

STAY OK RETHINKING WELLBEING AT WORKPLACES IN THE EU SMES

OPEN MANUAL FOR VET PROVIDERS

Tips for the VET Providers

PROJECT ID: 2023-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000154571





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STAY OK

About the STAY OK Project:

"STAY OK - Rethinking wellbeing at workplaces in the EU SMEs" -2023-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000154571 is an Erasmus+ project in the field of Vocational Education and Training, selected under the action type KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training.

The International Labour Organisation emphasises the importance of employee well-being in the workplace, highlighting the impact of remote and hybrid working arrangements on employee well-being.

Well-being at work is a crucial issue on corporate and political agendas around the world. STAY OK bridges the gap in VET and HE offerings and creates a course for small business leaders focusing on career planning, hybrid work, AI for HR management, removing technological barriers for workers with disabilities, community wellbeing and work/life balance.





PARTNERSHIP

The STAY OK project aims to help small companies in the service and intellectual performance sector, such as consultancy, marketing, software houses and training, develop policies to improve employee well-being.





OBJECTIVES

Well-being at the workplace is an important topic, particularly for small professional and consulting services companies. The STAY OK project aims to increase their attractiveness in the labour market and hold back the trend of great resignation, focusing on addressing this crucial issue on corporate and political agendas worldwide.

Objectives

Understanding <u>blockages and skills gaps</u> in small companies with regard to the issue of well-being at work.

Overcoming bottlenecks through <u>innovative tools</u> and actions in the VET.

Ensure the <u>sustainability of project</u> results over time and faster the date of conclusion of the project.





TARGET

STAY OK project will have a significant and radical impact on small business leaders, VET providers, business support organisations and partner organisations.





TARGET

• Small Business Leaders

STAY OK empowers leaders in the professional services sector with practical skills to improve workplace well-being, addressing a gap in VET and HE training. The curriculum, based on stakeholder input, has strong market potential.

• VET Providers

The project offers a ready-to-use, market-relevant training programme, supported by a detailed handbook and peer-reviewed with stakeholder input for easy integration into existing offerings.

Business Support Organisations

SME associations, consultancies and Chambers of Commerce can enhance their services with access to a research report, a free ondemand MOOC and a Digital Tool Kit to assess and improve workplace well-being.

• Partner Organisations

Academic and business partners benefit by expanding research and advisory services, while VET providers strengthen their course offerings with relevant, in-demand content.





The structure of the Open Guide and how to use it

The Open Guide for VET Providers is a structured, digital manual designed to assist vocational education and training (VET) providers in implementing effective, innovative training focused on workplace well-being for small business leaders. This guide serves as both a foundational framework and practical tool for designing, managing and delivering training that addresses crucial skills in the workplace, especially around the areas identified in the STAY OK project.

This manual is created to support VET providers, trainers and educators in fostering small business leaders' skills for managing workplace well-being. Given the growing emphasis on well-being and mental health in professional settings, the guide addresses six key modules that cover essential areas for maintaining a productive and balanced work environment:

Career Planning Hybrid Work Strategies Al for Worker Management Accessibility Issues Community Well-being Life-Work Balance





This Open Guide is divided into modules that can be accessed as standalone resources or as part of a comprehensive training plan. Each module includes theoretical content, practical exercises, case studies and tools that VET providers can customise to meet their local and organisational needs. The guide incorporates a blended methodology that combines online resources and work-based learning (WBL), which can be adapted to both online and in-person settings.

Read and understand the full guide

 Trainers and educators are encouraged to read the guide comprehensively to understand its objectives and methodologies.
 Familiarity with the content will allow trainers to make informed adjustments based on the needs of their participants.

2. Engage with **practical exercises and case studies**: each module includes exercises, real-world applications and activities designed for active learning. Trainers should encourage participants to engage deeply with these materials, as they simulate workplace scenarios and allow for hands-on problem-solving.





3. **Implement Work-Based Learning:** The guide includes a structured 20-hour WBL component for each module, offering participants the chance to apply their knowledge in real-life workplace settings. This section is essential for consolidating the skills acquired during training.

4. **Utilise Assessments and Self-Evaluation**: Each module includes self-assessment quizzes and final assessments to evaluate understanding and ensure participants can confidently apply what they've learned.

5. Adapt to Different Learning Environments: The guide's structure allows for flexibility across various formats (online, hybrid, or inperson), so trainers can modify delivery based on their resources and the specific requirements of their learners.

All trainers, VET providers and facilitators are advised to follow the guide's activities, incorporate its resources and customise its application to local needs for maximum relevance. This guide is not only an educational tool but a pathway to transforming workplace culture by empowering leaders with strategies to prioritise wellbeing and productivity.



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The structure of the Open Guide and how to use it





An **introductory section** explaining active training, i.e. the methodology to be used for training

A section explaining **how to approach the working group** and the main skills a corporate manager should have



A section on the different **activities** that can be carried out according to the **training modules**.





METHODOLOGY USED: ACTIVE TRAINING (AT)

In the essential work "Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom", compiled in 1991 for the Association for the Study of Higher Education and for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Bonwell and Eison defined strategies that promote active learning as "learning activities that involve students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing" (Bonwell and Eison, 1991).

Approaches that promote active learning focus more on developing students' skills than on conveying information and require students to do something. They also tend to emphasise students' exploration of their own attitudes and values.

This manual is intended as an introductory guide, a collection of information and useful tips for a first experience in the world of training. It cannot and should not be considered as a single point of reference, as the subject of training is much broader, multifaceted and in-depth. The manual is intended to support a deeper knowledge wide and in-depth understanding and developments in the field of training.





METHODOLOGY USED: ACTIVE TRAINING (AT)

This definition is broad and Bonwell and Eison explicitly recognise that a range of activities can fall under it. They suggest a spectrum of activities to promote active learning, ranging from the very simple (e.g. suspending the lesson to allow students to clarify and organise their ideas by discussing with neighbours) to more complex ones (e.g. using case studies as a focal point for decision-making).

"Instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing." Bonwell and Eison, 1991

"Students' efforts to actively construct their knowledge." Carr et al., 2015 "Active learning implies that students are engaged in their own learning. Active teaching strategies have students do something other than taking notes or following directions... they participate in activities... [to] construct new knowledge and build new scientific skills." Handelsman et al..2007

Active learning engages students in the process of learning through activities and/or discussion in class, as opposed to passively listening to an expert. It emphasises higherorder thinking and often involves group work."

