



Needs analysis report

Training needs for young professionals in remote work

Cases of Spain, Cyprus and Latvia, 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union

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Mental health of young professionals in remote work

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1. About this report

This report explores the mental health experiences and challenges faced by young professionals working remotely and examines the factors contributing to burnout in digital workspaces in Cyprus, Latvia and Spain. By combining survey responses with facilitated discussions, the report provides the necessary insights to craft a meaningful set of training modules that would support the identified needs for mental wellbeing of young professionals in remote work in the EQ CULTIVATE project.

About EQ CULTIVATE

It is an Erasmus+ funded KA210 project dedicated to boosting the well-being and efficiency of young professionals working in hybrid and smart environments. Our mission is to tackle and reduce burnout by strategically applying emotional intelligence and promoting inclusive work practices.

Our objectives include improving emotional intelligence skills, enhancing peer social interaction, identifying and reducing youth-specific burnout factors, fostering social and work inclusion, and promoting healthy technology management.

By focusing on these areas, EQ CULTIVATE aims to create a supportive environment where young professionals feel valued, connected, and equipped to thrive in the evolving landscape of remote and hybrid work. Read more about our activities on the website eqcultivate.eu.

2. Mental health in remote work

Maintaining mental health is crucial for youth in remote work environments, as recent EU reports highlight the significant impact of such settings on young individuals. The European Commission's 2023 [communication on mental health](#) emphasizes that the COVID-19 pandemic worsened mental health issues among young people, with increased loneliness and reduced social interactions leading to heightened anxiety and depression.

Additionally, the shift to remote work has introduced challenges such as job insecurity and social isolation, which are particularly important to young workers who may lack stable support networks. Addressing these mental health concerns is essential not only for the well-being of young individuals but also for the future of an overall resilient and productive workforce in the evolving digital landscape.

Brief insight in European scope

The European Year of Youth 2022 was a dedicated initiative for that year, focusing on enhancing opportunities for young people, including promoting flexible working arrangements such as remote work. It underscored the importance of increasing education, training, and employment opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas. While it concluded in 2022, the emphasis on youth employment and adaptability in the labor market has influenced ongoing EU policies and programs.

Since then, the EU has introduced several mechanisms and support measures aimed at enhancing youth employment opportunities, including those related to remote work. A notable initiative is the Reinforced Youth Guarantee, which targets individuals aged 15 to 29, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The offered personalized approaches to prepare young people for employment, with a focus on facilitating transitions into digital and green sectors, are the areas where mental health in remote work is among the topics to be addressed.

Even though these do not apply directly to youth, the European Union has also recognized the importance of addressing mental health challenges associated with remote work and has initiated several measures to tackle these issues. The directive on the ["Right to Disconnect"](#) aims to grant employees the ability to

disengage from work-related communications outside of working hours. [The research](#) “Minimum health and safety requirements for the protection of mental health in the workplace” addresses many of the necessary improvements in the current times, aiming to compel Member States to take action to protect employees and to ensure minimum standards and equality across the EU.

While these measures demonstrate the EU's commitment to addressing mental health in the context of remote work, as of March 2025, specific directives or measures for youth are still lacking.

Insights from Spain, Latvia, and Cyprus

The gathered insights in reports reveal distinct situations regarding youth involvement in remote work across Spain, Latvia, and Cyprus. Cyprus stands out with the lowest overall remote work rate in Europe at just 22%, and notably, specific data on remote work among Cypriot youth is limited, though the low general availability suggests potentially fewer opportunities for this demographic. In contrast, Spain shows a higher overall remote work adoption, with 15.1% of all workers engaged remotely. However, a significant difference exists as 73.6% of employees aged 16 to 24 in Spain did not have the opportunity to work remotely in 2023, indicating a considerable barrier for young professionals compared to older age groups. Latvia presents a more nuanced picture, with 10% of its total workforce being young people working remotely, and this group comprises a substantial portion (33.8%) of the overall remote worker population. Notably, Latvia also shows a trend of more people returning to traditional on-site work, though the reasons remain unclear.

