SwitchOff Training Programme Template – Module 1

Training Program

Module 1

Recovery from work, introduction to the concept and key theoretical framework

Module 1	
Module 1	*Recovery from work; introduction to the concept and key theoretical frameworks - IoD*
Short description of the module / abstract	The aim of this module is to introduce learners (HR managers) to the concept of recovery from work and the significance role recovery has in employees' efforts to maintain a healthy work life balance. In this training learners will explore key theoretical frameworks relating to the concept of recovery from work. They will also learn about the benefits of recovery for the individual and the organisation, based on empirical evidence. By completing this module, they will also gain a better understanding of the need of remote workers to switch off and recover from work. After attending the training, learners will be able to learn how to apply some strategies for fostering effective recovery practices in the workplace based on key recovery experiences that facilitate the recovery process. At the end of the training learners will be assessed with different methods such as multiple-choice questions, True/False statements, and open questions.
Learning Outcomes	Learning outcome 1: Learners will be able to define what is meant by the term "recovery from work". Learning outcome 2: Learners will be able to summarise reasons why remote workers have the need to recover. Learning outcome 3: Learners will familiarise with some key theoretical frameworks that highlight the significant role of recovery. Learning outcome 4: Learners will learn some key strategies that they can implement in order to foster recovery in the workplace.
Learning Units	*Learning Unit 1:* Introduction to the concept of recovery and its significance in the context of work and well-being. *Learning Unit 2:* Why do remote workers have the need to recover ? *Learning Unit 3:* Exploration of key theoretical frameworks from which the construct 'need for recovery' originates. *Learning Unit 4:* Recovery experiences that facilitate the recovery process.
Learning core material	For each chapter, please mention the offered learning material, using the following table. Learning material may encompass texts, PPTs, educational videos, practical activities, articles, etc. For Each chapter it is possible to propose more than one learning material, if it is reasonable and consistent with the learning objects. <table><tr><td>**Learning Units**</td><td>**Learning Material**</td></tr><tr><td>1.Introduction to the concept of recovery and its significance in the context of work and well-being.</td><td>Text, Articles</td></tr></table>

	2.Why do remote workers have the need to recover?	Text
	3.Exploration of key theoretical frameworks from which the construct 'need for recovery' originates	Text, Articles
	4.Recovery experiences that facilitate the recovery process	Text, Articles

Assessment method	For each chapter or Learning Unit please mention the assessment method	
	Learning Unit	**Assessment method**
	1.Introduction to the concept of recovery and its significance in the context of work and well-being.	*True - False statement, Multiple choice questions*
	2.Why do remote workers have the need to recover ?	*Open Questions , True/False statement*
	3.Exploration of key theoretical frameworks from which the construct 'need for recovery' originates	*Multiple choice questions*
	4.Recovery experiences that facilitate the recovery process	*True - False statement, Multiple choice questions*

Workload (Estimated study time) (min)	We have estimated 120' for this module, including the assessment activity. Detailed breakdown of time estimation: 85' for learning units (including studying parts of the articles provided) 35' for assessment activities
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LEARNING UNIT 1- INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF RECOVERY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF WORK AND WELL-BEING.

Defining recovery from work

Due to the increased demands of modern work, it is undeniable that taking time to recover from work-related stresses is a crucial necessity that everyone should prioritize. Just like a smartphone that requires recharging when its battery is depleted, employees similarly need to recharge their energy after work to ensure optimal functioning.

Therefore, the concept of **work recovery** can be best understood as the **process that restores a person's vitality and energy resources** (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011). Throughout a typical workday, individuals are involved in a range of tasks that demand cognitive effort (e.g. decision-making, problem-solving, giving presentations, scheduling meetings). Extended engagement in such tasks and mental activities can lead to both psychological and physiological reactions, resulting in strain and fatigue. This can leave employees feeling depleted by the end of their workday. Consequently, Geurts and Sonnentag (2006) defined recovery as the **"psycho-physiological unwinding following effort and energy expenditure at work"** (p. 482).