Freeman et al., 2014





Active learning is an approach to teaching that involves the **active involvement of students** with the course material through <u>discussion, problem-solving, case studies, role-playing</u> and other methods. Active learning approaches place a greater degree of responsibility on the learner than passive approaches such as faceto-face lectures, but instructor guidance is still crucial in the active learning classroom.

Active learning helps to **promote higher order thinking skills** such as application of knowledge, analysis and synthesis Active learning **engages students in deep** rather than surface learning and enable students to **apply and transfer knowledge** better

Active learning refers to a **wide range of teaching strategies** that involve students as active participants in their learning during class time with their instructor. Typically, these strategies involve students working together during the lesson, but may also involve individual work and/or reflection. These teaching approaches range from short **and simple activities** such as journal writing, problem solving and pair discussions, to longer and more **challenging activities or pedagogical structures** such as case studies, role-playing and structured group learning.





REPORT ON ACTIVE LEARNING FUNCTIONALITIES

The evidence that active learning approaches help students learn more effectively than transmissive approaches in which teachers rely on to **'teach by telling'** is solid and goes back more than thirty years (see, for example, Bonwell and Eison, 1991). We will now focus on a report examining and analysing multiple studies on active learning. Freeman and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of 225 studies comparing **"constructivist versus exposure-focused course designs"** in STEM disciplines (Freeman et al.)

Included were studies that examined the design of classroom sessions (as opposed to out-of-class work or labs) with at least some active learning as opposed to traditional lectures, comparing failure rates and student scores on exams, achievement or other assessments. They found that students in traditional classes were 1.5 times more likely to fail than students in courses with active learning.

 These results were consistent across disciplines: they observed no significant differences with respect to active learning in biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, geology, mathematics, physics and psychology courses.





REPORT ON ACTIVE LEARNING FUNCTIONALITIES

The authors conclude that the evidence in favour of the benefits of active learning is very strong, stating that "if the experiments analysed here had been conducted as randomised controlled trials of medical interventions they could have been stopped for the benefits, i.e. the enrolment of patients in the control condition could be stopped because the treatment tested was clearly more beneficial".

Although the report focuses on **STEM disciplines** and there are no similar reviews for the humanities and social sciences, most of the evidence suggests that active learning approaches are effective in all disciplines (Ambrose et al, 2010; Bonwell and Eison, 1991; Chickering and Gamson, 1987).

Since when given the opportunity to actively engage with the information they were learning, students perform better, let's find out what the benefits of active training are:





Active learning helps students to become "Lifelong learners": in an active learning approach, learning is not only about content, but also about process. Active learning develops learners' autonomy and their ability to learn. Active learning gives learners more involvement and control over their learning. This means that learners are better able to continue learning once they leave training institutions.

Active learning encourages success: encouraging active learning helps the learners obtain higher grades due to their increased skills and understanding. Since active learning encourages students to take a central role in their own learning, it better prepares them for both higher education and the world of work. Analytical skills help learners to better solve problems and apply their knowledge.

Active learning is engaging and intellectually interesting: an active learning approach encourages all learners to stay focused on learning, which often makes them more enthusiastic about studying. Teachers also find that they appreciate the level of academic discussion with their learners that an active learning approach encourages.





Opportunities to process course material through **thinking**, **writing**, **dialogue** and **problem-solving** offer students **multiple learning possibilities**.



The application of new knowledge helps learners **encode information**, concepts and skills in their memory, linking them with previous information, **organising knowledge** and **strengthening neutral pathways**.

Working on activities helps create **personal connections** with the material, increasing learners' motivation to learn.



Regular interaction with the facilitator and peers around shared activities and goals contributes to a **sense of community** in the learning environment.

Educators can gain **greater insight** into learners' thinking by observing and talking to them as they work.





INCORPORATE ACTIVE TRAINING IN YOUR TRAINING

Active learning activities can be used to:

Get students & increse motivation

Assess students' prior knowledge

Promote problem solving & application deepen student anderstnding

Assess whener students understood the material

Help students review materials for an exam

Prepare studentsfor a major assigment

Explore the relevance of the course material in students' professional or everyday lives



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How to start with active learning techniques?

Whether you are thinking of trying active learning for the first time or have already used it in the past and want to try something new, these are well-tested strategies for engaging learners and focusing on key concepts in your group. Start with one of them and consider adding others as you feel comfortable.

Breaking up the lesson every 15-20 minutes will help keep learners' attention and interest as they apply what they are learning.

TIPS to keep in mind when testing new techniques:

Make use of problems or questions that challenge and interest learners;

Explain the purpose of the activity and be clear about what you want the learners to do;

Allocate sufficient time to the activity; some activity in class only takes 2-3 minutes, but others may take longer;

Divide longer activities into stages or steps, so that learners who finish early are not waiting and learners who need more help get the feedback they need;

Allow time to do a debriefing and identify results at the end of the activity to ensure that learners receive feedback from you and/or their peers.





DELIVER TRAINING COURSE

INVOLVE LEARNERS IN THE TRAINING PROCESS

Anyone who has participated in corporate training courses has learnt that, to be successful, training must be engaging. When people like what they do and find the inner motivation to do it, they are more likely to concentrate and invest time.

As corporate trainers, you need to know how to increase employee engagement and how to keep their attention. Learner engagement measures their participation in training. Engaged learners actively participate in training, they do so willingly, they do not regret having to devote time and effort to it. In short, they have an internal motivation to participate in training. Engaged learners successfully complete their tasks, participate in discussions and produce good results.

Many believe that training is engaging if it is humorous. Of course, everyone likes to have fun and humour can improve retention of new knowledge, but this does not mean that it is sufficient to engage learners.





DELIVER TRAINING COURSE

INVOLVE LEARNERS IN THE TRAINING PROCESS

Adult learners not only have many personal and professional commitments, they also have different experiences and preferences. They are individuals with well-defined interests and personality traits and it is not easy to get and keep their attention.

They are often not focused on learning but on another aspect of their personal or professional life, they may have a negative past experience, they may suffer from boredom or feel isolated.

However, there is evidence that adult learners are motivated if:

 \rightarrow They learn independently, explore and research;

 \rightarrow The learning modules and exercises are short and relevant;

 \rightarrow They receive regular feedback and encouragement.