Despite these differences in statistics, a strong commonality is the limited availability of data concerning youth in remote work and their mental health within these contexts, particularly highlighted by reports from Latvia and Cyprus. While Spain provides a clear statistic on the lower remote work participation of young individuals, detailed insights into the experiences and mental well-being of these remote youth are still needed across all three examined countries. The observed trends also differ, with the Spanish report showing an overall increase in remote work, Latvian one indicating a return to on-site work, and Cyprus maintaining a low adoption rate. These varying scenarios underline the differences and influences of national economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors that would need a broader dataset to be defined more thoroughly.

3. Needs analysis

3.1. Methodology

The research methodology used aimed to gather insights into the mental health experiences and challenges faced by young professionals in remote work in order to conduct a needs analysis for developing context-relevant and meaningful training modules. All three reports from Cyprus, Spain, and Latvia utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from surveys or questionnaires with qualitative data from facilitated discussions or roundtables.

The outlined demographic for this was twofold: young professionals aged 18-35 who have had experience with burnout or other mental health effects as a result of remote work and stakeholders working with youth in remote work (youth workers, employers, managers, or educators). The needs analyses in the three countries engaged a mix of young professionals and stakeholders: Cyprus involved 9 participants in a discussion (6 youth, 3 stakeholders) and 14 in a questionnaire, with a majority of female participants and one with a disability; Spain had 10 participants in their virtual roundtable (7 youth, 3 stakeholders) with a diverse range including project managers and HR; and Latvia surveyed 16 individuals (9 youth aged 18-35, 7 stakeholders) and had 13 of them in an online discussion. **In total, 32 participants took part in this needs analysis.**

Content-wise, the analysis consisted of two parts carried out from December 2024 until March 2025. First, an online questionnaire (also used as an application form) was distributed and filled by the participants that wished to take part in the discussion. It consisted of 10 questions for young professionals and 7 questions for stakeholders working with youth. Afterwards, a discussion was conducted in each of the partner countries and built around the received answers from the written responses, allowing gaining a more detailed insight about the participants' views and needs.

More specific insights in the gained knowledge and process are revealed in the individual country reports for each of the countries in this project. These reports are available in the project website eqcultivate.eu, but the following paragraphs will extract only the most significant conclusions and summarize the findings.

3.2. Results

The synthesized findings from needs analysis reports conducted in Cyprus, Spain, and Latvia reveal many commonalities. In many cases, the experiences described are very similar, but the focus in each of the groups is slightly different (which we consider also possible due to the varied composition of participants). Nonetheless, these provide invaluable insights that allow us to form a better view on the potential strategies to assist young people in remote work. Below we briefly elaborate on each of the topics discussed during our needs analysis.

3.2.1. Burnout and negative mental health effects

Altogether, while working remotely the participants had experienced burnout or other negative effects on mental health first-hand. It allowed a conviction that any further insights and discussions will be based on personal experience and provide us with specific conclusions necessary to shape meaningful content for training. A participant from Cyprus shared:

"My burnout and depression was so severe it affected my physical health badly... I didn't feel supported by my employer... nor appreciated."

All young professionals surveyed in Cyprus reported experiencing some level of burnout or negative mental health effects, ranging from mild strain to severe burnout. In Latvia, the focus of causes was rooted in lack of social interaction, disturbed collaboration patterns, and challenges with personal motivation and daily structure.

Many of the Spanish participants reported burnout symptoms significantly increasing around deadlines. Those included concentration difficulties, headaches, and sleep disorders. Isolation, excessive workloads, and lack of recognition were identified as the most damaging factors. Keywords associated with burnout included "anxiety, exhaustion, alienation, fatigue and tiredness."

3.2.2. Key factors contributing to burnout

Going deeper into the experiences mentioned above, participants were asked to elaborate (both in surveys and in discussions) on aspects that affected worsening of their mental state or provided significant hurdles in the remote work model.

