

FROM STRESS TO MOBBING

CĂTĂLINA BONCIU*
GHEORGHIȚA CĂPRĂRESCU**

Abstract

The currently specific problem at work is chronic fatigue, a syndrome characterized by physiological and emotional exhaustion and often generated (through permanent frustration) by the position with a too much or too low volume of work. First of all, the treatment of stress, of burnout or in countering resilience, is preventive and consists in gaining a better resistance.

In simpler words, fighting against those phenomena is maintaining personal health. "Health is a fully favorable condition, physically, mentally and socially, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"[1]. Later it was added that health is the "capacity to lead a socially and economically productive life."

But, when the general concern is to destroy the balance, whatever that may mean – the balance of the active body or the body "ready to leave the system", balance of knowledge, individual and collective mental equilibrium, functional balance of economy, balance of the bio-system... - we must not remain indifferent. It occurs frequently a phenomenon which is a relatively unknown concept for the Romanian economy – the mobbing or bullying.

Keywords: *stress, burnout, resilience, mobbing, management of stress/burnout/resilience and combating mobbing*

Introduction

From the second half of 2007 I wrote about the fundamental changes which began to occur on the labor market. In fact, the evolution of economy cannot take place without the human factor to adapt to those always changing requirements. The times we live now are much different from what people have experienced or imagined for the future. More specifically, individuals are not mentally prepared for the changes in the social disposition, economic system, life and work conditions... If it is relatively easy to adapt the skills, abilities, professional competences to new jobs, is not the same with the people's psychological preparation to work in stressful conditions. Employers remain subject of immediate profit, but few think that the level of fulfillment of this mission depends mostly on the physical and mental quality of their employees. The more restrictive the legal conditions the lower the investments in the human factor, in the professional development techniques, but especially in preserving or improving their health. It seems that the general concern is to destroy the balance, whatever that may mean – the active body or the body "ready to leave the system", balance of knowledge, individual and collective mental equilibrium, functional balance of economy, balance of the bio-system... Therefore, how can survival and continuation, especially in conditions of performance, be preserved? According to the primary laws: who has days will escape?! According to nepotism laws: who is related to ... or who belongs to the group ...?! In the spirit of Christian laws: who loves his neighbor as himself and do everything he can to help, support, promote?! The problem of the imbalances in the individual's body, whether at work or in family or society, in the context of the economic crisis or the reorganization of the economic activity, is a subject frequently brought into the public's attention [2].

* Professor, Ph. D., Faculty of Administration and Business, University of Bucharest, Romania, (email: catalina.bonciu@yahoo.com).

** Professor, Ph. D., "Dimitrie Cantemir", Christian University, Bucharest, Romania (email: ghcaprarescu@yahoo.com).

It is true that it is not the world leaders who show concern for the fate of the workers. For some time, there is said that the planet's current population exceeds its level of affordability. Various studies, presented staggering conclusions, announced with temper or slipped discreetly, starting from the crisis (in different forms of manifestation) and reaching to subsequent decimations of the population (by means of apparent recovery and modernization).

What should actually raise real signs of concern among employers and managers? Completely voluntarily are not included in the analysis those who "master" us, economically and politically, seen or not seen...

1. The scientific concepts as well as the causes of the phenomena they explain.
2. The general and specific manifestations in the current transition towards a new economic order.
3. The management of all physical phenomena disturbing the physical and psychical equilibrium of the person exposed to transition.
4. What could be done to diminish the negative consequences of these phenomena with negative impact on individuals?

In life, the events we live are not happening at random. There are rare the situations when one cannot reveal the causes. A well scientifically and spiritually trained person, with sufficient attention to everything around him, can logically and emotionally interpret, can relate in time and space, and more than that, he can act as he considers more fit, not as it is directed, manipulated or coerced, forced.

Actual Content

Starting from this premise, what is fundamental for a businessman with a long term vision is to form a professional and loyal team, well trained and ready to change qualification if needed, with willingness to climb the career ladder, with a strong sense of responsibility and duty. Such people bring value to the business, are valuable themselves, and bring value to others in the team. Why? Because they have skills, abilities, competences.

Skills are mental and physical attributes, based on specific functional structures, which lead the person to successfully accomplish a certain activity. As they are reflected in the activity's quality, they show the human's possibilities. The skills are based on hereditary predispositions, but emerge only during activities, under the influence of the environment and the education. Higher forms of manifestation are: vocation (when the individual has a special inclination towards a particular activity), talent (creative development of complex skills) and genius (the highest level of development involved in an activity of historical significance – is rarely encountered among workers). The professional skill is seen as a juxtaposition of simple skills, being conditioned by knowledge, interests and aptitudes. The consummation of the professional skill takes place when the general or intellectual skills (intelligence, memory, observation, attention) are accompanied by one or more specific skills (technical or mechanical, psychomotor, sensory, organizational or management, etc.).