DELIVER TRAINING COURSE

INVOLVE LEARNERS IN THE TRAINING PROCESS

Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach to successful engagement, there are several strategies that can put your learning and development department on the road to success in engaging learners participating in formal training programmes.

Here is a roadmap for learning how to engage audiences in training:

Learning culture \rightarrow a strong learning culture significantly increases business impact;

Engaging content \rightarrow start with creativity, make the programme interactive and ensure that it clearly communicates key concepts;

Accessible opportunities \rightarrow beyond logistics, the content itself needs to be delivered in a way that is accessible to all;

Reinforcement plan \rightarrow make sure the programme has a plan to reinforce the knowledge or skills learnt beyond the classroom;

Needs-based approach \rightarrow it is necessary to understand the learners' competencies and needs, as well as the organisation's objectives, to ensure alignment of both.





To make training more engaging for employees in your organisation, trainer can:

- Analyse the needs and skills of the participants and identify gaps;
- Set clear learning objectives;
- Explain why they should participate in the training and how it will help them in their daily tasks;
- Recognise their participation in the training;
- Customise your training courses and be creative with the content;
- Use online courses, gamification, blended learning, mobile learning and social learning to make the process as beneficial as possible;
- Use forums and social media to create communication channels for learners to express and share their thoughts and opinions;
- Use a learning management system to easily distribute training to all employees;
- Make training active so that learners are not bored;
- Add stimulating questions to challenge participants;
- Allow participants to make mistakes and fail, but give them the opportunity to resume the course;
- Create a learning experience, not just a learning course;
- Add stories to increase learner involvement.





CREATE A POSITIVE AND STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT

The **learning environment** refers to the different physical places, contexts and cultures in which learners learn. Trainers must strive to create a positive learning environment with learners. A positive learning environment makes **trainees feel safe and valued**. It will help them experience learning as something positive and valuable.

A **positive learning environment** also encourages trainees to **open up to others and fosters team-building and other social skills.** When creating a positive learning environment, it is important to consider both the material learning environment and the learning climate.

MATERIAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The material environment refers to all physical factors associated with the training venue.

If training is conducted in a hybrid or mixed mode, it includes the learner's physical environment and the virtual learning space.

It is the task of the course provider to ensure adequate classrooms for their training courses.

It is also advisable for the trainer to check before the start of the course that everything is available and functional.





LEARNING CLIMATE

Besides the physical space, learning is also strongly influenced by the learning climate. This is the prevailing mood, attitudes, norms and tone in the classroom. A positive learning climate will foster a healthy coexistence between the trainees and the trainer, promoting positive relationships and improving the participation and motivation of trainees. A good orientation model for implementing a positive learning climate is Martin Seligman's PERMA Model (Flourish, a new vision of happiness by Martin Seligman).

PERMA identifies five elements:

- \rightarrow Positive emotions;
- \rightarrow Engagement;
- \rightarrow positive Relationships;
- \rightarrow Meaning;
- \rightarrow Accomplishment.





LEARNING CLIMATE

Positive emotions can be increased through gratitude activities, e.g. by writing down the good things that happened recently that caused positive emotions.

Engagement is achieved by encouraging learners to focus on the present moment and facilitating moments of flow, a state of intense concentration on the task at hand e.g. discussions, creative exercises or challenges.

Positive relationships between trainees can be facilitated through ice-breaking and regular exercises of team building.

Meaning for the trainee can be achieved by making them aware of their own values and strengths character strengths. Wherever possible, the trainer can create a powerful narrative in which the trainee is the protagonist and the trainer his/her guide.

The trainer can impart a sense of **achievement** in learners by setting clear and achievable goals for the course and individual modules.

All these elements come together to form the concept of personal well-being.





Focus on learners:

how to improve soft skills and managerial competences

Hard skills are the job-specific skills and knowledge we all need to perform a job, which can be acquired and improved through education and training programmes. They are typically quantifiable skills that can be easily defined and evaluated.

Soft skills, on the contrary, are defined as a large group of intra- and inter-personal characteristics of self-knowledge, self-management, attitude, disposition and personality necessary for personal well-being and, consequently, for success at work.

The classification of soft skills varies. However, there is no single list of soft but common elements can be found, namely that soft skills are divided into three main groups:

Personal skills: learning ability, stress tolerance, work ethic, selfawareness, commitment, life balance, creativity and innovation.

Social skills: communication, teamwork, networking, negotiation, conflict management, leadership, adaptability to cultures.

Content/methodological skills: i.e. customer/user orientation, continuous improvement, adaptability to change, results, analytical and decision-making skills, management skills, research and information management (Five, 2016).





Focus on learners:

how to improve soft skills and managerial competences

Recently, companies have been looking for employees with **soft skills.** They have become increasingly important. Many studies and surveys have highlighted a problem in the labour market, pointing to a skills shortage among employees, especially in the case of the younger generations.

In particular, research conducted by McKinsey (2016) reported that a third of employers believe that the lack of soft skills is causing major business problems in the form of cost, quality or time. Therefore, soft skills are crucial both for the employee and for the development of the company.

As a trainer, he/she should be aware of their importance and convey it to learners as well. Entrepreneurs often face difficulties in their careers, especially at the beginning, so it is essential to keep in mind that soft-skills are as important as knowledge.

Finally, a trainer should handle different situations that require the best of his or her soft skills.





Soft skills and their importance in the corporate world are defined below:

Self-knowledge is the state in which a person is deeply aware of his or her personality at all levels: strengths and weaknesses, passions and motivations, traumas, limitations, fears and dreams, mechanisms and tools, etc. In addition to recognising one's personal characteristics, a person who knows oneself well will continue to have an introspective attitude to balance one's strengths and weaknesses and pursue the best version of oneself.

Self-knowledge is crucial in the corporate world, because it is reflected in the work the employee does. In particular, a person's self-confidence and self-esteem undoubtedly have an impact on the quality of the work he or she does.

Introspection is the main key. It is important to be able to look inside oneself and to observe without judging. To be aware of one's strengths and weaknesses in order to be prepared in advance to face challenges.





Self-confidence is the state in which a person accepts all the characteristics discovered by self-knowledge, feels right with both her strengths and weaknesses. A person with self-confidence is able to take care of and value themselves independently of the evaluations of others and places themselves in first place without being selfish. High self-esteem will have an impact on the way we operate in the workplace, the way we relate to people and the results we will achieve in the personal career.