- **Isolation and poor communication.** In Cyprus, more than half of young professionals marked it as the main reason for their struggles. Communication gaps ("not being in the loop") also significantly contributed. In Spain, lack of communication and support within the team led to feelings of isolation and increased workload. In Latvia, lack of possibilities for social interaction (including, informal) and hindered collaboration were the highlighted issues.
- **Lack of recognition or appreciation.** In Cyprus, all participants felt a lack of recognition contributed to their difficulties, with many citing it as a primary or significant cause of stress. This theme was also present in the Spanish findings.
- **Blurred work-life boundaries.** In all three groups, participants highlighted the struggle of balancing personal and professional life as a key factor that affected their stress levels and well being.
- **Pressure for constant availability.** The expectation of being "always on" contributed significantly to stress for young professionals in Cyprus. This aligns with concerns about the difficulty of disconnecting from work in Spain and the mentally draining aspect of constant availability mentioned in Latvia.
- **Workload and routine:** Difficulty of planning leading to work overload was a key stressor in Spain while challenges with motivation and routine were mentioned in Latvian group. While less consistently severe than interpersonal and boundary issues, increased workload and lack of routine were moderate contributors to burnout in Cyprus.
- **Technical difficulties.** This was the least problematic factor overall. While challenges with tool integration and the overwhelming number of tools were mentioned in the Spanish group, and improper use of MS Teams as a distraction in Latvia, these were not primary drivers of burnout.

3.2.3. Use of digital tools

All groups indicated a high reliance on digital tools for communication (Slack,

Teams), video conferencing (Zoom, Meet), shared calendars, and task management (Trello, Asana). Nonetheless, none raised strong concerns about the lacking digital skills that would affect their mental health. It was rather improper use or effects of these tools as such that were mentioned as noteworthy aspects.

In Cyprus, frustrations arose when there was no clear structure for tool use or overlapping functions. The Spanish group raised concerns about the constant need to be available and responsive due to digital tools, blurring work-life boundaries. The overwhelming number of tools and lack of seamless integration were also among the mentioned challenges.

3.2.4. Practices for maintaining mental wellbeing

It was crucial exploring what practices are already used by the involved young professionals to define the potential gaps that could be addressed with our training efforts. All three groups mentioned similar personal strategies employed by young professionals, including:

- Taking regular breaks
- Setting clear work-life boundaries (defined hours, avoiding work outside these hours, dedicated workspace)
- Exercise and physical activity, regular walks for clearing the head
- Structured routines that make it easier to abide them daily
- Social connection and a planned checking in both with work colleagues and friends
- Spending time with pets and engaging in hobbies
- Mindfulness and meditation
- Managing information intake (limiting news/social media)
- Planning and prioritizing work ahead
- Delegation of tasks to minimize workload

Altogether, the participants showed awareness and dedication to their own mental wellbeing. Most practices could be categorized as either approaches for a more structured work (breaks, routines, planning, delegation) or practices for mental hygiene (activities that keep them grounded and connected to the “real” world and bodies, or help to disconnect from thoughts about work).

3.2.5. Insights from stakeholders

Another crucial aspect to get a broader perspective on the existing gaps and needs, was in the involvement of stakeholders (youth workers, employers, educators, HR and others) in these discussions. They provided information on their experiences with the management side of working with youth.

Stakeholders in Cyprus observed challenges related to self-motivation of young people, discipline, setting boundaries, attention spans, reduced access to learning opportunities, and difficulties in monitoring progress remotely. In Latvia, stakeholders noted difficulties in prioritizing tasks, managing deadlines, motivation, procrastination, social isolation, and communication challenges among young remote workers. Managers also found it hard to track workload and detect burnout. Similar topics were mentioned also in the Spanish group.

3.2.6. Support and policies from organizations working with youth

Importantly, to create a better understanding about already available resources and support (to avoid doubling the efforts through our project), the needs analysis also included a section about already existing measures and policies. Generally, the people who participated mentioned lacking either resources (including their own time or knowledge), policies, or willingness of management to implement any particular support. With this we concluded the systemic nature of some of the contributing factors for burnout among young professionals.

