Compte-rendu de la Conférence sur la prévention du Burn-Out

Avec le Dr Patrick Mesters et M. Roger Ortmans,

European Institute for Intervention and Research on Burn-Out

<u>*Intervention of Dr Mesters*</u>

- Bun-Out is not a sign a professional deficit or psychological handicap,

- We need to invest and reinvest in quality of the link between people,

- We all are co-responsible for combatting burn-out, nobody is guilty, but we have to stop denying the situation

- Stress is a normal human mechanism to cope with life changes, everyone adjusts its behaviour and the tool box varies according to personality, personal strategies and professional experience, and health status. But stress becomes negative (*distress*) when copying strategies are overwhelmed by uncontrollable events, work, environment…

European definition of *occupational stress*: demands of the work environment exceed the worker's ability to cope with or control them.

A long-lasting, repeated stress leads to a lack of resources, lack of support, personal conflicts between own values and values of the work place…

The reaction to stress depends on each one, there is a cultural dimension and the perception varies according to time, individualism *versus* group, stability *versus* chaos, competition *versus* cooperation, and communication (explicit *versus* implicit).

Burn-Out is the result of a conflict between:

- What you would like to do / you are asked to do,

- Dreams / reality

-personal values / structure

What are the symptoms?

- extreme fatigue,

- loss of empathy

- loss of professional satisfaction and enthusiasm

There are biological changes. Burn Out is a biological reality.

What are the announcing signs? Difficulties in sleeping, drinking, no social life, anxiety, physical problems (pre-diabetis, heart…).

People concerned are hard workers who have difficulty to put limits and say "no", have demanding sense of moral responsibility, who face a lack of balance between private and professional life, who face absence of family, social company.

This is largely due to beliefs (childhood/education) : "hurry up" (don't waste time), "be strong" (never call for help), "be perfect" (everything must be perfect), "be nice" (never say no).

The person has to learn to say "no" and put the limits. Otherwise, it leads to intimidation, humiliation, work overload, deadlines, destabilisation, moral harassment which are the major causes of burn-out.

Intervention of Mr. Roger Ortmans

How to prevent these risks from happening? A systemic approach allows to prevent this. In fact burn-out is a gift from an organisational point of view: something has to be rethought in the organisation. This is a precious signal.

The announcing signs in the organisation have to be detected: short-time sick leaves, complaints for clients, professional mistakes, conflicts, rumours, gossips, mobbing, harassment, vacant positions, difficult to retain or to attract good talents, high turnover rate, temporary employees, high level of overtime…

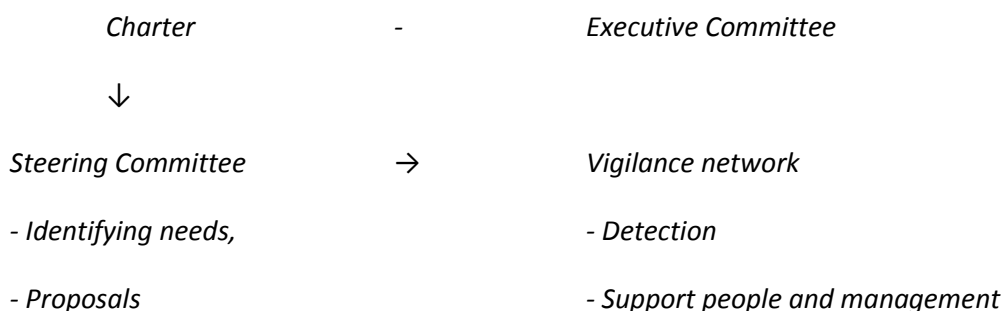There are 3 levels of responses: Corporate/management/individual

1) Corporate level :

-mobilising the collective intelligence, feedback, use the potential of people,

- stop blaming,

- co-creating a cultural impetus,

Tools : Step 1 **Welfare Survey**

Step 2 : establish a **Prevention Plan** with the commitment of the top management

2) Management level

Charter	-	*Executive Committee*
↓		
Steering Committee	→	*Vigilance network*
- Identifying needs,		*- Detection*
- Proposals		*- Support people and management*

- Planning   - Consistent support to steering committee

- Readjust

Sustainable management   Recognition   Accompanying coaching (team or

/training course   individual)

All the managers have to detect, prevent and protect their team. This is a shared responsibility. The management style is important: a sustainable commitment is required.

This requires an attention to:

      - relationships (carrying for constructive relationship)

      - workload (help reducing emotional overweight as work overload, "doing more with less" requires new solutions)

      - recognition (tangible and non-tangible signs),

      - values (to be identified and known),

      - fairness (non-negotiable value, mutual trust, openness and tranparency, mutual respect)

      - autonomy (allow for optimal autonomy : deadlines, organizing and working process),

      - clarifying the rules of the game (vision, values, strategy…).

This needs a posture, courage (it's permanent, an every-day work), an ethic.

3) Individual level

- exercising,

- reduce consumption of tobacco, coffee, tea…

- regular breaks,

- social network

- taking pleasure in doing something you like every day.

And if burn-out happens : be informed, do an health diagnosis, psychologist/therapist will be proposed, coaching, 360° accompanying process. Burn-Out is a crisis, not an illness and may lead to a great change in life.