As trainers and especially when dealing with entrepreneurs, it is important that failure or difficulties should not affect their selfconfidence. They need to be confident and aware that nobody is perfect.

Trust is a feeling of confidence and belief in oneself. A self-confident person is proud of what of who he is, does not feel inferior or superior to others and sees himself on the same level as others. This type of person encourages people to do things and uses language that is gentle and encouraging towards him/herself.





Showing confidence in the workplace is very important to make others believe in the quality of the employee's work. In the case of entrepreneurs, it is very important that they are confident in their business ideas and are willing to work for it.

As a trainer, it is important to be able to convey confidence to learners so that they feel in a safe environment.

Emotional awareness: is the ability to recognise, identify, accept and understand our emotions, moment by moment, without judging them. An emotionally aware person knows what he/she is feeling and why and is able to name, label or express the emotion. Furthermore, the connection between his thoughts, feelings and actions is in line and he knows how his feelings affect his performance. The workplace will certainly host different types of situations with different types of people and the ability to be aware of our emotions will be an important skill to better manage and understand circumstances.

It is crucial to identify and analyse why and how differently we feel that way. This will help to manage and prevent unwanted emotional responses. Self-analysis is essential.





Emotional regulation is the ability to manage emotions, the ability with which a person deals with, channels and controls emotions in an efficient and beneficial way for themselves and those around them. A person with good emotional regulation does not judge certain emotions and understands that all emotions have value.

In the workplace, the regulation of certain emotions is crucial, for example in the case of anger, frustration or sadness. The reactions a person may have to these emotions can have consequences for his or her career. That is why it is important to know how to manage strong emotions.

It is essential to be able to remain objective and not let emotions control us. As a trainer it is important to maintain a professional attitude even if we are going through a very emotional experience (positive or negative).

Emotional intelligence is the ability with which a person notices and accepts all emotions and impulses, understanding how they influence his or her thinking and responses and is able to manage them. Emotional intelligence is therefore the sum of emotional awareness and emotional regulation.





The workplace is a place full of social interactions between superiors, colleagues, customers, partners and so on, where emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in the well-being of the employee and his or her team. When owning a company, it is crucial to be aware of employees' emotions, which directly affect the productivity of the company.

Identifying, recognising, controlling and managing emotions is crucial, not only in the personal but also in the professional domain.

Teamwork skills comprise the set of interactive, interpersonal, problem-solving and communication skills necessary for a group of people working on a common task, in complementary roles, to achieve a common goal whose results are superior to those achievable by a single person working independently.

Teamwork is about being able to operate smoothly and efficiently within a group, being adaptable, flexible, able to get along and put aside differences to put the group's objectives first. Today, the corporate world demands of its employees that they often work in teams.





Therefore, it is necessary to be able to adapt to the way team work is done. Even if a person is very good at working alone, if he or she is not able to work in a team, this will have a negative impact on his or her career. On the other hand, a good ability to work in group can have a very positive impact.

Communicate with others ask for feedback, mobilise others, be assertive, deliver work on time, do not criticise, help others and ask for help if needed. As a trainer, encourage them to work in a team.

Communication means interacting with others, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and the actions themselves. Good communication is the ability to identify and use the appropriate resources needed at specific moments: words, expressions, intonation, voice modulation. In the workplace, a person will need to communicate all the time and whether the communication is effective and appropriate or not will have consequences, especially if the message is important or urgent. For companies, communication can be internal (distributors, employees) or external (customers, potential customers) and both are crucial.

Communication needs to be adapted to the situation and in particular to the addressee. As a trainer, a preliminary analysis of your target will help you find a suitable strategy.





Assertiveness is defined as the appropriate expression of emotions and needs in social relationships. Assertiveness consists of asking clearly and honestly for what one needs or wants, in a way that respects others. Assertive people do not shy away from defending their views or goals or from trying to influence others. Assertiveness is a necessary skill in the workplace, because the person will have to clearly state their needs and beliefs in various situations. For example, assertiveness is indispensable when negotiating, expressing an opinion on something in the company or talking to superiors. Assertiveness ensures that the person is taken into consideration by others. In the case of entrepreneurs, they need to be assertive in the beginning and be able to defend their idea.

As a trainer, assertiveness is essential, but one should always keep in mind that being assertive is also about respecting others.

Social skills are a set of naturally learned behaviors that enable a person to induce socially accepted situations when communicating with others. In the corporate world, communication, assertiveness and teamwork skills are particularly important, as they will definitely have an impact on one's career, whether used positively or negatively.

As a trainer, social skills also facilitate the delivery of training. However, remember to set a line and always keep in mind your role.





Make the training a personal learning experience - impact of training course on trainers

TRAINER AS A LEADER

The trainer, being a leader, is an expert in managing the group and stimulating its development.

The members of the group usually recognize his professional competence and this makes it easier to establish norms that are important for successful training management. training. His position as an expert not only allows him to set certain rules of behavior, allows him to intervene (or not to intervene) and to guide participants to respect the rules (directly or indirectly).

For example, the trainer may remain silent in order to emphasize the importance of group members' opinions, or he may ask participants to speak, instead of in the third person, directly to the group member to whom they refer. The role of experts also allow him to make comments to reinforce or diminish the importance, in terms of collective acceptance, of certain rules.





There are different opinions and beliefs, based on experience, about the personal characteristics that can be considered positive for a trainer:

SPONTANEITY: a good leader is spontaneous, quick to respond, natural and immediate. He/she will only be able to work well only if his reaction is prompt, intuitive and credible;

CONFIDENCE: the trainer should first have confidence in himself and then the group. Spontaneity does not work without self-confidence. Self-confidence requires courage and the ability to cope with the unexpected without despairing. Confidence in the group, on the other hand, is what makes working with participants possible;

STYLE: in many cases, the leader needs to be good at giving instructions, handling reactions and reactions and explanations, in explaining to the group what they want done. He/she needs to be good at managing conflicts and have to communicate his/her opinion credibly;

FALLIBILITY: a trainer/leader can also make mistakes. He/she should therefore allow the group to present them and correct them. He/she should not think of it as a failure, on the contrary and above all, he or she should not lose his or her legitimate position as a leader.





