



Developing Compassionate Workplaces in Europe for the digital and green work environment to protect employees' mental and physical health and wellbeing

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Research protocol:

Co-creative development and mixed methods process and outcome evaluation of Compassionate Workplace Programs

Project acronym: EU-CoWork

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Conflict of interests statement

The funder of the study has no role in the collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; nor in the decision to submit the report for publication.

Purpose of the document

This document provides guidance on the different aspects of the compassionate workplace program (CWP) process and outcome evaluation. It includes descriptions of the study design, sampling strategies, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques.

The document serves as a blueprint for the different national ethics applications (Austria, Belgium, Greece, Sweden, UK)

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Organisational structure and responsibilities

For the project we describe 6 different roles: 1) international principal investigator, 2) national principal investigators, 3) national workplace contact responsible, 4) CWP facilitator, 5) CWP evaluator, 6) independent ethics advisor

1) Principal investigator (international)

The principal investigator (PI) Prof. Joachim COHEN (VUB) is leading the international consortium at the management level and serves as the gateway between the supervisory board, the management board and the project partners. Coordination is supported by the co-PIs Steven Vanderstichelen and Deborah De Moortel. The team is responsible for assuring study quality and regular monitoring in accordance with research ethics principles, asking all national partners participating in the study (the national principal investigators) to provide regular updates on study progress, recruitment, implementation and data collection according to a predefined structure and template, and reporting at each Management Board meeting.

2) National principal investigator(s)

- Vrije Universiteit Brussel: Joachim Cohen
- Graz University: Klaus Wegleiter
- University of Athens: Irene Nikandrou
- Luleå University of Technology: Tiziana Sardiello

3) national workplace contact responsible

This person is responsible for the screening, recruitment, retention and follow-up with the eligible workplaces for the study. It is also the person to whom workplaces can address queries or to whom they can report adverse events.

- IDEWE (BE): Ellen Delvaux, Elke Velle, Berend Vanwonterghem, Lindsay Digneffe
- Sorgenetz: Carina Batek-Stipacek, Daniela Martos
- Luleå University of Technology (SWE): Malin Eneslätt
- University of Athens (Greece): Kyveli Papaioannou

4) Compassionate Workplace Program (CWP) facilitators

They facilitate the development of the CWP within the participating workplaces. They receive specific training for their activities and are hired and supervised by the national principle investigators.

5) Compassionate Workplace Program (CWP) evaluators

These persons are responsible for the data collections and evaluations within each of the workplaces

Per partner:

- Vrije Universiteit Brussel: Elise Vanbeuren, Hanne Bakelants
- Graz University: Kristina Kreimer, Dzenana Pupic, Markus Hadler, Ulla Kriebnerneegg, Anna-Christina Kainradl and Patrick Schuchter

- University of Athens: Irene Nikandrou, Erifili Hatzopoulou, Leda Panayotopoulou, Areti Gkypali
- Luleå University of Technology: Linnea Öman Olsson, Malin Eneslätt, Anna Berg Jansson, Tiziana Sardiello, Carol Tishelman (KI)

6) Ethics Evaluator (external to the project)

An ethics evaluator, external to the project consortium, will monitor the ethical aspects of the study, including data management and privacy concerns, will provide evaluation and advice on ethical, legal, data protection and data management issues based on audit of the reports by the national study managers to the Overall Study Manager. Ethical evaluation will be conducted shortly after the start of the study, and at least at 2 follow-up occasions.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

A significant proportion of employees will experience serious illness, caregiving tasks, dying and loss during their professional life. These types of End-of-Life (EoL) experiences do not only impact affected employees but also their colleagues in terms of labour relations, communication and team culture, and the work environment in terms of productivity and safety. The twin transitions (digitization and the green transition) have influenced both job demands and resources such that employees may feel less supported or not supported when coping with EoL experiences. For instance, hybrid work increases schedule control and autonomy which might facilitate caregiving but may also impede contact with colleagues and social support from co-workers, thereby potentially leading to social isolation and lower organizational commitment. Compassionate Workplace Programs (CWPs) aim to facilitate a work environment that protects and improves the mental and physical health and wellbeing of employees. Positive outcomes can be expected both for employees who have EoL experiences, but also for other employees in a compassionate work culture. Additionally, positive outcomes for organizations can also be expected (e.g., lower turnover intention, stronger organizational commitment, and a more open organizational culture of mutual care and attentiveness in everyday working life).

While there is some (limited) description in the peer-reviewed and grey literature about compassionate workplace programs, there is little guidance on their effectiveness, outcomes, nor what the processes of development may look like. On the basis of the available descriptions, the experiences of the consortium in co-creating with workplaces, input from relevant international experts about CWPs, and critical discussions amongst the EU-CoWork consortium members about the philosophical underpinnings of our CWP development, we have identified a need to develop guidance for the development of CWPs in heterogeneous workplace settings. It is essential that this guidance is developed through an international, adaptive, yet rigorous, scientific process and impact evaluation that is sensitive to local workplace contexts. The protocol for the data collection and analysis is outlined below.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The project objective is to create Compassionate Workplace cultures, practices and policies to support wellbeing for employees dealing with EoL experiences in different national and work contexts in Europe. To this purpose a co-creative development approach is followed in the participating workplaces.

The research objectives are:

- 1) to obtain an understanding of the context (e.g., assets, needs) within heterogeneous workplaces in order to inform a workplace-tailored co-creative development process of CWP
- 2) to describe and evaluate the process of co-creation and implementation of CWPs in different workplaces
- 3) to describe (anticipated and unanticipated) outcomes of (or changes due to) CWPs in different workplaces
- 4) to examine and understand how context and implementation aspects influence program outcomes.

Ethical advice is needed because the research will be published in journals for which an ethics approval is required, the research is financed by the EU that requires an ethics approval. Moreover, as this study will center on the theme of End-of-Life experiences during the professional life of people, specifically focusing on how a workplace can support these experiences, an ethical review of this research is deemed necessary.

First, we are going to use both quantitative and qualitative methods that might touch upon possible sensitive topics such as serious illness, caregiving tasks, dying and loss experiences but related to the workplace.

Second, this research wants to engage employers and employees as active participants in this research, which brings to the fore questions about representability, agency and the eventual dissemination of the research. This requires contextual and personal sensitivity from the part of the researcher in question in structuring and implementing the research.

Third, this research proposes a multidimensional and multi-level approach to studying the research theme. This evidently forces the researcher involved to think deeply about the influence of the data gathering on the participants' life and wellbeing, as well as to critically reflect upon the process of data gathering and, in the next step, data analysis.

2 Study design

This concerns a European cross-national project. The project consists of 2 core pieces of work that feed into each other:

- (1) a co-creative and developmental evaluation of tailored Compassionate Workplace Programs (CWPs);
- (2) a mixed methods process and outcome evaluation combining a timed series of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

1) We will both work from **Developmental Evaluation** and **Participatory Action Research**. **Both** will be used to support the co-creative development process of our Compassionate Workplace Programs within each participating workplace. The focus of Developmental Evaluation is on reflection, learning, and change to enable projects to adapt to the emerging complex environments in which they are situated. Developmental Evaluation is flexible and iterative, using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. The focus is on **ongoing data collection and feedback**, which is used to adapt and refine programs over time. The evaluation is often embedded in the program cycle, providing real-time insights as the program evolves. As for participatory action research, which focuses on **empowering participants** to actively engage in the research process to bring about social change – a compassionate workplace. It emphasizes collective inquiry and reflective practice and will use collaborative methods like interviews, focus groups, and participatory workshops.

For these reasons, we will make use of a toolbox of data collection methods, ranging from observations to semi-structured interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc. With an emphasis on balancing between the necessary collection of data and remaining flexible and iterative with the workplace and its members. From that perspective, we will use that toolbox to remain flexible in the workplace.

The emphasis in the project is necessarily on participatory action and co-creative development of the CWP. This has several clear justifications. First, CWPs concern a new and emergent topic with little readily available interventions that can just be implemented in workplaces. The emphasis is on identifying strategies and interventions together with workplaces. Second, the focus in the development of the CWPs is on tailoring, asset-based development, and learning to enable CWPs to adapt to the emerging complex environments in which they are situated. Therefore, a suitable overarching approach to support the co-creative development process (core piece 1) is Developmental Evaluation (DE). DE is focused on reflection, learning and adaption in an informed and timely manner throughout the process, by long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in development initiatives (more about the approach is found in [Supplemental Appendix 1](#)).

2) For the mixed methods process and outcome evaluation, we combine several approaches, including:

- Outcome evaluation is guided by a program theory that identifies the core concepts of interest (see point 6) and evaluates the extent to which changes in these concepts can be observed.
- Process evaluation helps to understand which factors contributed to the observed (intended or unintended) outcomes. This includes the components of the program (i.e. activities or outputs), their implementation (e.g., reach, dose, quality), and the interaction and responses to these program components. It also serves a formative purpose, informing the development of the intervention.
- Realist Evaluation (RE) is employed to understand what aspects of the CWPs work, for whom, in what circumstances, and why. To do so it formulates (and throughout the process expands) programme theories that explore the causal mechanisms responsible for the intervention's outcomes. These theories are formulated as Context-Mechanism-Outcome configurations (CMOCs). Hence, data are collected on the context (i.e., what can hinder or facilitate the intervention), mechanisms (i.e. the core

ingredients of the intervention by which outcomes are generated) and outcomes (i.e., expected, unexpected and/or unintended effects).

More detailed explanation about these approaches is provided in [Supplemental Appendix 2](#).

3 Study Setting

The EU-CoWork CWP's will be co-created with and evaluated in 12 workplace organizations in four intervention countries: Belgium, Austria, Greece, and Sweden.

All activities (development and research) are intended to take place within the workplace environment. Because the project's interest is also working with workplaces that have substantial tele-working, the workplace is not necessarily confined to the physical borders of the workplace.

4 Eligibility (targeted participants)

4.1 Workplaces

We will recruit and actively involve a heterogeneous theoretical sample of workplaces reflecting a variation in characteristics (i.e., sectors, industries, organizational size, sociodemographic profiles). Workplaces will be recruited via our extensive professional networks (e.g., our partner IDEWE's client base, Sorgenetz' extensive network occupational health and workplace health promotion organizations, AUEB's Career Office) and selection will be based on self-selection (i.e. workplace management's motivation for participating in the project) and a careful consideration on behalf of the project regarding heterogeneity in the total sample. Workplaces themselves will make important decisions regarding the selection of regions or sites that participate in the project. The list of recruited workplaces will be updated as recruitment progresses. A list of the workplaces that have already agreed to participate can be found in [Supplemental Appendix 3](#).

This selection strategy based on theoretical heterogeneity and self-selection is suitable for the project aims as we are interested in learning from heterogeneous contexts and are interested in theoretical generalizations rather than statistical generalisations within countries.

4.2 Staff within the workplaces

Our study population consists of all adult (18+) staff members of the participating workplaces in EU- CoWork. Because employment practices and workforce structures may differ between workplaces, the final sampling strategy for each recruited workplace will be determined in negotiation with the workplace management. In each workplace, what constitutes the full relevant population will need to be negotiated based on considerations of e.g., how best to consider secondments, temporary and precarious staff appointments, volunteers, and language differences in the workplace.

We strive for inclusivity, representativeness and proportionality in our inclusion and selection strategy of participants across the different data collections.

5 The development activities (i.e. what will the ‘intervention’ in workplaces will look like)

As explained under section 2 (study design) a core piece of the project is the co-creative development and developmental evaluation of compassionate workplace programmes in the recruited workplaces. **Supplemental Appendix 1** provides a detailed description of the interactions that happen with the workplaces (and with whom within the workplaces) in this context.

Summarized, the six core interaction components are: 1) first contacts and preparation, 2) asset & needs mapping, 3) Facilitated co-creation of outputs (facilitator and core development group), 4) Facilitated knowledge exchange workshops, 5) Communities of practice aimed at knowledge exchange and 6) The use of an inspiration resource to inspire workplace to develop specific activities (see Table 1)

Table 1: description of the core interaction components with workplaces for the development of the CWP

Component	What?	With whom?	When?
1) first contacts and preparation	- Stakeholder mapping to identify the people to be involved in the core development group to drive the co-creation process within each workplace. Relevant stakeholders represent the different departments and employee categories in the organization. - appointing a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the organization (who is also the 'project champion') - Introducing the project's facilitator and the evaluator who will participate to the core development group. For Belgium, the facilitator will be Elke Verellen; the evaluators will be Hanne Bakelants and/or Elise Vanbeuren. - agreeing on a memorandum of understanding with the workplaces	These first activities are performed with HR and management representatives	Intake, i.e. before the start of the development activities
2) Asset and needs mapping to inform the development process	- The core development group facilitates an asset/needs assessment mapping - the facilitator and evaluator do intake interviews (personal or focus groups) with company HR or management representatives (potentially with other staff depending on what core development group decides) focusing on motivation for participating in the project, needs experienced by the company management, HR, experiences with the topics, exploration of current strategies for EoL experiences,	- Core development group, HR or management representatives, and staff identified as relevant by core development group (t0 questionnaire is sent to all staff members [see section 11 survey, see appendix 6]).	First asset and needs mapping happens at Initiation phase (during -and between- first meetings of core development groups).

	resources and strengths already in place, etc. - t0 survey is held (see section 11 survey, see Appendix 6) - results of interviews, focus groups, and t0 survey are rapidly evaluated, summarized and reported back to the core development group.	- Project evaluator does the rapid evaluations and provides the rapid feedback	Subsequent needs and asset-based approaches happen throughout the project
3) Facilitated co-creation of activities or outputs*	- Core development group meets monthly and decides on an action plan for the activities (e.g., which activities first and when will they be evaluated,) -facilitator** supports this decision making and their implementation and refers to the inspiration resource (see component 5a of appendix 1) to suggest activities - evaluator keeps a record of all the planned activities, the extent to which these are implemented etcetera. The evaluation of this implementation aspect is used formatively as part of the Developmental Evaluation.	Facilitator and core development group (facilitator supports the development of the action plan) Evaluator monitors planned and actually implemented activities	Throughout the development phase (see Figure 2 below)
4) Facilitated knowledge exchange workshops	- at least two of the activities developed during the development phase in the workplace concern engagement with the entire workplace community. This is aimed at creating momentum for workplace-wide change. The workshops or events focus on experiential learning with knowledge exchange	Facilitator and core development group organise this and seek involvement of broader workplace community	Throughout the development phase (see Figure 2 below)
5) Being inspired	The facilitator uses a developed inspiration resource based on more than 100 existing resources used in other settings to serve as an inspiration. The facilitator provides guidance to workplaces on how they can use the inspiration resource The EU-CoWork project will facilitate a learning network across all participating countries where all workplace core development groups are invited to participate to exchange experiences, knowledge and inspiration	Facilitator and core development group use the inspiration resource within the workplace EU-CoWork coordinators organize a learning network where workplaces are invited to participate	Inspiration resource is used throughout the development phase. The learning networks take place one every 6 months.

*: The type of activities or interventions that will be decided by the workplaces as part of the CWP development process will be workplace-specific. The activities are emergent/unpredictable, but will be classified according to 6 action domains: 1) **Development of Policies** (e.g., revising and developing policies that support a culture of

openness, experienced support and a stigma-free environment around EoL experiences, company agreements that might include legal requirements for flexible working hours, days off, support formats, etc); 2) **Adaptations in the social and physical environment** (e.g., physical space for solace and rituals, awareness-raising moments and awareness raising communications, community-building activities to strengthening relationships and social participation), 3) **Reorientation of existing wellbeing services** within the workplace (e.g., existing wellbeing-related services, if there are any, integrate the topics of the compassionate workplace in their functioning), 4) **Activities to increase skills and self-efficacy** (e.g. how to talk/be supportive in situations of grief; leadership training...). A specific activity will be to increase skills to create compassionate leaders and a compassionate workplace culture. 5) **Knowledge exchange and support groups** (e.g. creating support groups, buddies,...), 6) **Stimulation of community initiative** (e.g. spontaneous and continuous community activities around the topics)

** Facilitators are trained for this task through 2 components: a 3-day training and a Community of Practice (see below)

The national facilitator is experienced in enhancing participation and action within workplaces and with working with the theme of serious illness, caregiving or loss. Additionally, she will follow a 3-day training (see Appendix 1) where she will obtain further skills to use several participatory methods to drive change, work carefully with the topics of serious illness, caregiving and loss and tailor her support to the wishes and expectations of the participants.

As we consider a one-time training insufficient to address the -unpredictable and emergent- issues and challenges that may arise for the facilitators, continued training, mentoring and coaching is provided through Community of Practice meetings (see Appendix 1). Communities of Practice meetings will take place every three months to share ideas, questions, thoughts and learning about the process of developing and using tailored CWP. There could also be invited speakers on specific topics of interest to the group. In addition, they can organise an annual online meeting open to all those involved in the EU-CoWork project and maintain an online forum for ongoing discussions.

6 Program theory

The development of our tailored Compassionate Workplace Programme and hence our data collection and analysis are based on our preliminary programme theory as shown in **Figure 1**. The program theory synthesizes different theories about factors that influence employee wellbeing and productivity. The program theory is formulated as a logic model identifying tentative inputs, standard activities, output activities, outcomes, desired impacts, long-term aims and contributions to other work-related outcomes, and it identifies factors in each of these categories at the levels of the Individual, Group, Leadership, and Organisation (IGLO).

The program theory identifies EU-Cowork's long-term goal of stimulating the development of workplaces as supportive social and physical environments for experiences of serious illness, caregiving, loss, and bereavement. It highlights the required outcomes that we expect to lead to the envisioned cultural change that will bring about this long-term goal, as well as the range of possible standard and output activities at different levels that can bring about these desired outcomes.

The programme theory will guide our data collection efforts. The theory provides the core concepts that, according to our programme theory, are targets of change. These concepts will be operationalised in the survey questionnaires that will be administered to the staff members

of the participating workplaces and the sensitizing concepts that guide the qualitative observations (e.g., topic guides).

The theory will be periodically updated based on progressive insights developed throughout the project and therefore is not rigid but rather a flexible, living document.

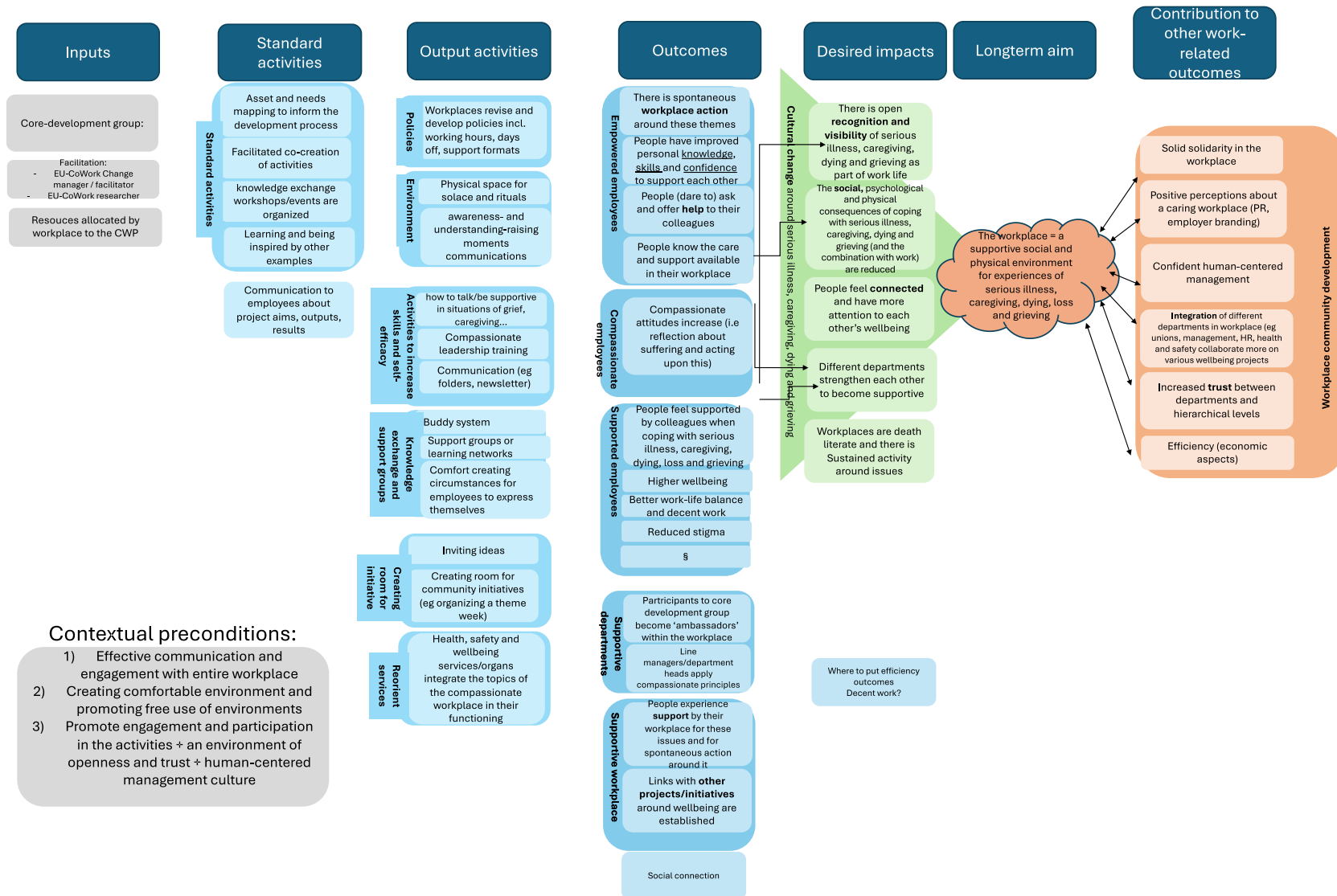
The core concepts that the program aims to influence, and transform are:

- **Spontaneous action** concerns Employees take proactive, voluntary steps to offer support to one another, particularly in response to situations involving serious illness, caregiving, loss, or bereavement. This indicates a workplace culture where compassionate action becomes second nature, and staff members feel empowered to act without waiting for formal structures.
- **Compassion** is generally defined as "a sensitivity to suffering of self and others, with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it" (Gilbert, 2017). We distinguish between (a) employees' compassionate attitudes and behavior. At the individual level, compassion, particularly in the context of end-of-life experiences, involves an employee's personal sensitivity to the emotional, psychological, and sometimes physical suffering of colleagues who are either facing their own mortality or coping with the serious illness, caregiving responsibilities, or loss of a loved one. Employees are sensitive to the profound challenges a colleague may experience during end-of-life situations, such as grief, anticipatory loss, and emotional exhaustion and choosing to act in ways that support their colleagues. It might involve offering a listening ear when a colleague wants to talk about their experience, expressing empathic concern for their grief or caregiving challenges, or even stepping in to help alleviate their workload, allowing them space to navigate these difficult moments. It may also involve advocating for the establishment or use of formal support mechanisms, such as bereavement leave or emotional support services within the organization. On this way employees contribute to the overall well-being of the workplace, creating a ripple effect where acts of kindness and support become the norm, fostering a work culture that values are.
(b) (experienced) compassion from colleagues: Colleagues are able to notice when someone is in distress and offer personal support. It could be through emotional listening, offering practical assistance, or simply being present. The commitment here lies in colleagues' willingness to engage with each other's struggles out of genuine care and concern.
(c) compassion from the company reflects the company's structured, institutional response to the needs of employees. It involves policies (e.g., paid leave, flexible work hours, mental health resources), practices, and cultural norms that are designed to recognize and respond to the suffering of employees, whether that suffering stems from serious illness, caregiving responsibilities, loss, or bereavement. Line managers and department heads apply compassionate principles. In this way, the organization takes proactive steps to foster a supportive and inclusive environment, alleviating both the personal and professional burdens employees may face in relation to serious illness, caregiving responsibilities, loss, or bereavement.
- **Knowledge, skills, and confidence to support each other and ask for support:** The program aims to strengthen employees' knowledge, skills, and confidence in

offering support to colleagues dealing with end-of-life situations, whether it be their own or that of a loved one. This includes strengthening emotional intelligence and practical tools to navigate sensitive conversations, provide meaningful assistance, and recognize when someone may need help. Knowledge about which care, and support is available at the workplace. Likewise, it encourages employees to feel comfortable and secure in asking for support during such difficult times, whether they are grieving, caregiving, or facing their own mortality. The program seeks to foster a culture where empathic concern, open communication, and compassionate behavior are normalized, ensuring that no one feels isolated or unsupported during such moments.

