

Fred Zijlstra

Working under duress:

- 1) Working times are important and relevant; do not work too long for a long period. Working longer than 10 hours a day increases risks for mistakes.
- 2) Take regular breaks, and try to do something that distracts the attention from current problems/work.
- 3) Recovery after work: take sufficient rest. In addition, sufficient sleep is crucial, try to get at least 8 hours sleep.
- 4) Distraction is particularly relevant *after* work, in order to unwind be able to fall asleep. Try to engage briefly into something you enjoy doing. When there is no time, try 'mindfulness or yoga exercises'. Various video clips and exercises are available on Youtube and elsewhere.
- 5) For work that is emotionally demanding, like in healthcare: emotional regulation strategies are important. *See below for tips:*
- 6) Furthermore, It is important that the organisation organises 'support teams' (like clinical psychologists) that staff can talk to, and to blow off steam, ...

Emotional regulation strategy guidelines:

- 1) Reappraising: difficult situations by considering that 'the problem' (i.e. difficult customer, or patient, or technical failure, or...) is not a personal assault or failure, but reflects the other's (or current situation's) problems.
- 2) Reappraising difficult situations as a hindrance that can be over won, and is an opportunity for personal growth.
- 3) Perspective taking: taking the perspective of the other (customer, patient) may help to understand why the other behaves/responds like this..
- 4) Attentional deployment: try to think of something positive and enjoyable, either in the past, or in the future.

Sources:

Hülshager, U.R., Schewe, A., Lang, J., & Zijlstra, F.R.H. (2015). When regulating emotions at work pays off: A diary and intervention study on emotion regulation and customer tips in service jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Vol. 100(2), 263–277.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038229>,

Zijlstra, F.R.H., and Sonnentag, S., (2006). After work is done: Psychological perspectives on recovery from work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 15(2), pp. 129-138. DOI:10.1080/13594320500513855

Firoozabadi, A., Uitdewilligen, S., Zijlstra, F.R.H., (2018). Solving problems or seeing troubles? A day-level study on the consequences of thinking about work on recovery and wellbeing, and the moderating role of self-regulation. In: *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. Vol. 27(5). 629-641. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2018.1505720>

Some guidelines for working from Home:

- 1) People working from home generally miss a clear structure. Create a structure for the days: with start and end, with breaks for coffee and lunch. If possible, make a little walk before and after work to simulate going to work and/or home. This helps to create a distance between work and non-work domains of life.
- 2) Try to find place where you can work undisturbed, or try to create/arrange this. When little children in the household, try to arrange an agreement with partner for a division of work, and working times.
- 3) Stay in contact with colleagues, and with the organisation using digital media (like Skype, Teams, Google hangout, etc.).
- 4) Try to get in a 'work mindset', and perhaps 'dress for work', particularly when skype or video conferencing is involved.
- 5) Be compassionate with yourself.; understand that conditions are not optimal, so performance can also not be optimal.