A leader is not the main protagonist of training. He/she defines the skills to be acquired, plans the training, manages the course of work and helps the participants, but what is most important is what the participants learn by working together.

In any case, the trainer must be responsible for ensuring that the activities he/she is carrying out with the group coincide with his/her possibilities. This is the only way to be credible and to be a good trainer. A trainer needs to constantly update in order to keep his skills and his knowledge, experience is not enough.

Other important characteristics and ways of behaviour of the trainer will be presented below, organised according to the phases of the training:

- Present himself/herself more as a facilitator than as a trainer.
- Let the group members speak more than he does.
- Also ask participants at the beginning of the day how they feel.







During the course of the training the trainer should:

 \rightarrow As far as possible transmit both verbal and physical (posture) messages that are consistent with each other;

 \rightarrow Do, whenever possible, things together with the other participants, in order to be perceived as a member of the group. This does not refer to group work, where the his/her role is that of supervisor, but to moments, such as the presentation of the participants, where it is appropriate for him to be perceived as part of the group;

 \rightarrow Stick posters on the wall with the outputs of the activities carried out as they are written. This is useful to give participants an idea of the path being followed together;

 \rightarrow Write on the board not in red but in blue or black because it is easier to read from a distance;

 \rightarrow Communicate in a soft way about respecting time, trying to make people responsible and when there is one minute left, calmly ask them to start meeting;

 \rightarrow When working in groups, go around the groups and implicitly try to direct them, in case their work is not going in the right direction. Keep eye contact with the groups;

 \rightarrow The group reflection parts in the margins of the various exercises should be given adequate time.





Qualities of a good trainer

- Competence
- Credibility
- Method
- Ability to enjoy
- Knowledge of objectives
- Engaging
- Passion
- Desire to improve
- Making together
- Creativity
- Observation
- Analytical skills
- Availability
- Aware of the limits of one's trade
- Intellectual honesty
- Preparedness





Career planning

The "Career Planning" module offers a comprehensive framework for SME leaders (and employees) seeking to enhance their professional fulfilment and overall wellbeing in the workplace. Through five engaging lessons, participants explore the intersection of career planning and personal satisfaction, learning to assess their skills, interests and values.

They develop SMART career goals and create actionable plans to achieve, monitor and adjust them. With interactive activities, peer feedback sessions and practical resources, this module equips participants with the tools and insights needed to navigate their career paths with confidence and resilience.

By prioritising holistic wellbeing alongside professional development, individuals can cultivate fulfilling and sustainable careers that align with their personal values and aspirations.

Link to the e-learning platform (MOOC)







LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding career planning as a strategic process to align personal and professional goals.
- Ensuring job satisfaction by aligning career choices with individual values and interests.
- recognising the importance of adapting to the changing job market and staying competitive.
- Acknowledging career planning as a tool for improving organisational performance, talent retention and adaptability.

SKILLS

- Proficiency in digital tools and industry-specific technologies
- Project management and technical abilities relevant to the job role
- Effective communication and teamwork abilities
- Leadership and conflict management skills
- Problem-solving and adaptability to new professional challenges
- Regular assessment and updating of skills
- Alignment of employee capabilities with business needs
- Ongoing training and development for professional growth





LEARNING OUTCOMES

COMPETENCES

- Conducting self-assessment to identify strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities for growth.
- Integrating digital tools and flexible career paths to adapt to market changes and organisational needs.
- Adapting plans based on evaluation results to ensure effective alignment with organisational objectives.
- Developing mentorship and coaching strategies to facilitate skill transfer and professional growth.
- Creating supportive work environments that prioritise employee well-being, balancing personal and professional aspirations.
- Implementing career development initiatives that promote engagement, satisfaction and productivity.

Suggested duration:

5 hours of theoretical training & 2 hours of reflection/activities





LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON AT

CASE STUDY

A case study is an activity useful for analyzing and taking inspiration from a scenario that has already been experienced and could also occur in one's own organisation.

• Present learners with a problem to solve or a case study that reflects a current issue in the field of social entrepreneurship.

REAL-LIFE APPLICATION EXERCISES

Real-Life Application Exercises are practical activities designed to apply learned concepts to real-world workplace scenarios, reinforcing skills through hands-on experience.

• Present learners a relevant workplace scenario and guide them through applying concepts from the lesson.







Hybrid work strategies

Hybrid working is one of the most promising forms of work in the future. The combination of office and remote working opens up extensive opportunities for both companies and employees. Hybrid working makes it possible to work independently of time and place, with part of the work being carried out in the office and another part from any other location.

The global pandemic has created new challenges and opportunities in the service sector. The winners will be those who best understand the needs of their customers, work together to find different solutions and bring new ideas to the market. These behaviours will only be possible if people come together in a new, modern workplace where the feel-good factor in the workplace is quite high.

However, hybrid working must be planned in order to be successful. This module focuses on all aspects of well-functioning hybrid work. This includes understanding what hybrid work is and how it can be implemented effectively in terms of work organisation, communication and collaboration.

Link to the e-learning platform (MOOC)





LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- To understand the term "Hybrid workplace"
- To understand how hybrid workplace should look like from an organisational and technical perspective
- To have known how hybrid workplaces can be implemented into the company culture and environment

SKILLS

- To reflect the from an efficiency perspective how the own work which is done in a hybrid workplace
- To be able to communicate and collaborate effective in hybrid working place
- To be able to organize a hybrid working day

COMPETENCES

- Having the competence to establish a hybrid workplace
- Having the competence to organize a hybrid working day
- Having the competence to integrate hybrid work into the organisational culture





LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON AT

CHECKLIST

A checklist is a structured list of tasks or criteria to ensure all necessary steps are completed accurately.

• Learners will prepare a checklist about the working environment, access to the workplace safe, technical equipment...

POMODORO TECHNIQUE

The Pomodoro Technique is a time management method that involves working in focused intervals of 25 minutes, called "Pomodoros," followed by short breaks, to enhance productivity and maintain concentration.

• Learners will apply the pomodoro technique

Suggested duration:

5 hours of theoretical training & 2 hours of reflection/activities





Artificial intelligence for worker management

This module covers the intersection of artificial intelligence and worker management.



It begins with an overview of artificial intelligence and its implications for the labour market which can be understood as a comprehensive sorting or matching mechanism. The module follows the employee lifecycle within a company or organisation starting with recruitment which also includes approaches to predicting employee performance using AI-based tools.

