



KATAWAG PROJECT

KATAWAG Study Research Brief

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KATAWAG (*meaning 'on a call together'*) worked with Business Processing Industry (BPO) employees in the Philippines to map key factors shaping workplace mental health and wellbeing and design an intervention.

Within the BPO Industry, contact centre work is characterised by low autonomy, high emotional and productivity demands, and regular night shifts. This impacts employee wellbeing.

Katawag took a systems perspective and used an approach called participatory systems mapping. The project ran map building workshops with agents, supervisors, team leads and managers from three different worksites. Stress, anxiety and sleep issues were identified as key concerns, linked to factors like high workload, pressure to meet targets, and changing shift patterns. Stress and tiredness (caused in part by sleep issues) influenced quality of relationships at home and work, which affected motivation and performance. Some of these factors link together to form a circular chain of causal influences (a feedback loop).

The Katawag team constructed a system map. In the next workshop, employees discussed opportunities to intervene in this 'system' of workplace mental wellbeing. They noticed that supervisors occupy a critical position in the system, with significant power to interrupt detrimental feedback loops. They agreed the Katawag team should design a coaching programme to support supervisors.

The programme brought together supervisors to discuss mental wellbeing issues affecting their teams. They took these discussions back to their teams and worked together to develop plans to build a supportive team environment. The Katawag team piloted the programme in three different groups, using learning from the first wave to improve the next. Supervisors (and their team members) were positive about the sessions, suggesting potential to scale-up and evaluate for impact on employee mental wellbeing.

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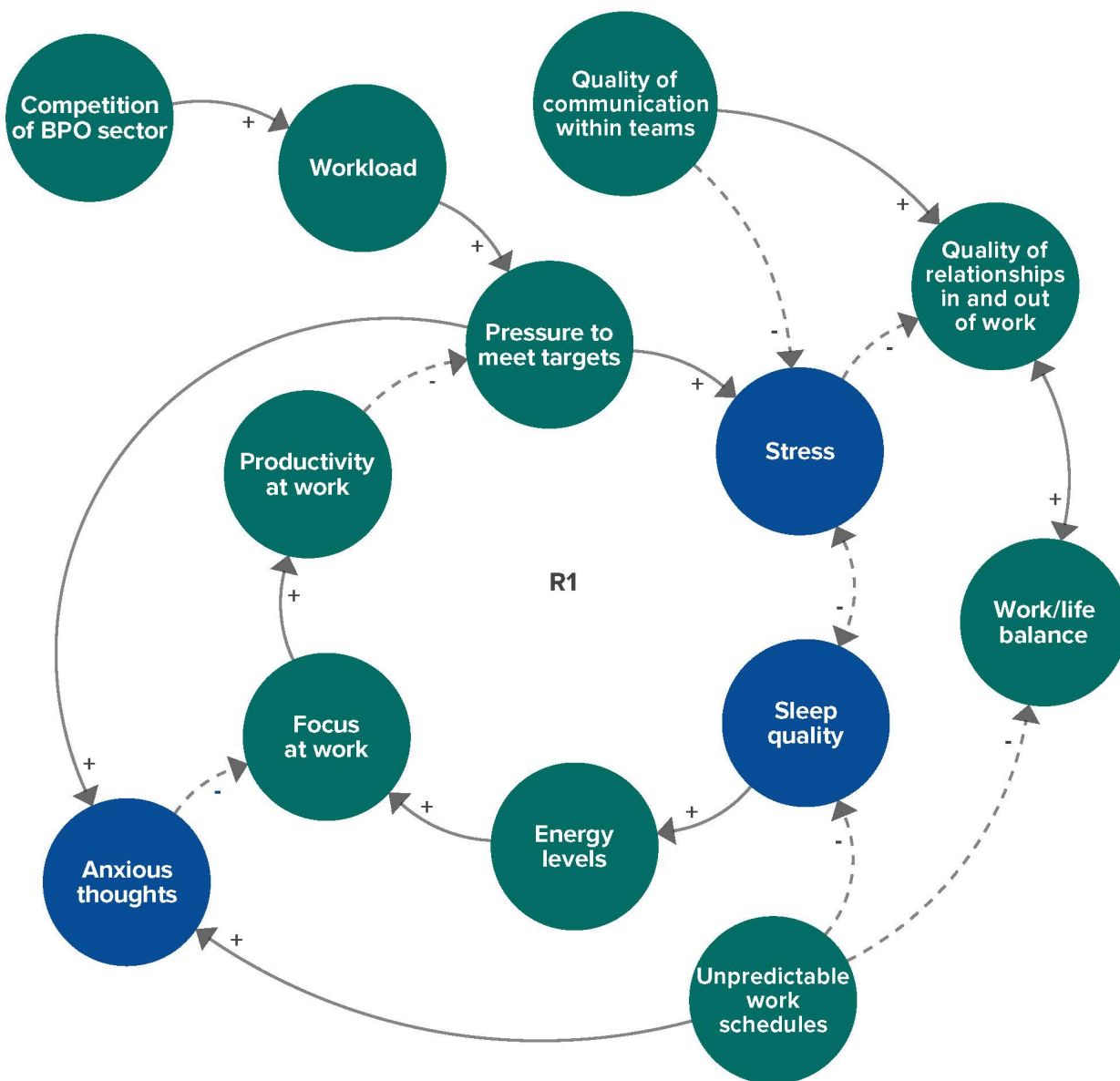


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Sub-map showing interlinkages between contact centre environment, sleep and stress



———— a positive influence (+) indicates that two variables move in the same direction (they both either increase or decrease).

- - - - - a negative influence (-) indicates movement in opposite directions (if one increases, the other decreases and vice versa).

R R: Reinforcing feedback loop. Effects of these loops are exponential, and not linear. These loops amplify either healthy or adverse effects.

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