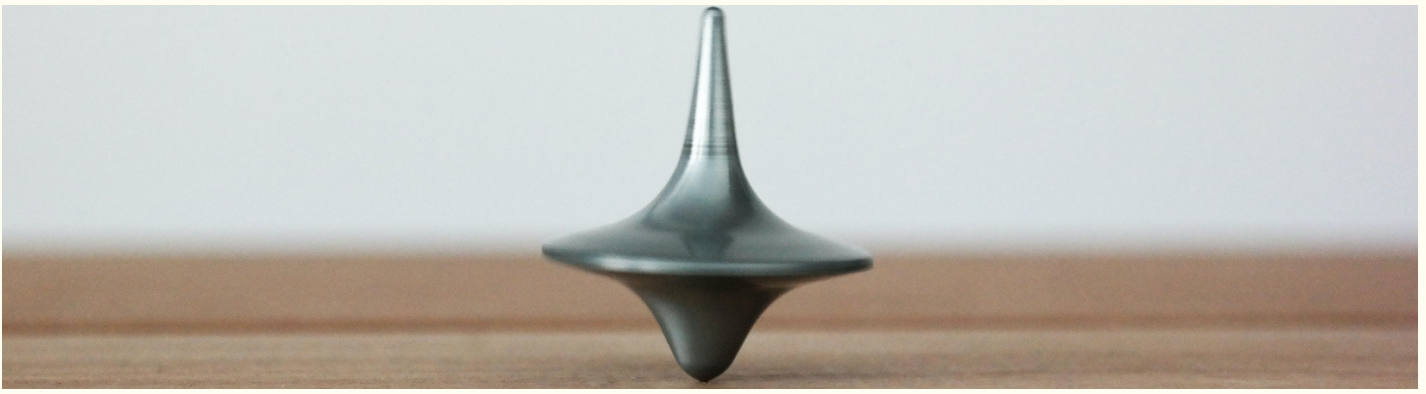
Mindfulness and a eustress mindset are more complex to put into action even though focusing on the present moment is imperative at work. At this point, it's clear that there is a necessity for further development of this concept and to teach people how to work in mindfulness.

VETs providers and MHPs have all shown interest in more training to apply these concepts in their work every day.

Since they don't have difficulty demanding help when they need it, they are requiring adequate training, support, and platforms to help acquire or sharpen their competencies.

We listed the main points we could highlight from this research and we found seven of them:

- a) The need to promote communications skills, social and emotional support
- b) Education of the managers about stress and burnout
- c) Having a wider staff of professionals who listen and can give surveillance (manager, colleagues, therapist,...)
- d) Promote intrinsic motivation and self-compassion
- e) Normalise and value taking a break for oneself (yoga, relaxation,..)
- f) Having a balance between professional and personal life
- g) Help to learn how to ask for help, self-care



The beauty within

After about half a century of intensive work on the treatment and prevention of mental illnesses, a part of psychologists began to see the need to broaden the field's interest beyond any pathological aspects, emphasizing that psychology's research and practice should not only focus on the negative aspects of human existence in general but also on the development of bright potentials and, above all, resilience.

The emerging necessity to concentrate on the promising characteristics of individuals has also been pinpointed by researchers and specialists interested in the prevention of mental illness. Various studies have suggested that among others, courage, optimism, interpersonal abilities, faith, and hope, act as shields against mental illness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

This new consideration resulted in the birth of the blooming field of positive psychology.

Barbara L. Fredrickson's research on positive emotions is also a part of the positive psychology department. Fredrickson's research focuses on studying positive emotional consequences, calling attention to their beneficial effects, as well as understanding why human beings developed a powerful ability to experience positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2003).

In 1998, Fredrickson articulates the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. This theory comes to enrich the knowledge of the field and is most likely to lead to the investigation of new perspectives in the area of psychotherapy.

Positive emotions have never received much attention from researchers and theorists of emotions, because of how influential the negative ones are perceived to be, bringing often more visible consequences. For example, the majority of the existing relevant literature focuses on negative emotions (fear, anger, disgust, etc.), and many psychotherapeutic approaches have given special weight to their expression and externalization.