Skills are completed by *mental abilities* (verbal understanding, word fluency, ability to count, resonance, inductance, memory, perceptual speed and other special skills) and *physical abilities* [3]. *Ability* is defined according to the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary as skills, cunning, adroitness, dexterity, quality of being shrewd, skill to do something.

The *professional competence* is the ability to perform activities required at the workplace at the quality level specified in the occupational standard [4]. Professional skills are acquired through: initiation, qualification, training, specialization, retraining:

Initiation - acquiring the minimum knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform an activity.

Qualification - acquiring a set of skills that enable a person to perform a specific activity or profession.

Training - developing the professional skills within the same qualification.

Specialization - acquiring knowledge and skills in a small area of coverage of an occupation.

Requalification - acquiring skills which are specific to other occupations or professions, different from those previously acquired.

Most workers, after fulfilling all the steps in developing and/or acquiring the skills, abilities, competences needed, could not enjoy the results of the effort made for their professional investment.

The present prolonged crisis psychologically marked the workers, stressed them, some more, some less. There are neurotic, depressive employees, employees with identity crises, which receive treatment. But most of them do not even realize what is going on with them, let alone the fact that they would not have the sufficient financial resources for specialized treatment.

The insistence to work under stress turns into burnout. Later, the employers, noticing the employees lack of response to harsh work conditions, being content with their apathy or even rejoicing that they managed to instill terror among the employees, can impose permanent stressful working conditions.

Are any of those interested in the health of their subordinates? Generally, no. If course, if asked, they all pretend to be worried and involved, but, in reality, protection happens only at individual level. However, irrespective of the actions of the employer or of the manager, each individual has the obligation to maintain his health and work capacity in the normal parameters, through his own efforts, without expecting too much from others.

Literature review

According to the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary, stress is the name given to any environmental factor (or combination of factors) causing abnormal body reaction. Stress is an adverse effect of the human body produced by an environmental factor.

The Oxford Dictionary translates the word “stress” as a condition of care, with energetic physical and mental implications. Stress is also a condition or circumstance (not always negative), which can disrupt the normal physiological and psychological functioning of an individual.

There is not a universally accepted definition of stress; many scholars have considered the phenomenon as being the sum of “external and internal conditions creating stressful situations” [5], or “symptoms experienced as a result of the existence of stressful conditions.”

Arnold și Feldman [6] define stress as “the reactions of the individuals to new or threatening environmental factors” and William and Huber (also 1986) define it as “physical and mental reaction to environmental conditions extended beyond the individual’s adaptive capacity.”

In the publication “Gestalt Therapy Verbatim (1969), Pearls [7] suggests a more general interpretations, in which stress is a manifestation of thinking about the future.

French, Kast and Rosenzweig [8] highlight the idea that stress is not necessarily negative. “The term stress can be considered neutral, while distress and eustress terms can be used to define the negative effects and respectively the positive effects.” The authors propose a model that characterizes the optimal level of stress in relation to its effects on performance. What goes beyond the optimal threshold leads to poor performance and “burnout”, and what is under the optimal threshold leads to a decreased performance and generates the “rust-out” (:rusting”. i.e. a trivialization of performance and creativity).

The “father” of the stress concept is Hans Hugo Bruno Selye. He believes that stress is the individual’s adaptation syndrome to the environmental aggressions, through tenseness, tension, coercion, force, strain. Hans Selye defines stress as the totality of the human body reactions to the external action of certain causative agents (physical, chemical, biological and psychological), consisting of morpho-functional changes, frequently endocrine. In the case of a long-term stress agent the general syndrome of adaptation involves a stage evolution. Selye [9] was the first author

who described the stages of the human body in threatening situations. His model, “the general adaptive syndrome” defines three phases: alarm reaction stage (preparation for a possible emergency by slowing digestion, increased heart rate, blood vessel dilation, increased blood pressure and respiratory rate), the stage of resistance (continued stress lead to resistance, the body get accustomed to the effects of the stressful factor) and the exhaustive stage (as the adaptive energetic resources are consumed, the alarm reaction symptom reappears and distress manifests as illness).

The concept of burnout was set in 1969 by H.B. Bradley, in his article “Community-based Treatment for young adult offenders.” Burnout was first defined as a particular stress, strictly related to work. This term has been repeated by the psychoanalyst Herbert J. Freudenberger (1974), then by psychologist Christina Maslach (1976), where burnout was the manifestation of professional wear and tear.

The definition of mobbing is rooted in the English verb “to mob” (to criticize, to confront, to attack someone). There has been written about mobbing since 1963, when Konrad Lorenz described the manifestations of rabbits and geese when a fox appeared. Later, in 1969, the concept was extended to human society by the Swedish Dr. Peter-Paul Heinemann, who studied violence on groups of children [10].

