

Sustainable productivity workshop

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Block 1: Overview, meta, basic ideas

Block 2: Theory

Block 3: Solutions

Block 4: Wrap up and key learnings

Meta

Phones. Off or on? Note: at least two breaks for emergencies.

Note taking. Website, Github. I'm not an expert: here to learn and discuss. "This is what I've got."

Write on whiteboard: *our* notes. Learnings, things we want to apply. First: why we are here.

Goal: create sustainable productivity by reflecting on relationship stress, productivity, mental health.

Presentation Mattis. Scrum master, playing in band, hospital visit because of too much stress.

Overview subject

Looking at experts, it's all "common knowledge." Key is to identify specific obstacles.

Data in Sweden: most common reason sick leave. +14% of all emergencies "acute stress reaction"

Why are we exhaustion ourselves? Most common in females 30-40.

Stress correlated, but not causing cancer. Why? Unhealthy methods?

Traditionally we think of mental and physical as separate. All mental activity has brain correlation.

Is stress good or bad?

Not binary. Not two different kinds of stress. Compare to exercise / calories / whatever.

Caring as pre-requisite of stress. Highly sensitive people: DNA + upbringing.

Stress correlated – but not causing – cancer. Why? "Healthy" vs "unhealthy" methods.

Net stress. Perceived situation. Control, support, recovery. Stressed about being stressed.

Where are you? How do we know? Cynicism, exhaustion, physical symptoms, memory, patience ...

[five-minute break]

"Because I'm a fucking caveman"

Homo sapiens sapiens not changed for 50 000 years. Not built for this environment: bugs.

What made us more successful than other species: ability to plan & cooperate.

Not able to survive alone = social part of stress often most important. But not talked about.

Thinking about problem in future = enough to react now. Always worrying about future = :(

Fight or flight or freeze. What do we need to run from? Opposite is rest & digest.

The tribe needed different kinds of people. What if no one was neurotic? Bug or feature?

Neuroscience of stress

Amygdala(s) part of limbic system. ~225 m years old (shrews have them!) Iterated and QA:d.

Quick fast-and-up system. Overrides thinking part of brain – the prefrontal cortex. Self-talk.

Subconscious identification of danger, not rational. What do you need to be afraid of in 2017?

We're built differently. Some have larger / more active amygdalas and thus stressed out more.

Different environments shape us. Bad family situation with "danger" causes amygdala to grow.

Good news that brain is plastic. 8 weeks of meditation shrinks amygdala. (but fighting 1m years!)

Mindset intervention: Challenge response

Why doesn't saying "Don't worry" solve the problem? We've already tried not to worry!

Different reactions to challenge (psyched!) and danger (scared!). We can change mindset.

Examine the worst case. Realize it's not that bad. Now it's a challenge. We can lower/raise bar.

Reality check: burnouts are often related to workaholism. Rarely only work.

Our mental image of the world shapes how we react.

Yerkes-Dodson

Avoiding stress = avoiding all types of challenges.

Different leadership skills depending on scale. Example: talking about mission & values.

Many companies still have industrial view of work. Best to be at the desk for X hours. Why?

With simple task, it doesn't matter how stressed out we are: we'll do OK anyway. Cleaning.

With complex tasks, we need the perfect amount of stress. Surgeon. (cover faces example)

[five-minute break]

Categories of stress management

Examples of each category.

Reflect on your own (journal, meditation, walks) or with others (friends, therapist, coach)

Try out by dividing group into solo or social.

Outside: work environment

* Belong to a group, defined as: to feel secure with others and to be affirmed by others.

* Sense of contribution & creativity: to perform & be challenged.

* Self-realisation: fostering and developing individual ability.

+ Hygiene factors: salary, physical work environment, personnel policy

+ Motivation factors: good leadership, mission and values

Mindfulness & meditation

Supposed to be non-religious. But if you dig in, the Buddha pops out. Not compatible all religions.

However, rename method to presence. Research indicates it reduces anxiety but no placebo controls.

Why would it work? 1. Disconnect 2. Not think about future. 3. Breathing activates PNS.

Meditation can be defined a million ways. Just sitting, breathing, and focusing on the breath.

Some people hate meditation and that's OK. As we've seen, there are other methods available.

[five-minute meditation]

Greatest hits

Individual: lower / raise ambition based on life situation. Team: psychologically safe environment: honest, affirming. Organization: allow individual to decide best work situation.

Questions, reflections, thoughts

Pick up on what was written down in beginning. Follow up on anything we haven't covered.

Write down changes we want to make as individuals, teams and orgs.

Prioritize changes we want to make. Simplify: what if I can only do one thing?

Always free to email me with questions and feedback. I will send out slides etc.

Thank you + don't forget to pick up phones :)