The following sessions focus on workplace efficiency and productivity as well as decision-making processes. These sessions are sensitive as they cover the interaction between humans and machines and will include discussions of various setups and use cases. The module concludes with a critical discussion on ethical considerations which builds on the previous sessions.

Suggested duration: 5 hours of theoretical training & 2 hours of reflection/activities

Link to the <u>e-learning</u> <u>platform (MOOC)</u>





LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the role of AI in workforce management from recruitment to performance evaluation.
- Recognize Al's implications for the labor market as a sorting and matching mechanism.
- Identify key AI tools used in employee lifecycle management, including predictive analytics for recruitment and performance.
- Understand Al's impact on workplace efficiency, productivity and decision-making.
- Be aware of ethical concerns, including bias, transparency and accountability in Al-driven HR systems.

SKILLS

- Assess and evaluate AI-driven recruitment and performance prediction tools.
- Analyze workplace AI implementations and their effects on productivity and decision-making.
- Identify and address potential biases and fairness issues in AI applications.
- Interpret Al-driven recommendations and integrate them into human decision-making processes.
- Engage in critical discussions about ethical challenges related to AI in workforce management.





LEARNING OUTCOMES

COMPETENCES

- Apply AI-driven strategies to optimize employee recruitment and management.
- Make informed decisions regarding Al's role in workplace efficiency and organisational structure.
- Advocate for responsible AI practices that promote fairness, inclusivity and transparency.
- Collaborate with AI systems effectively while maintaining ethical oversight and human-centric decision-making.
- Contribute to policy discussions and strategic planning regarding AI in workforce management.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON AT

AI & EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE ANALYSIS

Worksheet to analyze the potential for artificial intelligence for improving the employee lifecycle at your company.





Accessibility Issues



The "Accessibility Issues and Mental Well-being" module is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster a more inclusive workplace environment.

Over the course of five lessons, participants will explore the importance of accessibility in small business settings, identify barriers faced by diverse groups of workers, learn how to implement inclusive design principles, understand legal requirements for accommodating employees with disabilities and discover accessible communication and technology solutions.

Practical tasks throughout the module, including role-playing exercises and hands-on activities, allow participants to apply their learning in real-world scenarios. By the end of the module, participants will be empowered to create more accessible and inclusive workplaces that promote employee well-being and productivity.





LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Recognising the importance of accessibility and how it affects the well-being of employees in small enterprises.
- Determining the different accessibility hurdles and how they affect different types of workers.
- Discovering the legal requirements for accommodating employees with impairments as well as inclusive design principles.

SKILLS

- Developing and implementing inclusive design strategies within business practices.
- Applying the best practices for accommodating employees with disabilities at the workplace.
- Using accessible communication methods and technology solutions effectively.

COMPETENCES

- Fostering an inclusive workplace culture that supports diversity.
- Promoting employee well-being through improved accessibility measures.
- Enhancing workplace productivity by addressing and overcoming accessibility challenges.





LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON AT



WORK-BASED LEARNING EXERCISE

Identify and propose a solution to an accessibility challenge in the workplace, focusing on physical, technological or cultural barriers.

Learners will have practical experience, enhancing their ability to create environments that support diversity, inclusion and employee well-being.

Suggested duration:

5 hours of theoretical training & 2 hours of reflection/activities

Link to the <u>e-learning platform (MOOC)</u>





MODULE 5

Community well-being

This module, focused on Community Well-Being provides a comprehensive framework for understanding, assessing and promoting well-being within small and medium enterprises.

The module starts with an overview of defining the 'Community Well-Being' concept and outlining the project's objectives. Participants will explore the definition of Community Well-Being through its social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions.

Moreover, assessing and promoting community well-being will equip learners with practical tools to evaluate community wellbeing and implement strategies for enhancement. Collaboration and engagement are emphasised, focusing on the importance of community involvement and partnerships in fostering well-being.

Suggested duration: 5 hours of theoretical training & 2 hours of reflection/activities

Link to the <u>e-learning</u> <u>platform (MOOC)</u>





LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of community well-being through SMEs.
- Participants will be involved in the assessment tools and best practices for promoting positive outcomes at the community level.

SKILLS

- Developing skills in assessing community well-being through the SME's work.
- Enhance their ability to identify improvement areas and implement effective strategies in their own companies.

COMPETENCES

- Strengthening their critical thinking, leadership and sustainability competencies through interactive activities.
- Increasing their ability to analyse community well-being issues, inspire collective action and design sustainable strategies.





LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON AT

GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET



Use this worksheet to analyze the community's wellbeing in your local context. Remember to make your goals smart: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

CASE STUDIES

A case study is an activity useful for analyzing and taking inspiration from a scenario that has already been experienced and could also occur in one's own organisation.

• Present learners with a problem to solve or a case study that reflects a current issue in the field of social entrepreneurship.





Life-Work Balance



The module on life-work balance delves into the complexities of achieving equilibrium between professional obligations and personal life for both employees and company leaders. The module outlines five key lessons:

1. Prioritising Well-being in a Fast-Paced Work Environment (Understanding Life-Work Balance): It explores the concept of work-life balance, stressing its importance for both individual and organisational health. The shift towards prioritising employee wellbeing is linked to better performance and reduced stress.

2. **Strategies for Managing Stress and Preventing Burnout:** The lesson identifies signs of workplace stress and burnout, discussing strategies for mitigation through employer-supported initiatives like stress management workshops and flexible work arrangements.

Suggested duration: 5 hours of theoretical training & 2 hours of reflection/activities

Link to the <u>e-learning</u> <u>platform (MOOC)</u>





Life-Work Balance

3. **Setting Boundaries and Establishing Work-Life Harmony:** This part discusses the crucial role of setting physical, temporal and emotional boundaries to reduce stress and enhance productivity, especially in remote working scenarios.

4. **Time Management Techniques and Productivity Tools:** techniques for effective time management are discussed to help manage workload and improve focus, including tools like the Eisenhower Matrix and apps like Todoist.

5. **Building Resilience and Coping Skills:** it covers strategies to build resilience, such as cognitive reframing and mindfulness, aiming to bolster individuals' ability to cope with adversity in the workplace.

Overall, the module provides comprehensive strategies and practical tips to foster a supportive work environment and promote a healthy balance between professional and personal lives.