The Swedish psychologist Heinz Leymann consolidated the concept in the world of specialists with his work “Mobbing”, published in 1993, paving the way for German and Scandinavian researchers. He identified about forty components of aggression, which, if repeated at least once a week for six months, represent mobbing. That is, a conflict that degenerates.

The psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Marie-France Hirigoyen has introduced the term “le harcèlement moral” in the French literature, through her book “Le harcèlement moral – La violence perverse au quotidien” (1998). Continuing her studies and research, her second book “Malaise dans le travail” (2001) brought together a growing number of workers which were found in situations similar to those presented in the book. “Moral harassment is an abusive conduct manifested in particular by behavior, words, actions, gestures, writings which can have negative impact on the personality, dignity or physical or mental integrity of a person, endangering his/her work or degrading the social environment.” In other words, the person aggressed is unable, psychologically, to withstand the onset of a conflict or to assume an open conflict, less damaging. [11].

Theoretical background

1. Stress

In management, the concept of stress was borrowed from medicine, where it is perceived as a reactive state of the body subject to a sudden action, and the etymology has to be searched in English, where stress means treadmill. In medical language, stress is defined as a disruption of the body and the homeostasis. This mind-body application occurs when you must deal with continual changes occurring in life. A state of stress appears relatively normal.

Doctors have identified multiple sources of aggression on the body, each representing stressors: trauma, emotional shock, surgery, poisoning, cold and generally, the constraints of daily life (noise, multiple phone calls, urban transport, etc.) In more specific terms, aggression triggers at brain level (pituitary) an “alarm reaction” that stimulates the secretion of adrenocorticotrophic hormone and adrenocortical hormones. They change the subject’s psycho-physiological balance and provoke tachycardia, respiratory hyperventilation and arterial vasoconstriction. When stress is kept within the normal limits, it plays a positive role, improving resilience to pressure. Not the same thing happens when aggression is very intense or too extended in time.

Still in medicine, stress-related disorders are treated at levels such as the neurovegetative factors, endocrine or tissue, with individual customization.

The most common symptom is stomach ulcer – a repeated stimulus leads to the contraction of the arterial network irrigating the stomach mucous. If the stress is not eliminated, ischemia occurs,

i.e. causing circulatory failure or deterioration or necrosis of the tissues. The next step is bleedings or stomach perforation.

Stress-related diseases can appear at cardiovascular level (myocardial infarction, hypertension), digestive level (transit disorders, colitis, ulcers), at skin level (rash, alopecia or hair loss), endocrine level (chronic adrenal insufficiency) and at gynecological level (ovulation disorders and/or menstruation flow).

Stress can be the source of pains and neurovegetative ailments (heart palpitation, syncope), rebel fatigue, depression, insomnia, anorexia and even mental confusion.

Recent studies talk about the dangerous physical changes attributed to prolonged exposure to stress. A report made in New York showed an increase of twenty grams of the heart muscle at persons exposed to stress situations. This “growth of the left ventricle of the heart is present, many times, as an incipient form of a coronary heart disease and a heart attack” (Pieper, 1990). Also, the “Omni” magazine (1991) published a series of experiments made on animals in order to examine the effects of prolonged stress. Researchers have discovered that there is a loss of neurons in the hippocampus region, a phenomenon likely to occur also in the case of human subjects.

Why did I start with the medical approach of stress? Precisely to understand the gravity of the phenomenon. Before explaining the manifestations of organizational stress, everyone should pay more attention to the serious consequences on our body’s health.

In other words, there is a potential for the occurrence of stress. The stressed person cannot manage the imbalance between the individual capacities and the personal resources, and the difference between the rewards and costs of achieving a certain goal is substantial (*ibid*). The personal level of stress is therefore dependent on the self-perception of the personal skills, self-confidence and fear of failure.

As the work environment often implies new situations, stress is unavoidable, and reactions to stress are individualized, depending on perceptions, emotions, attitudes and personal changes of the human resources.

Stress appears as an adaptive individual response to a conscious or unconscious threat, a subjective phenomenon, not as an objective response to the environmental factors. The level of stress caused by a certain situations depends on the way that situation is interpreted, not only by the contextual conditions. In other words, stress is a relative phenomenon.

In addition, focusing on a somewhat distant horizon, creating expectations for the future and appreciating the difference between their ideals and the present situations, individuals begin to feel anxiety. When this anxiety is released on one task, one can speak of eustress, positive and motivating stress. But when anxiety does not lead to mobilization, we are dealing with distress, negative and harmful stress.