On the other hand, positive emotions in addition to improving a person's quality of life, also perform other essential functions: they develop the depth of thinking and acting, contribute to obtaining valuable advantages, and in general, help individuals to reach a mental and physical balance, growth and maturity, to cultivate their relationships, gain optimism, expand the way they see themselves and the world, and many other consequential benefits.

Psychological resilience

The theory of positive emotions suggests that positive emotions may be active components of "psychological resilience" as a personality trait.

Individuals who possess sufficient psychological resilience may be expert users of the antidote function of positive emotions; they can use positive emotions to cope with difficult times (Fredrickson, 2001). Thus, "psychological resilience" is considered one relatively stable personality trait, characterized by the individual's ability to overcome negative and stressful experiences quickly and efficiently and adapt effectively to the ever-changing demands of everyday life (J. Block & Kremen, 1996; Lazarus, 1993).

Data from a variety of research reveal that there is some relationship between psychological resilience and positive emotions. Individuals with high psychological resilience have been found to have a more optimistic outlook on life, to be more open to new experiences, and are characterized by high positive emotionality (J. Block & Kremen, 1996; Klohnen, 1996). They have also been found to use "positive" strategies, such as humor (Masten, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992; Wolin & Wolin, 1993), relaxation

(Anthony, 1987) e.t.c., as ways to deal with problems. So it seems that these individuals, more than others, understand the value of positive emotions, and use them to cope with difficult situations (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larkin, 2003).

By extension, as its definition suggests, individuals with high psychological resilience will come back to their stable mental state more quickly and effectively after dealing with stressful circumstances (Carver, 1998; Lazarus, 1993) compared to individuals with less psychological resilience. As positive emotion theory suggests this tendency might be fueled by the backgrounds of positive emotion that these individuals have previously experienced (Fredrickson, 2001).

The "upward spiral"

Consequently, positive emotions are likely to fuel the differences between individuals in terms of their psychological resilience.

Since psychological resilience is a lifelong resource of the individual, positive emotion theory assumes that positive emotions, to the extent that they broaden thought and action, will increase individuals' psychological resilience (Aspinwall, 2001). In addition, through increasing psychological resilience, positive emotions will improve the emotional well-being of individuals (Fredrickson, 2001).



Psychological resilience

Fredrickson & Joiner (2002), suggest that there is a reciprocal relationship between positive emotions and the positive meaning one attributes to certain situations. Finding/attributing positive meaning to a situation evokes positive emotions, but also positive emotions themselves increase the likelihood of finding positive meaning in future events because of the broadening they bring about (Fredrickson, 2000).

Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) based on these reciprocal relationships, propose that positive emotions mobilize an “upward spiral” which refers to the hypothesis that positive emotions not only make us feel good at the given moment we experience them, but they also increase the possibility for mental well-being in the future, thanks to the effects of broadening and building new resources.

In particular, the theory predicts that experiencing a positive emotion and the consequent broad way of thinking, are mutually influenced and motivated by each other. A positive emotion generates broadening, which subsequently helps the individual to cope with the difficulties he is facing and encourages the experience of other positive emotions, which, in turn, will result in the broadening of thought-action and so on, thereby creating an upward spiral. The result of this process is the gradual increase in psychological resilience and emotional well-being of individuals

(Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002).

Partners' meeting in Valladolid



The second transnational meeting took place in Valladolid (Spain) on the 18th and 19th of January, during which the partners analyzed the progress achieved so far in the project. They discussed the results of the Study: Mental health professionals and professional burnout then defined the contents of the training for Mental Health Professionals based on Positive Psychology Methodologies to prevent professional burnout. The partners defined upcoming tasks and responsibilities and immediately started to work.

FUNDACIÓN
Intras

CHU
de Liège

S C f
SCUOLA CENTRALE FORMAZIONE

iasis

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union




**INSTITUTE OF
DEVELOPMENT**
N. CHARALAMBOUS

CPIP
Dedicated to your development

happsy
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ ΘΕΤΙΚΗΣ ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
HELLENIC ASSOCIATION OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



Smarted
SMART EDITION
SITO IN MANUTENZIONE

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.