



“EN-TÊTE” campaign on mental health

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

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Today, as part of your EN-TÊTE campaign, let's do some thinking about mental workload.

Mental workload is a weight you carry around without really realizing it. When you make a physical effort, you get tired from it. There's a beginning and an end. However, with mental workload, there is no end. There are things going on in your head that are weighing you down, almost without you knowing it. You're working on one file, but you're thinking about the next one. You think that you haven't put in enough hours, that you should be home this evening, but you aren't because you have to work. Mental workload is all the concerns we have that are sometimes background noise. Sometimes we hear loud and clear “I should be doing something else”, or equally loud and clear, “I have too many responsibilities”. And sometimes, things weigh on our minds without us even being aware.

Responsibilities and powers

Responsibilities must go hand in hand with the power to carry them out. When you are given responsibilities without enough means to carry them out, they turn into a mental workload. For instance, let's take concerns over money. “Am I going to make ends meet? Am I going to have enough money? Am I spending too much? Am I making good investments? When am I going to be able to retire? Will I be able to support my family?” If these questions are a regular concern for you, they constitute a mental workload.

Take action...

What can you do? You can take action, but first, you have to take some time to think. We have to ask ourselves what is weighing on our minds, what feels heavy. Money is a good example. When you become a professional, a lawyer, for instance, you feel that you should have a certain standard of living, that other people expect you to be living at a certain pace, that you'll have certain possessions and a certain amount of freedom. Sometimes, the ideal image and reality are different. You have to sit down and face the reality of your finances. Deal with them instead of worrying about them.

The same is true of your health: do you have concerns about your health and wonder what you can do to care of yourself? First, you have to look at your concerns, face the reality of them, and then take action.

...while being realistic

Sometimes we ask too much of ourselves, sometimes even the impossible. For instance, let's take work-family balance: you may have a picture of a father who was always outside of the home with many professional responsibilities and a mother who had many family responsibilities. You have two models, but if you try to do the exact same things as your father plus your mother, you won't be able to, because you don't have two lives, but only one.

It is therefore important to question our models and make sure they are realistic. We have to take into consideration who we are as a person, instead of trying to measure up to a standard or an image that others have of us.

Conclusion

We have to take stock of the situation, and then take action. Act in order to achieve a balance that is right for you and take some of the weight off your shoulders.

When you delegate, whether it is at work or in other spheres of your life, try to delegate responsibilities rather than just tasks. Remember that when you delegate a task, you are holding on to the mental workload of making sure everything is going well. Instead, try to find people you trust. They might not be as perfect as you, but it will be one less weight on your shoulders!