- **Well-being** (and related concepts: Feelings of Isolation, Perceived Health Status, Stress, and stigma): This focuses on the mental, emotional, and perceived physical well-being of employees. It addresses factors such as feelings of loneliness, perceived health, and stress levels, all of which are important to maintaining a supportive and healthy work environment. Reduced stigma focuses on reducing negative stereotypes and discrimination related to serious illness, caregiving, and mental health issues in the workplace. By reducing stigma, the organization fosters an environment where employees can be open about their needs without fear of judgment or exclusion.
- **Supportive workplace:** Employees feel they are part of a supportive network in the workplace, where both formal (policies) and informal (colleague interactions) structures reinforce emotional and practical support. The feeling of support extends across multiple levels—individual, group, and organizational—contributing to a more compassionate and understanding workplace culture.
- **Supportive colleagues:** This refers to the presence of a network of colleagues who offer emotional and practical support to each other. It emphasizes mutual respect and understanding, where colleagues feel comfortable reaching out for help and offering it in return.
- **Compassion ambassadors:** The core development group will take on the role of ambassadors for the initiative. Their involvement in co-creating the program gives them unique insights and the necessary skills to lead by example. These ambassadors are tasked with actively promoting the program's values of empathic concern, compassion, and knowledge, in the context of end-of-life experiences such as serious illness, caregiving, loss, and bereavement. They serve as key figures in fostering a workplace culture where compassion is practiced, ensuring the ongoing integration of the program's principles into everyday work life. Through their leadership, the ambassadors encourage colleagues to embody these values.
- **Economic outcomes** focus on reducing staff turnover and presenteeism / absenteeism among staff, maintaining or improving long-term staff productivity, encouraging the knowledge and usage of supportive measures in situations of EoL challenges, and a receptive and supportive organizational culture. Cost-effectiveness also focuses on weighing the opportunity costs of the activities (e.g., time staff spends on activities, costs of managers/employees training, costs of delivering the intervention, costs incurred to the business in terms of output and money lost) with the obtained outcomes.

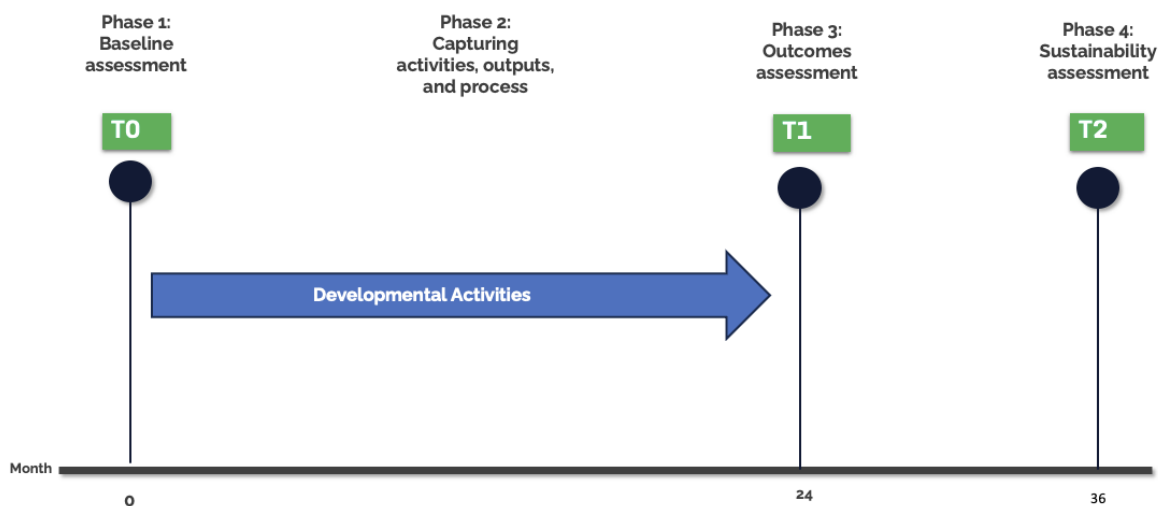
Figure 1: Draft of the logic model representing the program theory or theory of change resulting from the CWP.



7 Timeline (data collection phases)

Within each workplace, the research and development activities follow a specific timeline. This timeline outlines the scheduling of key data collection activities (both qualitative and quantitative), but it allows for flexibility to accommodate workplace-specific needs. For example, variations in the start date or the exact timing of data collection can be adjusted to account for factors such as busy periods or other operational demands.

Figure 2: Timeline of the different research phases within each participating workplace



Phase 1: Baseline assessments and preparatory activities

This phase serves to develop an understanding of the state of affairs in the participating workplaces in the project in each country and to provide a baseline measurement in terms of our variables of interest (including EoL experiences, employee health and wellbeing, perceptions of needs, context, mechanism and outcome variables, etc.). It also includes some of the initiation activities meant to develop an understanding of the organisational level context in order to create a better understanding of the workplace structures, existing assets and needs.

Phase 2: Capturing activities, outputs and process

This phase concerns the co-creation of the tailored Compassionate Workplace Program in each workplace. During this phase, we will capture, using a diverse instrumentarium, the different aspects of the development process (e.g. what is developed, why, how is it developed and implemented).

Phase 3: Outcome assessment

This phase concludes the facilitated development stage in the workplaces and shifts focus toward evaluating changes in outcomes. Additionally, key process indicators—such as reach, dose, and the quality of activity implementation—are quantitatively assessed and integrated into the outcome survey. Economic factors, including cost-effectiveness, are also evaluated.

Phase 4: Sustainability

This phase marks the final phase of the project. It focuses on long-term changes and sustained changes in outcomes due to the Compassionate Workplaces Programs (approx. 1 year after the end of the intervention in the workplaces). It also focuses on evaluating wider impact, including emergent and unexpected outcomes and processes spurred on by the co-creative process and the implementation of the CWPs.

8 Sample size

We use qualitative and quantitative data collection methods (see further below) and depending on the method, different numbers are targeted.

For the **qualitative process and outcome evaluation** we will include participants based on purposive sampling, i.e. including the people with the theoretically most relevant experiences or perspectives in order to obtain sufficient data.

For the **quantitative outcome evaluation** (survey) we will aim to include the full eligible population in each of the participating workplaces in our samples. The justification is both statistical power and inclusion of the entire relevant population.

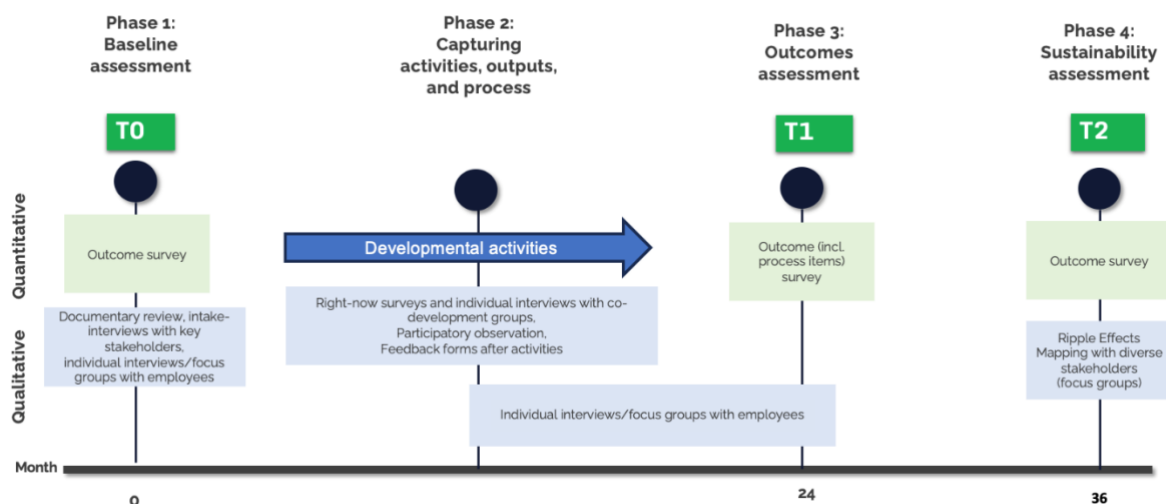
9 Data collection methods: overview

In each of the identified research phases (see section 7) different data collection methods (both quantitative and qualitative) take place. Table 1 provides an overview of these. These methods are adaptive and flexible in response to the development process.

Table 1: overview of research phases and data collection methods

	Phase 1: Baseline assessment	Phase 2: Capturing activities, outputs, and process	Phase 3: Outcome assessment	Phase 4: Sustainability
Qualitative methods	Document analysis Intake interviews Interviews/focus groups employees	Participatory observation Right-now surveys Individual interviews/focus groups co-development groups	Individual interviews/focus groups with employees	Ripple Effects Mapping (REM)

		Interviews employees/feedback forms for employees who participated in specific interventions		
Quantitative methods	Survey: core concepts (T0)	”(use of administrative data where relevant and available)	Survey: core concepts + tailored process items (T1)	Survey: selection of core concepts (T2)



10 Qualitative data collection methods

Several qualitative data collection modalities will be used throughout the different research phases. These modalities will be adapted to the specific characteristics and needs of the workplaces being studied, ensuring that the data collection is both relevant and context-sensitive. This also means that the precise qualitative data collection method will depend on (or flexibly adapt to) the action. They form an 'instrumentarium' to capture activities, process and change. In other words, we describe the possible methods that will be used but this does not mean that all methods will be used.

For each of the qualitative data collections, we will use an informed consent (IC) form and a participant information sheet (PIS), which outlines the ethical considerations and participation details for the study. These documents, essential for safeguarding participants' rights and ensuring transparency, are described in detail in [Supplemental Appendix 4](#). They include information on the study's objectives, confidentiality measures, data usage, and the participants' right to withdraw at any stage without consequences.

Document analysis

Data collection method and purpose: To map existing assets and gain a comprehensive understanding of the national and organizational context, a review of relevant documents will be conducted. The aim is to build a deeper understanding of the existing resources, stakeholders, and broader context.

Materials: Key documents, such as policy guidelines, charters, and protocols, will be analyzed to explore the existing framework surrounding bereavement leave, long-term leave, and workplace protocols for handling EoL-experiences. Moreover, the documents will be evaluated in terms of their goals and objectives, leadership commitment, ownership, involved stakeholders, responsibilities and accountabilities, accessibility, tailoring, implementation, strengths and weaknesses.

Data analysis: A policy review toolkit will be used which helps to guide the data collection and analysis of relevant policy documents. See Appendix 5 for policy document analysis tool. Clarification questions about existing regulations and protocols can be asked during the intake interviews with HR/management personnel.

Intake-interviews/focus groups

Data collection method and purpose: A critical initial step of the start of the data collection process is to meet with key stakeholders of the organization to build the relationship and begin to understand their unique perspectives. Intake interviews with HR/management personnel will be conducted. These interviews aim to get a grasp of the context and underlying dynamics. These intake interviews are also important to build trust between the researcher and relevant stakeholders and generate buy-in for the co-development process. Buy-in means that stakeholders believe in and are committed to the evaluation design (i.e., the questions and data collection and analysis methods).

Participants: HR-personnel/Management (will be decided in each workplace).

Materials: The interview questions will explore existing resources, potential leverage points (e.g., areas with the greatest potential impact), as well as anticipated challenges, gaps, and obstacles. They will also probe organizational, social, commercial, and political barriers that may hinder the process. Additionally, the intake-interview will gauge what has already been attempted and what lessons can be drawn from previous well-being projects or efforts, and what the current needs are. It is important to understand how the project may be influenced by other system elements. Moreover, understanding stakeholders' motivation is crucial. Therefore, questions will also focus on how different stakeholders perceive their roles, responsibilities, and expectations regarding the project, as well as their underlying motivation for participation. See Appendix 5.

Data analysis: Interview transcripts will be rapidly evaluated and summarized. This will be done in conjunction with the analysis of policy documents. The analysis will also be used to identify issues to observe or need further investigation.

Individual interviews/focus groups with employees (baseline)

Data collection and purpose: As part of the baseline assessment, interviews or focus groups with employees will be conducted to explore their experiences with end-of-life (EoL) issues in the workplace. These interviews will also examine their specific support needs, providing a deeper understanding of how the workplace can address EoL challenges.

Participants: All employees (diverse roles, departments). The recruitment strategy is determined in collaboration with the core development group, utilizing channels such as the workplace newsletter and other internal communication methods.

Materials: The interview guide should complement the quantitative baseline survey. We will explore existing strategies and resources by asking questions like, “Where do you seek help?” Additionally, we will assess the workplace culture surrounding these topics, such as, “Are you able to discuss serious illness, death, or bereavement openly with your colleagues?” We will also inquire about employees’ support needs.

Data analysis: Transcripts of the focus groups/individual interviews are rapidly analysed, summarized, and reported back to the core development group to support decision-making.

Participatory observation

Data collection method and purpose: Observations are a critical component of DE and happen frequently. A participatory observational approach will be applied (Bonney et al., 2009), with the researcher actively participating in the co-development and implementation meetings. Additional observations will be conducted during other relevant meetings (e.g., follow-up meetings, meetings with additional stakeholders, etc.) and during activities related to the development and implementation process. When feasible and beneficial for gaining new insights, additional strategies like shadowing key individuals within the organization will be used to further enrich the data collection process.

Materials: The researcher will take detailed field notes during key events, regular meetings, and other gatherings where the process can be observed. The observations will focus on key agenda items, intended versus observed outcomes, as well as the interactions and dynamics among participants.

Data analysis: The field notes will be transferred into qualitative data analysis software (e.g. MAXQDA). In the short term, the field notes are reviewed to look for issues that might be worth further investigation. In the longer-term, the field notes will be used to identify any patterns around issues that keep coming up, any information about how decisions in general are being made or how a specific decision was made.

Right-now surveys

Data collection method and purpose: To keep abreast of action and to uncover issues that may quickly become problems if not resolved or missed opportunities if not addressed, a ‘right-now’-survey will be conducted (Spark Policy Institute, 2014). The survey will also help to identify conflicting perspectives or information that may hinder the development and implementation process. Moreover, the survey may help to assess coherence within the system, this is the degree to which stakeholders pursue the same goals and have a shared understanding of the potential leverage points and roadblocks.

Participants: All employees who are involved in the development and implementation of activities. The employees who are part of the core development groups will receive an online right-now survey per e-mail immediately after (or alternatively during the final 5 minutes of) every core-development group meeting (which is minimum once a month).

Materials: The survey will primarily gauge what is happening at that specific moment (right-now) and include no more than three questions: 1) *Right now, our greatest opportunities are...*; 2) *Right now, our biggest challenges/concerns are...*; 3) *Right now, we miss guidance for/expertise in...* Participants will need around five minutes to complete the survey.

Data analysis: Data will be categorized to highlight key themes, and equal attention will be paid to outliers – stakeholders whose thoughts differ significantly from the rest and make you wonder why a disconnect is happening. Once the results are obtained, it may be decided that an issue raised by the survey needs to be explored further through the individual interviews or focus groups

Individual interviews/focus groups with core development groups

Data collection method and purpose: Individual interviews or focus groups will be conducted with employees participating in the core development group to explore their experiences with the development process. These discussions will delve into the challenges they encounter, their perceptions of the program's value, and their views on future directions.

Participants: Core development group

Materials: During the individual interviews/focus groups participants will be asked to describe their engagement with the program and share their experiences with the start-up phase. Follow-up questions will include questions related to the progress, whether they are adopting the planned approach, and what challenges they encounter (See Appendix 5).

Data analysis: All transcripts will be uploaded into qualitative data analysis software (e.g., MAXQDA/NVIVO). Verbatim transcripts of interviews and focus groups will be subjected to a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive thematic analysis.

Individual interviews with employees

Data collection method and purpose: Qualitative interviews or focus groups will be conducted with employees to gather insights into their experiences with the program, including their perceptions of its effectiveness and the outcomes they observed. These valuable insights will be relayed to the core development team to inform ongoing improvements and program refinement.

Participants/sample: All employees

Materials: The individual interviews or focus groups will explore participants' experiences with the program's activities, their views on the program's effectiveness, and feedback on what worked well, what could be improved, and what may be missing. (See Appendix 5)

Data analysis: Verbatim transcripts of interviews and focus groups will be subjected to a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive thematic analysis.

Ripple Effects Mapping

Data collection method and purpose: Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) will be used as a participatory evaluation technique to map the outcomes of the CWP programs. The method motivates involved stakeholders to think about the successes of the intervention and engages them to retrospectively and visually map the 'performance story' by the use of Appreciative Inquiry techniques (Chazdon et al., 2017). The focus group session takes place after the implementation of activities, during the sustainably phase. The REM-session will also be crucial for discussing next steps and supporting the long-term sustainability of the CWP program. Participants will reflect on the program's outcomes and identify actions to maintain its impact moving forward.

Participants: People involved in the core development groups and other relevant stakeholders and end-users.

Materials: The REM-focus group session, which encompasses three stages: (1) partner interviews, (2) group discussion and mapping, and (3) reflection. After the facilitator introduces the format for the focus group, participants are asked to pair up and interview their partner. A set of guiding questions will be provided to the participants. These questions include some variation of: What is a highlight or achievement of the CWP program? What new or deepened connections with others have emerged as part of the program? What unexpected things (positive or negative) have happened as a result of the program? How have initiatives affected the wider community? After the partner interviews, the group engages in a facilitated group discussion, sharing insights gathered from the partner interviews, and inviting all participants to provide further detail regarding their narratives. Details of the stories are collected on a whiteboard. After this, possible themes are identified, creating a mind map that captures the main actions and outcomes of the CWP program.

Data analysis: After completing the REM focus group, the qualitative data captured from the hand-drawn mind map will be digitized using the recommended mapping software, XMIND. The results will then be reviewed with the core development group to determine how best to share this information and how it can be leveraged to guide the program's future direction and actions.

11 Quantitative data collection method: repeated questionnaire survey

A repeated survey will be conducted in EU-CoWork to describe and evaluate changes in relevant outcomes (see identified core concepts in section 6 – Program Theory) of the Compassionate Workplaces Programmes and to be able to formally evaluate developed CMO (i.e. context-mechanism-outcome) configurations.

Objectives of the repeated survey are:

- 1) To provide a description of the situation within the workplace at baseline (i.e. T0) in terms of core concepts for a Compassionate Workplace Program. These help identify areas of action and change.
- 2) To describe and evaluate changes at individual and group level within the identified core CWP concepts (T1-T0) and evaluate them in relation to the developmental process
- 3) To evaluate sustainability of the changes (i.e. lasting effects between T2-T1-T0).
- 4) To formally evaluate what contextual aspects (e.g., personal or group characteristics that cannot be changed by the interventions but may influence their effects), produce which mechanisms (i.e. mediators, the active ingredients of the intervention that produce the outcomes) that can explain outcomes.

Design

A repeated survey is conducted in the 12 participating workplaces at 3 time points. At each time point the entire workplace population is surveyed. This means that the survey will both have a cross-sectional aspect at each of the time points as well as a longitudinal aspect (following up the same participants across the 3 timepoints).

The survey standardly uses a self-administered computer-based (online) questionnaire (with a possibility for pen-and-paper self-administered questionnaire where deemed necessary by the participating workplaces).

An overview of the timepoints is presented in table x: T0 might be different for each participating workplace, within each workplace, T1 is scheduled 24 months after T0, and T2 will take place 36 months after T0 (See figure under section 9. data collection).

Table 2: Timepoints of the survey, their focus and included variables

Time point	Time from T0	Focus on	Included variables
T0	Month 0 *	Providing a baseline description	Core concepts + background/context variables
T1	At month 24*	Evaluating change in outcomes and describing aspects of process/implementation	Core concepts + tailored process items
T2	At month 36*	Evaluating sustainability in change	Selection of core concepts**

*: these are approximations; the exact time will partly be determined by (convenience for) the workplace but we strive for the measurement to be around this timing in view of the aims of each timepoint

** : a selection of core concepts will be included depending on signals of change observed within different workplaces

Setting

The surveys take place within the 12 participating workplaces. Completion of the self-administered questionnaire can happen within the workplace or anywhere convenient for the participant

Participants

The full eligible population (see section 5 eligibility criteria) within each workplace is included in the survey sample at each timepoint. The justification is both statistical power (cfr Supplemental Appendix 3) and inclusion of the entire relevant population.

Because employment practices and workforce structures may differ between workplaces, the final sampling strategy for each recruited workplace will be determined in negotiation with the workplace management. In each workplace, what constitutes the full relevant population will need to be negotiated based on considerations of e.g., how best to consider secondments, temporary and precarious staff appointments, and language differences in the workplace. In this sense, the sampling strategy will be to pursue full relevant population samples where feasible, but to tailor each workplace sample to the workplace.