Ivancevich and Matteson [12] made the connection between the customs of the primitive people, with responses like “fight or run” in order to survive and the inertia of the human nervous system to respond now, in the same way, to environmental stress factors, even though the environment is radically different. Reitz [13] strengthens and supports the idea that individuals in modern societies often substitute the fight or run option with psychological reactions, such as negativism, the expression of boredom, irritability, nervousness in front of unimportant problems, but also with feelings of persecution, apathy, resignation, fantasy, amnesia, lack of concentration and impossibility to take decisions.

The stress present for a short time represented a useful tool in the survival of humankind. But extended for a longer period of time, stress leads to continuous and increased adaptive efforts. When it comes to work, the negative effect of stress on the physical and emotional health is important. Williams and Huber (1986) presents a comprehensive list of stress symptoms: constant fatigue, low energy levels, headaches, intestinal problems, chronic respiratory problems, sweating limbs, dizziness, increased blood pressure, constant inner tension, insomnia, temperamental crisis, hyperventilation, irritability, restlessness, inability to concentrate, aggressiveness, chronic worry,

anxiety, inability to relax, feeling of inadequacy, increased self-defense, dependence on painkillers, alcohol and tobacco abuse.” Moreover, stressful jobs expose people to serious diseases: managers subject to high levels of stress are twice more prone to heart attacks than those at lower level of stress [14].

2. Burnout

Excessive stress at work is not an isolated or negligible problem. The “burnout” phenomenon is already a constant presence in the life of most employees. In such situations, work-related stress leads to lower productivity levels and the emergence of personal health problems [15].

Burnout is a popular term for mental or physical energy depletion after a period of chronic, unrelieved job-related stress characterized sometimes by physical illness. The person suffering from burnout may lose concern or respect for other people and often has cynical, dehumanized perceptions of people, labeling them in a derogatory manner. Causes of burnout often include stressful, even dangerous, work environments; lack of support; lack of respectful relationships; low pay scales compared with other’s salaries; shift changes and long work hours; pressure from the responsibility of providing continuous high levels of work over long periods; and frustration and disillusionment resulting from the difference between job realities and job expectations [16].

Burnout is the syndrome of total exhaustion. That is, a higher stage of the evolutionary scale of discomfort. Burnout is a disease characterized by a set of signs, symptoms and behavioral changes at workplace; general pain, lack of attention, insomnia, irritability, anxiety, fatigue and psychological distress, lack of work motivation.

In some cases one can observe also morphological, functional or biochemical changes, that can lead to a wrong diagnosis. In such a state of fatigue, burnout is included among the psychosocial risk occupational diseases, as a subsequent exposure to permanent and prolonged stress. Expressed in a cynical way, burnout means: “dead by work overload.”

Burnout is the current specific situation at work, of chronic fatigue syndrome, characterized by physiological and emotional exhaustion. The causes must be sought in the chronic frustration given by the workplace, on one side, and the work volume, on the other side. Therefore, it is not a surprise that persons having the burnout symptoms are all the more: increased consumption of alcohol, coffee and even drugs, depression, decreased self-esteem, pessimism and accentuated feeling of loneliness, absenteeism, tiredness and irritability, muscle tension and stomach problems, loss of sense of humor and strong sense of guilt.

In the current organizational context, employees may experience positive stress, perceived as a pleasant challenge, of limited duration. This helps them concentrate and perform well. The main condition is the short time of manifestation. However, conversion to negative stress, as an intermediary step to burnout, is made on account of a continuous pressure exerted on the respective subject, when they are obliged to act in ways not compatible to their real competences, skills, time and resources.

In 1980, Freudenberger et Richelson in “Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement”, p. 145, defined burnout as “a state of frustration, depression and chronic fatigue caused by dedication to a cause, a life model or a relationship that fails in producing the expected results, leading to reduced involvement and non-completion of work tasks.”

Generally, people do not realize when they go through the stress stages to reach burnout: frustration, anxiety, depression.

Frustration is deep discontent, felt by the individual when something or someone comes in the way of attaining a goal. When kept within certain limits, frustration has beneficial effects: customizes behavior and pushes towards progress and energy mobilization in solving emerging problems. The consequences of frustration are positive only when frustration is intermittent and when the individual has the opportunities to solve the problems. When these lack, frustration becomes an emotional state of mind which may take aggressive forms such as protest, violence,

sabotage or in extremis, apathy and isolation. When frustration comes by surprise and is considered as having unjust causes, it manifests as aggression.

Anxiety is the reaction to a physical or psychological anticipated threat, unlike fear (a response to present danger). Both occur on the lack of defense against possible danger. Anxiety appears in an organization because of the employees' vulnerability in front of decisions which are not in their favor: frequent changes of routine, internal competition, when persons can lose their position or reputation, ambiguity of tasks, job insecurity, mistrust and continuous and hostile surveillance. The personal factors, such as illness, family problems, alienation from a group, too high ambitions, also have an important role in the installation of frustration. Moderate anxiety motivates, sharpens the senses and increases innovation, being the source for interesting solutions to problems and tasks. But when it becomes chronic and exceeds certain limits, the subjects are no longer thinking rationally. Some even start to get help and courage from alcohol, tobacco and drugs. The worst is that people manifesting anxiety, especially men, do not recognize their status (which they consider a sign of weakness), thereby delay discussions on this problem and other's attempts to help them.