LIFE





LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding the concept of life-work balance, especially how it applies to small business owners and solopreneurs.
- recognising the importance of well-being and the risks associated with life-work imbalance, such as stress, burnout and health issues.
- Learning about key time management techniques and productivity tools tailored for entrepreneurs.
- Gaining insights into the importance of resilience, the impact of stress and how building resilience can enhance overall wellbeing.
- Exploring strategies for setting boundaries, managing stress and preventing burnout.

SKILLS

- Ability to apply time management techniques, such as the 12week planning system, time blocking and prioritization.
- Skills in identifying and managing stressors, both in personal and professional life and implementing strategies to mitigate them.
- Developing effective boundary-setting practices to maintain lifework integration.
- Enhancing problem-solving skills and improving resilience through assertiveness and coping strategies.
- Practicing self-awareness and mindfulness to recognize early signs of burnout and take proactive steps.





LEARNING OUTCOMES

COMPETENCES

- Integrating life and work in a way that supports both personal well-being and business success.
- Building a proactive approach to maintaining a sustainable lifework balance.
- Demonstrating resilience in the face of challenges and setbacks, utilizing appropriate coping mechanisms.
- Cultivating the ability to manage workload effectively, including prioritising tasks, delegating and setting boundaries.
- Implementing self-care routines and strategies to prevent burnout and maintain energy levels.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON AT

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to understand the stress level at your company and develop stress strategy toold that could be used by your team.

 Arrange a team activity and fill in the question below. Create a separate resource for your team by compiling answers to the last question.





PRACTICAL TASK: REFLECTIVE JOURNALING ON LIFE-WORK BALANCE

Objective: To enhance self-awareness and identify areas of imbalance in your life as an entrepreneur, fostering improved well-being and work-life integration.

Instructions:

- Journaling Prompt 1: Reflect on the different aspects of your life

 work, personal relationships, health, leisure, etc. Identify which areas feel unbalanced or neglected. Write about the specific factors contributing to this imbalance. Identify 1 core area that you will start to work with. What basic steps can you implement and put in your calendar to improve the way you feel.
- Journaling Prompt 2: Consider how this imbalance is affecting your overall well-being. Are you experiencing stress, burnout, or dissatisfaction? Describe the physical, emotional, or mental impacts you're noticing.

Outcome: By completing this exercise, you'll gain clearer insights into the areas of your life that need attention. This reflection will help you make more informed decisions to improve your life-work balance and overall well-being.





FACILITATION TIPS

Training online

Technology has introduced new possibilities for teaching and learning in education. Digital devices can be used as a support tool for teaching to enrich the method of education. Modern education is increasingly incorporating online elements. The recent closure of educational institutions due to the pandemic has accelerated this trend. As a result, learners and trainees have needed to develop their digital skills in order to succeed.

Online learning can increase motivation, make lessons more interactive and facilitate effective self-study. They have also opened the way for innovative learning methodologies such as e-learning and b-learning. However, these new methodologies require new skills competences and and current trainers may be unfamiliar with them

Tips to improve online training 1. Record lessons, when possible 2. Shorten presentations 3. Search for free resource 4. Collect feedback from learners 5. Priorities personal contacts



FACILITATION TIPS

Training in presence

Face-to-face training has come to a standstill due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is a revival of this mode of training as this method, with decades of consolidation over time, continues to offer numerous advantages. The first and perhaps the most obvious, is the human contact between trainer and learner. The skills of a good trainer mean that the presence of a physical person, their timbre of voice and gestures allow for more effective and stimulating communication, as well as easier memory of the information transmitted.

Another positive aspect is the possibility to interact with the trainer by asking questions during the lesson. This makes the involvement of learners greater than in an online training course.

Tips to improve in presence training

- Create a detailed project to follow
- Preparing effective slides to prevent learners from losing attention by just listening
- Be aware of communication techniques





Use of e-learning platform

Online learning has transformed international training courses by eliminating physical distance and enabling learners to learn at their own pace. This has led to the development of large-scale open online courses (MOOCs), accessible to anyone with an internet connection, thereby enhancing education and training.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE TRAINING

| Allows greater flexibility for trainee's schedule training | The lack of social interactions can reduce group building and bonding between trainees, making it more difficult for the trainer assess the trainees' emotional state and psychological well-being and may leave trainees feeling isolated and demotivated. |
|--|---|
| Trainee's knowledge and progress can be quickly assessed progress | Learning can be content-heavy and less engaging for trainees. Working in pairs and of groups are more restrictive. |
| Reduces administrative and travel costs for both trainees and training providers. | Problems with technology and ICT skills may prevent trainees from fully participating. |
| The number of apprentices who can access training can easily be increased. | It requires students to be disciplined and self-motivated. |





STAY OK

00

Use of e-learning platform

Purpose

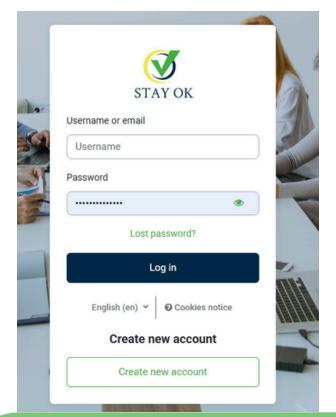
Dashboard My courses

Funded by

the European Union

The STAY OK MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is designed to complement the project's curriculum by offering an open, flexible and interactive learning environment. It supports vocational education and training (VET) providers and learners by providing accessible training on workplace well-being tailored to small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

By bridging gaps in traditional training methods, the MOOC ensures that learners can enhance their skills in areas like career planning, hybrid work and AI in HR management, enabling better implementation of workplace well-being practices.





Co-funded by the European Union



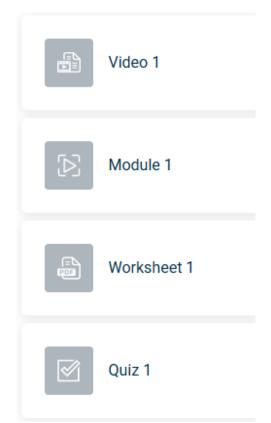
Use of e-learning platform



Features

The MOOC incorporates a variety of features to enhance the learning experience:

- **Modules**: Structured courses covering essential topics such as career planning, hybrid work strategies, AI in HR management, accessibility issues, community well-being and work-life balance.
- Multimedia Content: Engaging videos designed to make complex concepts easier to grasp.
- Activities: Practical exercises and assessments to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios.
- Accessibility: Designed to ensure inclusivity, the platform includes language options, easy navigation and compatibility with assistive technologies.