Each participant will receive a pseudonomized ID number in order to allow follow-up at (pseudonomized) individual participant level across the time points. Because of staff turnover, however, new participants will be included at each time point.

Sampling procedures

All samples are drawn by the national evaluator (i.e. researcher of the project) together with the workplaces' HR departments at each timepoint. The researcher will use the drawn up sample to organize the mailing and follow ups.

To allow for the sending of reminders and for follow-up unique but pseudonomized numbers are used. To safeguard this pseudonimisation the architecture of the different sampling and mailing lists will strictly prevent that HR or the researcher can link questionnaire responses to personal identifiable staff data. This means that several files are created:

- 1) The personnel list: sampling file composed of the register/list of staff as kept by the organization/HR, including the unique identifiers (ID) as used by the organization, to which pseudonomized identifiers (Δ ID, see description below) are added. This file stays with the HR department
- 2) The key file: contains a list of the unique identifiers (ID) as used by the organization, and the pseudonomized identifiers (Δ ID). This file is kept with the HR department and is meant to allow for possible linking of pseudonomized administrative data to questionnaire data after the survey.
- 3) The mailing file: this contains Δ ID and the e-mail addresses of the target participants. This file is included in the third-party survey platform (such as Qualtrix) and is used for the automatic mailing and follow-up. It is accessible to the HR of the workplace only.
- 4) The response file: this is the file that contains Δ ID and the responses to the questionnaire but not any personal identifiable information (such as email). The file is in the third-party survey platform in an environment that is accessible to the researcher only.

In the personnel list a pseudonomized Δ ID will be created. This identifier will allow pseudonomized identification throughout the longitudinal survey of 1) individual staff, 2) department, 3) teamleader the individual belongs to.

Typically the pseudonimisation will look like: **Δ ID = (2 letter ISO code for country) & _ & (1 letter code for workplace) & _ & pseudonomized department number & _ & pseudonomized teamleader number & _ & WorkID*pseudomization algorithm .**

This result in a unique number that allows following up individual target participants across the different mailings and time points but without having access to identifiable personal data.

The unique pseudonomized IDnumbers also allow pseudonomized analyses at team and team leader.

Mailing and datacollection procedures

The mailing of invitations (and reminders) to complete the questionnaire, the datacollection and the storage of questionnaire responses is managed through a third-party survey platform (such as Qualtrix or LimeSurvey). This assures efficiency while at the same time guaranteeing pseudonymity and data protection.

The mailing file (cfr sampling procedures) is integrated in the survey platform and is accessible to the HR of the workplace only. At the agreed upon time the automatic mailing is initiated by the HR department (a help desk from the researcher will be provided if needed). This will, in principle, involve a single click to activate the survey and send the survey invitations to each of the staff members in the mailing file.

The invitation e-mail will include information about the survey and emphasise the importance, purpose, the entirely voluntary participation, data protection and present an opt out possibility. It will also include a unique link that takes the target participant to the questionnaire. Here, the opt out option is presented again or the option to start the questionnaire.

Several scenario's are now possible:

- The participant choses to opt out. In this case no further reminder are sent to that person
- The participant completes and submits the questionnaire. In this case the answers to the questionnaires are stored in the response file (cfr sampling procedures). The participant will not receive a reminder but will receive a confirmation about the submission and thanking them for participation.
- The participants takes no action or completes only a part of the survey (i.e. does not submit the survey). The person will be sent up to three reminder invitations (see below). If no response is received after the three reminders this is considered a non-response.

Response status to the questionnaire can be determined via the response file, and this status is communicated to the mailing file without transferring or linking the questionnaire responses to the mailing file.

We send up to 3 reminders as this is considered one of the core strategies to obtain a satisfactory response rate and limit selection bias due to non-response (see eg Dillman's total or tailored design method).

The timing for the reminders is as follows:

Timing	What is received by target participant (e-mailed)	Description
Day 1	First invitation to the questionnaire	invitation, information, link to the questionnaire
Day 14	First reminder	Reminder of the invitation (repeat of link)
Day 28	Second reminder	Repeat of invitation with information, link to questionnaire
Day 42	Close-out e-mail	Explanation that no response has been received and no further reminders will be sent. Link to questionnaire is provided

For the the invitations and the questionnaire we follow tailored design principles as developed by Dillman and strictly adhere to ethical principles of autonomy (cfr infomed consent procedures)..

While the preferred route for the distribution of questionnaires is via the survey platform, it is possible that the workplace (HR department) decides that alternative strategies for questionnaire distribution are more appropriate or effective, for instance because certain staff categories are not likely to respond to e-mails or do not have e-mail addresses. This can include HR distributing paper invitations or questionnaires with the survey links or codes.

If so, the same described procedures of pseudonymity and reminders (below) are applied.

Informed consent procedure for the survey (see Supplemental Appendix 4)

Participants will indicate their agreement to participate in the surveys simply by following the link to the questionnaire. This will bring them to a description of the survey that emphasizes its importance and purpose, but also its entirely voluntary nature, data processing, privacy, data protection and their rights as participants. It will present an opt out possibility that indicates refusal to participate. If the participant confirms to have read the information and starts the questionnaire this will be considered as informed consents for participation.

Questionnaire and questionnaire testing

The questionnaire used for the survey will contain the instruments that operationalise the core concepts as identified in section 6 (program theory), as well as participants' background characteristics that are considered to be important potential moderators of the influence of the interventions or the CWP.

Validated instruments will be used where possible and the final t0 questionnaire will have an average length of maximum 15-20 minutes.

The procedure for the development of the final questionnaire is as follows:

- 1) Identification of candidate instruments to operationalize the core concepts.

The consortium has identified a number of candidate instruments (See Table 3 below).

- 2) Trimming down of the instruments based on critical discussion of program theory (consortium meeting November 2024)

At the consortium meeting in November 2024 a critical discussion about the instruments in relation to the program theory is held with all international consortium members with the aims of: trimming down lists of candidate instruments, identifying hierarchy of importance of core concepts, identifying operationalisation issues, identifying core concepts that need self-developed items (and suggesting these).

A master draft of the questionnaire can be found in [appendix 6](#), this draft will be used for the testing and translating of the questionnaire into the languages of the countries under study.

- 3) Translation and cognitive testing of the instruments

Measures that do not have a validated translated version in one or more of the intervention country languages (i.e., Dutch, Swedish, Greek, German) will be forward translated by the research team of the respective country into their language. This translated instrument will then go through cognitive validation as follows. The translated items will be tested for difficulty and clarity of the questions and other potential problems regarding content and format with 5-6 volunteers recruited from both the research group and workplaces. Testing will proceed in two or more rounds, between which the

instruments' item or scale formulations may be adjusted if necessary, until adjustments are no longer deemed necessary. After any necessary changes are made resulting from the input from the cognitive validation, the final version of the instrument will be sent for language and literacy review to a local expert organisation (e.g., Wablieft center for clear language in Belgium).

4) Practical testing of the questionnaire:

A practical testing with 10-15 respondents is organized to test the time needed to complete the different modules of the questionnaire. This time data is analysed to inform decisions about possible further trimming of the questionnaire

5) Final questionnaire implemented in survey platform

After all instruments are validated and finalised, they will be integrated into the digital survey platform.

6) Further tailoring of questionnaire for t1 and t2

At T1 and T2 the same core instruments as in t0 are used for the questionnaire. However at T1, additional tailored items, specific to each workplace, will be added to the questionnaire for the process evaluation. These 'process' items will be customized based on the specific CWP actions that were implemented at each workplace.

The items will ask about implementation evaluation aspects such as reach (eg are participants aware of an action or policy), dose (eg to how what activities have they participated), and quality (eg satisfaction with or subjective evaluation of an activity)

Table 3: Candidate instruments for the operationalisation of the core concepts for the survey questionnaire

Concept	Construct	Scale	Level*
Compassion	Compassionate attitudes and behavior of employees	(Gilbert et al., 2017)	I
Compassion	Compassion from colleagues	(Gilbert et al., 2017)	I G
Compassion	(Perceived) Compassion from leadership	(Sansó et al., 2022)	I L O
Compassion	(Perceived) Compassion from the company/organization	?	I O
Well-being	Well-being: (Dis)stress	?	I
Well-being	Well-being: Feelings of isolation	(Golden et al., 2008)	I
Well-being	Well-being: Perceived health	?	I
Well-being	Well-being: Absenteeism & Presenteeism	?	G? O
Well-being	Well-being: Stigma	(Rao et al., 2009) – adapted to EOL	I L O?

Knowledge, skills, and confidence	Death Literacy Index		I
Knowledge, skills, and confidence	(Collective) self-efficacy	?	I G O

*: the IGLO classification (Nielsen et al. 2018) indicates at the level within the organization to which the instrument relate: I – Individual (eg Individual resources and states); G – Group (eg Group-level processes and interactions); L – Leader (eg Leadership behaviour); O (Organisation, Policies, practices and procedures)

12 Harms and benefits

Harms

The EU-CoWork protocol is non-invasive and does not present known risk of protocol-related injury. The intervention is focused on supporting the development of a compassionate workplace. Physical and social integrity of the participants is not jeopardised and the nature of the research activities is highly unlikely to lead to serious adverse events.

The only potential anticipated not serious adverse event is mild psychological discomfort or distress that may be caused by questions, conversations or reflections that can result from the data collection activities or the developmental activities about serious life events such as serious illness or loss.

However, several strategies are put in place to minimize the impact from such distress:

- Interviews are conducted by researchers who are experienced in dealing with potentially stressful topics.
- The facilitators for the development activities are similarly experienced in dealing with these topics and receive training and continued supervision that particularly pays attention to working with workplace in these topics
- Inter-collegial counselling and reflection settings are also planned within the consortium team in order to ensure that data collection and analysis are appropriate in terms of research ethics and to support the researchers in their personal handling of potentially emotionally demanding interview situations
- Participants will be instructed that they may refuse to answer any question and may withdraw participation from the datacollection at any point in the study without negative consequence.
- Participants will always be presented with clear information about who they can contact within the workplace and from the research project to report any adverse events. In addition, should participants show a need for help during the interviews, selected contacts and contact points (e.g. psychological counselling centres such as the telephone counselling service, grief counselling) will be made available to them in order to ensure their well-being.
- The EU-CoWork consortium has extensive experience in research around end-of-life issues and workplace interventional research and is thus accustomed to and prepared to meet and manage reactions that may occur.

Benefits (including participant remuneration or compensation)

Participation in the study offers considerable added value to the interviewees and those involved in implementing the measures, as the research design creates space for reflection and personally supportive ways of dealing with existentially challenging situations.

Developing Compassionate Workplace Programs involves knowledge exchange about various end-of-life care and support efforts. End-of-life issues are potentially sensitive topics. However, previous research has shown that there is a low risk that participants who complete questionnaires about the end of life will experience discomfort. Sharing experiences has been found to be perceived as beneficial by the participant when done in a respectful context.

Study participants do not receive any direct financial compensation. Instead, participation in the study takes place during the employees' regular working hours, so that no additional time is required outside of their regular work commitments. In addition, the participating companies are provided with personnel support from an experienced facilitator/trainer in workplace health promotion for the development and implementation of the programmes and measures from the project funding.

13 Data processing/management

13.1 Data security

The International Standard ISO/IEC 17799 covers data security under the topic of information security, and one of its main principles is that all stored information, i.e. data, should be “owned”, so that it is clear whose responsibility is to protect and control access to that data, to keep it safe from corruption and involuntary disclosure outside researchers who have the appropriate authorizations and outside the European Economic Area. In complying with these measures the coordinating partner (VUB) will seek advice from the institutional Information Security Officer (ciso@vub.be) and the institutional Data Protection Officer (dpo@vub.be).

13.2 Data protection

EU-CoWork will implement state of the art data protection procedures and ensure alignment with GDPR. This entails a clear informed consent with clear indication what type of data is being captured, why it is being captured and how it is being used, and how it might be used in the future. Furthermore, the informed consent will describe the location of the data servers (within the EU). The participants of the study will be able to request their data and request to be omitted as described in the GDPR (except in cases where it serves the greater good to keep the data). Participants' IP addresses will not be recorded in the database. Data access is strictly limited to those who require access to perform the research.

The recording of the qualitative interviews will be transcribed verbatim. Upon doing so, all personal data will be removed and names will be replaced by aliases. Interview transcripts will receive a code. The key to the code will be kept in such a way that identification of the participants is only possible for authorized researchers. After the transcriptions the audio recordings will be uploaded onto the secure data server with the same access protocols as described above. The original recordings on the recording device will be deleted.

Written informed consent of the participants will be sought containing a detailed and written explanation of data security, ownership, and the rights of the data subjects. A record of the

processing activities will be kept. The signed informed consents will be stored in a closed room at each of the participating institutions in the 5 countries, that is only accessible by the researchers involved in this project.

13.3 Information sharing

Sharing of datasets will be defined on a case-by-case basis. Based on the type of dataset, it will be decided which datasets can be made public, shared or have to be kept confidential. All participants in the user tests will sign an informed consent, clarifying all implications in terms of privacy and protection of their personal data. Data sharing will be defined before data collection so that users are able to consent. If data would be shared to unanticipated parties, only the pseudonymized data will be shared and it will be evaluated by the DPO if compatible grounds for scientific research apply.

13.4 Data storage

Data will be stored on VUB servers, using the EU-CoWork SharePoint to store work in progress data in encrypted and password-protected folders, and using Pixiu for storage after the project ends, which are password protected and only accessible by the PI and co-Is. Data will be deleted after the 10 year retention period. The data will be deleted from the Pixiu folder, ensuring that no back-up copies remain in the cloud or on any linked devices. Data will be jointly collected by and shared with the academic partners involved in the project (i.e., VUB, AUEB, LTU, UG, USFD). All work in progress data will be stored on the VUB servers, using the EU-CoWork SharePoint. Each partner will pseudonymise their collected data before saving it on the EU-CoWork SharePoint.

For information on data storage, data protection and data sharing activities and procedures, we refer to the EU-CoWork Data Management Plan, which can be found here: [Data Management Plan](#). A Data Processing Impact Assessment was also conducted.

14 Further ethical aspects

14.1 General consideration of Ethical principles

The principles of autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice are carefully considered in the study.

Autonomy

The autonomy of participants is central to this investigation. Participants will be made aware that consent is fluid and that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time throughout the study without any negative implications. Consent will be obtained without any coercion of study participants. All participants will be given the full disclosure about the nature and goal of the study. Participants will be given the opportunity to ask questions before they decide if they want to participate.

Non-maleficence

The researchers will adhere to the principle of non-maleficence, above all cause no harm to participants. As no invasive interventions will be delivered to the participants in this study, the

anticipated risks in this study are minimal. In the unlikely case of mild psychological discomfort, participants are informed that they are allowed to refuse to answer any of the questions or to look into specific materials at any point in the study, without any consequences. If needed, participants will be referred to a psychological support service.

Confidentiality will be assured. All information pertaining to individuals will be pseudonymized from the outset of the study and consent sought for the use of pseudonymized quotes from participants.

Beneficence

Beneficence is an integral part of this study and maximizing the benefits the participants in terms of their wellbeing is the intention of the activities within the Compassionate Workplace Programs (CWPs). This will be adhered to in this study by ensuring all potential participants have all of the necessary information for informed consent and have the opportunity to ask questions about the study. Additionally, the development process of the CWP is carefully facilitated by a trained CWP facilitator that will integrate the principle of beneficence in the activities developed by the workplace.

Justice

The principle of justice refers to equal share and fairness. Staff members will not be excluded from the research or the development activities on the basis of unjust criteria. We will ensure that unforeseen discriminatory aspects are identified so that they can be remedied.

14.2 Research ethics approval

Each national partner involved in the CWPs and the data collection will obtain ethics approval from their local/national ethical committee before the start of the datacollection or developmental activities.

14.3 Informed consent

The voluntary nature of participation in the study is guaranteed at all times, which is also explicitly stated in the participant information and informed consent forms.

These also contain a reference to the fact that participation in the study can be cancelled at any time without giving reasons and without incurring any disadvantages.

Study participants are also offered contact options for further information or queries (both the workplace's internal point of contact and the research team's responsible key researcher) and for support in case of discomfort (see section on harms).

As part of the research project, attention is paid to a transparent working method throughout. This means that all study participants are informed about aspects such as the aim and procedure of the study, data protection and voluntariness. The consent and data protection declaration can be found in Supplemental Appendix 4. In addition, project objectives, the data collection process and the handling of the data are openly communicated in advance in cooperation with the co-development group in the respective organisations, as well as communicated to employees at kick-off events and via internal communication channels (newsletter, etc.).

At the moment of the data collection, they will receive an information letter with the following information:

- The goals of the project;
- The method of data collection;
- How long it takes to participate in the research;
- That participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time;
- That the information they give will be treated confidentially;
- That interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim (if permission is given);
- Who and how they can contact someone in case of questions, harm or discomfort after participation in the research;
- How the interlocutors can obtain/will be informed about the results of the research;
- Information about the debriefing and feedback;
- Information about extra support that may be offered to participants

15 List of supplemental appendices

Appendix 1 _ Developmental activities in the workplaces

Appendix 2_ Info about the evaluation approaches and analyses

Appendix 3_ Overview of participating workplaces

Appendix 4_ Informed consent forms and participant information

Appendix 5_ instrumentation of qualitative datacollections

Appendix 6_ Draft questionnaire for quantitative datacollection at T₀

Appendix 1



Supplemental Appendix 1) Description of the Compassionate Workplace Program developmental activities within the workplaces

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Purpose of the document

This document describes the different aspects of the compassionate workplace program (CWP) development in and with the workplaces. It describes the approaches we take with and the underlying philosophy of the modes of collaborating with the workplaces. Aspects addressed are: initial contacts with candidate workplaces, core aspects of the development process, training and role of the facilitators, modes of communicating and collaborating with the workplaces throughout the development process (including ethical aspects).

1 Design, concepts and principles of the development process

Design: Developmental evaluation approach with an emphasis on participation and co-creation

To develop the CWPs in the different organizations, a co-creative Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach is used. DE was first described by Patton in the mid-1990s as a distinct approach to evaluation with the explicit purpose of helping to develop and shape an innovation, intervention or project that is emergent, complex and dynamic^{[OBJ]¹[OBJ]}. The focus of DE is on reflection, learning and change to enable projects to adapt to the emerging complex environments in which they are situated^{[OBJ]²[OBJ]}. As such, DE is different from other, more traditional forms of development or implementation and evaluation where the focus is on informing the planning of a pre-defined initiative with a focus on standardization and implementation fidelity. By contrast, CWPs are developing or emerging initiatives that are asset-based, focused on experiential knowledge exchange without prior assumptions about what knowledge is relevant, and strongly based on facilitation and tailoring. Developing compassionate workplaces is an intrinsically co-creative process which focuses on reorienting settings, which will thereby experience ongoing change and adaptation. A DE approach enables the CWPs to adapt quickly to any changes in the environment or to new learnings that emerge, thereby also generating and advancing knowledge about the initiative in the field. In short, DE is highly compatible with the core features of CWPs (see section [Core components of the Compassionate Workplace Programs](#)) and is an exceptionally appropriate approach when working in complex environments where the route to change is non-linear and cannot easily be predicted beforehand. The establishment of spaces for feedback and reflection are essential core elements in the co-creative development process and are also expected to be very important for the sustainable organisational development of CWP beyond the project period.

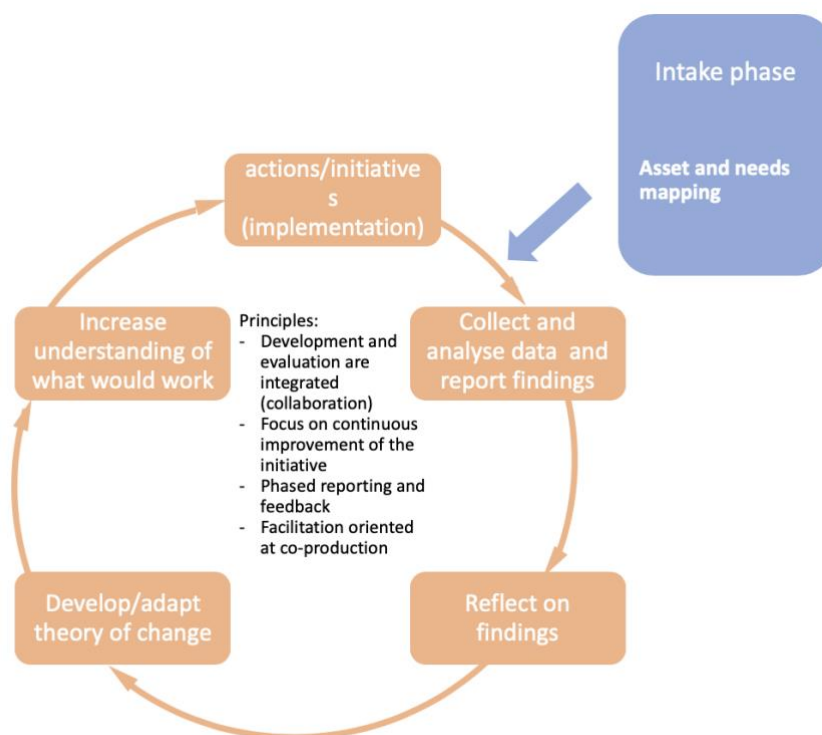
In DE, development and evaluation support each other. This means that each CWP will have a **core development group** composed of the different relevant stakeholders (representing the different departments and employee categories in the organization), a compassionate workplace facilitator and the EU-CoWork national researcher. There is a partnering relationship between all actors involved and decisions about what new knowledge is needed, what needs to be evaluated, and how this informs the decisions in the development of local CWPs are made in a collaborative manner. It is therefore particularly important that special attention is paid to establishing this transdisciplinary group in the organisations at the start of the project, to benefit both social development and program content. Rapid evaluation with rapid feedback becomes part of the intervention as data are systematically gathered, interpreted, and used to make decisions regarding the CWP development (see **Figure 1**). The way in which this is applied is very context dependent. What works in one time

and place will not necessarily work in another. Because DE is sensitive to this, our approach will allow us to determine features that are common across work environments and contexts, and which features are context-dependent and variable.