Depression is also an emotional state experienced by everyone at some point, following an illness, of a prolonged effort or an unfortunate event. At these times, depression for a limited period is beneficial because the body functions slow down, defending it in front of excessive energy consumption in order to adapt. Normally, depressions disappear after short periods of time. Energy, appetite for life, optimism return and normal life is resumed. But for some depression becomes a permanent state. They are becoming increasingly apathetic and isolate, they are not sleeping well (they get up after one hour or two of sleep), no longer have appetite, are undecided, negligent about their appearance, they find it hard to focus, they feel guilty and helpless, they no longer enjoy life. All this affects their ability to work, their family and social relations, leading to abuse of medicine, alcohol and drugs.

3. Resilience

“At some point, everyone experiences stress. The term was used to describe a variety of negative feelings are reactions that accompany threatening or challenging situations. Thus, not all forms of stress are negative. A certain amount of stress is necessary for our survival. Reaction to stress maximizes energy production to prepare the body to cope with such situations” [17].

Those who managed to maintain themselves in relatively normal operating conditions respond to another managerial and psychological concept – resilience.

Resilience is defined as a dynamic process that individuals exhibit positive behavioral adaptation when they encounter important adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress:

- good outcomes regardless of high/risk status;
- constant competence under stress;
- recovery from trauma;
- using from challenges for growth that makes future hardships more tolerable.

In the past two years, words such as *layoffs*, *unemployed* and *restructuring* are also known by children. The so-called “survivors” of these events positively answered to the resilience phenomenon, to the recent economic and financial changes.

The price paid by those who leave a company which undergoes a restructuring process is far too high. The consequences for the survivors are also, significant and serious. The employees' confidence and moral often suffers as the volume of work increases and job insecurity become more pressing. Over half of these survivors are extremely stressed at work, suffer of fatigue due to reduction of personnel and present the risk of no longer being apt for work. However there are cases of survivors who consider this an opportunity for personal development [18].

Reduction of personnel seems to cause stress both to managers and those who manage to keep their jobs. Managers may feel threatened because, according to the American model – where growth equals success, the opposite may indicate a failure, at least in perception. Whether it is an inefficient or poor management, managers that implement staff reductions say they themselves feel a certain degree of insecurity at the work place. Managers are thus faced with a diminished importance in the organization – the image and their status is affected. Moreover, their responsibility of communicating the layoffs decision to the employees leaving the company is generating stress and anxiety in itself [19].

Employees, survivors of such changes may come to feel the stress at a very high level, mainly because of a mixture of guilt and insecurity. They often feel guilty, especially in front of their colleagues leaving the company. Then, exposure to the departure of those colleagues causes the perception of a threat: losing their job, demotion and income reduction (ibidem).

As a concept, the reduction of personnel is not equivalent to the decline of the organization, as it aims growth in efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. The survivors of this process may contribute or hinder this goal. Everything depends on the reactions and behaviors they adopt. The classification of survivors can be made in a sociologic frame of reference EVLN – exit, voice, loyalty, neglect (Hirschman, 1970, Farrell, 1983), according to types of behavior constructive/destructive and active/passive (MISHRA, SPREITZER, 1998). By juxtaposing the two dimensions, we can classify survivors in:

- *Constructive* – do not perceive restructuring as threatening and are willing to cooperate with management in order to implement it. Example: employees work unpaid overtime to help the organization overcome the transition period.

- *Destructive* – just the opposite; they feel the change as threatening and become uncooperative. Example: the surviving employees stock or block in their department resources which could be used in other departments;

- *Active* – express confidence that they can cope with the restructuring, are assertive. Example: employees offer to identify the jobs that need to be restructured or, by contrast, organize protests against restructuring.

- *Passive* – do not trust their ability to cope with the reorganization process, do not have initiative.

Example: employees wait for their superiors to identify the jobs to be restructured.

4. Mobbing

Mobbing is a communication interrupted by a conflict between colleagues or between superiors and the staff at the workplace, where the concerned individual is systematically dominated and often attacked, directly or indirectly, by one or more persons (at least once a week) and over a long period of time (min. six months) with the purpose to expel him/her from the working life and what makes him/her feel discriminated against.

