

BOOK REVIEW

Karanika-Murray, Maria; Biron, Caroline (2015). Derailed Organizational Interventions for Stress and Well-Being. Confessions of Failure and Solutions for Success, Springer, Dordrecht, Netherlands, 310 p.

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Why some organizational interventions for well-being succeed, and others fail in the same case? Which is the best practical solution? What are the steps that lead to successful interventions?

This volume shows us how to obtain the desired results in the case of derailed organizational interventions for stress and well-being through "failed confessions" of researchers and trainers. This book has an innovative approach, taking the good from the negative outcomes. It is addressed mainly to the categories mentioned above, but it is also addressed to teachers, students from the organizational area or other related sciences.

The volume is carefully structured, beginning with an introductory chapter and then continuing with five parts, each one with a different number of chapters. Each chapter describes a failed intervention, discusses lessons learned from this derailment, offers possible solutions and outlines the key messages.

The introductory chapter explains to us how to identify the positive elements from derailed or failed organizational interventions for stress and well-being. Moreover, the pillars for organizational interventions for stress and well-being are explained: *content-context-process-outcome*.

Part 1 Intervention Content sustains that unless the intervention is based on the problem's specific context, it might not reflect the actual problem. *Part 1* includes Chapter 2 which outlines the lessons learned from an organizational intervention focused on reduced working hours. Chapter 3 suggests ways used for integrated and staged approaches which combine organizational and individual in order to facilitate entry in high risks workplaces. Chapter 4 explains and offers a bottom-up participatory approach as a solution in a burnout example. Chapter 5 argues that well-rehearsed solutions do not often yield expected results, accentuating the role of management and the organizational culture on the impact of the legitimacy and likelihood of symptoms reported.

Part 2 Intervention Context reflects on the variety of contextual factors that can appear at various stages of the organizational interventions. Chapter 6 provides us a key lesson on how uptake, awareness and proper use of a policy and government-led initiative can be enhanced. Chapter 7 explains the subjective point of view on natural interventions, highlighting the TTT, Things Take Time. Chapter 8 discusses ways to improve the organizational interventions, based on a study aimed at improving the well-

being of knowledge workers. A key lesson here is to anticipate the possible derailed organizational changes and the cooperation between the research project and the management. Chapter 9 reminds us of the major contribution of assessment and performance metrics for increasing interventions. Moreover, the financial pressure is the major reason stress, and wellbeing interventions fail as resources. Chapter 10 outlines how the perceptions of key organizational stakeholders form a barrier to engagement. Nevertheless, we are given strategies for addressing stakeholders' perceptions. Chapter 11 explains us strategies for overcoming leadership challenges in a military setting. A wellness intervention in this environment should begin with the right people and an adequate infrastructure. Chapter 12 talks about the concept of fit of the intervention to the organizational context and the individuals within it. Assessing the skills and competencies of participants the context may provide support for the specific wellness intervention.

Part 3 Intervention Process identifies potential causes for intervention failure related to the actual implementation process. The processes described are mainly focused on human agency and program management. Chapter 13 is about the lessons learned and recommendations for managing conflicts and diversity during the implementation of programs. One of the key messages for solutions is to address the concern directly and to lead from the top. Chapters 14 and 15 focus on conflict among stakeholders. We find out recommendations of how to avert a cocktail of factors which lead to conflict. Chapter 16 is all about the communication obstacles encountered between the organizational researcher and legal advisors. Chapter 17 clarifies the role of enhancing acceptance and identifying local champions within large organizations. Strategies to enhance acceptance include establishing a local steering group or consultation with both executive-level managers. Chapters 18 and 19 describe an individual coaching intervention for managers regarding safety-related competencies, and a team coaching intervention for employees. It is important to learn from successes as well as failures in the

implementation process. Chapter 20 provides an overview of two cases of a worker participatory approach to improve the psychosocial work environment in Japan, and a tool, the Mental Health Action Checklist for a Better Workplace Environment. To make an intervention effective, it is desirable that at least half of the employees participate in a workshop. Chapter 21 reminds us of the decreasing response rates in employee health surveys. Chapter 22 outlines the challenges associated with conducting occupational health intervention research. It is focused on the obstacles encountered in recruiting and retaining participants. Chapter 23 approaches the issues of randomization and participants' attitude during intervention studies.

Part 4 Intervention Outcomes can be *proximal*, they can improve health, stress, well-being, the psychosocial work environment, and *distal outcomes*, they relate to effects of the applied interventions on individual's health. Chapter 24 refers to long-term sustainability in intervention processes. The goal of this chapter is to examine the reasons behind the failure and identify practical solutions for long-term sustainability. Chapter 25 draws the line for the failure of wellbeing interventions lack of ongoing organizational support, badly organized intervention implementation and lack of reinforcement from supervisors. Chapter 26 amplifies the importance of an effective needs assessment. A need assessment is the first critical step of any wellbeing intervention. Chapter 27 suggests that evaluation based on statistically detected changes in a distal target outcome may not be sufficient. It is proposed a comprehensive framework for evaluating organizational interventions. Chapter 28 uses systematic review findings to illustrate why interventions produce the expected outcomes or not. In this chapter are suggested ways improve the quality of evidence. Chapter 29 describes the role of work analysis as a diagnostic tool. Work analysis is a legitimate approach to the appraisal of derailed interventions.

Part 5 Concluding Thoughts contains the last three chapters of the volume. Chapter 30 discusses 17 key lessons learned from organizational stress management intervention research. Chapter 31 offers some

insightful observations on intervention research and practice. Chapter 32 describes briefly the lessons learned and presents recommendations for future developments in organizational interventions for stress and well-being.

In conclusion, this book is a major survival kit in the organizational domain. Nevertheless,

the textbook is an accessible and engaging read. All the solutions provided are reliable, being applied depending on the failure of the organizational intervention. This volume makes us know we have the power to change and constantly improve if we just can identify and communicate our daily challenges.