Within the core development group, it is recommended that a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the organization is appointed. It is advisable that this person is mandated by their company with time allocated for the project (e.g. 10%). Yet, we must understand that not every organisation has the resources to do so, and there may be internal structures (and cultures) which might make appointing a SPOC difficult. In that case, for communication about the CWPs, the entire core development group would need to be contacted. The core development group will be involved in the decision-making process of the CWPs, yet for the assets/needs assessment of the organisation (at the start of the intervention) all employees (beyond the core development group) can be consulted.

In a first step, the core development group (including the facilitator and the national researcher) will organize asset/needs assessment mapping (based on intake interviews and document analysis). The results of these interviews and focus groups will be summarized and reported back to the core development group. Then, the core development group decides (using the inspiration guide and the summary of results) on an action plan for the activities (e.g., which activities first and when will they be evaluated). This process of feeding back data from rapid evaluations of interviews or surveys to guide the decisions about activities is followed throughout the development phase.

Figure 1: Developmental approach used for the development of the CWPs in EU-CoWork



As part of the DE approach, several important aspects can be highlighted. We will employ an explicitly asset-based approach, focus on experiential learning in the workplace, and invest in facilitated co-creation. We see the co-creative process as part of the intervention and co-creation can continue during the implementation phase of the activities (as there might be ongoing adjustments).

Conceptual clarification: The compassionate workplace

A compassionate workplace refers to a work environment in which company responsible parties/managers/people in power and/or employees develop deliberate policy and actions to support experiences of serious illness, caregiving, dying and loss; a work environment in which members collectively notice, feel, and respond to the suffering and pain of other employees. Leadership within the workplace explicitly commits itself to help in the activities by offering support, finding solutions together and encouraging employees to support their co-workers with end of life (EoL) experiences.

The compassionate workplace is a specific form of compassionate community. Based on an understanding of health promotion, a compassionate community develops a good way of dealing with serious illness, loss, dying, death and bereavement in the very places where we live, love and work. The compassionate workplace thus refers to the working world as a living world that does not ignore issues of vulnerability, finiteness and dependency. By proactively addressing these issues and giving them space, the world of work also becomes a more humane, health-promoting environment.

We do not see the compassionate workplace as an a priori determined endpoint. But essentially it is a social ecology approach that aims to make the workplace one where serious illness, dying, caregiving and grief is everyone's business and not just that of wellbeing services or those directly affected.

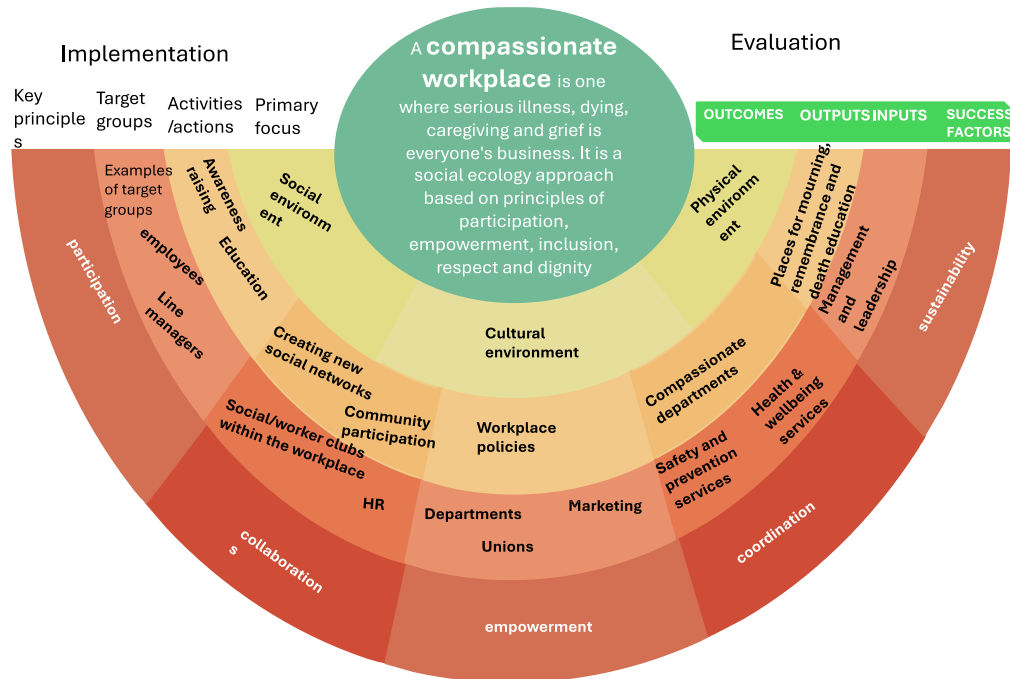
Figure 2 provides a conceptual illustration of how a compassionate workplace program (CWP) operates.

The development of a CWP:

- Occurs according to several **key principles** or foundations: it is participatory, based on collaboration and trust and strives towards empowerment of workplaces. In line with a system-theoretical understanding of organisational development and the promotion of a caring organisational culture, CWP development is thus NOT a program that is implemented by an external agent or organisation together with management or a specific service. It is a facilitated development including an important role for coordination (for example, when mapping assets and needs, building a plan of action, evaluating the activities, adjusting the activities, etc.). Sustainability is an explicit aim, as the program should be able to continue and further develop after the study concludes and the facilitators leave the workplace.
- Works with and for the **different stakeholders** at the workplace, which can include: employees from the different levels, sections and/or departments of the organisations, line managers, union and safety representatives, HR, marketing, operations management, safety and prevention and health and wellbeing services, management and leadership. CWPs intend to be inclusive of the different employees, structures or departments of the workplace.
- with these 'stakeholders', implies **activities or actions** that are aimed at raising awareness, enabling questions about care and EoL experiences to be openly addressed and discussed, educating, improving social connection, developing policies, creating places of solace, and stimulating community participation in these activities.
- Eventually targets a **social, physical and cultural environment** that is supportive for experiences of serious illness, dying, caregiving and grief.

- Highlights and (potentially) addresses fundamental structural barriers (in terms of policy, social security, etc.), even if they cannot be solved within the workplaces and the project duration. The identification of such barriers could serve as inspiration for a possible workshop, creating awareness for the broader social context (e.g., compatibility of care and employment).

Figure 2: Conceptual illustration of a compassionate workplace



Development process

We discuss the core components of the development process (standard in every CWP) and the type of (strongly tailored) activities that will be organised in the development process.

I. Core components of the Compassionate Workplace Programs

The core components of the CWP are the aspects of the development process that we consider as standard in developing every CWP. These are pre-requisite for tailoring the CWP to specific workplaces needs and contexts.

They include:

- First contacts and preparation
- Asset & needs mapping
 1. Facilitated co-creation of outputs (facilitator and core development group)
 2. Facilitated knowledge exchange workshops
- Inspiration: use of an Inspiration resource and learning network for workplaces

3. Core component 1: First contacts and preparation

Aim: *Identifying the stakeholders to be involved in the core development group to drive the co-creation process within each organization.*

Stakeholders will be identified based on a stakeholder mapping looking at power (e.g., knowledge, skills and position that will contribute to the process) and interest (e.g., engagement with the topics and availability for meeting) for the program. The members represent the different departments and employee categories in the organization. Based on this outcome a **core development group** will be established within each of the workplaces, formed with attention to inclusivity and representation. Workplaces themselves decide who will participate in the core development group; ideally this will be a small (e.g. 5-12 people). It would not be suitable, for instance, for only HR to be represented.

Within the core development group, it is recommended that a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the organization is appointed. This is one of the stakeholders of the core development group.

The project's facilitator and national researcher, who will participate to the core development group, are also introduced to the stakeholders. They will develop a memorandum of understanding, in collaboration with the stakeholders, in which an agreement about the structures and procedures is made. Workplaces can choose to put this into a 'charter'. A charter would make these structures and procedures more official or binding within the organization. This process will happen after discussions about how both sides will work together (in the co-creation process), ensuring that the stakeholders have a say in how the agreement is structured.

Core component 2: Asset and needs mapping to inform the development process

Aim: *making the CWP context-driven, and tailored to the involved workers*

Throughout the development process an asset-based and needs-informed approach is taken. An asset-based approach moves from a problem-based focus to a salutogenic⁵ approach, focusing on factors that promote wellbeing and resources that support this. This means that we will utilize each work environment's existing strengths, resources, and capacities in a transformative process.

The first contacts with a recruited workplace will include asset and needs mapping. This is done jointly by the facilitator and a researcher (see role description further below). Intake interviews can be conducted with company HR or management representatives focussing on motivation for participating in the project, needs experienced by the company management, HR, and its employees in relation to EoL experiences, exploration of current strategies for EoL experiences, resources and strengths already in place, etc. Intake interviews can also be conducted with specific employees (e.g. those with long tenure, or those with a certain EoL experiences) focussing on practical implementation of workplace policies, what strategies have worked or failed in the past, etc..

One or two focus groups may also be organised with employees in a short initial research phase, if deemed necessary, for example in large or complex organizations. As HR and management do not always have insight or access into all relevant issues for employees on the work floor. The facilitator and the researcher use tools such as asset mapping and needs assessment interviews, that will be available to them via the facilitator training (see below).

The initial assessment of assets and needs forms the starting point for further data collection, and for the realist evaluation to align with the development process (see appendix 2). At the same time, the summarized information that will be fed back to the core development group reveals significant points of attention for the co-creative process as well as initial concrete potential development perspectives and fields of action. It also serves as an appreciation of previous organisational measures for employee orientation and health promotion.

Portions of the data collected (during the entire project) as part of the data collection protocol or as part of the developmental evaluation approach (i.e. based on suggestions from workplaces) are used to support the asset and needs based process. For instance, in keeping with the developmental evaluation approach, baseline data collection will be rapidly processed and discussed with the core development group of the CWP to allow identification and mobilization of resources as building blocks for change processes and to guide the further decisions. The same applies for subsequent data collections: data are systematically gathered, rapidly evaluated, fed back and interpreted, and used to make decisions regarding continued development.

The core development group will draw up a list and time plan of the planned activities.

Core component 3: facilitated co-creation of activities or actions

Aim: *the involvement of the facilitator will ensure that both the needs of the employees and the supervisors, HR, etc. are met and will facilitate communication between different types of workers.*

An experienced facilitator will be appointed to assist each work environment in the development of their own CWPs (one facilitator per country (i.e. BE, SE, AT, GR). The facilitator will have experience in enhancing participation, co-creation methods, guiding adaptation processes, and will be familiar with EoL topics and have a relevant background, e.g. in occupational health or health promotion. The facilitators will receive both initial and continued training and support for the CWP development process from internal partners (e.g., VUB, IDEWE, Sorgenetz) and appointed relevant subcontractors (e.g., The Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care, ...). A community of practice (CoP) is set up to guarantee continued training through ongoing exchange of expertise and experiences. The training and CoP are described below.

In addition to skills obtained through training and the community of practice, facilitators will have access to a facilitator manual (developed together with the training) that offers guidance in, for

instance, using different techniques for co-creation processes, ways of handling resistance and creating enthusiasm, and which also includes the essentials from the current protocol. The manual clarifies the steps to be taken (e.g. in stakeholder mapping, forming a core development group) and how to address tailoring of the CWP.

Through the training, the manual and the CoP, facilitators will be able to, together with the recruited workplaces:

- conduct stakeholder mapping (of interest and potential impact),
- plan and prepare different meetings of the core development group in view of deciding about activities and outputs, and communication to the entire workplace about the activities etcetera
- maintain a good relationship and open and constant communication with the core development group about the process
- exchange ideas on how to keep momentum going in organisations, exchange ideas about adjusting the CWPs during the process, etc.
- exchange ideas about how to integrate the intervention into organisational policies and practices with the core development group.
- ensure relevant material is circulated well in advance of meetings to ensure stakeholders are up to speed.

A recommended frequency of the meetings of the facilitators with the core development group is every month. However, the decision for frequency is made jointly in the core development team and, for instance, will depend on the specific organisational context. The facilitator will also plan the timing of the meetings in a manner that accounts for optimal alignment with development initiatives and evaluative elements. For instance, it may be possible to have two months between two core development group meetings if concrete activities on the ground take place in between.

Core component 4: Facilitated knowledge exchange workshops (or events)

Aim: *to engage with the workplace community and create momentum for workplace-wide change.*

The facilitator and the core development group will organise at least 2 knowledge exchange workshops or events with the extended workplace (i.e., the workers beyond the core development group). The facilitator will offer guidance and inspiration (including from the inspiration resource, see core component 5a) on the possible and workplace-specific adequate formats to organize these.

The workshops or events focus on experiential learning with knowledge exchange. Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience and more narrowly defined as "learning through reflection on doing". Experiential learning is proven to be an important feature in a variety of formal and informal educational endeavours seeking to increase abilities to deal with EoL situations. One means of implementing experiential learning is through a process of knowledge exchange, i.e., sharing of experiences and exchange of ideas leading to action, in a reflective cycle (see Johansson^{10, p84}). Different forms of experiential learning and knowledge exchange are expected to be key components of the tailored programs.

Core component 5a: Inspiration: the use of an inspiration resource

Aim: *this will serve as a resource to inspire workplaces to plan activities in the compassionate workplace development; facilitators provide support for its use.*

A compilation of more than 100 existing resources used in other settings has been developed to serve as an inspiration about a range of potential activities, to support workplaces in deciding about their own activities.

For the development of the inspiration resource, an international scoping review was conducted to create an inventory of available resources to support employees faced with serious illness, caregiving, death, loss and grief. The inspiration resource was developed in English but will be translated to the official languages of the different participating workplaces within the 4 intervention countries as needed (Austria [German], Belgium [Flemish Dutch], Greece, Sweden).

The inspiration resource and its use within the CWP development has the following characteristics:

- **Format**: a website that is dynamic and easy to navigate and find the information needed.
- **Content**: summary of activities/interventions, best practices and success stories.
- **Target users** primarily the core development group and therefore staff with different roles in the workplace. As facilitators have an important role in guiding the core development group in the use of the inspiration resource, they should be familiar with the material.
- **Modes of use**: the inspiration resource is clearly presented as a non-prescriptive document, purely meant for inspiration for the compassionate workplaces. The expectation is not that workplaces can or will copy examples from the resource but be inspired to adapt ideas and examples to their specific (national and) workplace context and needs. The CWP facilitators provide guidance to workplaces on how they can use the inspiration resource and can also refer to it in response to ideas or questions formulated within the core development group meetings. The training of the facilitators explicitly addresses how to use the inspiration resource.

The development of the inspiration guide was done by the EU-CoWork consortium and Good Life Good Death Good Grief in Scotland.

The (provisory) location of the resource:

https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/inspiration_guide_home/

Core component 5b: Inspiration: International learning network for the participating workplaces

Aim: bring the participating workplaces together and expand knowledge beyond the participating workplaces.

EU-CoWork will facilitate a learning network across all participating countries that are developing CWPs (i.e. BE, GR, AT, and SE). All workplace core development groups are invited to participate to exchange experiences, knowledge and inspiration. The recommended frequency of the meetings of the learning network is every 6 months. All EU-CoWork workplaces are invited to participate.

Nationally facilitated learning networks can optionally be considered by the national facilitators.

II. Activities in the Compassionate Workplace Programs

The type of activities or interventions that will be decided by the workplaces as part of the CWP development process will be workplace-specific and will be generated through the 5 core components described above. The activities are emergent/unpredictable, but will be classified according to 6 action domains:

- **Development of Policies** (e.g., revising and developing policies that support a culture of openness, experienced support and a stigma-free environment around EoL experiences, company agreements that might include legal requirements for flexible working hours, days off, support formats, etc)
 1. **Adaptations in the social and physical environment** (e.g., physical space for solace and rituals, awareness-raising moments and awareness raising communications, community-building activities to strengthening relationships and social participation)
 2. **Reorientation of existing wellbeing services within the workplace** (e.g., existing wellbeing-related services, if there are any, integrate the topics of the compassionate workplace in their functioning)
 3. **Activities to increase skills and self-efficacy** (e.g. how to talk/be supportive in situations of grief; leadership training...). A specific activity will be to increase skills to create compassionate leaders and a compassionate workplace culture.
- **Knowledge exchange and support groups** (e.g. creating support groups, buddies, ...)
- Stimulation of **community initiative** (e.g. spontaneous and continuous community activities around the topics)

2 Data collection, processing and storage

The data collected for the evaluation of the CWP programs are part of the data collection protocol. However, any data that is collected in the context of interactions with the workplaces (e.g. should there be recordings or minutes of meetings) for the development process is processed and secured by each national academic partner (VUB, LTU, UG, AUEB).

3 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval will be sought from each of the relevant local ethical committees of the participating academic partner institutions for the development of CWPs within workplaces and for the data collection activities.

General ethical considerations

This project adheres to fundamental ethical principles of doing good (beneficence), not harming (non-maleficence), respecting autonomy and justice. These are described in more detail in the datacollection protocol

Providing feedback from minutes, interviews and data collections to workplaces is part of the needs assessment and the developmental evaluation approach. However, this creates risks in terms of identification (particularly in smaller workplaces) of individual staff members. The researchers will rigorously evaluate pseudonimisation concerns within the feedback process to safeguard the confidentiality of individuals when providing input to the core development group.

4 Planning

The dedicated facilitators in each of the implementing countries will establish collaborations with the selected workplaces and agree on the timeline, plan and procedures. The starting dates can be flexible for the engaged workplaces, without jeopardizing the timing of deliverables.

Facilitation/support within a workplace for the CWP development lasts approximately 24 months.

Within each country three workplaces are supported by facilitators. Facilitators may want to incrementally start their process in the three workplaces rather than starting all at the same time, to increase feasibility and allow a learning opportunity from each initiation.

5 Training and community of practice for the CWP facilitators

The exact training program and set up of the community of practice still need to be developed (with input from the subcontractors). However, a tentative description of both is provided here.

For whom: all appointed facilitators and researchers for the CWP development process in the four intervention countries will follow the training and participate in the CoP meetings.

By whom: training will be offered by internal consortium partners (in cases in which relevant expertise exists) and external subcontractors (where specific external expertise is needed)

When: 2-4 December 2024

Where: Belgium

What: program to be developed but the aspects addressed in the training are described in the tentative program:

Program at a glance

Day 1: Monday, Dec 2	
9.00 - 9.30	Introductory session
9.30 - 10.50	Getting more comfortable discussing death, dying, loss and care
10.50 - 11.00	<i>Break</i>
11.00 - 12.00	Engaging others in death, dying, loss and care: our own role and position in relation to the workplace
12.00 - 13.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
13.00 - 14.00	Engaging others in death, dying, loss and care: creating an inclusive space
14.00 - 15.00	Facilitation: skills, challenges and tools
15.00 - 15.30	Closing: Questions, reflection and looking after ourselves

Day 2: Tuesday, Dec 3	
9.00 – 9.15	Check-in
9.15 – 10.30	What will the facilitator do?
10.30 – 10.45	<i>Break</i>

10.45 – 12.15	Resources for inspiration – facilitation
12.15 – 13.15	<i>Lunch break</i>
13.15 – 14.45	Resources for inspiration – co-creation
14.45 – 15.00	<i>Break</i>
15.00 – 16.30	Resources for inspiration – measures & actions for intervention
16.30 – 16.45	Closing: Questions, reflection and looking after ourselves

Day 3: Wednesday, Dec 4	
9.00 – 9.15	Check-in
9.15 – 10.45	Community of practice
10.45 – 11.00	<i>Break</i>
11.00 – 12.30	Closing: Summing up, questions & concerns
12.30 – 13.00	<i>Lunch break</i>

Day 1: Facilitators engaging with others on issues relating to death, dying loss and care

Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Have examined and reflected upon one's own perspective / relationship to EoL issues, including compassion;
- Better understand challenges that they personally may face in facilitator role;
- Will better understand some of their strengths and weaknesses that may affect their role as facilitator;
- Consider who you are in relation to the workplace you will be in contact with ;
- Discuss expectations of your role, what you might encounter and what can be accomplished;
- Be more confident engaging with others on issues relating to death, dying, loss and care;
- Have an awareness of how different styles of engagement/types of activities can affect people's potential willingness to engage;
- Be more 'comfortable with the uncomfortable' – understand how a facilitator can hold space for people sharing difficult or upsetting experiences;
- Have an awareness of common concerns, stigmas and reactions people may have relating to death, dying, loss and care;
- Have some practical techniques to support facilitation of potentially challenging discussions.

Programme

Day 1 Introductory session (9.00 - 9.30)

- Getting to know each other
- Overview of the day

Day 1 Morning Session – part 1 (9.30 – 10.50) - Getting more comfortable discussing death, dying, loss & care

- Sharing concerns around talking or facilitating discussions about dying, death and bereavement
- Personal and group development around end-of-life issues
- Discussion activity
- Sharing reflections

Day 1 Morning Session – part 2 (11.00 – 12.00) - Engaging others in death, dying, loss and care: our own role and position in relation to the workplace

- The facilitator role and expectations
- Reflections on facilitator role and position in relation to the workplace

Day 1 Afternoon Session – part 1 (13.00 – 14.00) - Engaging others in death, dying, loss and care: creating an inclusive space

- Identifying potential barriers to inclusion
- Unconscious bias & assumptions
- Physical spaces
- Setting boundaries

Day 1 Afternoon Session – part 2 (14.00 – 15.00) - Facilitation: skills, challenges and tools

- Facilitation skills
- Looking at challenging scenarios
- Practical techniques and tools
- Sharing reflections, questions & discussion

Day 1 Closing (15.00 – 15.30) - Questions, reflection and looking after ourselves

Day 2

Day 2 Check-in (9.00 - 9.15) – Reflections on the previous day

Day 2 Morning Session – part 1 (9.15 – 10.30) - What will the facilitator do?

Focus on the different stages of the co-development and the role of the facilitator in this process, also in relation to the principal researcher and the core development group.

Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Be familiar with the core concepts (including theory of change), and expected activities and stages in the project, with focus on workplace co-creative processes and the facilitator role
- Feel comfortable and familiar with steps to take in working with each organization to create a core development group

Day 2 Morning Session – part 2 (10.45 – 12.15) - Resources for inspiration - facilitation

Focus on tools and tips for facilitation, both within the core development team and within the whole organization.

Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Know how to prepare for a meeting or workshop
- Know what a group needs to collaborate
- Know how to reach the group's goals
- Be familiar with strategies for inclusivity
- Be aware of potential challenges and approaches for dealing with resistance to change
- Be aware of different ways in which materials and techniques can be used
- Have discussed strengths and limitations in the various materials and techniques

Day 2 Afternoon session – part 1 (13.15 – 14.45) - Resources for inspiration – co-creation

Focus on methodologies for co-creation, with linking to tools and techniques described in the facilitator's guide

Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Have a good overview of the methods of co-creation that can be used (including intakes, assets & needs mapping, development of CWPs)
- Have “experienced” some of the methods
- Develop a repertoire of approaches for co-creation and working with the core development group and other stakeholders
- Be aware of different ways in which materials and techniques can be used
- Have discussed strengths and limitations in the various materials and techniques

Day 2 Afternoon session – part 2 (15.00 – 16.30) - Resources for inspiration – inspiration actions

Focus on the inspirational material and how to use this as an inspiration to fuel the tailored CWPs

Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Have a good overview of the different types of measures and activities can be part of a CWPs
- Become oriented to and familiar with the inspiration material

- Know how the inspirational material can be translated to the work context they are guiding
- Be aware of different ways in which materials and techniques can be used
- Have discussed strengths and limitations in the various materials and techniques

Day 2 Closing (16.30 – 16.45) - Questions, reflection and looking after ourselves

Day 3

Day 3 Check-in (9.00 - 9.15) – Reflections on the previous day

Day 3 Morning Session – part 1 (9.15 – 10.45) – Community of Practice

Communities of Practice are created over time through a shared domain of interest, and support relationship-building through common activities, discussions and shared practice. Therefore, communities of practice both within and across work environments and countries are expected to evolve through experiential learning, knowledge exchange and the process of developing and using tailored CWP's.

Core features of CoPs are argued to be mutual engagement, joint enterprise with a common purpose, and a shared repertoire with resources created over time. While evaluation research on CoPs remains limited, CoPs have been studied in a variety of sectors, and are argued to enable organizational change, with use of a facilitator to enhance interaction, attention to communication, and uptake of knowledge promoted by organizational infrastructure, which are some of the effective features in such change processes.

Features of the CoP might include:

- An initial face-to-face gathering of all facilitators and researchers involved in the project to discuss what they need from the community of practice.
- Quarterly online meetings of facilitators to share ideas, questions, thoughts and learning. There could also be invited speakers on specific topics of interest to the group.
- Annual online meetings open to all those involved in the project, including facilitators, workplaces, PhD students, steering group members.
- Maintaining an online forum for ongoing discussions.

In this session, we will give some theoretical background on Community of Practice, map the needs of the facilitators regarding this Community of Practice and make some practical arrangements.

Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Be familiar with what is meant by Community of Practice in EU-CoWork
- Have considered what they wish for through a Community of Practice, in terms of ambitions, how these ambitions can be met
- Have determined a plan of action for the Community of Practice

Day 3 Morning Session – part 2 (11.00 – 12.30) – Closing – Summing up, questions and concerns

We take the time to reflect on what we have learned in the past days, and to raise questions and concerns we still have regarding the facilitation of the core development group within the organizations we guide.

Community of Practice (CoP) for the facilitators

Communities of Practice are created over time through a shared domain of interest, and support relationship-building through common activities, discussions and shared practice¹¹. Therefore, communities of practice both within and across work environments and countries are expected to evolve through experiential learning, knowledge exchange and the process of developing and using tailored CWPs. Core features of CoPs are argued to be mutual engagement, joint enterprise with a common purpose, and a shared repertoire with resources created over time. While evaluation research on CoPs remains limited, CoPs have been studied in a variety of sectors¹², and are argued to enable organizational change, with use of a facilitator to enhance interaction, attention to communication, and uptake of knowledge promoted by organizational infrastructure, which are some of the effective features in such change processes¹¹.

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- Maintaining an online forum for ongoing discussions.

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Appendix 2

info about evaluation approaches

Below we outline the three overarching evaluation approaches employed in the mixed methods process and outcome evaluation:

1. Outcome evaluation
2. Process evaluation
3. Realist evaluation

Outcome evaluation

The aim of this approach is to ascertain to what extent the CWPs achieve their envisioned outcomes at the Individual (i.e. employee), Group (e.g., team), Leadership (e.g., management) and Organisational levels (cfr. the IGLO model (Nielsen et al. 2018)). The effectiveness of the CWPs will be investigated by comparing outcome measurements over time. A group pretest post-test design using questionnaires at three time points (T0 at baseline, T1 immediately after the development phase (=T0+24m), and T2 a year after the development phase (=T0+36m)). This means that all participating workplaces have exposure and there is no control group. Additionally, a qualitative outcome evaluation will be conducted with key stakeholders (e.g., staff to understand what components, factors or processes were crucial in creating the identified changes.

Process evaluation

This evaluation approach aims to critically understand how the program of interventions brings about the observed outcomes, explain discrepancies between expected and observed outcomes, identify causal mechanisms through which elements of the program bring about observed intermediary outcomes and understand the influence of contextual factors. The process evaluation in EU-CoWork can be divided into a quantitative and qualitative approach. The various data collection techniques used in this evaluation are detailed in the section 'Research Techniques and Methods' below.

Implementation evaluation

This evaluation approach aims to describe aspects of implementation of the CWPs such as the concrete activities and interventions developed in each workplace, reach, dose delivered, dose received and fidelity (See Table 1). Implementation will be evaluated both during implementation (i.e. while the developmental activities are ongoing) and post-implementation (at T1).

Table 1. Concepts and operationalisation of these concepts in the implementation evaluation

Concepts	Operationalisation
Reach	At the Individual, Group and Leadership levels: % invited to participate in training/workshops (communication material, follow-up surveys) At the Organisational level: Number of people in participating departments/work groups (organisational records of the size of organisations and/or departments, and the demographic composition of employees)
Dose delivered	How many employees engaged in intervention activities (i.e., registration at training/workshops, and awareness of O-level policies in follow-up survey)
Dose received	How many of the activities did people engage in (registration at training/workshops and use of o-level policies in follow-up survey)
Fidelity	Training/workshops delivered according to plan (observations) and policies used according to plan (follow-up surveys)

Realist evaluation

We complement our DE approach with a **Realist Evaluation (RE)** approach. RE formulates initial programme theories with stakeholders and test them to explore causal mechanisms that are responsible for creating the impact of the intervention. RE theories are formulated as Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMOCs), which are then tested. **Context** is that what can (1) hinder or (2) facilitate the intervention. Contexts are aspects of the workplace that we cannot change. **Mechanisms** are the ingredients of the intervention by which envisioned outcomes are generated. We distinguish between *content mechanisms* – the mechanisms by which the intended outcomes of the activities we implement are achieved - and *process mechanisms* – the mechanisms by which our intervention is successfully implemented (e.g., the presence of the facilitators). **Outcomes** are the intended results of the mechanism given a certain context. Outcomes can be diverse, they can include (1) the effects that we envision and expect our mechanisms to generate, but they can also include (2) unexpected effects, (3) unintended adverse effects.

CMO configurations are often formulated as ‘if [...], then [...], and as a result [...]’ statements. Below we offer two examples.

An example of a CMO with a content mechanism:

*If management is committed to a good work environment (Context), **then** managers are more likely to engage with a compassionate leadership program and transfer learning from the course to daily work (training transfer as the Mechanism), **and as a result** an increase in compassionate leadership will be observed (Outcome).*

An example of a CMO with a process mechanism:

*If there is a participatory climate where employees and managers discuss how to improve the work environment (Context), **then** employees are more likely to engage in Co-Creation workshops and openly discuss what activities are needed to create compassionate workplaces (Mechanism), **and as a result**, activities will be chosen and implemented that result in more compassionate workplaces (Outcome).*

Table 2 below gives three examples of contexts, mechanisms and outcomes that might be found in CWPps.

Table 2: Examples of Context-Mechanism-Outcomes (CMO) configurations for our CWPps

Context	Mechanism	Outcomes
If there is a culture of speaking openly about sensitive issues, ...	... then senior managers will be able to communicate openly with staff about the bereavement of a colleague and employees will openly share their feelings ...	... and as a result employee wellbeing will increase.
If there are physical spaces for reflection , ...	... then employees will be able to reflect on their situation ...	... and as a result their wellbeing will increase.
If company agreements explicitly include issues of care, dying, death and mourning ...	... employees are able to take care or hospice leave without a guilty conscience ...	... and as a result the employees also have legal security in dealing with care tasks and the care-oriented self-image of the organisation becomes clear.

The EU-CoWork program theory

Our initial CMO configurations – and thereby a substantial part of the process and outcome evaluation – will be driven by our program theory. While part of the program theory will be developed with the workplaces, as part of the co-creative development process, there is an a priori program theory that drives (part of) the data collection activities.

Appendix 3: Overview of recruited workplaces

	Country	Workplace	Sector	Size (N)
1	Austria	Lebensgroß GmbH	tertiary	1 500 / Large
2	Austria	Imerys	Tertiary	400 / Medium
3	Sweden	Kaunis Iron	Primary	550 / Large
4	Sweden	Perbacken and Fagnäs Preschools	Tertiary	~30 / Small
5	Greece	SKAG	Secondary	102/ Medium
6	Greece	Nespresso Professional – SYNERGY SA	Primary/Tertiary	~65 / Medium
7	Greece	Grant Thornton	Tertiary	Large
8	Belgium	Municipality “Tielt-Winge”	Tertiary	Medium
9	Belgium	M Museum	Tertiary	Medium
10	Belgium	Infrabel	Secondary/Tertiary	>10.000/Large

Appendix 4



EU-CoWork

Developing Compassionate Workplaces

Supplemental Appendix 4: Informed consent and Participant Information procedures

General procedures and principles

The informed consent procedures of EU-CoWork are intended to maximally guarantee autonomy of participants.

This implies that, for each participation to a data collection activity, participants:

- are made aware of the voluntary nature of participation in the study and that consent is fluid and that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time throughout the study without giving reasons and without incurring any disadvantages.
- provide consent without any coercion
- are given the full disclosure about the nature and goal of the study.
- Are given the opportunity to ask questions before they decide if they want to participate.
- are also offered contact options for further information or queries (both the workplace's internal point of contact and the research team's responsible key researcher) and for support in case of discomfort.

While the general procedures and principles are the same for all research activities, we distinguish three informed consent forms and procedures:

- informed consent for the quantitative survey
- informed consent for a qualitative data collection
- informed consent for the core development group

- **Informed consent for the participation to the survey**

Target participants will first receive an invitation to complete the (online) survey questionnaire. This will provide information about the study and invite them to participate.

Next, they indicate their agreement to participate in the surveys simply by following the link to the questionnaire. This will bring them to a description of the survey that emphasizes its importance and purpose, but also its entirely voluntary nature, data processing, privacy, data protection and their rights as participants. It will present an opt out possibility that indicates refusal to participate. If the participant confirms to have read the information and starts the questionnaire this will be considered as informed consents for participation.

- Text used for the invitation e-mail

Title: invitation to participate in a survey on compassion in the workplace

Text:

Dear [name],

Are you and your colleagues receiving enough support from your workplace to cope with difficult life experiences such as serious illness, caregiving and loss? Do you feel equipped to support your colleagues who face these emotional challenges? The VUB and IDEWE are jointly investigating how workplaces in Belgium support their employees through these difficult times. We want to hear about

your experiences. By answering a few questions, you can help us work towards better workplace support for difficult times in Belgium.

Completion of the questionnaire will take about 20 minutes. To go to the questionnaire click on <this link>.

Why are you invited to participate?

This study is done together with 12 workplaces in 4 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Greece, and Sweden). Your workplace /[Name] has decided to be one of these. Over a period of two years several actions will be taken to develop a Compassionate Workplace Program. Collecting information about the experiences and views of employees of the workplace is indispensable to both inform and evaluate the development process.

Participation to the questionnaire study is entirely voluntary. You can stop your participation at all times. All information you provide will be processed automatically by the electronic survey system and will only be used by the researchers of VUB and IDEWE for research purposes. The online survey system guarantees that no party will be able to link your identity to the answers you provide to the questionnaire. At no point, the provided information will be accessible by people within your workplace other than yourself or by any third parties

The research has received a positive review from the Ethical Committee of VUB.

Thank you for participating in this survey!

Ellen Delvaux (IDEWE), Prof. Dr. Joachim Cohen (VUB), Prof. Dr. Deborah De Moortel (VUB), and Dr. Steven Vanderstichelen (VUB)

If you have any questions, please email: hanne.eline.bakelants@vub.be

- Text used in the title page of the survey, to obtain informed consent before proceed

Once target participants click on the link and navigate to the online questionnaire, they arrive at a title page that contains the following text:

“Questionnaire about compassion in the workplace.

The following questionnaire asks about support within your workplace to cope with difficult life experiences such as serious illness, caregiving, and loss. Your answers will help inform programs to work towards better workplace support for difficult times.

Completion of the questionnaire will take about 20 minutes

Information on Data Protection

If you proceed with the survey, you agree that your responses will be processed for scientific research. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. All information you provide will be used solely for this research. The responses will be processed automatically by the online survey system. All answers will be stored in a pseudonymised form on a secure server, and they cannot be linked to your identity. The research has received a positive review from the Ethical Committee of VUB.

Should you wish more information about the research, click here <link>.

More information about data protection can be found here <link>

Partners of the research

<Logo of VUB> <logo of IDEWE>

<next, answer options are provided:

- Complete the questionnaire
- I do not wish to participate to the questionnaire and do not want to be contacted about it. >

Once the questionnaire is started an e-mail contact address will be provided at the bottom of every page for further queries.

Contact can also be sought (e.g., with an independent psychological support service [e.g., at IDEWE in Belgium] in case of discomfort.

Two link-out options are provided in the short description.

These will open text that is put on a separate webpage within the EU-CoWork website

Link-out 1 (information about the research):

Title of the study: Developing Compassionate Workplaces

Aims of the study:

- Create Compassionate Workplaces based on identified needs, strengths, and experiences ~~and-views~~ within the workplace;

- Describe and evaluate the process of co-creation and implementation of Compassionate Workplaces Programs in the workplace
- Describe (anticipated and unanticipated) outcomes of (or changes due to) the program in the workplaces
- Examine and understand how context and implementation aspects influence program outcomes

Description of the research

What is a Compassionate Workplace?

A compassionate workplace refers to a work environment in which company responsible parties and employees develop deliberate policy and actions to support experiences of serious illness, caregiving, and loss; a work environment in which members collectively notice, feel, and respond to the suffering and pain of other employees.

For whom?

Every employee within a workplace is invited to participate

Why are you invited to participate?

This study is done together with 12 workplaces in 4 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Greece, and Sweden). Your workplace /[Name] has decided to be one of these. Over a period of two years several actions will be taken to develop a Compassionate Workplace Program. Collecting information about the experiences and views of employees of the workplace is indispensable to both inform and evaluate the development process

Link-out 2 (data protection information):

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Detailed provisions on data protection:

1. Data will be processed in accordance with the principles imposed by the new European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has been in force since 25 May 2018.
2. In the context of the investigation you are participating in, personal data will be collected from you. We, Hanne Bakelants, Joachim Cohen, Deborah De Moortel and Steven Vanderstichelen, are responsible for the correct processing and the information obligation that goes with it. That is why we would like to draw your attention to the fact that we collect a number of personal experiences and opinions from you. Your IP address will not be registered;
3. Of course, we may only use your personal data for the scientific research purposes described in the informed consent form.
4. Dr Hanne Bakelants, Prof Joachim Cohen, Prof Deborah De Moortel and Dr Steven Vanderstichelen are the recipients of the personal data you entered in the questionnaire.

5. Next, we would like to inform you that, in accordance with the relevant legislation, the data collected as part of the research will be retained for at least 5 years. The original data we collect about you is not anonymous. However, in a second phase these personal data are reduced to a pseudo-anonymous data set. This means that your personal data will be reduced to codes. Only the researcher (Hanne Bakelants) has access to the key to this code. In this way, results can never be directly attributed to you.

The researcher has a confidentiality obligation with regard to the collected data. This means that he / she is committed to, for example in the context of a publication or a conference, never revealing your name or any other data that could identify you.

The data are never mailed around and are not stored on the personal computer of the researcher. They will be stored on a SharePoint that has strict access conditions.

6. According to the GDPR, you have a number of rights regarding the processing of your data. If you have further questions about this, you can always contact the Data Protection Officer of the VUB: dpo@vub.be (link sends e-mail).

7. Finally, you also have the right to submit a complaint about how your information is handled. You can do this at the Belgian supervisory authority that is responsible for enforcing data protection legislation:

Gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit (GBA)

Drukpersstraat 35,

1000 Brussel

Tel. +32 2 274 48 00

e-mail: contact@apd-gba.be (link sends e-mail)

Website: www.gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit.be (link is external)";

8. Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw your consent regardless of the time and the reason.

- **Informed consent for the qualitative data collection employees**

For each of the qualitative data collections, we will use an informed consent (IC) form and a participant information sheet (PIS), which outlines the ethical considerations and participation details for the study. These documents include information on the study's objectives, confidentiality measures, data usage, and the participants' right to withdraw at any stage without consequences.

PIS and ICF text:

Dear sir, madam

The international 'EU-CoWork' group invites you to take part in a research project aimed at helping workplaces to become more 'Compassionate Workplaces.' The goal is to support, describe, and evaluate this process. Your insights and experiences are invaluable. You are invited to participate because your workplace has agreed to take part in this project.

Before you decide to participate in this study, please take your time to carefully read this information letter. Should you have any questions or need further information, you can always contact the researchers, whose contact information can be found at the bottom of this form.

This research project will be conducted by <name of local research partner, e.g. Vrije Universiteit Brussel> in collaboration with <name of other local research partner, e.g. IDEWE> and is funded by the Horizon Europe Program of the European Union.

Once you have decided to participate in the study, you will be asked to sign the consent form.

- **Title of the study:** Developing Compassionate Workplaces

- **Aims of the study**

The aims of this study are to

- Create Compassionate Workplaces based on identified needs, strengths, and experiences within the workplace;
- Describe and evaluate the process of co-creation and implementation of Compassionate Workplaces Programs in the workplace
- Describe (anticipated and unanticipated) outcomes of (or changes due to) the program in the workplaces
- Examine and understand how context and implementation aspects influence program outcomes

- **Description of the research**

What is a Compassionate Workplace?

A compassionate workplace refers to a work environment in which company responsible parties and employees develop deliberate policy and actions to support experiences of serious illness, caregiving, and loss; a work environment in which members collectively notice, feel, and respond to the suffering and pain of other employees.

For whom?

Every employee within a workplace is invited to participate

Why are you invited to participate?

This study is done together with 12 workplaces in 4 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Greece, and Sweden). Your workplace **/[Name]** has decided to be one of these. Over a period of two years several actions will be taken to develop a Compassionate Workplace Program. Collecting information about the experiences and views of employees of the workplace is indispensable to both inform and evaluate the development process

What will be asked of you if you choose to participate

We collect information through different methods. You will be invited to participate in these activities **<this will be tailored depending on the data collection activity the participant is invited to> :**

- Focus groups

A focus group is a small, guided discussion with a group of people (e.g., 8 to 12 participants) to get their opinions and thoughts about a specific topic, or service. These sessions typically last between

60- and 90-minutes. The focus groups will be organised in a workshop format to explore your views on the Compassionate Workplaces project. You will be invited to two focus groups during the research project. If you do not wish to participate in a specific focus group session, this will be fully respected.

- Individual interviews

An individual interview is a one-on-one conversation to gather insights and specialized information on the Compassionate Workplaces program. These interviews aim to understand what employees consider important, their expectations, and any barriers encountered during the development and implementation process. You will be invited to participate in two interviews - once at the beginning and once at the end of the project. Each interview typically last between 30 and 60 minutes. If you choose not to participate in one or both interviews, your decision will be fully respected

- <other method if applicable>

- **What are benefits of participation to the study**

By participating in this study, you have the chance to contribute to research with a large societal relevance and to help foster a compassionate work environment in your workplace. There are no other anticipated direct benefits or rewards of participation.

- **Information about the Privacy and confidentiality**

Ethics committee

This study received approval from the Ethics Committee of <include name>. This committee assesses whether studies meet the legal and ethical criteria and whether it is therefore responsible to conduct the research. The Ethics Committee issues an opinion on this in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (or GDPR) of April 27, 2016. Under no circumstances should you regard the approval of the Ethics Committee as an incentive to participate in this study (<add contact details of the ethics committee>).

Consent and refusal

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study, you are completely free to answer or not answer questions, and you can withdraw from the study at any time. You do not have to give any reason for this.

Confidentiality and data protection

It's important for you to know that as researchers, we have a duty of confidentiality regarding the data collected. This means that we commit not to disclose your name or any other information that could identify you, whether in publications, conferences, or any other context. Your personal data and responses will also not be shared with your organization.

During this study, personal data about you will be collected. The collection and processing of your data are possible because we conduct scientific research and will obtained your explicit consent for this purpose. The collection and processing of data will be carried out in accordance with the legal principles mandated by the new European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has

been in effect since May 25, 2018. <add name of the main researcher who is indicated to be the responsible data processor, preferably a senior person> oversees the correct processing of your personal data and the obligation to provide information related to this.

This obligation to provide information entails that we must inform you about:

- The personal data we collect from/about you, specifically: video or audio recordings (optional), your name, your email address, IP address, observation notes, ...
- That the **Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, VAT BE 0449.012.406)** acts as the data controller for your information.
- That the data is collected and processed within the scope of the aforementioned study's purpose.
- That we may only use your personal data for scientific purposes.
- That you have the right to access and correct your data. You also have the right to erase your data, restrict the processing of your data, or object the processing of your data, as well as the right to object the right to transfer your data to third parties. If you have any questions, please contact the researchers.
- You have the right to withdraw your consent for the processing of your data at any time. Withdrawal of consent does not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal.
- Your consent is entirely voluntary, and you may decline to provide it without facing any disadvantages.
- Your data will only be accessed by the researchers named above and will not be shared with other institutions.
- Your data will be stored and secured in accordance with **VUB** guidelines.
- If you wish to exercise your rights or have further questions regarding your rights and the processing of your personal data, you can always contact the **Data Protection Officer of VUB at: dpo@vub.be.**
- To ensure your privacy, the following protective measures are implemented:

The data collected are not anonymous, therefore they are promptly pseudonymized (i.e., identifying information is replaced with a code or pseudonym, so that individuals cannot be directly identified without additional information). The pseudonymized data is gathered in a second dataset where direct identification is no longer possible. A "translation key" is created to convert codes or pseudonyms back to their original meaning. Only the researcher team has access to this key and thus to the non-anonymous data. This ensures that only the EU-CoWork researcher can link these data back to you as an individual. The coding key is stored securely separately or deleted.

Audio and/or video recordings made during interviews are promptly transcribed, and the audio and/or video recordings are deleted.

