

EU-CoWork: Developing Compassionate Workplaces to protect employees' health and wellbeing

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Background and aim

A significant proportion of employees will experience serious illness, caregiving, death and loss (end-of-life (EoL) experiences) during their professional life. These affect employees and their colleagues' health and wellbeing as well as workplace productivity and safety. The twin (digital and green) transitions have influenced job demands and resources of jobs and work environments such that employees can feel less or not supported when coping with EoL experiences.

The EU-CoWork project aims to

- 1) Understand the influence of changing workplace organization on wellbeing, performance, job quality, and work culture for employees confronted with EoL experiences and their colleagues;
- 2) Develop and evaluate tailored Compassionate Workplaces Programs (CWPs) to support employee health and wellbeing in the work environment in Europe.

Methods

The project entails a cross-national (Belgium, Sweden, Austria, Greece) mixed-methods intervention study with an embedded process and impact evaluation. It applies an international co-creative and developmental evaluation and combines a timed series of quantitative cross-sectional panel surveys, qualitative interviews and fieldwork, and policy document analysis. Tailored CWPs will be developed in 12 digitalized and/or green European workplaces.

Results

EU-CoWork will generate findings about workplace compassion and employee health and wellbeing; the relationships between workplace characteristics, workplace compassion, and health and wellbeing of employees confronted with EoL experiences; between employees' EoL experiences, company responses, and company and employee performance; and the variability in European workplace policies addressing such risk factors.

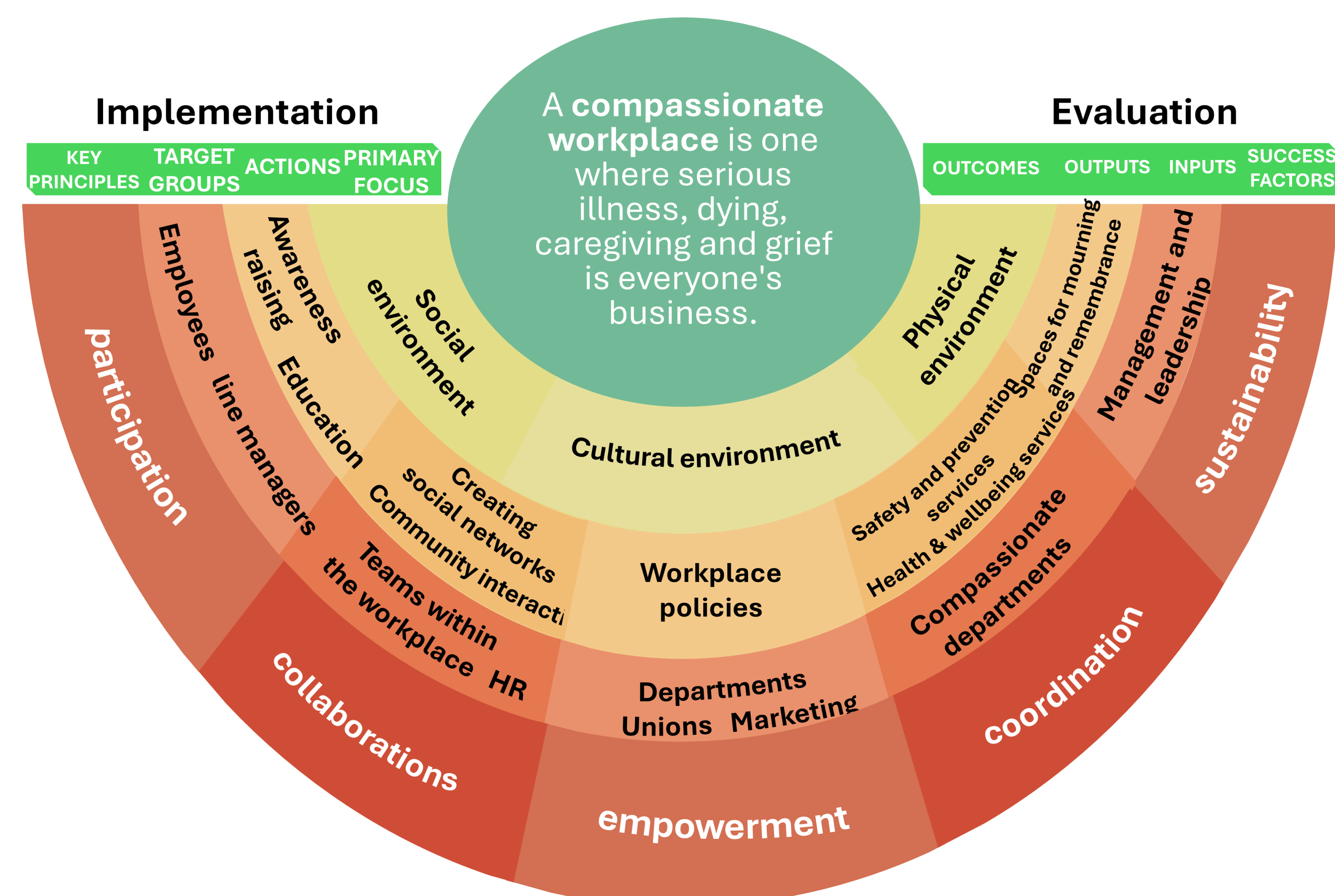


Fig 1. The Compassionate Workplaces model.



Fig 2. The EU-CoWork partners

Conclusion

EU-CoWork will offer building blocks for workplaces to ensure adequate and tailored support and policy to counter-balance experiences that may exacerbate the risk for adverse health and wellbeing outcomes for employees, and insights regarding CWP-related productivity gains and cost-effectiveness.

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