There is a so called “list of the 45” [20] which clearly lists the behaviors and actions resulting from mobbing:

- a) Effects on the victims’ possibilities to communicate adequately (10):
 - Management gives the victim no possibility to communicate;
 - The victim is constantly interrupted;
 - The victim is silenced by colleagues;
 - The victim is verbally attacked;
 - The victim is permanently criticized about his/her work ;
 - The private life of the victim is continuously commented (negatively);
 - The victim is terrorized via phone;
 - The victim is orally threatened;

- The victim receives written threats;
- The victim is denied eye contact, by derogatory glances or gestures, through allusions, without being directly spoken.
- b) Effects on the victims' possibilities to maintain social contacts (5):
 - The colleagues do not talk with the victim;
 - He/she is denied conversation;
 - The victim is isolated from the colleagues, being moved as far away as possible;
 - The colleagues are forbidden to talk with the victim;
 - He/she is completely ignored.
- c) Effects on the victims' possibilities to maintain his personal reputation (15):
 - The victim is calumniated;
 - Rumors are spread;
 - The victim is ridiculed;
 - The victim is suspected to suffer from a mental illness;
 - It is intended to force the victim to submit to a psychiatric examination;
 - Colleagues make fun of a handicap of the victim;
 - They imitate walking, way of talking or gestures, in order to laugh at him/her;
 - They attack the political and religious views of the victim;
 - They publicly despise the victim's privacy;
 - They laugh of the victim's ethnic heritage;
 - The victim is forced to do tasks that shake his/her confidence;
 - The victim's work is appreciated in an incorrect and offensive way;
 - They question the victim's decisions;
 - They use obscene words or other calumnious expressions;
 - The victim is made verbal sexual offers.
- d) Effects on the victims' occupational situation:
 - The victim is not given work assignments;
 - The victim is stopped from completing their work assignments;
 - The victim is given meaningless work assignments,
 - The victim is given work tasks which are not suitable for his/her qualification;
 - The victim permanently receives new tasks;
 - The victim is given offensive tasks;
 - The victim is given tasks which are not proper for their own qualification, in order to discredit him/her.
- e) Effects on the victims' physical health:
 - The victim is given dangerous work assignments;
 - The victim is threatened with physical attacks;
 - The victim is aggressed physically, to be given a lesson;
 - The victim is physically aggressed;
 - The victim is caused financial damages;
 - The victim is caused physical damages in privacy or at work;
 - The victim is sexually aggressed.

In most cases, mobbing appears in a stressed body, in a person physically and morally weakened. Mobbing is likely to appear when the organizational climate favors the splitting of the working team, when individuals, separated from the group, become vulnerable. The phenomenon degenerates in:

- I – daily conflicts, unnecessary but common;

II – psychological terror, mobbing installed because the victim did not participate in the resolution of previous conflicts;

III – bad management of the destructive personnel, often too late for the victim and only on the recommendation of colleagues' representatives;

IV – exclusion from the working life, not because of physical and social problems, but because of the misfortune of being “chosen” for such a position.

It is clear that there are well planned scenarios by which the victim is forced to resign or retire earlier. And these are the situations with a happy end, because the gravity of the phenomenon is revealed by many call centers and therapy clinics, where victims seek help, either just advice or medical, psychotherapeutic help. I met a large number of medics and psychiatrists, who have tried, for at least ten years, to help suffering people, victims of mobbing. The effects of their work cannot be neglected, but satisfactions (if it can be named as such in this context) are always minimal. Why? Because the percentage of psychological and moral relief and comfort of individuals subject to mobbing (and who, no doubt, are made ill on the long run) is not at all high, any person recovered is a huge success for the therapists.

People are different, not everyone has the ability to acknowledge mobbing. They do not know how to react in their own favor, they have no courage to oppose, or to ask help from their superiors. Often, they do not know their rights, they have no idea where to turn, what help to ask. In our country, unlike France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom... the phenomenon is ignored by legislation, and the EU laws, which naturally should be appropriated by any state of the European Union, are totally ignored.

Conclusions

Stress at work is responsible for millions of working days unused each year and millions of days of sick leave. So the figures for human and material (money) losses are significant since many companies do not realize how much stress at work affects life and the economic progress.

First of all, the treatment of stress, of burnout or in counter resilience, is preventive and consists in gaining a better resistance.

The holistic combat of stress is made through a healthy way of life, by maintaining a perfect equilibrium between work and life style, with the help of:

- Education (strengthen self-esteem, positive thinking); in all its forms: in family, formal, informal and non-formal;
- Energetic rehabilitation (healthy food; exposure to natural light and fresh air; exercises in open air; respecting the sleeping hours...)
- Adopting a preventive behavior: diminish/eliminate smoking, alcohol, avoiding crowded places or with a high degree of risk, use seat belt while driving, helmet on motorcycle, knee pads and armrests while practicing certain sports, using protection gloves while gardening...

Alimentation has to be made of substances necessary to the daily consumption: carbohydrates (50-55%), proteins (15-20%), unsaturated fats, fibers, vitamins, minerals and a lot of water (2l/day), vegetables, fruits and cereals (over 60% of the daily menu); as many fresh, natural aliments as possible, no additives or preservatives.