Spain has implemented national initiatives like the "Desconexión Digital" law and the 024 mental health hotline. Local initiatives and university programs also offer support. However, experts emphasize the need for more structured policies and targeted programs. Some organizations in Cyprus and Latvia mentioned flexible working hours and availability of communications tools as the provided mental health support. One stakeholder in Cyprus candidly stated their organization offered no specific mental health support for remote young workers, highlighting a significant gap. In Latvia, many mentioned lack of structured mental health policies, often encouraging self-awareness without formal support systems.

3.2.7. Other suggestions and insights

Young professionals in Cyprus emphasized the need for trust and flexibility from

employers, advocating for autonomy and less micromanagement. They also highlighted the importance of fostering human connection in remote work.

Some of the recommendations from the Spanish group included training in stress management, improved communication and team support, support for creating work-life balance, training on digital tools, and creating an overall supportive work environment.

In Latvia, the discussion concluded that too much responsibility is placed on young professionals to manage the mental health effects of remote work, and systemic issues need to be addressed by employers. Organizations need to take responsibility for preventing burnout and ensuring effective communication.

4. Conclusions

Even though this is not a scope we will be able to address within the EQCultivate project, a very meaningful conclusion is the existing gaps in the system and the workplaces themselves. There is a clear need for more effective organizational support and systemic changes - workplaces need to prioritize mental wellbeing as a crucial resource for their remote workers. It can be done by fostering trust and flexibility, improving communication strategies, establishing clear work-life boundaries, and implementing formal mental health support policies and programs.

But moving on to the challenges that actually can be addressed by implementing training of individuals are consistently visible in the needs analysis across Cyprus, Spain, and Latvia. Burnout, fueled by social isolation, communication limitations, blurred work/life boundaries, and the pressure of constant availability, is a significant concern and affects the wellbeing of young professionals in remote work who participated in these discussions. Many are already aware of the things "to be done" to maintain their mental health, but the most significant gaps are some of the soft skills, self-awareness, and strategies for managing aspects of work.

Based on their perspectives and expressed needs, this report concludes on a list of potential topics for the training that could provide individual support and relief for those affected by the peculiarities of remote work.

Proposed topics for training modules

1. **Understanding and recognizing your own mental health needs in remote work:** a module that would focus on developing self-awareness regarding mental well-being, identifying early warning signs of worsening mental health, and understanding the specific triggers and symptoms of burnout in remote work environments. Additionally, it could include suggestions for identifying one's own productive work style that includes exploring the working times and other tangible aspects of the working environment.
2. **Mastering the art of setting, communicating, advocating for your boundaries and needs in remote work:** this topic looks into the very common issue of blurred work-life boundaries. It would cover how to define personal and professional limits, effectively communicate these boundaries to colleagues, managers, and clients, and confidently apply them in daily remote work interactions. Additionally, it would help to understand how to communicate when the current remote work system is not working, and advocate for necessary support and adjustments.
3. **Enhancing communication skills for remote teams and fostering human connection:** this module would focus on strategies for effective and constructive communication in digital settings, addressing potential for misinterpretations in written communication, and fostering clear and open dialogue within remote teams. It would also cover techniques for providing and receiving feedback remotely. To address the challenges of social isolation, this section could include strategies for proactively building and maintaining connections with colleagues, fostering team spirit in remote settings, and utilizing digital tools effectively for social interaction without leading to overload.
4. **Burnout prevention and self-care strategies:** This essential topic would equip young professionals with methods to prevent further burnout, including how to recognize when to stop and take a break, evaluate the sustainability of their working habits, and implement effective self-care practices. For example, mindfulness, resilience-building exercises, taking breaks, stress management techniques, strategies for coping with the unique stressors of remote work and others.

5. **Practical strategies for workflow management and prioritization:** this is the point that would provide young professionals with actionable tips and tricks for planning and structuring their workload and priorities to enhance productivity and prevent feelings of being overwhelmed. It could include approaches for time management, prioritization and others.
6. **Understanding and utilizing digital tools mindfully:** This section would focus on developing a healthy relationship with digital tools, learning to manage notifications and avoid digital fatigue, and identifying the most effective tools for collaboration and communication while minimizing distractions. It could also include guidance on establishing clear structures for tool usage within teams.



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