

Stress Management Maturity Concept - a model for successful interventions in work systems

Topic: 12. Organizational Interventions and outcomes

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Abstract

This paper proposes a maturity concept (Stress Management Maturity Concept) which can analyze the existing stress management practice and support a sustainable development of new preventive work practices in knowledge intensive work systems.

The concept consists of two modules: First, a maturity test which is used to map the existing stress management practice. The second module consists of a applicable self-help tool which can support the development and design of new preventive work practices based on a participatory process.

Module one is presently being developed in a newly started mixed methods research project - "*Development of a stress preventive model for SME's*". The development is based on research results and literature on Stress management and interventions and maturity models and subsequently tested in four case companies. Hereafter, the companies are to use the self-help tool.

The self-help tool was developed as part of a research project with the objective to study whether it is possible through an intervention to develop and implement stress preventive changes in knowledge intensive companies. The outcomes of the research project are preventive changes where the human factor perspective has been integrated in the design and management of work systems resulting in increased productivity, flexibility and work environment.

To support successful interventions the research project builds on the following results and premises identified in previous interventions:

- The local collective knowledge forms the basis for the preventive interventions which have a participatory approach.
- Tacit knowledge on working conditions and practices, problems and relevant solutions is made explicit in collective rooms for reflections in order to secure participation, commitment and organizational learning.
- The development of preventive changes has its starting point in the daily local practices.
- The participants decide on their program goals and theory which can be evaluated step by step through the intervention by the evaluator.
- The evaluation enables to identify implementation failures and changes to be made.
- Progress and process activities are continuously visualized in order to secure focus, commitment and "something to talk about".
- The appointed coordinator of the process follows the process and evaluates the implementation of the program and addresses the shadow systems in order to seek ideas and stories influencing the interventions.

The Self-Help tool comprises together with the maturity model and the success criteria the key components of the maturity concept which can support the development and implementation of primary stress preventive changes.