Water, which is considered “the source of life” is an main component of the human body (present in almost 75 pc) has structural role and role in the fluid equilibrium; lubricant and emollient; thermostat; washing, conditioning, transport and solubilization agent, with an important role in digestion (forming saliva); prophylactic and curative factor – hydrotherapy.

Light was defined over time as: photons, wave flow, complex of electromagnetic radiations, UV radiations (A – long, B – medium, C – short), visible (40% of those reaching Earth) and infrared (caloric), cosmic radiations, γ , X rays, and so on. The effects of light are: it is photochemical and photosensitive (heatstroke, rash...), bactericidal, physiological and psychological of colors,

biochemical and metabolic, it has effects on blood, circulatory, respiratory, digestive systems, on the endocrine and on the nervous system, on the skin...

The fresh air, even though invisible it is vital, more than physically necessary (to the life of plants and animals) and through the negative ions favors the effect of aërotherapeutics and diminishes those of pollution (smoking)...

Exercises in open air and physical exercises are recommended, such as:

- walking every day and jogging as much as possible;
- renouncing at the comfort of the elevator, the car (for the bicycle), the escalators...;
- walks in lunch breaks or between activities;
- rediscover the gym or the sports in parks with special gym arrangements;
- dance classes;
- trips on touristic routes;
- climbing on high mountains;
- practice any physical activity.

Self-determination and respecting the sleeping hours has to respect the three equal parts: 8hrs work + 8hrs other activities + 8hrs of sleep. Even in the case of insomnia the body has to remain in an horizontal position in bed, with eyes closed, and it is recommended 2hrs of sleep or rest in bed in the afternoons. Rest is called the universal force of our existence, a proper behavior factor, but also a remedy with extended utility.

The causes of exhaustion are: long hours work or physical effort – hypotonic fatigue, long term work or intellectual effort – hypertonic fatigue, insufficient sleep. Sleep is defined as the organism's rejuvenation period, characterized by interrupting the state of wakefulness.

According to the simple people, it is recommendable to draw a "map of life", as a diagnosis analysis of what is healthy and recommended to be preserved (raw a little processed food, water consumption in large quantities, respect and time for one's self, happiness and passion in life) and what is harmfully and has to be eliminated (alcohol, smoking, drugs in any way – medicines, plants, coffee – in excess), and what is not yet part of one's behavior, to be adopted.

Maybe the easiest way to apply in the treatment of stress, burnout and resilience, has to start from a few advices:

- Nothing, except respecting the laws, is compulsory, but recommendable.
 - "You don't have to, it's good to..."
 - Life lived intensely, alertly, with preoccupations, shortcomings and worries impede people to think about themselves, about their aspirations, their ideals...
 - Self-forgetting leads to exhaustion, illness or extra pounds, motivation, energy or the joy of living disappear.
 - The most recent recommendation encourages the change in the existential paradigm by adopting a new approach of the phenomena's causality and effects and existential simplification (reduction in the number of daily needs – from 11.000 of the modern man).
- The incredible regenerative capacity of the organism can be met by a series of complementary therapies:
- Therapies for a better way of life: naturopathy, relaxation, visualization, meditation...
 - Therapies for wellbeing: Alexander technique, Tai Chi, Chi Kung...
 - Natural therapies: homeopathy, natural medicine...
 - Touch therapies: massage, shiatsu, aromatherapy, reflexology...
 - Art therapy: dance, color, painting, music, sculpture...
 - Manipulation therapy: palm-therapy, osteopathy...
 - Mental therapies: healing, psychotherapy, hypnotherapy...
 - Eastern therapies: Ayurveda, Chinese traditional medicine, acupuncture...

Adopt a healthy way of life, in harmony with nature, can influence genetically a person. "Healthier life, rawer and vegetarian food, intense exercise and continuous love stimulate the development of brain cells, disabling genes that generate diseases, transforming them in benefic ones." (dr. Dean Ornish, president and founder of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute in Sausalito, California, during the latest TED Conference in Monterey).

Regarding mobbing, its impact on an individual has long-term consequences and infinitely more devastating than stress or its higher forms – burnout and resilience – because, the moral subjugation of the individual is more destructive, both for him/herself and the society.

Managing a mobbing situation is more complicated and costly than preventing it. People subject to bullying have certain manifestations, at least on three levels [21]:

- Psychopathological: reactions to anxiety, fear and avoidance; apathy; concentration problems; depression; changing mood; flashbacks; hypertension; insecurity; insomnia; intrusive thoughts; irritability; lack of initiative; melancholy; recurrent nightmares;

- Psychosomatic: asthma attacks; hypertension; tachycardia; arrhythmia; heart diseases; dermatitis; hair loss; headaches; muscle and stomach aches; even ulcers; loss of balance...

