



PROMOTING STRESS PREVENTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE TEACHERS - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract: *Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, wound up tight, tense and worried. We all experience stress at times. It can sometimes help to motivate us to get a task finished, or perform well. But stress can also be harmful if we become over-stressed and it interferes with our ability to get on with our normal life for too long. The hormones increase our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, metabolism and muscle tension. Our pupils dilate and our perspiration rate increases. While these physical changes help us try to meet the challenges of the stressful situation, they can cause other physical or psychological symptoms if the stress is ongoing and the physical changes do not settle down. The signs and symptoms of stress overload can be almost anything. Stress affects the mind, body, and behavior in many ways, and everyone experiences stress differently. Hence, it is important to learn how to recognize when our stress levels are “out of control” or having an adverse effect. It cannot be completely avoided, but measured and minimised based on which an individual’s positive development and well-being is ensured.*

Keywords: *stress, hormones, metabolism, symptoms, well-being.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a normal part of life. To some extent, stress is good; it motivates us and helps to become more productive. However, too much stress, or a strong response to stress can be harmful. If we always respond in a negative way, our health and happiness may suffer. By understanding ourselves and our reaction to stress-provoking situations, we can learn to handle stress more effectively. To be accurate, stress management is not about learning how to avoid or escape the pressures and turbulence of modern living; it is about learning to appreciate how the body reacts to these pressures, and about learning how to develop skills which enhance the body's adjustment. To learn stress management is to learn about the mind-body connection and to the degree to which we can control our health in a positive sense.

Causes/ Sources of Stress:

- a) Environment: weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, unsafe and substandard housing, and crime.
- b) Social stressors: deadlines, financial problems, job interviews, presentations, disagreements, demands for your time and attention, loss of a loved one, divorce, and co-parenting.
- c) Physiological stressors: rapid growth of adolescence, menopause, illness, aging, giving birth, accidents, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and sleep disturbances.
- d) Thoughts: Brains interpretations and perceptions.

Cognitive Aspects of Stress and Anxiety:

Anxiety is a feeling that we commonly experience when faced with stressful life events. Anxiety can be one of the most distressing emotions that people feel. It is sometimes called "fear or nervousness".

Physical Symptoms of stress include: Sweaty palms, Muscle tension, Racing heart, Flushed cheeks, Light headedness

Behaviors include: Avoiding situations where experiencing anxiety might occur, Leaving situations when feelings of anxiety begins to occur, Trying to do things perfectly or trying to control events to prevent danger.

Moods include: Nervous, Irritable, Anxious, Panicky.



Thoughts include: Overestimation of danger, Underestimation of your ability to cope, Underestimation of help available, Worries and catastrophic thoughts.

Common Signs and Symptoms of Stress:

1. Frequent headaches, jaw clenching or pain
2. Gritting, grinding teeth
3. Stuttering or stammering
4. Tremors, trembling of lips, hands
5. Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms
6. Light headedness, faintness, dizziness
7. Ringing in the ears
8. Frequent blushing, sweating
9. Dry mouth, problems swallowing
10. Cold or sweaty hands, feet
11. Frequent colds, infections
12. Rashes, itching, hives, "goose bumps"
13. Unexplained or frequent allergy attacks
14. Heartburn, stomach pain, nausea
15. Excess belching, flatulence
16. Constipation, diarrhea
17. Difficulty breathing, sighing
18. Sudden attacks of panic
19. Chest pain, palpitations
20. Frequent urination
21. Low sexual drive or performance
22. Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness
23. Increased anger, frustration, hostility
24. Depression, frequent or intense mood swings
25. Increased or decreased appetite
26. Insomnia, nightmares, disturbing dreams
27. Difficulty concentrating, racing thoughts
28. Trouble learning new information



29. Forgetfulness, disorganization, confusion
30. Difficulty in making decisions
31. Feeling overwhelmed
32. Frequent crying spells or suicidal thoughts
33. Feelings of loneliness or worthlessness
34. Little interest in appearance, punctuality
35. Nervous habits, feet tapping, fidgeting
36. Increased frustration, irritability
37. Overreaction to petty annoyances
38. Increased number of minor accidents
39. Obsessive/compulsive behaviors
40. Reduced work productivity
41. Lies or excuses covering up poor work
42. Rapid or mumbled speech
43. Excessive defensiveness or suspiciousness
44. Problems with communication
45. Social withdrawal or isolation
46. Constant tiredness, weakness, fatigue
47. Frequent use of over-the-counter drugs
48. Weight gain or loss without diet
49. Increased smoking, alcohol, or drug use
50. Excessive gambling or impulse buying

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the meaning for 'stress' and its causes at workplace.
- To understand the impact of stress on teacher's quality of work-life in autonomous colleges.
- To evaluate the psychological attitudes and how individual teachers perceive the concept of stress.
- To analyse the positive ways of managing stress and its impact on psychological well-being.



Hypothesis:

H0: Every Autonomous College Teachers are not over-stressed, although having a positive attitude towards psychological well-being.

