

MENTAL HEALTH AND WORK

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Presentation of the Recommendation N° 30 of the National Labour Council, on “the prevention of burnout among workers - for healthy workers in healthy organisations”

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“National Labour Council” (NLC)

1. Characteristics of the NLC ?

- bipartite social dialogue
- most representative confederations of employers and workers
- federal, intersectoral
- private sector (profit and social profit)

2. Role and function NLC ?

- Opinion : to Government – Parliament (2400 opinions)
- Reports (133)
- Recommendation : to industrial sectors – enterprises (30 recommendations)
- Collective labour Agreements (CLA): binding for signatory parties and their members + generally binding by Royal Decree (172 CLA)

« National Labour Council key working method: achieving consensus between social partners »

+80% of its opinions are consensual

1. NLC Recommendation no. 30 of 8 November 2023 “for healthy employees in healthy organisations”

- Adopted by the federal social partners in the framework of the National Labour Council
- To enterprises and sectors
- On the (primary) prevention of psychosocial risks, especially burn-out

« Contrary to a vast majority of HR advice/outreach: target not only the individual but also the organisational level !! »



2. The origins of the Recommendation no. 30

- The Collective Labour Agreement no. 72 of 30 March 1999:
 - Defines the concept of stress, determines how an employer should implement a stress prevention policy, defines the role of workers and their representatives
- The federal OSH/Well-being at work legislation in relation to prevention of psychosocial risks at the background !!
- Link between burn-out and stress : opinion no. 9339 of the Belgian Conseil Supérieur de la Santé
- The interprofessional Agreement of 2 February 2017
 - The prevention of burn-out among workers is a major social challenge
- Successive joint opinions of the National Labour Council
- Cooperation with academic experts that have evaluated the pilot projects positively
- The entire process has made it possible to reach a good understanding of what works and can be identified as a good practice

3. Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of psychosocial risks, especially burn-out

<p>The law Well-being Act of 4 Augustus 1996 Codex on the well-being at work</p> <p>Every employers must identify the situations that give rise to psychosocial risks at work, evaluate the risks and take prevention measures where needed</p>			
<p>The pilot projects</p> <p>How to take up this obligation ? Testing an outlined approach</p>			
Agency	NLC	Federal Agency for Occupational Risks (Fedris)	National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (RIZIV)
Focus	Primary prevention	Secondary prevention	Tertiary prevention
=	Engaged at work	When difficulties at work or short absences	When prolonged absences (return to work)
Results	Recommendation no. 30		<p>Legislation concerning "trajectory return to work"</p> <p>NLC works on an instrument concerning the collective reintegration policy of enterprises</p>
<p>The 2020-2021 federal plan for the prevention of stress at work and for mental resilience</p>			

4. The Recommendation no. 30 – Its structure and content

- Includes six (sub) recommendations (for the primary prevention of burn-out)
- A broad quality framework for good interventions by enterprises and sectors
- Sector support initiatives for enterprises should be aimed at introducing the recommended good practices in these enterprises
- The intention is that the promoted good practices are more widely adopted in enterprises and sectors

5. Its structure and content: sub recommendation no. 1

True primary prevention must target the individual as well as the organisational level = an integrated or holistic approach

- the collective risk factors (on the team or organizational level) should be prioritized
- work organisation has various sub-aspects (see next slide)
- the broader the perspective, the more risk factors in the work organisation can be identified and addressed
- the integrated approach will require the application of different areas of expertise = multidisciplinary
- given the complexity of the subject matter, it may be necessary to seek external expertise
- special attention should be paid to awareness, training and behavioural change among managers
 - Competence management, talent management, attention for learning opportunities and career opportunities

6. The sub-aspects of work organisation

- The structure of the organisation (vertical or horizontal) and its culture
- Job content
- Employment conditions
- Working conditions
- Employment relations (internal and external, between workers and between workers and management)

7. Its structure and content : sub recommendation no. 2

It is recommended that firm internal support is created within the enterprise for a robust well-being policy

- As a very first step, it is best to use didactics in an enterprise to create awareness about what (psychosocial well-being and) burn-out is (the discovery phase).
- Then, in order to obtain the relevant input for the primary prevention approach, it is recommended as a second step to work to create a "positive" environment/culture
- In which (mental) well-being and burn-out can be openly discussed and expressed and solutions sought, taking into account individual aspects (the support phase).
 - For example, a positive statement of intent can be drafted in which the employer defines his intention of a sincere and lasting commitment to the well-being of his employees
- Broader efforts can also be made to create a culture of trust and respect.