- Behavioral: hetero-aggressive and self-aggression reactions; eating disorders; increasing frequency of drinking, smoking, drugs; avoiding friends and social isolation; physical discomfort and illness; self-isolation from social engagements; detachment from family ties, from commitments/responsibilities; intolerance to family problems; violence and worsening school performance of children; sexual dysfunctions; marital problems and divorce; loss of joint projects, friends; difficulty in qualifying for other jobs or engage in job search; litigations; loss of income; health expenses ...

Losses are considerable both for the employers and the community/society.

In the first case employers engage additional costs related to retirement; repeated transfers and staff replacement costs; absenteeism due to sickness; growing number of people unable to work, as well as the total number of employees; increased costs of training new personnel and workplace integration; costs for labor disputes; loss of qualified personnel; damage to company image; decrease in number of clients; reduced competitiveness and product quality; reduced individual and group productivity; reduced motivation, satisfaction and creativity; organizational climate damage.

In the latter case, the whole society becomes a victim because of the increased pressure on the general wellness, with various consequences, depending on the national health system and social services: costs due to early retirement; high costs for the disabled/work incapacity; high costs with unemployment; medical costs and possible hospitalizations; loss of human resources, more painful when it comes to efficient/productive employees.

If the main concern today is strictly related to money, either as income or costs, mobbing is one important aspect that has to be brought into discussion, not necessary the impact of mobbing on the victim, but especially in respect to the behavior of the community. In most cases considered delightful by those fond of conflicts and scandals, it is lost sight of the consequences of the victim's manifestations on his/her colleagues. Some enjoy, participate directly, as aggressive characters, morally threatening. Others, more fearful, with a weak personality or training keep distance from the victim, without realizing that in a near of distant future they will take his/her place. And then the skills, abilities, talent or vocation, competences, experience or seniority will not matter.

Therefore, if this reminiscent animal behavior found in the reactions of certain workers is understood, why not establish a system to protect potential victims?

As we are witnessing in the recent years a massive loss of rights won by workers in several hundred years, the only viable recommendation is to keep one's mental state in perfect condition, to provide oneself with a solid cultural and educational baggage, capable of allowing an easy integration in the work team and more flexibility in interpersonal relations.

References

- Hugh J. Arnold, Daniel C. Feldman, *Organizational Behavior*, (New York: McGraw Hill, SUA, 1986)
- Cătălina Bonciu, *Stress, burnout and resilience*, (comunicare științifică ICEA, București, România, 2011)
- David J. Cherrington, *The Management of individual and organizational performance*, (Allyn and Bacon, SUA, 1989)
- Ingrid M. Cordon, *Stress*, (Ed. California State University, Northridge, SUA, 1997)
- Wendell L. French, Fremont Ellsworth Kast and James Erwin Rosenzweig, *Understanding Human Behavior in Organizations*, (New York: Harper & Row, SUA, 1985)
- John M. Ivancevich, Michael T. Matteson, *Stress and Work*, (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, SUA, 1980)
- Peggy Lawless, *Employee Burnout: America's Newest Epidemic*, (Minneapolis, MN: Northwestern National Life Employee Benefits Division, SUA, 1991)
- Theodor J.E. McGrath, *Stress and behavior in organizations in Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, (Dunnett, M. D. (ed) Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing, SUA, 1976)
- Karen Spreitzer and Gretchen M. Spreitzer, *Explaining how survivors respond to downsizing: the roles of trust, empowerment, justice, and work redesign*, (Academy of Management Review, Vol. 23, No.3: 567-588, SUA, 1998)
- Frederick S. Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, (Lafayette, CA: Real People Press, SUA, 1969)
- H. Joseph Reitz, *Behavior in Organizations*, (Homewood, IL: Irwin, SUA, 1986)
- Ray H. Roseman, Meyer Friedman, *The central nervous system and coronary heart disease*, (in *Hospital Practice* 6: 87-97, SUA, 1971)
- Hans Selye, *The general adaptation syndrome and the diseases of adaptation*, (in *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology*. 2: 117-230, SUA, 1946)
- Robert Sutton, Thomas D'Aunno, *Decreasing organizational size: untangling the effects of money and people*, (Academy of Management Review, No. 2, Vol. 14: 194-212, SUA, 1989)
- Guide pour les victimes du harcèlement moral „Mobbing” et pour leurs interlocuteurs, (Mobbing aslb, Luxembourg, 2011=
- *Mosby's Medical Dictionary*, (8th edition, Elsevier, 2009)
- *OUG 129/2000 privind formarea profesională a adulților*, art.5.
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobbing>
- <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harc%C3%A8lement>
- <http://www.semneletimpului.ro/stirescurta/S-a-deschis-primul-centru-anti-mobbing-din-Romania-3599.html>