Your data is stored only on a secured VPN-protected server, which has strict access conditions and provides high levels of protection. Your data is never stored on the personal computer or USB stick of the researcher(s) (except when encrypted and stored on the USB stick) and is never sent via email.

- Finally, you also have the right to lodge a complaint about how your data are being handled. You can do this with the **Belgian supervisory authority** responsible for enforcing data protection legislation, the **Data Protection Authority (GBA)**, at Drukpersstraat 35, 1000 Brussels, Tel. +32 2 274 48 00, email: contact@apd-gba.be, Website: www.gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit.be

- **Statement from the researcher**

We, the undersigned, EU-CoWork researchers, declare that we have provided the necessary information regarding this study and have provided a copy of the information document to the participant.

We confirm that we work in accordance with the ethical principles as stated in "**The Code for Scientific Research in Belgium**" and the ethical principles within my specific research discipline.

We confirm that we work in accordance with the legal obligations regarding the correct processing of personal data as stated in the "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)".

Researcher's Name and Signature:

Contact information:

First person of contact:

Elise Vanbeuren

End-of-Life Care Research group and BRISPO, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

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E-mail: Steven.vanderstichelen@vub.be

Telephone number: **+32 (0)479759029**

Prof. Dr. Joachim Cohen

End-of-Life Care Research group, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

E-mail: joachim.cohen@vub.be

Telephone number: **+32 (0)24774714**

Informed consent form

I declare that I have been informed about the nature, purpose, and duration of the study, and that I understand what is expected of me.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide a reason.

*Tick the box if you agree

I agree to participate in the following parts of the study **<depending on what the invitation is for>**:

- I agree to participate in the focus groups
- I agree to participate in the individual interviews.
- I agree with audio recordings being made during the focus groups and individual interviews.
- I agree that pseudonymized* quotes may be used for (scientific) publications.

I agree to participate in the study. I have received a copy of the signed information and consent form.

Name, first name, date, and signature of the participant:

- **Informed consent for the Core development group**

PIS and ICF text:

Dear sir, madam

The international 'EU-CoWork' group invites you to take part in a research project aimed at helping workplaces to become more 'Compassionate Workplaces.' The goal is to support, describe, and evaluate this process. Your insights and experiences are invaluable. You are invited to participate because your workplace has agreed to take part in this project.

Before you decide to participate in this study, please take your time to carefully read this information letter. Should you have any questions or need further information, you can always contact the researchers, whose contact information can be found at the bottom of this form.

This research project will be conducted by <name of local research partner, e.g. Vrije Universiteit Brussel> in collaboration with <name of other local research partner, e.g. IDEWE> and is funded by the Horizon Europe Program of the European Union.

Once you have decided to participate in the study, you will be asked to sign the consent form.

- **Title of the study:** Developing Compassionate Workplaces
- **Aims of the study**

The aims of this study are to

- Create Compassionate Workplaces based on identified needs, strengths, and experiences within the workplace;
- Describe and evaluate the process of co-creation and implementation of Compassionate Workplaces Programs in the workplace
- Describe (anticipated and unanticipated) outcomes of (or changes due to) the program in the workplaces
- Examine and understand how context and implementation aspects influence program outcomes

- **Description of the research**

What is a Compassionate Workplace?

A compassionate workplace refers to a work environment in which company responsible parties and employees develop deliberate policy and actions to support experiences of serious illness, caregiving, and loss; a work environment in which members collectively notice, feel, and respond to the suffering and pain of other employees.

For whom?

Every employee within a workplace is invited to participate

Why are you invited to participate?

This study is done together with 12 workplaces in 4 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Greece, and Sweden). Your workplace **/[Name]** has decided to be one of these. Over a period of two years several actions will be taken to develop a Compassionate Workplace Program. Collecting information about the experiences and views of employees of the workplace is indispensable to both inform and evaluate the development process

Additionally, we aim to describe and evaluate the co-creation and implementation process. As a member of the core development group, your insights are invaluable for understanding the development and implementation of specific initiatives, including the barriers, opportunities, and roadblocks encountered along the way.

What will be asked of you if you choose to participate

We collect information through different methods. You will be invited to participate in these activities **<this will be tailored depending on the data collection activity the participant is invited to> :**

- Focus groups

A focus group is a small, guided discussion with a group of people (e.g., 8 to 12 participants) to get their opinions and thoughts about a specific topic, or service. These sessions typically last between 60- and 90-minutes. The focus groups will be organised in a workshop format to explore your views on the Compassionate Workplaces project and your experiences with the development process. If you do not wish to participate in a specific focus group session, this will be fully respected.

Individual interviews

An individual interview is a one-on-one conversation to gather insights and specialized information on the Compassionate Workplaces program. These interviews aim to understand your expectations,

and any barriers encountered during the development and implementation process. You will be invited to participate in two interviews - once at the beginning and once at the end of the project. Each interview typically last between 30 and 60 minutes. If you choose not to participate in one or both interviews, your decision will be fully respected

- Right-now surveys

Right-now surveys are very short surveys, which will be emailed to all members of the core development group immediately at the end of each core group meeting. This survey will take approximately five minutes of your time and will primarily gauge what is happening at that specific moment (right-now). The frequency of these surveys is dependent upon the frequency of the core development group meetings (which is a recommended minimum of once a month).

- <other method if applicable>

- **What are benefits of participation to the study**

By participating in this study, you have the chance to contribute to research with a large societal relevance and to help foster a compassionate work environment in your workplace. There are no other anticipated direct benefits or rewards of participation.

- **Information about the Privacy and confidentiality**

Ethics committee

This study received approval from the Ethics Committee of <include name>. This committee assesses whether studies meet the legal and ethical criteria and whether it is therefore responsible to conduct the research. The Ethics Committee issues an opinion on this in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (or GDPR) of April 27, 2016. Under no circumstances should you regard the approval of the Ethics Committee as an incentive to participate in this study (<add contact details of the ethics committee>).

Consent and refusal

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study, you are completely free to answer or not answer questions, and you can withdraw from the study at any time. You do not have to give any reason for this.

Confidentiality and data protection

It's important for you to know that as researchers, we have a duty of confidentiality regarding the data collected. This means that we commit not to disclose your name or any other information that could identify you, whether in publications, conferences, or any other context. Your personal data and responses will also not be shared with your organization.

During this study, personal data about you will be collected. The collection and processing of your data are possible because we conduct scientific research and will obtained your explicit consent for this purpose. The collection and processing of data will be carried out in accordance with the legal principles mandated by the new European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has been in effect since May 25, 2018. <add name of the main researcher who is indicated to be the

responsible data processor, preferably a senior person> oversees the correct processing of your personal data and the obligation to provide information related to this.

This obligation to provide information entails that we must inform you about:

- The personal data we collect from/about you, specifically: video or audio recordings (optional), your name, your email address, IP address, observation notes, ...
- That the **Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, VAT BE 0449.012.406)** acts as the data controller for your information.
- That the data is collected and processed within the scope of the aforementioned study's purpose.
- That we may only use your personal data for scientific purposes.
- That you have the right to access and correct your data. You also have the right to erase your data, restrict the processing of your data, or object the processing of your data, as well as the right to object the right to transfer your data to third parties. If you have any questions, please contact the researchers.
- You have the right to withdraw your consent for the processing of your data at any time. Withdrawal of consent does not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal.
- Your consent is entirely voluntary, and you may decline to provide it without facing any disadvantages.
- Your data will only be accessed by the researchers named above and will not be shared with other institutions.
- Your data will be stored and secured in accordance with **VUB** guidelines.
- If you wish to exercise your rights or have further questions regarding your rights and the processing of your personal data, you can always contact the **Data Protection Officer of VUB at: dpo@vub.be**.
- To ensure your privacy, the following protective measures are implemented:

The data collected are not anonymous, therefore they are promptly pseudonymized (i.e., identifying information is replaced with a code or pseudonym, so that individuals cannot be directly identified without additional information). The pseudonymized data is gathered in a second dataset where direct identification is no longer possible. A "translation key" is created to convert codes or pseudonyms back to their original meaning. Only the researcher team has access to this key and thus to the non-anonymous data. This ensures that only the EU-CoWork researcher can link these data back to you as an individual. The coding key is stored securely separately or deleted.

Audio and/or video recordings made during interviews are promptly transcribed, and the audio and/or video recordings are deleted.

Your data is stored only on a secured VPN-protected server, which has strict access conditions and provides high levels of protection. Your data is never stored on the personal computer or USB stick of the researcher(s) (except when encrypted and stored on the USB stick) and is never sent via email.

- Finally, you also have the right to lodge a complaint about how your data are being handled. You can do this with the **Belgian supervisory authority** responsible for enforcing data protection legislation, the **Data Protection Authority (GBA)**, at Drukpersstraat 35, 1000 Brussels, Tel. +32 2 274 48 00, email: contact@apd-gba.be, Website: www.gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit.be

- **Statement from the researcher**

We, the undersigned, EU-CoWork researchers, declare that we have provided the necessary information regarding this study and have provided a copy of the information document to the participant.

We confirm that we work in accordance with the ethical principles as stated in "**The Code for Scientific Research in Belgium**" and the ethical principles within my specific research discipline.

We confirm that we work in accordance with the legal obligations regarding the correct processing of personal data as stated in the "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)".

Researcher's Name and Signature:

Contact :

First person of contact:

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Informed consent form

I declare that I have been informed about the nature, purpose, and duration of the study, and that I understand what is expected of me.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide a reason.

*Tick the box if you agree

I agree to participate in the following parts of the study *<depending on what the invitation is for>*:

- I agree to participate in the right-now survey
- I agree to participate in the focus groups
- I agree to participate in the individual interviews.
- I agree that audio recordings being made during the focus groups and individual interviews.
- I agree that pseudonymized* quotes may be used for (scientific) publications.
- I agree to complete an evaluation of the workshops/focus groups.

I agree to participate in the study. I have received a copy of the signed information and consent form.

Name, first name, date, and signature of the participant:

Appendix 5: Instrumentarium of the qualitative datacollection

Orientation framework

Process, instruments and methods of qualitative data collection and analysis

Preamble

This orientation framework should...

- a.) provide a general overview of the process of qualitative data collection,
- b.) take into account the interconnection with the establishment of project partnerships, especially at the beginning - Phase 0 (Pre-Phase and T0),
- c.) present the individual instruments, including their thematic objectives.

Important:

This orientation framework is to be understood as a pool of instruments and methods that will be organically expanded and adapted in the course of the process, because...

- 1.) settings, methods and instruments will require local adaptations,
- 2.) particularly in the question of observations and complementary qualitative method elements, some possibilities will only arise/prove useful in the process.

What is crucial is that there is a stable core of instruments across all consortium partners and workplaces and that we agree on the core dimensions to be captured.

In the joint working group meeting, attention should be paid to the complementary and interrelated indicators/dimensions with the quantitative questionnaire.

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Overview – qualitative data collection and analysis

phase		data collection method/setting	instrument	form of data collection / documentation	data analyses method	methodological considerations	notes on the process
PHASE 0	Prep	kick-off meeting(s) with organizations	meeting design / agenda Optional: Memorandum of Understanding / MOU	documentary, memory protocol, flipchart images	Team reflection and documentation of the key content ... regarding context, process expectations and planning, particularly noteworthy/specific aspects	First important piece of the puzzle in understanding the context, the needs and the project expectations.	The number of meetings and the exact constellation depend very much on the workplace in question. Social constitution, rough understanding of the context, project process, phases, roles, timing, motivation and expectations
	Prep	Context - asset and needs mapping group discussion / focus group	guide for group discussion / focus group	memory and photo protocol, recording, transcription of key messages (partially)	<i>“Rough” thematic-analysis</i> <i>Team-reflection</i> What are the central topics and concerns? What are the existing resources? Which relevant actors/stakeholders need to be taken into account? How does the project tie in (in terms of content and structure)? What is the significance of infrastructure and spatial issues? What are the images and expectations?	The recording serves as a backup, and also so that certain topics can be listened to again if needed. If there are any memorable quotes here, then these are maybe useful reference points that can be referred to later in the process.	This setting can and will also look and work a little differently in every workplace.
	Initial CMO’s Meeting: Bilateral meetings with team Sheffield to discuss initial insights into the context, asset and needs mapping, to refine the initial CMOs.						

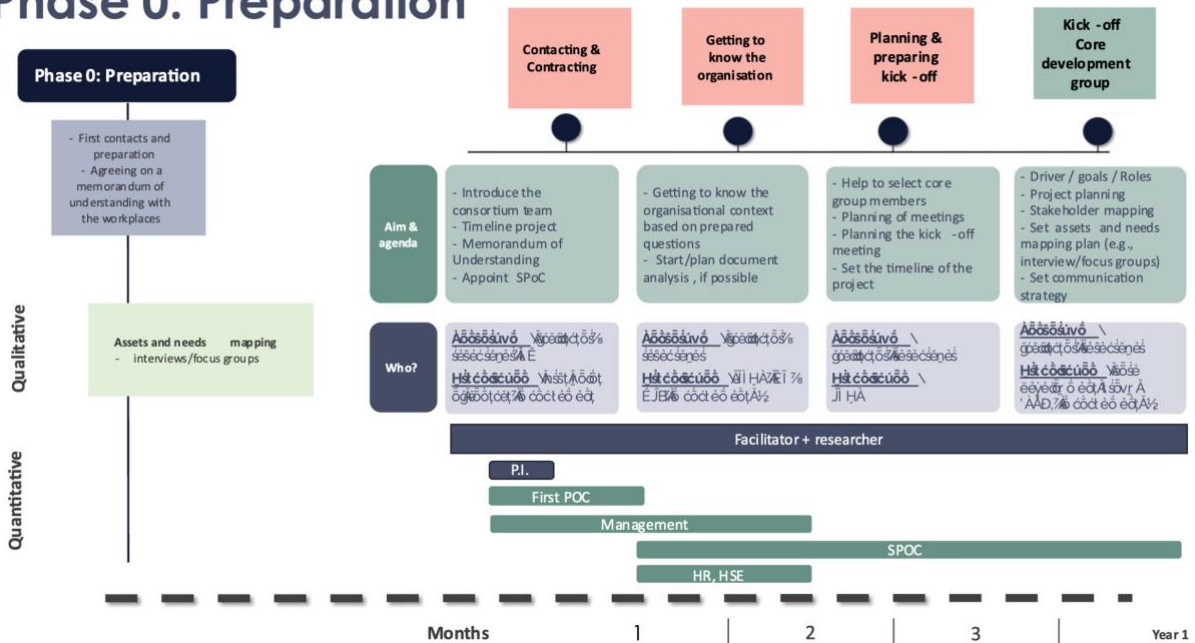
	Prep	Context – asset and needs mapping Interviews with management/HR Interviews with employees	guide for interviews management, guide for interview/group discussion employees	recording, transcription, memory protocol, feed data/transcripts into NVivo/MAXQDA	<i>“Rough” thematic analysis</i> <i>Team-reflection</i> <i>Optional:</i> “in-depth” reflexive thematic analyses (e.g. Braun, Clarke)	Since these interviews could also delve into a very personal level of experience, depending on how they go, they could optionally also be used for an in-depth analysis at T0 (even though the guide is a little different, certain questions overlap).	1 -2 complementary (to focus group) interviews with management / 2 - 3 complementary interviews or 1 focus group with employees depends on the local conditions at the workplace
	Prep	Document analyses	Guiding questions, and evaluation tool	National research, collecting at the organisational level based on a discussion with the team / SPOC	content/thematic analyses	For the project process (understanding the context, assets and needs), a rough analysis is initially sufficient. If certain publications are based on this document analysis, a more differentiated evaluation/reflection is required.	Discuss the relevance of documents at the different levels in the group discussion (asset & needs mapping).
Phase 1 - Baseline	T0	Interviews with employees	guide for interview	recording, transcription, feed data/transcripts into NVivo/MAXQDA	“in-depth” reflexive thematic analyses (e.g. Braun, Clarke)	The exact method of qualitative analyses is still to be discussed. Maybe it is important that all ‘key researchers’ keep a kind of research diary in which they record observations, contextual impressions, spatial and atmospheric conditions, ... dimensions of digitalisation and (direct/indirect) implications of the green transition for the field of	The ratio of individual interviews to group interviews/focus groups will vary depending on the workplace. The form and extent of observational access will also differ.
	T0	Interviews with management/HR	guide for interview	recording, transcription, feed data/transcripts into NVivo/MAXQDA	“in-depth” content/reflexive thematic analyses		
	T0	(Opt.) group interview / focus group	guide for group interview / focus groups	recording, transcription, feed data/transcripts into NVivo/MAXQDA	“in-depth” content/reflexive thematic analyses		

	T0	field observations / research log	Key questions for the observation/reflection lens	feed data into NVivo/MAXQDA	“in-depth” content/reflexive thematic analyses	work, the company, working conditions... Dispositive analyses serves as analytical lense and integrative framework (the quantitative survey, the document analysis will also be integrated).	
Phase 2 – Activities and process	Developmental evaluation	co-development group observations					
		Interviews, focus groups					
	Qualitative process evaluation	Interviews, focus groups					
		field observations / research log					
Phase 3 –	T1	Interviews with management/HR					
	T1	Interviews with employees					

		Cost effectiveness analyses					
	T1	(Opt.) group discussion / focus group					
	T1	field observations / research log					
Phase 4 – Sustainability	T2	Interviews with employees					
	T2	Interviews with management/HR					
	T2	(Opt.) group discussion / focus group					
	T2	field observations / research log					

Phase 0: Preparation

Phase 0: Preparation



Kick-off meeting(s) with organizations

Aim and Agenda:

- Social constitution & mutual familiarization, introduction of the consortium team
- A joint look at project process, phases/timeline, roles
- Understanding the context in terms of structure and content: **Listening!**
 - What different areas of work? Potentially affected employees?
 - Where does the project tie in?
 - Which organizational/work areas are potentially involved?
 - **Which potential informations/documents/programs/surveys etc. for document analysis**
- Motivations and expectations
- Appointment of SPOC / internal project lead
- Memorandum of Understanding

Important: The number of meetings and the exact constellation depend very much on the workplace in question.

Potential agenda/process for meeting 1 / 2,5h

- Welcome: Organizational representative
- Facilitation: Project team

Introduction round: Who is there and how?

- Person, background, role, personal connection to project concerns

The project: EU-CoWork – Developing Compassionate Workplaces

- Objectives, development and research process, contributions
- Open questions, response
- **Where does the project tie in with the organization in terms of content and structure? What initiatives already exist in this regard?** What other projects/development processes need to be taken into account?

Expectations and benefits for the organization

- *What are your hopes for the project?*
- *What is important to you ...? What should we definitely bear in mind?*
 - Regarding content / process / data

- Break -

Roles and participation

- Employees/management and areas of work
- Co-development group
- Internal project management / SPOC

Resources & documents

- Studies, programmes, surveys etc.

Communication of the project

- communication channels, process, existing,

Timeline

- aligned with the 'rhythm' of the organization

Next steps

- Memorandum of Understanding / MOU
- Meetings II and III: Asset and Needs Mapping

Until next time provide a draft of the MOU, an overview of the expected time investment of the employees, and a document on how to handle data are provided.

Potential agenda for meeting 2 / 2,5h: Deepening and fleshing out the project planning

Areas of work and roles

- Which areas of the organization should/will be more at the centre of developments?
- What involvement and roles (including in the co-development team when developing and implementing measures) are necessary for successful implementation?

Coordinating the timeline and steps with the ongoing processes in the organization

- Big picture
- Asset mapping

Group discussion and complementary individual interviews with employees and management

Who should be present at the group discussion so that we can gain a good insight into existing resources, the areas of work involved and the specific needs and expectations?

- Data collection process T0: Quantitative and qualitative

Temporal development and handling of data

Communication practice/culture and channels

- In the project and development team (teams)
- With the employees
- with relevant environments and stakeholders

Memorandum of Understanding

Next steps

Context, asset and needs mapping

Aims and agenda:

- More understanding of the context, concerns, issues and ways in which the company is affected, experiences, resources and approaches, fears and success indicators.
- Employee perspective of the organizational areas concerned
- Conclusions for CMOs and data collection

Document analysis

Document types (What will be analyzed?)

Documents will be collected in the initial phase with the aim of creating a greater understanding of the context in which the workplace operates. These are planned to be collected at different levels: Documents at the **national** (1) and **organizational** (2) level.

Optionally, in some participating countries it may also be necessary to consider the **regional** level.

(1) National Level

1.1 Laws, acts

e.g. the act of sick pay, hospice leave, the work environment act, discrimination act

1.2 Policies about support for employees

1.3 Policies related to support for the carer of family, relatives or others (like neighbors)

1.4 Policies related to support if you get sick

1.5 Policies directed to employers

(2) Organizational Level

2.1 Collective agreements

2.2 Documents and policies within the organization

e.g. company agreements, mission statement, findings and outcomes from existing staff wellbeing / pulse surveys, absence policies and data: sick leave, care leave, compassionate leave, turnover data.

Optional: Regional level

Document analysis procedure (How are the documents analyzed?)

The document analysis is based on **overarching guiding questions** and on an **evaluation tool**, which supports the researchers to evaluate available and relevant policy documents in terms of aspects such as goals and objectives, responsibilities and procedures.

Documents will be collected in the initial phase with the aim of creating a greater understanding of the context in which the workplace operates. These are planned to be collected at different levels:	
National level	• Laws (e.g. the Sick Pay Act, the Work Environment Act and the Discrimination Act) • Guidelines and policies from authorities such as the National Social Insurance Agency and the National Tax Agency
Regional level (optional)	

- Examples?

Organizational level

- Collective agreement
- Documents and policies within each workplace (e.g. Findings and outcomes from existing staff wellbeing / pulse surveys, Absence policies and data: sick leave, care leave, compassionate leave etc, turnover data and exit interviews.)
- Annual reports for each workplace

Overarching guiding questions regarding the content of relevant documents

(In the research and in direct conversation with the workplace.)

- Which laws, programs, agreements, documents, reports, etc. are addressing topics of serious illness, care, care tasks, reconciliation, mental stress/health, sick (care/hospice) leave, loss, dying, death and mourning of employees? In what way do these issues come up ...?
 - at the various levels (organizational, national; optional: regional)
- How does the content of the documents directly/indirectly shape the way companies and employees deal with these topics (options for action)?
- Which contents support employees in dealing with EoLC experiences, and which ones limit their options for action?
- How binding or non-binding are the contents? At what level is the decision-making power for this?

Collection: The criteria below will support the review of collected documents.

