



LATVIA

CASE STUDY N°4

PAPER B

ZEBRA FORMATIONS ASBL
HANNUT
BELGIUM



WHY NOT TRY? / IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO...

Considering that stressed and insecure preretirement aged people wish to remain competitive in the labour market, particularly by maintaining a good balance between physical and mental health it would be highly recommended that any training course addressing this issue includes a special fun section to inform the learners in a humorous way of the psychological mechanisms leading to stress thereby acknowledging their difficulty and showing that it can be overcome. Having consulted Séverine Barbet (Senior Manager for Talent management and certified in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction - MBSR) on this subject it appears that relief stress games which can be found on the Internet will only reduce pressure momentarily (in an isolated context) but not eliminate the anxiety caused by an objective situation that comprises the risk of losing one's job. Pleasurable sporting outdoor team games are effective for rapidly reducing stress but their impact is not long-lasting and they require physical exercise (**most ball games**). The best plan for a training course is to organise **self-confidence boosting activities** that create a feeling of inclusion in the work place. The course could organize get together activities during which learners can enjoy themselves: going out for a meal together, planning an outing, setting up a theatrical performance (acting out your situation can be therapeutic), creating a mock fashion show, etc. These activities recreate a sense of belonging to a community and of participating to a common project in a stimulating and playful way for persons who may feel victimized by their hierarchy.

One interesting group game to improve self-confidence consists in writing **positive descriptions** about each other starting with a random chosen letter (H for example): Gregory is **Honest**, **Handsome**, **Hard-worker**, etc.

The training course may also consider using a **role reversal game** (a kind of role play) that can be a fun way of getting the stress out of your system and that can be enlightening regarding the way your company functions. In this game learners must adopt roles they are not used to and include some humour to dedramatize difficult challenging situations. You could imagine playing the part of your manager and proving to the rest of the group that you are the best person for the job!

More ideas at: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_TCS.htm

NECESSARY CONDITIONS: MATERIAL / PLACE / TIME

No special material is required (pen and paper should do). Choosing place and time has to be done very carefully: out of school activities require skilled thinking about where and when to organise them: this may entail some useful negotiation with learners. Leading and managing the training courses involving psychological aspects requires expertise. It may be necessary to use the services of a trained group dynamics monitor, preferably someone with a good sense of humour.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES

Learners or "clients" may have certain prejudices towards activities that at first hand do not seem serious enough for the difficulties they wish to overcome. They will therefore have to be properly informed about the objectives and methods of the proposed games and playful activities. As results will require some time before they can be measured the action course will have to be ventilated on a fairly long period of time.

ILLUSTRATION

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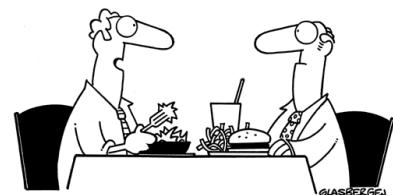
"Aside from ulcers, heart attacks, bypass surgery, drug and alcohol problems, and broken families, a little hard work never hurt anyone!"

CHEER UP.
AT LEAST YOU
HAVE A JOB!



"It's not exactly the sort of morale booster I had in mind."

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"I learned about stress management from my kids. Every night after work, I drink as much chocolate milk as my stomach will hold, eat handfuls of sugary cereal straight from the box, then run around the house in my underwear squealing like a monkey."