

Healthy Work Assessment Tool – Identifying stressful aspects of work

The **Healthy Work Assessment Tool – Identifying stressful aspects of work** - provides ways of assessing the 'unhealthiness' of work.

Its uses might be to:

- Get a picture of the nature of the work being done by a person or in your organisation;
- Gather information about a person's difficulties in a job;
- Identify stressors in a person's job;
- Explore the extent of agreement between an employee and a supervisor about a person's work;
- Gather information to spot trends across an organisation;
- Gather baseline data for later comparison with evaluations.

The tool can be used to identify the unhealthy features of work. There are many ways of using such a tool – with people working singly or in groups – to list individual concerns or to agree about a group conclusion. A worker and a supervisor could complete the table together to better understand its opportunities and difficulties. One point of the tool is to emphasise the idea that while it is healthy for a worker to feel a sense of control at work, employers may very well feel a strong lack of control over the way they are constrained to conduct their business.

Care should be taken to view the job as a whole and to avoid fixing on single items and allowing them to dominate the discussion.

When using this tool the practical realities faced by employers and employees and their possibly limited abilities and opportunities to respond need to be acknowledged.

Healthy Work Assessment Tool – Identifying stressful aspects of work

Feature of healthy work	What is the evidence for the presence or absence of this feature in the workplace?	Extent to which this feature can be controlled by the . . .		Actions needed to address this feature –	
		Employer	Employee	Employer . . . How can employees be supported?	Employee . . . How can I support the employer and my colleagues?
Organisational function and culture: rigid work practices, poor communication, non-supportive work culture		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		
Role in organisation: role/task ambiguity, role conflict, too much responsibility		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		
Career development: Career uncertainty/stagnation, poor status or status incongruity, lack of rewards		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		

Feature of healthy work	What is the evidence for the presence or absence of this feature in the workplace?	Extent to which this feature can be controlled by the . . .		Actions needed to address this feature –	
		Employer	Employee	Employer . . . How can employees be supported?	Employee . . . How can I support the employer and my colleagues?
Decision latitude/control: Little opportunity to participate in decision making, lack of control over work rate and/or scheduling		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		
Relationships at work: Physical isolation, no formal employee participation system, poor relationships between people, conflict and violence, poor social support		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		
Home/work interface: Conflicting demands, dual career problems		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		
Task design: Lack of variety, short cycle tasks, fragmented/tedious work, under-utilisation of skills, constant customer contact		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		

Feature of healthy work	What is the evidence for the presence or absence of this feature in the workplace?	Extent to which this feature can be controlled by the . . .		Actions needed to address this feature –	
		Employer	Employee	Employer . . . How can employees be supported?	Employee . . . How can I support the employer and my colleagues?
Workload or work pace: Lack of control over work pace, work over or underload, high levels of time pressure		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		
Work schedule: Shiftwork, particularly badly designed shift rosters; inflexible work schedules; unpredictable, long or unsociable work hours		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		
Work Context: Inherently hazardous work; no two way communication on workplace issues		High . . . Low	High . . . Low		