The significant role of recovery in the context of work and wellbeing

The significance of recovery is rooted in its connection to vital outcomes affecting both an individual's job performance and overall well-being. Sonnentag's (2003) study revealed that adequate post-work recovery had a favorable influence on **employees' engagement** with their work. This heightened level of engagement resulting from sufficient recovery, in turn, prompted **proactive behaviors like taking initiative and pursuing learning objectives among employees.** Numerous studies have also emphasized the significance of ample recovery for **employees' well-being.** To illustrate, Rook and Zijlstra (2006) found that inadequate recovery can lead to fatigue. Postponing complete recovery may plunge employees into a cycle where insufficient recovery from one workday necessitates extra effort to meet job demands, forcing them to exert added energy to accomplish routine tasks. Consequently, the restoration of less-than-optimal psychological states is delayed, and this could eventually lead to occupationally induced fatigue, possibly evolving into Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS; Sluiter, Frings-Dresen, van der Beek, & Meijman, 2001). Insufficient recovery also has the potential to exacerbate strain and, over time, could detrimentally affect health, consequently elevating employee sick leave (Meijman & Mulder, 1998).

To complete this Learning Unit you have to:

Read the online article: https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-091355

LEARNING UNIT 2: WHY DO REMOTE WORKERS HAVE THE NEED TO RECOVER?

Remote working can be a double-edged sword, impacting employees' well-being in ways that are both beneficial and detrimental. On the one hand remote work can indeed provide **greater freedom and flexibility, enabling a better work-life balance**. On the other hand however working from home comes with some challenges. More specifically, because the **boundaries between work and home gets even more blurred** as employees work from home, staying focused on their job while being at home takes a great amount of effort and can result in **higher levels of anxiety and fatigue** (Sonnentag et al., 2008).

Moreover, in order to maintain contact and meet their job expectations, remote workers **heavily rely on ICTs** which allow them to stay connected when working from different locations (Middleton, 2007). Consequently, they reported **working long hours** (Grant et al., 2013) something that makes it **more difficult for them to switch-off from work** (Kossek et al., 2009). This is a phenomenon that intensifies the **'always on culture'**, where individuals are expected by their supervisors to **be constantly available**, (Derks et al., 2015). These behaviours can impair individuals' ability to switch-off from work, translating into **poor well-being and health problems** (Kompier, Taris, & Van Veldhoven, 2012). As such, remote workers have a greater need to disconnect and recover from work at the end of their working day.

LEARNING UNIT 3: EXPLORATION OF KEY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The research about the construct of recovery mainly builds on two main theoretical frameworks: (1) the effort-recovery model and (2) the conservation of resource theory. Below we describe briefly the two theoretical frameworks.

1) Effort-recovery model

The effort-recovery model introduced by Meijman and Mulder (1998) postulates that individuals are required to invest mental and physical effort and utilize resources while dealing with work-related demands (such as meeting deadlines). This encompasses various task demands and psychosocial factors present in the work environment. This dedication involves behavioural, physiological, and emotional responses to these work demands, leading to the depletion of resources like energy and creating the necessity for 'recovery.' Recovery takes place only when exposure to work demands ceases, allowing homeostasis to be achieved between psychological and physiological systems within a specific timeframe (Meijman & Mulder, 1998).

2) Conservation of resources theory

Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1998) has also been found to be a major explanatory model for understanding stress and recovery processes at work (Westman et al., 2005). Based on this theory individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources that constitute individuals' necessities of life, which can be objects (e.g. home), personal characteristics (e.g. self-esteem), conditions (e.g. being employed), and energies (e.g. money). Gorgievski and Hobfoll (2008) stated that the workplace environments are regarded as not only providing employees with important resources (e.g. money), but they also places a high resource demands upon them (e.g. job engagement, energy, flexibility). Loss of resources, or a threat of loss can be a precursor of stress. For recovery from stress to take place and to regain their well being, individuals must replenish their resources and especially their internal attributes (i.e. personal and energies).

To complete this Learning Unit you have to:

Read the online articles:
1. Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J. P., & Westman, M. (2018). Conservation of resources in the organizational context: The reality of resources and their consequences. *Annual review of organizational psychology and organizational behavior*, *5*, 103-128. [Read only the Introduction]. Link:
https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032117-104640

2. Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Geurts, S. A., & Taris, T. W. (2009). Daily recovery from work-related effort during non-work time. In *Current perspectives on job-stress recovery* (pp. 85-123). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. [read pages 87-89]. Link:
https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=081c45617b59270b8a95e9198c48c820ce8fd21c

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LEARNING UNIT 4: RECOVERY EXPERIENCES THAT FACILITATE THE RECOVERY PROCESS

According to Sonnentag and Fritz (2007), the psychological state in which people are in during nonwork time, can impact their recovery process. Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) proposed the following strategies which could be useful for recovery:

Psychological detachment
Psychological detachment implies refraining from work-related thoughts and gaining mental distance from one's work during nonwork time. This suggests that being physically away from work is not sufficient for one's recovery process. But other than what above mentioned, what is crucial to one's recovery is the sense of being mentally away. This could be achieved through various ways. Some examples are presented below:

- Abstain from receiving job-related phone calls at home.
- Avoid actively engaging in job-related activities such as answering emails.
- Disabling work related notifications during non-working hours.
- Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life.