Integration

To maximize its impact, the MOOC is ideal for both standalone and blended learning approaches. Trainers can integrate modules into classroom sessions, using the content as supplementary material for discussions or assignments. For individual learners, it serves as a selfpaced tool to reinforce in-person training or as a primary resource when traditional training is unavailable. VET providers are encouraged to use the MOOC alongside digital tools like the workplace readiness assessment to personalize learning paths.

Benefits

For trainers, the MOOC is an invaluable teaching resource, offering pre-designed, research-based content aligned with the STAY OK curriculum. It saves preparation time and enhances training delivery. Learners benefit from its flexible structure, allowing them to learn at their own pace, revisit modules as needed and access high-quality materials remotely. The platform's focus on practical, real-world applications ensures that both trainers and learners can implement lessons effectively to promote workplace well-being.

> Link to the MOOC: e-learning platform

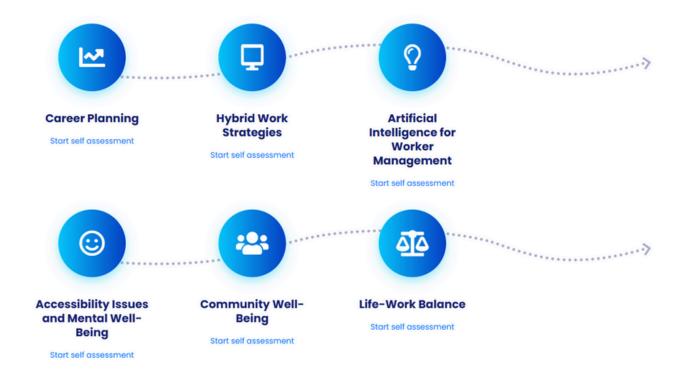




Use of STAY OK Digital Toolkit

The StayOK Digital Toolkit is designed to help SME leaders assess workplace well-being and identify key areas for improvement. By providing a structured evaluation process, it enables business owners and managers to gain a clear understanding of workplace dynamics, pinpoint wellbeing challenges and develop strategies for fostering a healthier, more productive environment. With a focus on practical insights, the toolkit supports SMEs in creating sustainable well-

being initiatives that drive business success.





Purpose



Stay Ok Digital Toolkit

Start your self assessment

| | Welcome to our digital toolkit. Are you ready to start? | |
|---|---|----------|
| 2 | What is your name? | |
| | | 00 PAUSE |
| | | 0 |

Features

This digital toolkit provides SME leaders with an intuitive and functional interface designed to facilitate the evaluation of workplace well-being. The Digital Toolkit Ex-Ante offers practical advice on how to improve workplace well-being and features direct links to the e-learning platform, enabling users to revisit the course and reinforce their knowledge. Furthermore, the Digital Toolkit Ex-Post serves as a progress evaluation tool, allowing businesses to assess improvements made after completing the course and track their well-being evolution over time.

> Link to the Digital Tool: open tool





Application

SME leaders can integrate the StayOK Digital Toolkit into their regular business strategy and training initiatives. It can be used to conduct well-being assessments, guide leadership discussions and develop targeted interventions. Whether applied during management meetings, employee feedback sessions, or strategic planning, the toolkit provides data-driven insights that help leaders make informed decisions to enhance workplace well-being.

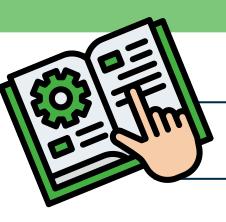
Benefits

By using the StayOK Digital Toolkit, SME leaders can create effective action plans that lead to measurable improvements in workplace well-being. The insights generated enable businesses to implement targeted solutions, strengthen employee engagement and enhance overall performance. In the long run, fostering a culture of wellbeing can lead to reduced absenteeism, increased retention and a more resilient, high-performing workforce—key factors for long-term business success.

Link to the Digital Tool: open tool







CONCLUSION

The **Open Manual for VET Providers** could be used as a comprehensive guide for integrating **workplace well-being into vocational education and training (VET) curricula**. Through its structured approach, it provides VET providers with the **tools**, **methodologies** and **strategies** necessary to address the evolving needs of small business leaders and their workforce.

By focusing on <u>career planning, hybrid work strategies, Al-driven</u> <u>worker management, accessibility and mental well-being,</u> <u>community well-being and life-work balance</u>, this manual equips trainers and educators with the resources to create more inclusive, adaptive and effective training programs.

The STAY OK project recognises that workplace well-being is a fundamental factor in fostering **employee satisfaction**, **productivity and long-term business success**. As SMEs face increasing challenges related to remote work, digital transformation and evolving workforce expectations, the **need for structured wellbeing strategies** has never been greater.





CONCLUSION

The manual ensures that VET providers can deliver training that is practical, impactful and aligned with real-world business challenges, while also supporting the broader goals of the EU's VET modernization agenda.

By adopting Active Training (AT) methodologies, promoting workbased learning (WBL) and leveraging digital tools such as MOOCs and self-assessment toolkits, the manual offers a sustainable, flexible and innovative learning framework. VET providers can incorporate these resources into their existing programs, ensuring that the knowledge and skills imparted remain accessible, scalable and adaptable to diverse training environments.

Furthermore, the manual's emphasis on self-reflection, leadership development and participatory learning highlights its commitment to **fostering lifelong learning**. Trainers, educators and SME leaders are encouraged to use this manual not only as a training resource but as a foundation for <u>continuous improvement and innovation in workplace well-being</u>.





CONCLUSIONS

Looking ahead, the success of the STAY OK project lies in its ability to create a lasting impact beyond the project's duration. The MOOC platform, Digital Toolkit and structured curriculum ensure that the training remains accessible to SME leaders, VET providers and other stakeholders for years to come. Through collaboration, adaptation and sustained engagement, this initiative has the potential to reshape how well-being is perceived and implemented in SMEs across Europe.

The path to workplace wellbeing is an ongoing journey one that requires continuous learning, adaptation and commitment.



This manual provides the necessary foundation for fostering healthier, more engaged and resilient workplaces, ensuring that well-being remains a strategic priority in the future of work.





ADDITIONAL SOURCES

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