8. Its structure and content : sub recommendation no. 3

It is recommended that a tailored situation analysis and approach are used

- A picture of the enterprise should be created, a situation analysis, identifying both positive elements of enterprise policy and bottlenecks/improvements.
- The prevention measures taken must address the most critical and priority risk factors that were evaluated.
- The situation analysis can bring out risk factors specific to the work organisation and (competence/talent/learning) management
- Therefore a tailored approach to the enterprise is necessary.

9.1. Its structure and content : sub recommendation no. 4

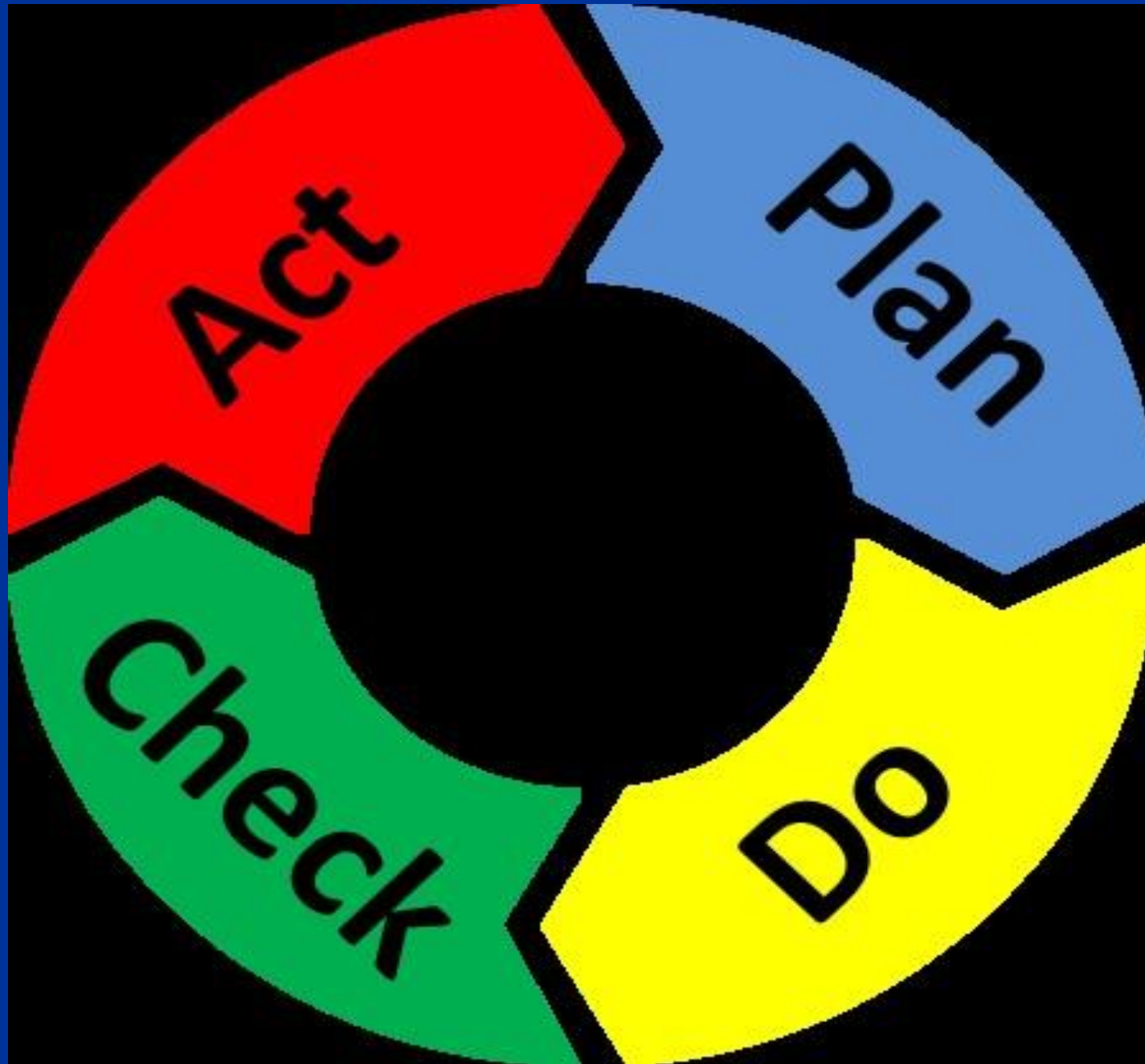
It is recommended that the approach is embedded in the enterprise's longer term strategic policy