Relaxation

Describes the experience of low sympathetic activation that can be achieved by meditating or breathing practices as well as everyday activities that calm the body and mind. Relaxation is also associated with increased positive affect (Stone et al., 1995). Relaxation can be achieved by deliberately engaging in activities aiming at the relaxation of body and mind such as progressive muscle relaxation (Jacobson, 1938) or meditation (Grossman et al., 2004). Activities that require people to be exposed in a restorative environment such as nature walks could also lead to relaxation (Hartig et al., 2003). Relaxation could also be achieved through the following activities:

- listening to soft music
- light walk into nature
- taking a warm bath
- having a relaxing massage.

Mastery Experiences

Mastery experiences refer to off-job activities that distract from the job by providing challenging experiences and learning opportunities in other domains. Such experiences, although they might seem cognitively demanding, contribute to one's recovery process as they allow the individual to build up new internal resources such as skills, competencies, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Hobfoll, 1998). Examples of such activities include:

- learning a new language
- starting a new hobby (e.g. chess, painting)
- pursuing a sport (e.g. climbing, cycling)

Control during leisure time

This describes one's ability to use their discretion in the activity they would like to pursue during leisure time, as well as when and how to pursue this activity (Ouyang et al. 2019). The experience of control during leisure time may satisfy one's desire for control by increasing self- efficacy and feelings of competence, which in turn promote well-being. In this sense, control may act as an external resource that enhances recovery from work during off-job time. In addition, control during leisure time provides the individual with the opportunity to choose those specific leisure activities that they prefer and that may be especially supportive for the
recovery process. Increased levels of recovery may then become evident in a person's increased well- being and potential for action regulation.

To complete this learning unit you have to:

Read the online article:
1. Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2007). The Recovery Experience Questionnaire: development and validation of a measure for assessing recuperation and unwinding from work. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *12*(3), 204 -221.

Link: https://kops.uni-konstanz.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/98ac710b-0e57-4fb7-a281-e7a2aa0618ef/content

References:

Cropley, M., & Zijlstra, F. R. (2011). Work and rumination. *Handbook of stress in the occupations*, *487*(503), 10-4337.

Geurts, S. A., & Sonnentag, S. (2006). Recovery as an explanatory mechanism in the relation between acute stress reactions and chronic health impairment. *Scandinavian journal of work, environment & health*, 482-492.

Sonnentag, S. (2003). Recovery, work engagement, and proactive behavior: a new look at the interface between nonwork and work. *Journal of applied psychology*, *88*(3), 518.

Rook, J. W., & Zijlstra, F. R. (2020). The contribution of various types of activities to recovery. In *Work and Rest: A Topic for Work and Organizational Psychology* (pp. 218-240). Psychology Press.

Hartig, T., Evans, G. W., Jamner, L. D., & Davis, D. S. Ga «rling T, 2003,``. *Tracking restoration in natural and urban field settings"Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *23*, 109-123.

Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2007). The Recovery Experience Questionnaire: development and validation of a measure for assessing recuperation and unwinding from work. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *12*(3), 204.

Grossman, P., Niemann, L., Schmidt, S., & Walach, H. (2004). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: A meta-analysis. *Journal of psychosomatic research*, *57*(1), 35-43.
Gorgievski, M., & Hobfoll, S. E. (2008). Work can burn us out and fire us up. *Handbook of stress and burnout in health care*, 7-22.

Hobfoll, S. E. (1998). *Stress, Culture, and Community: The Psychology and Physiology of Stress.* New York: Plenum Press.

Meijman, T.F., & Mulder, G. (1998). Psychological aspects of workload. In: P.J.D. Drenth, H.
Thierry, & C.J. de Wolff (Eds.), Handbook of Work and Organizational Psychology: Vol. 2, Work Psychology (2nd edition, pp. 5-33). Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Sonnentag, S., Binnewies, C., & Mojza, E. J. (2008). " Did you have a nice evening?" A day-level study on recovery experiences, sleep, and affect. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *93*(3), 674.

Kossek, E. E., Lautsch, B. A., & Eaton, S. C. (2009). Good teleworking": Under what conditions does teleworking enhance employees' well-being. *Technology and psychological well-being*, 148-173.

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SWITCH OFF

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Supporting worker's well being during remote work

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