Goals and Objectives	Are the goals and objectives clearly stated? Do they address the key issues related to EOL experiences? Are there specific, measurable outcomes defined?	
Leadership Commitment	Is there evidence of commitment and support from leadership on this policy? Are adequate resources allocated for EOL experiences?	
Responsibilities	Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined? Are there mechanisms in place to hold individuals accountable?	
Accessibility	Are the policies easily accessible to all stakeholders? How are the policies communicated to those affected? Are the documents available in multiple languages if needed?	
Procedures	Are the procedures detailed and clear? Are they consistently applied across the organization? Do they allow for flexibility to meet individual needs? Is there is a clear process for employees to follow to implement the policy?	

Tailoring	Are the policies tailored to the specific needs of different groups (i.e., is it tailored to different types of staff by job type or by gender, age, ethnicity, contractors/part time workers etc.)? Are the policies tailored to the specific context? Is there a mechanism for feedback to ensure continuous improvement?	
Implementation	Is there a clear implementation plan? Are there specific timelines for implementation? Is there support available during the implementation phase?	
Supportive in tone	Is there a clear implementation plan? Are there specific timelines for implementation? Is there support available during the implementation phase of the policy?	
Links to strategy and policies	Does the language demonstrate concern, support and encouragement? (This could include examples of desired behaviours rather than legal language or an unbalanced focus on punitive actions.)	
Communication	Is there a clear communications plan outlining how the policy can be accessed, and how it will be shared with employees?	
Developing understanding	Are there arrangements for supervision, training and developing skills and understanding related to policy? (e.g., training for managers, shared at induction).	
Complaints and further information	Is it clear how employees can make a complaint about the policy or how the policy is being implemented?	
Review date and process	Is the last review date, and process for review clear? (Ideally, reviewed periodically and transparently and in response to specific incidents)	
Review process	Is there a process of feedback on the policy itself (i.e., how employees feedback) is noted? Are there regular reviews of the policies? Who are reviewing it? How often are the policies updated?	
Analysis: Will this be the same for all? Here are some suggestions from discussions at the consortium.		
Organizational culture - lense	e.g. Edgar Schein: Iceberg – Model Artefacts. These describe any overt, visible, describable aspects of the organisation. Think things like branding and logos, office design, dress code, policies and tools. Things that you can see.	

	• Espoused values. This is how people would describe the organisation, in current or aspirational terms. These include missions, goals, value statements, and social contracts. • Underlying assumptions. These are unconscious, unspoken, hard to articulate elements of the organisation, particularly from within. They include the “real” but unspoken aim of the organisation and underlying beliefs about dealing with vulnerability, illness quality, or safety ... Hojstede? Globe ?	
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Exploratory overview: Complementary available national knowledge

Exploratory country-specific literature review at the interface between workplace, care responsibilities, serious illness, loss, dying, death, mourning, care leave models, ...

= > in order to contextualise the international research on CWP in relation to national research

Examples for Austria:

Sardadvar, K., & Mairhuber, I. (2018). Employed family carers in Austria. The interplays of paid and unpaid work—beyond “reconciliation”. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie (ÖZS)*, 43(1), 61-72.

Schmidt, A. E., Fuchs, M., & Rodrigues, R. (2016). Juggling family and work—Leaves from work to care informally for frail or sick family members—an international perspective. *Policy Brief of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research*, 9.

One could then refer, for example, to the model “caregiver-friendly workplace policies (CFWPs)” (Ireson et al. 2018)¹ that reflects the following core dimensions:

- Support services (i.e. workshops, counselling, etc.)
- Flexible and customisable work schedules
- Financial assistance/relief
- Unpaid leave
- Paid leave
- Culture change

Literature research: Reconciling work and care, employees and caring responsibilities, hospice leave, etc.

¹ Ireson, R., Sethi, B., & Williams, A. (2018). Availability of caregiver-friendly workplace policies (CFWP s): An international scoping review. *Health & social care in the community*, 26(1), e1-e14.

Group interview / focus group: Asset and Needs Mapping (Meeting 3)

Aim: To meet the key stakeholders, to build the relationship and deepen to understand their perspectives. The group interview (and complementary individual interviews / or focus group) in this phase aim to get the grasp of the context and underlying dynamics and generate buy-in/commitment for the co-development process. So that we can gain a good insight into existing resources, the areas of work involved and the specific needs and expectations.

This is incorporated into the development of the initial CMOs, the surveys and the tailoring of the measures.

Participants: Proposed by the core group and the SPOC. Focusing on management, HR, the works council and line managers, etc.

The researchers make sure that certain other criteria are taken into account as far as possible. Diversity, working areas, ... etc.

Introduction and information

- Introduction: Objective, significance of the discussion for understanding context, assets and needs; form of evaluation/feedback
- Anonymity (Information letter & consent form)
- Recording & **time frame (approx. 1,5 - 2h)**

Draft: Rough Guide / initial draft

The group interview focuses more on organisational and contextual factors, while the supplementary individual in-take interviews offer more scope for personal experiences and concerns.

Dimensions	Questions	Probes
Introduction round: Background information	Own function/role, background experience, perspective Own relation to the topic	Introduction round (possibly already narrative-generating)
Motivation for participation (organizational)	What do you think was particularly crucial for your organisation's final decision to become a project partner?	
Experiences with (EoL)care responsibilities, serious illness, dying, loss and mourning in the organization	In what way have you encountered situations where you needed to address or navigate issues related to informal caregiving, serious illness, loss, or mourning in the context of the workplace? What did you find helpful and what did you find challenging?	Can you please illustrate this with very concrete experiences and situations?
& effect on work	How does EOLC experiences effect employees and work?	Personally, for the employee him/herself, on work performance and the employee's task,

	Are there observable differences in certain areas of work?	<i>motivation, contact, relationship and interaction with colleagues</i>
Perceived needs	What specific needs do you identify among your employees/colleagues related to serious illness, care and end-of-life situations?	Which needs should definitely be addressed by the project?
Resources, assets and cultures Integration with existing structures and practices	Which existing structures, practices and cultures that the project builds upon do you see? (Optional: What organizational strategies or resources are in place to support employees (or managers) dealing with end-of-life situations?) In what way can differences (of communication culture, mutual support, working culture, etc.) in the different fields of work (areas of the organization) be perceived? What do you think are the reasons for that?	Are there any other strategies and resources the organization has to support employees (or managers) confronted with ... • informal care responsibilities? • serious illness? • dying, loss and mourning? For example: regular team meetings, awareness and training programs, internal contacts or advisors, collaborations with hospice team or mourning companion, or other ongoing initiatives aimed at improving social support, mental health and employee well-being?
Challenges	Which main challenges do you perceive exists in this organization when it comes to supporting employees around EoL experiences, illness and care work? Which of these can be addressed within the organisation and which must be addressed externally (laws, societal factors, etc.)?	Could you illustrate this again with specific examples? <i>To what extent might there also be different challenges in the different areas of work here?</i>

Contextual factors <i>Including: Spatial dimensions & Digitalization & Green Transition</i>	What are relevant internal or external information/factors that must be considered when supporting employees and strengthening compassionate workplaces? What other projects/development processes in the organization need to be taken into account? What lessons can be drawn from previous well-being, mental-health etc. projects or efforts? In what way do questions of spatial conditions or team structure (working alone or in teams) play a role in this topic? How does digitalization (technologies, remote work, etc.) has an impact on working conditions (in which areas of work), in particular for employees with EoLC experiences? Does it present new opportunities and/or challenges? In what way are issues of sustainable development or ecological transformation important in the organisation, either strategically or directly in the design/development of workplaces?	How could the project be influenced or promoted by other processes or organizational system elements? in which areas of work
Communication & participation	What should be considered in the communication with employees so that... - a.) the project concerns are widely communicated - b.) employees are willing to participate in the surveys - c.) employees proactively contribute to the development and implementation of measures. What is your advice?	

<i>Expectation in relation to the project</i>	What are your expectations for the compassionate workplace project? What are concerns or reservations regarding the implementation of the project? What aspects do you think we should pay particular attention to during the implementation of the project? When you look back on the project in 2028, what 1-3 things would have to have happened for you to say: That was truly a successful and sustainable project?	
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[Mini-questionnaire: gender, formal position, age, time within organization]

Prephase: Interview Guide for HR / Management (individual / group)

Final draft

Introduction and information

- Introduction of researcher and project
- Anonymity (Information letter & consent form)
- Recording
- Time frame

Dimensions	Questions	Probes
Background information	Tell us a bit about yourself: What is your professional background and what is your position within this workplace?	What are your responsibilities and the key tasks you handle in your daily work?
Motivation for participation (organizational and personal)	What do you think is the motivation <u>for your organization</u> to participate in this project?	
	How <u>about you personally</u> ?	
	What do you think was particularly crucial for your organisation's final decision to become a project partner?	How did you experience this decision-making process, if you were involved?
	How do you think does the project's aims fit with the organization's vision / values?	
Experiences with (EoL)care responsibilities, serious illness, dying, loss and mourning in	In what way have you encountered situations where you needed to address or navigate issues related to informal caregiving, serious illness, loss, or mourning in the	Can you please illustrate this with very concrete experiences and situations?

<i>the organization</i>	context of the workplace?	How did you approach these situations?
	In which way do you think this experience has impacted you or your colleagues/employees?	Which employees in particular? In which area are employees particularly affected by EoL experiences?
	How did the colleagues, ... the team, ... the organization address the situation?	
<i>Resources, assets and cultures</i>	What organizational strategies or resources are in place to support employees (or managers) dealing with end-of-life situations, such as caregiving responsibilities, serious illness, loss, or mourning?	Are there any other strategies and resources the organization has to support employees (or managers) confronted with ... • informal care responsibilities? • serious illness? • dying, loss and mourning? Is this support part of a standardised routine or is it organised case by case? What is the rationale for determining who receives support and

		the type of support they are offered?
	How do you perceive the level of support provided by the organization, particularly in helping employees balance caregiving responsibilities and work?	Could you please share specific examples to illustrate this?
	How do you experience the communication and support culture on personal (burdensome) topics in the team, in the organisation?	In what way is this also experienced in relation to sensitive topics such as illness, caregiving responsibilities, or experiences of loss?
	In what way can differences (of communication culture, mutual support, working culture, etc.) in the different fields of work (areas of the organization) be perceived? What do you think are the reasons for that?	
Challenges	Which main challenges do you perceive exists in this organization when it comes to supporting employees around EoL experiences, illness and care work?	Could you illustrate this again with specific examples? To what extent might there also be different challenges in the different

		areas of work here?
<i>Perceived needs</i>	What specific needs do you identify among your employees/colleagues related to serious illness, care and end-of-life situations?	Which needs should definitely be addressed by the project?
<i>Integration with existing structures and practices</i>	Which existing structures, practices and cultures that the project builds upon do you see?	[In case of a need for clarification] For example: regular team meetings, awareness and training programs, internal contacts or advisors, collaborations with hospice team or mourning companion, or other ongoing initiatives aimed at improving social support, mental health and employee well-being?

<i>Expectation in relation to the project</i>	What are your expectations for the compassionate workplace project? What are concerns or reservations regarding the implementation of the project? What aspects do you think we should pay particular attention to during the implementation of the project? When you look back on the project in 2028, what 1-3 things would have to have happened for you to say: That was truly a successful and sustainable project?	
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[Mini-questionnaire: gender, formal position, age, time within organization]

Prephase: Interview Guide for employees (individual / group)

Final draft

Introduction and information

- Introduction of researcher and project
- Anonymity (Information letter & consent form)
- Recording
- Time frame

Dimensions	Questions	Probes
Background information	Tell us a bit about yourself: What is your professional background and what is your position within this workplace?	What are your responsibilities and the key tasks you handle in your daily work?
Motivation for participation <i>(organizational and personal)</i>	How would you describe the relevance of this project for your organization or workplace?	
	What motivated you personally to participate in this interview?	
Experiences with (EoL)care responsibilities, serious illness, dying, loss and mourning in the organization	How do experiences of informal caregiving, serious illness, dying, loss, and mourning impact employees?	
	Could you share an example of either present or past experiences?	In which way do you think this experience has impacted you or your colleagues? How did the organization manage this situation?

Resources, assets and cultures	What organizational strategies or resources are in place to support employees dealing with end-of-life situations, such as caregiving responsibilities, serious illness, loss, or mourning?	Are there any other strategies and resources the organization has to support employees (or managers) confronted with ... • informal care responsibilities? • serious illness? • dying, loss and mourning? Is this support part of a standardised routine or is it organised case by case?
	How do you perceive the level of support provided by the organization, particularly in helping employees balance caregiving responsibilities and work?	Could you please share specific examples to illustrate this?
	How do you experience the communication and support culture on personal (burdensome) topics in the team, in the organisation?	In what way is this also experienced in relation to sensitive topics such as illness, caregiving responsibilities, or experiences of loss?
Challenges	Which main challenges do you perceive exist in this organization when it comes to supporting employees around	Could you illustrate this again with specific examples?

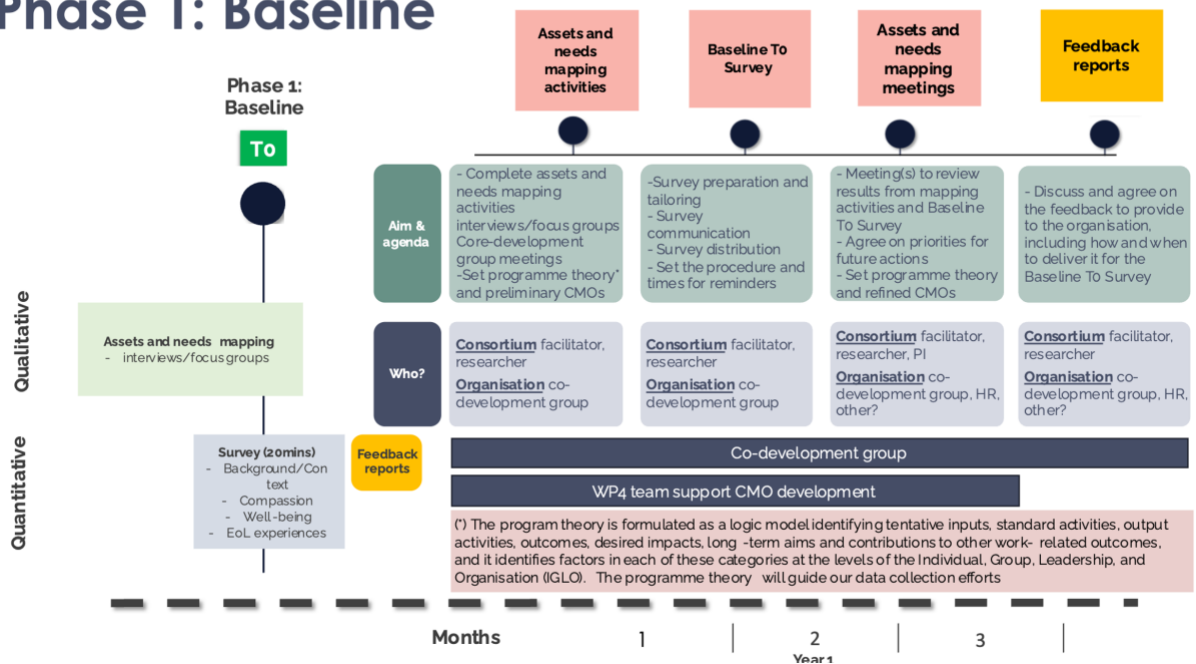
	EoL experiences, illness and care work?	
<i>Perceived needs</i>	What specific needs do you identify among your colleagues related to serious illness, care and end-of-life situations?	Which needs should definitely be addressed by the project?
<i>Integration with existing structures and practices</i>	Which existing structures, practices and cultures that the project builds upon do you see?	[In case of a need for clarification] For example: regular team meetings, internal contacts or advisors, awareness and training programs, collaborations with hospice team or mourning companion, or other ongoing initiatives aimed at improving social support, mental health and employee well-being?

<i>Expectation in relation to the project</i>	What are your expectations for the compassionate workplace project? What are concerns or reservations regarding the implementation of the project? What aspects do you think we should pay particular attention to during the implementation of the project? When you look back on the project in 2028, what 1-3 things would have to have happened for you to say: That was truly a successful and sustainable project?	
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[Mini-questionnaire: gender, formal position, age, time within organization]

Phase 1: Baseline

Phase 1: Baseline



Qualitative interviews / focus groups

- In-depth understanding of personal and organisational EoL experiences and concerns, context and resources and challenges
- Initial situation – Pre-Intervention
- Experiences and needs of employees
- Role of the organisation for mental health, reconciling care and work, compassionate and supportive environments
- Appreciation of the existing & development potentials
- Readiness for project participation
- Concretisation of the CMO's for process and impact evaluation

Employee: Qualitative interviews / focus group – T0

Introduction and information

- Introduction of researcher and project
- Anonymity (Information letter & consent form)
- Recording
- Time frame

Dimensions	Questions	Probes
Background information	Tell us a bit about yourself: What is your professional background and what is your position within this workplace?	What are your responsibilities and the key tasks you handle in your daily work?
<i>Personal motivation for participation and relation to topic ...</i>	Why are you taking part in the interview? What is your relation to the topic	
<i>Experiences with (EoL)care responsibilities, serious illness, dying, loss and mourning in the organization</i>	In which way are serious illness, care responsibilities, dying, death and loss ... an issue for you? What does EoLC experiences actually mean for you? How does it affect you personally and at your workplace as employee?	What does it mean for you personally to have a serious illness, or to have experienced loss, or to care for someone with serious illness?

	How does it affect your colleagues at the workplace?	Could you share an example of either present or past experiences? What have you learnt from your colleagues?
Challenges and resources/support	How did you experience this time or how do you experience it now? What is/was good, enjoyable, works? What is difficult, stressful, doesn't run smoothly, is challenging? What challenges have you encountered? Can you think of any specific situations...? What particularly moved you then? What did you experience as particularly supportive and empowering in this situation a.) within the organisation b.) beyond What would hinder this? What would be helpful?	What do you believe are the main challenges that employees with such experiences face in the workplace? ... or in observing your colleague ... How easy or difficult would it be to adapt in your current professional situation/position to the changed situation caused by EoLC experiences? Why would it be comparatively difficult/easy in your area? In which other area would it be more difficult/easier? Why?
Compatibility of work an illness/care/EoLC	What additional support or flexibility do you think would be helpful?	

<u>Practice & Culture 1</u> <i>Communication / thematising/ talking about it</i>	How openly have you discussed/thematised your situation at work with colleagues or management? Why like this and not otherwise? What kind of behaviour (open - completely secret) would be desirable and helpful for you? How is grief expressed in the workplace? How does it feel to be around grieving colleagues? When health or other sensitive issues arise, who is the first you talk to? The HR department? Your line manager? A colleague? Someone else?	Or how would you handle it if you were in this situation? How do you experience the communication and support culture on personal (burdensome) topics in the team, in the organisation? In what way is this also experienced in relation to sensitive topics such as illness, caregiving responsibilities, or experiences of loss?
<u>Practice & Culture 2</u>	What does it mean, to be affected by serious illness, care responsibilities EoLC experiences as employee in this organization ...? <i>Where are you on the scale between "I have to deal with this on my own" and "I would like the workplace/organization to support me"?</i> How does the team you are working with has handled or you think will handle a colleague with serious illness or a colleague with increased caregiving responsibilities or EoLC experiences? What role do leaders/managers play when it comes to supporting employees? Can you give an example?	Optional: How safe do you feel in your company in terms of job security and psychological safety? Could you explain what contributes to this feeling?

<i>Resources, assets and policies</i>	How do you perceive your organization's support for employees in/with end-of-life situations/experiences? What resources are in place to support employees dealing with end-of-life situations/experiences? Is this support part of a standardised routine or is it organised case by case? What options for flexible working hours or financial assistance does your company offer for e.g. caregiving responsibilities, grief leave etc.? Do you have an example of support that makes you feel proud for working with this company/in this team ... organization?	Are there any other resources the organization has to support employees (or managers) confronted with ... • informal care responsibilities? • serious illness? • dying, loss and mourning?
<i>Needs and support</i>	What specific needs do you identify among your colleagues related to serious illness, care and end-of-life situations? What would you wish for from your employer in view of your current situation or if you were in a EoLC situation?	Which needs should definitely be addressed by the project?
	Where do you obtain relevant information (about legal rights, financial and other support options, etc.)? <i>information, advice, bureaucracy</i>	

	How do you deal with “paperwork” and bureaucracy regarding support in EoLC situations? Which role does your organization play a in this? Would you like support from the company for this?	
<i>Optional:</i> Contextual factors - Care web	Who in the organization is/was/would be particularly important to you in EoLC situations? Why? Who else is important? Outside of the organizations ... Which social environments & relationships, supportive networks, and “things” - in the broad sense - are important (including nature etc.)	
<i>Optional</i> Justice and gender	What consequences does/has a phase of caring for relatives had on your professional life? In terms of career, belonging to the team, etc.? What difference does it make whether male or female employees find themselves in a EoLC situation? What does it mean for them and how do they react to it?	... may fit as a follow-up question earlier ...
<i>Optional</i> Contextual factors Spatial dimensions & Digitalization & Green Transition	In what way do questions of spatial conditions or team structure (working alone or in teams) play a role in this topic? How does digitalization (technologies, remote work, etc.) has an impact on working conditions (in which areas of work), in particular for employees with	

	EoLC experiences? Does it present new opportunities and/or challenges? In what way are issues of sustainable development or ecological transformation important in the organisation, either strategically or directly in the design/development of workplaces?	
Optional: Expectation in relation to the project	What are your expectations for the compassionate workplace project? What aspects do you think we should pay particular attention to during the implementation of the project so that as many employees as possible participate and it has an effect? When you look back on the project in 2028, what would have to have happened for you to say: That was truly a successful and sustainable project for us employees?	
Summary and conclusion	Do you have any people/groups in mind who should be asked about this topic? What else is important for you to tell us at the end of this interview? Did you have any insights or even aha moments as a result of the interview? What would you like to think about further or "stay tuned" on this topic?	