- The complexity of primary prevention and organisational change requires time and sustained attention and commitment to the issues.
- Systemic embedding of attention to burn-out within an integrated HR and prevention
- Enterprises are therefore recommended to proceed through different phases for their primary burn-out prevention efforts.
- What is important here is to pay sufficient attention to an action-orientated approach from the very first phase.

9.2. Its structure and content : sub recommendation no. 4

It is recommended that the approach is embedded in the enterprise's longer term strategic policy

- It is recommended that a preparatory phase includes the creation of (a) task force(s)/project group (s).
- Which will conduct a situation analysis of elements that may have an impact on employees' psychosocial well-being and, in particular, cause burn-out.
- These are used as a basis for the general definition of work points (objectives) and outlining a vision for improvement.
- A plan should then be drawn up in which policies/actions/programmes: the development phase.
- Then the developed actions are actually taken: the implementation phase.
- After the actions are rolled out follows the evaluation phase.
- The adjustment phase.



10. Its structure and content : sub recommendation no. 5

It is recommended to work from the bottom up and in dialogue with the various stakeholders in the enterprise

- In this context, the crucial role in Belgium of the enterprise's consultation bodies should be underlined, in accordance with their respective competences.
 - works council
 - committee for prevention and protection at work
 - as well as the trade union delegation in the enterprise
- In Belgium all workers and line managers should also be informed of the results of the situation analysis and the applicable preventative measures
- A workers and line managers and the consultative bodies members should receive the necessary training to adequately apply preventive measures

11. Its structure and content : sub recommendation no. 6

It is recommended to take benefit from the expertise the sectors can provide

- Belgium has 165 joint committees and subcommittees: can conclude sector collective agreements and can establish jointly managed funds and actions
- Translating the results of a situation analysis into actions and action plans is a difficult step for many enterprises.
- The sectoral projects have a transversal scope and cover a wide variety of professional situations. This allows for the transferability of good practices through wide dissemination of prevention tools.
- An external perspective can help to achieve a cultural change, stay on track and support a broader vision of primary prevention.

12. Summary of the recommendation no. 30

- The recommended action for psychosocial well-being in the enterprise and primary prevention of employee burn-out in particular:
 - is aimed at improving the psychosocial work environment in all its aspects (holistic)
 - is based on internal support
 - is tailored to the enterprise's needs
 - targets both rapid improvements and long-term/permanent efforts
 - takes place from the bottom up, in dialogue with the various stakeholders in the enterprise, primarily the employees and their representatives
 - And benefits from the expertise the sectors can provide.

The Recommendation no. 30 and the other cited NLC-opinions can be consulted on the website of the NLC :

- www.cnt-nar.be
- <https://cnt-nar.be/nl/thema-dossiers/burn-out>
<https://cnt-nar.be/fr/dossiers-thematiques/burn-out>
- <https://cnt-nar.be/sites/default/files/documents/nl/Aanbeveling-30-Engels.pdf>
- <https://cnt-nar.be/sites/default/files/documents/nl/aanbeveling-30-Duits.pdf>

The recommendation no. 30 is available in Dutch, French, English and German

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**