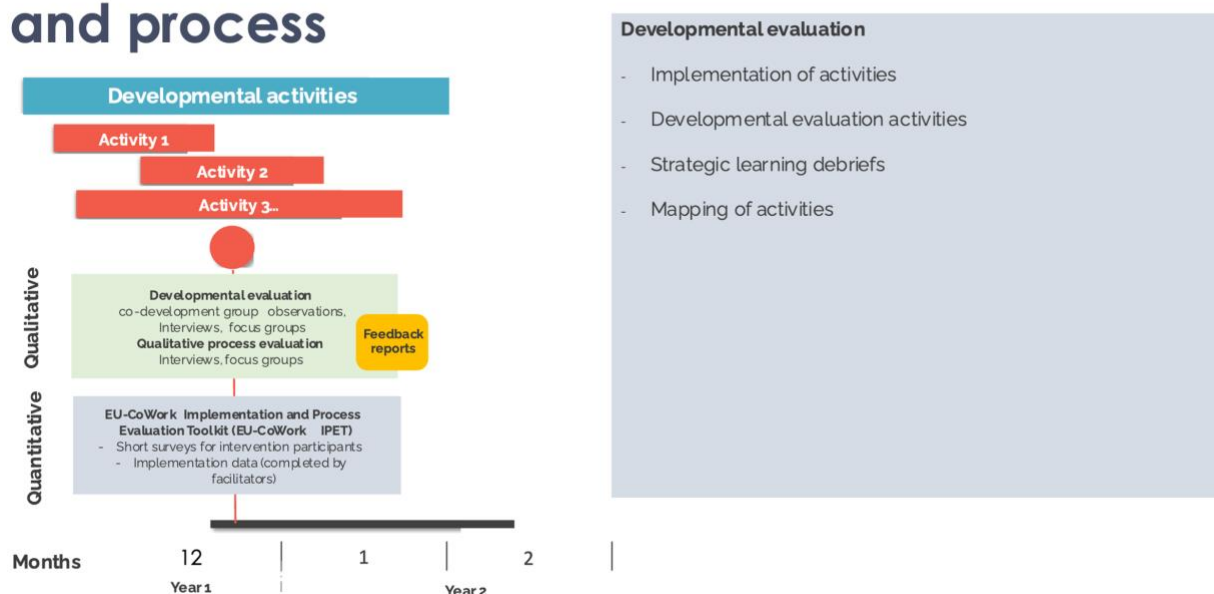
	Written declaration of consent We now ask you to confirm the consent that you gave us verbally at the beginning with your signature. One original of the form will remain with you and one with us.	
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Management / HR: Qualitative interviews / focus groups – T0

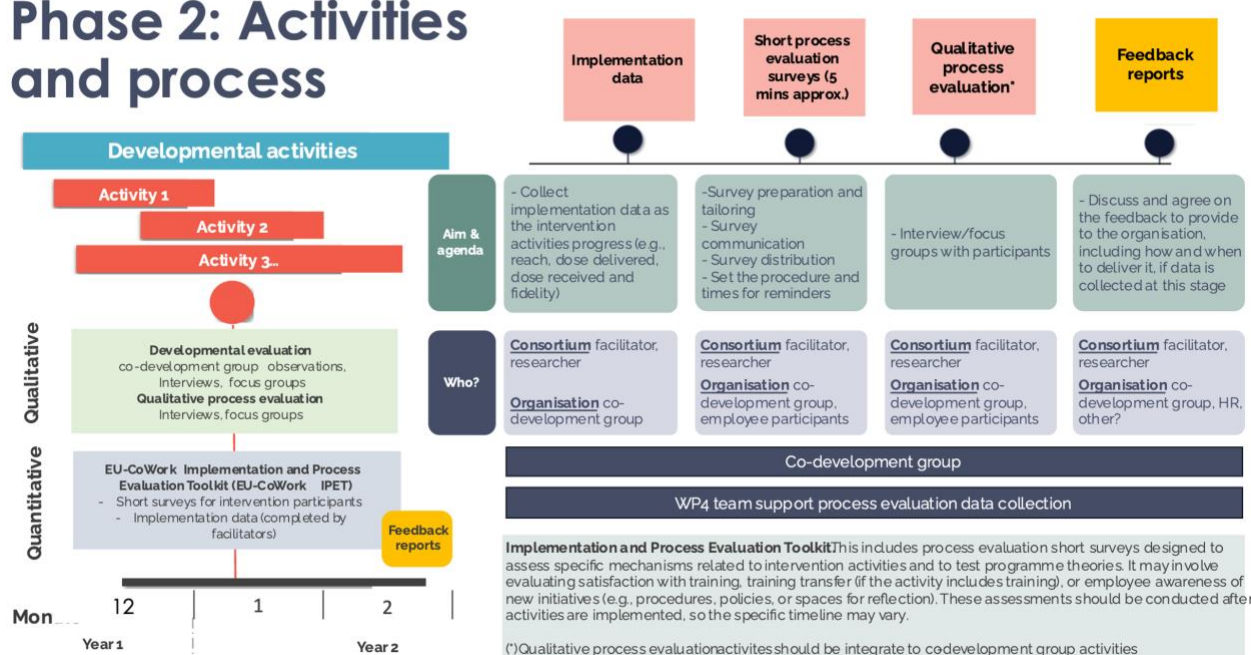
Asset and needs mapping meeting(s) – post T0

Phase 2: Activities and process

Phase 2: Activities and process



Phase 2: Activities and process



Developmental evaluation

Qualitative process evaluation

Phase 3: Post intervention

Phase 4: Sustainability

Appendix 6: Questionnaire



[Placeholder for identification label]
(105 x 35 mm)]

EU-CoWork

consortium

Questionnaire

[Country - workplace]

Main Survey Version

[English]

[National Project Information]

Dear [name],

Are you and your colleagues receiving enough support from your workplace to cope with difficult life experiences such as serious illness, caregiving and loss? Do you feel equipped to support your colleagues who face these emotional challenges? The [our institutions] are jointly investigating how workplaces in [you country] support their employees through these difficult times. We want to hear about your experiences. By answering a few questions, you can help us work towards better workplace support for difficult times in [your country].

Completion of the questionnaire will take about 20 minutes. To go to the questionnaire, click on <this link>.

Why are you invited to participate?

This study is done together with 12 workplaces in 4 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Greece, and Sweden). Your workplace /[Name] has decided to be one of these. Over a period of two years several actions will be taken to develop a Compassionate Workplace Program. Collecting information about the experiences and views of employees of the workplace is indispensable to both inform and evaluate the development process.

Participation in the questionnaire study is entirely voluntary but highly valued. You can stop your participation at all times. All information you provide will be processed automatically by the electronic survey system and will only be used by the researchers of VUB and IDEWE for research purposes. The online survey system guarantees that no party will be able to link your identity to the answers you provide to the questionnaire. The information you provide will at no point be accessible by people within your workplace or any third parties other than yourself or the researchers.

The research has received a positive review from the Ethical Committee of [you country].

Thank you for participating in this survey!

[your team]

If you have any questions, please email: [email address your national researcher]

Text used in the title page of the survey, to obtain informed consent before proceeding

Once target participants click on the link and navigate to the online questionnaire, they arrive at a title page that contains the following text:

“Questionnaire about compassion in the workplace.

The following questionnaire asks about support within your workplace to cope with difficult life experiences such as serious illness, caregiving, and loss. Your answers will help inform programs to work towards better workplace support for difficult times.

Completion of the questionnaire will take about 20 minutes

Information on Data Protection

If you proceed with the survey, you agree that your responses will be processed for scientific research. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. All information you provide will be used solely for this research. The responses will be processed automatically by the online survey

system. All answers will be stored in a pseudonymised form on a secure server, and they cannot be linked to your identity. The research has received a positive review from the Ethical Committee of VUB.

Should you wish more information about the research, click here <link>.

More information about data protection can be found here <link>

Partners of the research

<Logo of [your organisation]> <logo of [your facilitator partner]>

<next, answer options are provided:

Complete the questionnaire

I do not wish to participate to the questionnaire and do not want to be contacted about it. >

Once the questionnaire is started an e-mail contact address will be provided at the bottom of every page for further queries.

If you experience any discomfort during the questionnaire, you are invited to contact independent psychological support [Elke Velle (IDEWE), Elke.Velle@idewe.be, [phone number]eg at IDEWE?]

Two link-out options are provided in the short description.

These will open text that is put on a separate webpage within the EU-CoWork website Link-out 1
(information about the research):

Link-out 2 (data protection information):

Current Work

These questions are about you, your current work situation. In responding to the questions, please mark the appropriate choice(s) or provide figures where necessary.

1. Which of the following options best describes your employment at this workplace?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Employee
- ☐₂ Self-employed/sub-contractor/freelance
- ☐₃ Interim work (employment agency)
- ☐₄ Volunteer
- ☐₅ Apprenticeship
- ☐₆ Job start agreement
- ☐₇ Other: (fill out)

2. Concerning your current occupation at this workplace, please indicate if you are a manual (i.e., doing mostly physical labour) or non-manual worker (i.e., doing mostly mental labour)

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Manual worker
- ☐₂ Non-manual worker

3. What is your employment status at this workplace?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Permanent employment (an on-going contract with no fixed end-point before the age of retirement)
- ☐₂ Fixed-term contract for a period of more than 1 year
- ☐₃ Fixed-term contract for a period of 1 year or less

4. What is your current employment status, in terms of working hours?

Please mark one choice in each row.

	Full-time (more than 90% of full- time hours)	Part-time (71-90% of full-time hours)	Part-time (50-70% of full-time hours)	Part-time (less than 50% of full- time hours)	Not applicable
a) My employment status in this workplace	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	
b) All my employments together	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

5. How many years of work experience do you have, regardless of whether you worked full-time or part-time?

Do not include any extended periods of leave such as maternity/paternity leave.

Please write a number in each row. Write 0 (zero) if none.

Please round up to whole years.

a) Year(s) working in this organisation

b) Year(s) working in total

6. Do you have leadership responsibilities at this workplace?

Multiple answers possible.

☐₁ No

☐₂ Yes, over employees

☐₃ Yes, over other supervisors

7. Do you live in the vicinity of this workplace?

Please mark one choice.

☐₁ Yes, within 30 minutes (walking, cycling, driving, train,...)

☐₂ No, I commute from farther away

8. Do you work from home (telework) during a regular working week?

Please mark one choice.

☐₁ Yes, most of the time (three or more days a week)

☐₂ Yes, occasionally (less than three days a week but at least one)

☐₃ No or only sporadically

9. Did you need to relocate to your current location due to work?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Yes, I moved from another city or town
- ☐₂ Yes, I moved from another country
- ☐₃ No

10. The following questions are about the support you receive from your immediate supervisor and colleagues. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
1.	My immediate supervisor has an eye for my well-being.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
2.	My immediate supervisor helps me and supports me.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
3.	My immediate supervisor helps to get the work done.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
4.	My colleagues help and support me.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	

11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
1.	I have friends available to me at work	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
2.	I have one or more co-workers available who I talk to about day-to-day problems at work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
3.	I have co-workers available whom I can depend on when I have a problem.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
4.	I have enough people available at work with whom I can talk about my job.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
5.	I have people around me at work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	

12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
1.	I have a say in my own work speed.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
2.	I have a choice in deciding how I do my work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
3.	I have a choice in deciding what I do at work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
4.	I have some say over the way I work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	

13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your work?

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
1.	More is expected of me than I can handle.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
2.	I don't have enough time to do the things I need to do.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
3.	Too much is expected of me.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
4.	I never catch up with my work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	

Compassion at the workplace

14. These questions are about your experiences with compassion for other people at your workplace. When things go wrong for other people and they become distressed by setbacks, failures, disappointments or losses, we may cope with their distress in different ways.

We are interested in the degree to which people can be compassionate to others at work. We define compassion as “a sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it.” Below is a series of questions that ask you about these two aspects of compassion.

Please read each statement carefully and think about how it applies to you when people at your work become distressed.

Please mark one choice in each row.

So: When people at my workplace are distressed or upset by things...

	Never									Always
1. I notice and am sensitive to distress in people at my workplace when it arises.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀
2. I am emotionally moved by expressions of distress in people at my workplace.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀
3. I am motivated to engage and work with the distress of people at my workplace when it arises.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀
4. I reflect on and make sense of people at my workplace's distress.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀
5. I take the actions and do the things that will be helpful to people at my workplace.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀
6. I express feelings of support, helpfulness and encouragement to people at my workplace.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀
7. I direct attention to what is likely to be helpful to people at my workplace.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀
8. I think about and come up with helpful ways for people at my workplace to cope with their distress.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇	☐ ₈	☐ ₉	☐ ₁₀

15. These questions are about your experiences with compassion from other people at your workplace. When things go wrong for us and we become distressed by setbacks, failures, disappointments or losses, others may cope with our distress in different ways.

Please read each statement carefully and think about how it applies to the people at your work when you become distressed.

Please mark one choice in each row.

So: When I'm distressed or upset by things...

Never Always

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 9. | People at my workplace notice and are sensitive to my distressed feelings when they arise in me. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |
| 10. | People at my workplace are emotionally moved by my distressed feelings. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |
| 11. | People at my workplace are actively motivated to engage and work with my distress when it arises. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |
| 12. | People at my workplace reflect on and make sense of my feelings of distress. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |
| 13. | People at my workplace take the actions and do the things that will be helpful to me. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |
| 14. | People at my workplace treat me with feelings of support, helpfulness and encouragement. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |
| 15. | People at my workplace direct their attention to what is likely to be helpful to me. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |
| 16. | People at my workplace think about and come up with helpful ways for me to cope with my distress. | ☐ ₁ | ☐ ₂ | ☐ ₃ | ☐ ₄ | ☐ ₅ | ☐ ₆ | ☐ ₇ | ☐ ₈ | ☐ ₉ | ☐ ₁₀ |

16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements.

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	In this organization, we plan, implement, and evaluate programs, policies, and practices to support employees dealing with serious illness, caregiving, death, loss, or grief.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
2.	The policies in my workplace adequately support employees dealing with serious illness, caregiving, death, loss, or grief.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
3.	The organisation provides a safe environment to be open about dealing with serious illness, caregiving, death, loss, or grief.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
4.	I have received information about the goals of the Compassionate workplace program	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

17. Are you aware of any policies in your workplace that provide support for employees experiencing serious illness, caregiving, death, loss, or grief?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Yes
- ☐₂ No

18. Do you know the policies or procedures in your workplace for accessing the following rights?

Please mark one choice in each row.

	Yes	No
1. Paid holiday	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
2. Paid sick leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
3. Paid maternity/paternity leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
4. Parental leave or care leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
5. Taking a day off unexpectedly	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
6. Bereavement leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
7. Care leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
8. Palliative care leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂

19. How easy is it for you to access this right at your workplace in practice?
For each item, select the option that best describes your experience or impression.

Please mark one choice in each row.

	Very difficult	Rather difficult	Rather easy	Very easy	Don't know
1. Paid holiday	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
2. Paid sick leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
3. Paid maternity/paternity leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
4. Parental leave or care leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
5. Taking a day off unexpectedly	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
6. Bereavement leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
7. Care leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
8. Palliative care leave	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

20. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Please mark one choice in each row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I believe initiatives like the compassionate workplace program can make a meaningful difference for employees.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
2. Most people in this workplace strive to develop new ideas to improve their work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
3. Most people in this workplace are open to change.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
4. Most people in this workplace search for new ways to solve problems.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

5. Most people in this workplace provide practical support to each other for implementing new ideas. ☐₁ ☐₂ ☐₃ ☐₄ ☐₅

What improvements, if any, would you suggest for your workplace to better support employees dealing with difficult life experiences such as serious illness, caregiving, death, loss, or grief?

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Experiences with serious illness, caregiving, death, loss, or grief

21. The following questions are about your personal experiences with serious illness, caregiving, dying, loss, or grief. We understand that sharing these experiences can be difficult, but your responses will help us gain insight into the prevalence of such experiences within our organization so that we can organize targeted support initiatives.

What experiences of serious illness, caregiving, death, loss, or grief have you had in the past two years?

Please mark one choice in each row.

	Yes	No
1. I am or have been seriously ill myself.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
2. A close colleague is or has been seriously ill.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
3. A close colleague has died.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
4. A personal acquaintance, friend, or family member is or has been seriously ill.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
5. A personal acquaintance, friend, or family member died.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
6. I was a caregiver, on an unpaid basis, or provided assistance to one or more persons with age-related problems, serious illness, chronic conditions or handicaps.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
7. I am going or went through a mourning process.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
8. A close colleague is or has been the caregiver for someone who was seriously ill.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
9. A close colleague is or has been mourning.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂

22. You have indicated <experience indicated as yes in Q20>, please answer the following questions regarding that experience:

	No	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1. Did you feel supported by people at your workplace?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
2. Did you take time off work related to this experience?				
a) ☐ ₁ Yes, Days				
b) ☐ ₂ No				

23. How able would you feel to have the following conversations

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Not at all able			Very able
1.	Talking about death, dying, or grief to colleagues.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄ ☐ ₅
2.	Talking about death, dying, or grief to my supervisor(s).	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄ ☐ ₅
3.	Talking about death, dying, or grief to HR.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄ ☐ ₅
4.	Talking to a grieving person at my workplace about their loss.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄ ☐ ₅

24. The following statements are about how easy it is at your workplace to share your difficult life experiences such as your own serious illness, caregiving you do for someone with a serious illness, or your grief.

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
1.	I would worry to disclose these experiences.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
2.	I would avoid telling people at my workplace about these experiences.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
3.	I would find it hard telling people I have such experiences.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	

Well-being

25. Please indicate for each of the five statements which is the closest to how you have been feeling at work over the last two weeks i??

Please mark one choice in each row.

		At no time	Some of the time	Less than half of the time	More than half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1.	I have felt cheerful and in good spirits at work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
2.	I have felt calm and relaxed at work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
3.	I have felt active and vigorous at work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
4.	I woke up feeling fresh and rested to go to work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
5.	My daily work life has been filled with things that interest me.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆

26.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

27. The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience this situation. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Never	Rarely	Someti mes	Often	Always
1.	At work, I feel mentally exhausted	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
2.	After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
3.	At the end of my working day, I feel mentally exhausted and drained	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
4.	At work, I feel physically exhausted	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

28. In general, how would you describe your health?

Please mark one choice in each row.

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
5.	In general, I would you say my mental health is.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
6.	In general, I would you say my physical health is.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

29. The following questions deal with the impact of work on your private life and the other way around.

Please mark one choice in each row.

How often in the last 12 months, have you...?

		Never	Rarely	Sometime	Often	Always	
1.	...kept worrying about work when you were not working.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
2.	...felt too tired after work to do some of the household jobs which need to be done.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
3.	...found it difficult to concentrate on your job because of your family responsibilities.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
4.	...found that your job prevented you from giving the time you wanted to your family.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	

30. Over the past 12 months did you experience health problems (such as illness, back pain, cardiovascular problems, depression or other)?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Yes
- ☐₂ No => go to question 31
-

31. Did you, in the past 12 months, continue to work while experiencing one or more of these health problems?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Yes
- ☐₂ No => go to question 31
-

32. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements in describing your work experiences in the past 12 months.

Please mark one choice in each row.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------

1.	Despite having my health problem(s), I was able to finish hard tasks in my work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
2.	At work, I was able to focus on achieving my goals despite my health problem(s).	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
3.	Despite having my health problem(s), I felt energetic enough to complete all my work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
4.	Because of my health problem(s), the stresses of my job were much harder to handle.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
5.	My health problem(s) distracted me from taking pleasure in my work.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
6.	I felt hopeless about finishing certain work tasks due to my health problem(s).	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

33. Over the past 12 months how many days in total were you absent from work due to sick leave or health-related leave?

Please write a number. Write 0 (zero) if none.

a) days absent from work due to sick leave or health-related leave

34. How often do the following statements apply to you?

Please mark one choice in each row.

	Rarely or never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
1. How often do you seriously think of leaving your present job?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
2. To what extent do you <u>want</u> to quit within the next year?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
3. To what extent are you <u>actually</u> planning to quit within the next year?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

Background and Qualification

These questions are about you, your education. In responding to the questions, please mark the appropriate choice(s) or provide figures where necessary.

35. I am ...

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ ...male
- ☐₂ ...female
- ☐₃ ...non-binary
- ☐₄ ...other:

36. In what year were you born?

Please write a number.

Year:

37. What is the highest diploma that you have obtained?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ None or primary education
- ☐₂ Secondary education
- ☐₃ Higher education (bachelor)
- ☐₄ Higher education (master)
- ☐₅ Other:

38. How easily can you/your family pay for everything you need in a month? (e.g. food, rent, ...)

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Very difficult
- ☐₂ Difficult
- ☐₃ Rather difficult
- ☐₄ Rather easy
- ☐₅ Easy
- ☐₆ Very easy

39. Including yourself, can you please tell me how many people live in your household?

Please write a number.

people

40. How many children are living with you? You may also include stepchildren, foster children, and adopted children.

Please write a number.

children

41. Do you belong to a minority group in [THIS COUNTRY]

Please mark one choice.

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

42. Where you and both of your parents born in [THIS COUNTRY]

Please mark one choice.

☐₁ Yes => Go to Question 45

☐₂ No

43. In which region were you born?

Please mark one choice.

☐₁ Northern Europe

☐₂ Western Europe

☐₃ Southern Europe

☐₄ Eastern Europe

☐₅ North America

☐₈ Central Asia

☐₉ South Asia

☐₁₀ Middle East and North Africa

☐₁₁ Sub-Saharan Africa

☐₆ Latin America and Caribbean

☐₇ East Asia and Pacific

44. In which region was your mother born?

Please mark one choice.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ ₁ Northern Europe | ☐ ₈ Central Asia |
| ☐ ₂ Western Europe | ☐ ₉ South Asia |
| ☐ ₃ Southern Europe | ☐ ₁₀ Middle East and North Africa |
| ☐ ₄ Eastern Europe | ☐ ₁₁ Sub-Saharan Africa |
| ☐ ₅ North America | |
| ☐ ₆ Latin America and Caribbean | |
| ☐ ₇ East Asia and Pacific | |
-

45. In which country was your father born?

Please mark one choice.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ ₁ Northern Europe | ☐ ₈ Central Asia |
| ☐ ₂ Western Europe | ☐ ₉ South Asia |
| ☐ ₃ Southern Europe | ☐ ₁₀ Middle East and North Africa |
| ☐ ₄ Eastern Europe | ☐ ₁₁ Sub-Saharan Africa |
| ☐ ₅ North America | |
| ☐ ₆ Latin America and Caribbean | |
| ☐ ₇ East Asia and Pacific | |
-

46. How would you describe yourself in terms of religion or philosophy of life?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐₁ Catholic
- ☐₂ Protestant
- ☐₃ Christian, but not Catholic or Protestant
- ☐₄ Muslim
- ☐₅ Secular Humanist
- ☐₆ Non-religious
- ☐₇ Other: (fill out)
-

47. How important is religion/spirituality to you?

Please mark one choice.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

[illegible]