H1: Every Over-stressed Autonomous College Teachers have negative attitude towards psychological well-being.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study involved a number of 200 teachers involving seventy- five Assistant Professors, seventy-five Associate Professors and fifty Professors. The scope of this study is limited within the Mangalore city. Convenient sampling method was adopted for data collection primarily, via; questionnaires. This Work-related Questionnaire included thirty eight variables which were used as parameters to measure the impact of stress on an individual's well-being empirically, using SPSS. The ROC curves are also constructed so as to identify the specificity and sensitivity of certain stress variables and they tend to change over times, creating impact on the individual's psychological and physical well-being.

Introduction to the Work-Related Questionnaire:

This questionnaire is closely based on the Management Standards Indicator Tool produced by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive). The Management Standards define the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work-related stress are being effectively managed and controlled. The questionnaire is being issued by the UNITE Health and Safety Representatives following reports of the work-related stress.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Arkott (1968) describes in detail his own and **Maslow's (1954)** observations of the characteristics of autonomous behavior. "People with strong autonomy needs avoid routines, responsibilities, and obligations. They refuse to conform; they ignore convention, disregarding the opinions and demands of others, defying authority" (Arkott, p. 46). Autonomous people are "self-constrained and not easily upset by environmental adversities" (Arkott, p. 46). Arkott points out that autonomous people are dependent on their environments for the satisfaction of only the most basic of needs. **Maslach (1999)**, the renowned expert on burnout, declares that stress and burnout are two distinct constructs; however, for purposes of this study they were considered degrees of the same construct. Burnout was first investigated in the 1970s as a crisis of overextended and disillusioned



service workers. The influence of stress and subsequent potential for burnout was soon shown to be “an issue of particular concern for all people orientated occupations in which (a) the relationship between providers and recipients is central to the work and (b) the provision of education, service, or treatment can be a highly emotional experience” (Maslach, p. 211).

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Scale: Variables of stress and their impact on Autonomous College Teacher's psychological

Well-Being

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	199	89.2
Cases Excluded ^a	24	10.8
Total	223	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.572	.431	41

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People	983.717	198	4.968	15.592	.000
Between Items	1326.662	40	33.167		
Within People Residual	16847.338	7920	2.127		
Total	18174.000	7960	2.283		
Total	19157.717	8158	2.348		

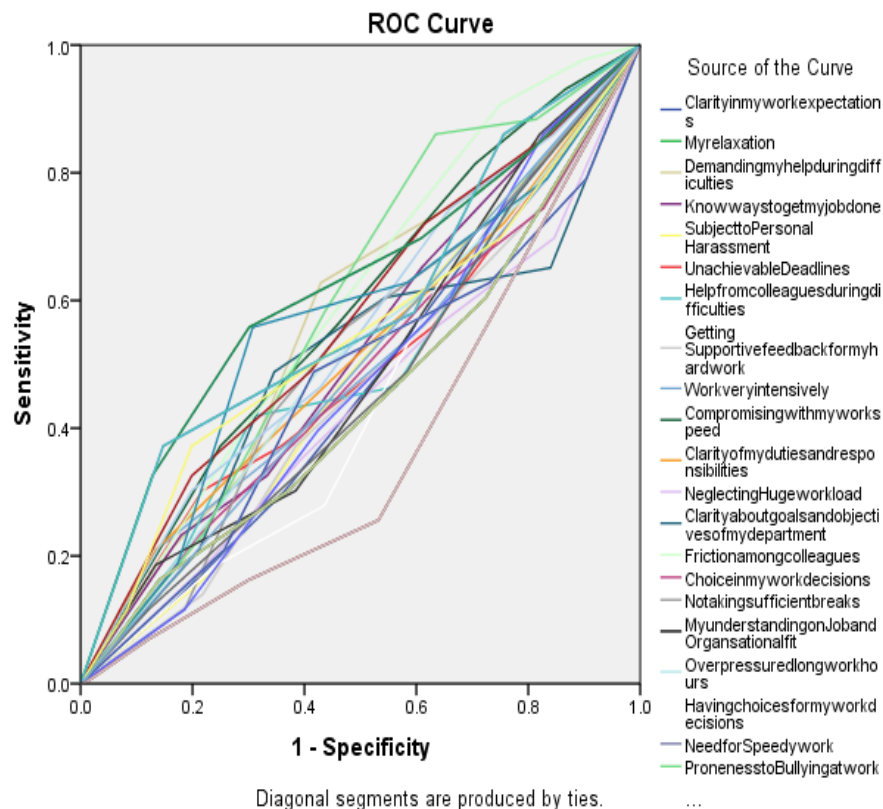
Grand Mean = 2.8473

Inference:

The Alternative study (H1) that ‘Every Over-stressed Autonomous College Teachers have negative attitude towards psychological well-being’ is proved satisfactory since the ‘p’- value is .000 which is lower @ 5% level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.



a) The below given chart highlights on how the impact of stress variables differs based on ages:



Case Processing Summary

Age ^a	Valid N (listwise)
Positive ^b	43
Negative	156
Missing	24

- Larger values of the test result variable(s) indicate stronger evidence for a positive actual state.

a. The test result variable(s): My understanding on Job and Organizational fit, Communicate to line managers on any dissatisfied work means has at least one tie between the positive actual state group and the negative actual state group.

b. The positive actual state is below 30 years.

Area Under the Curve

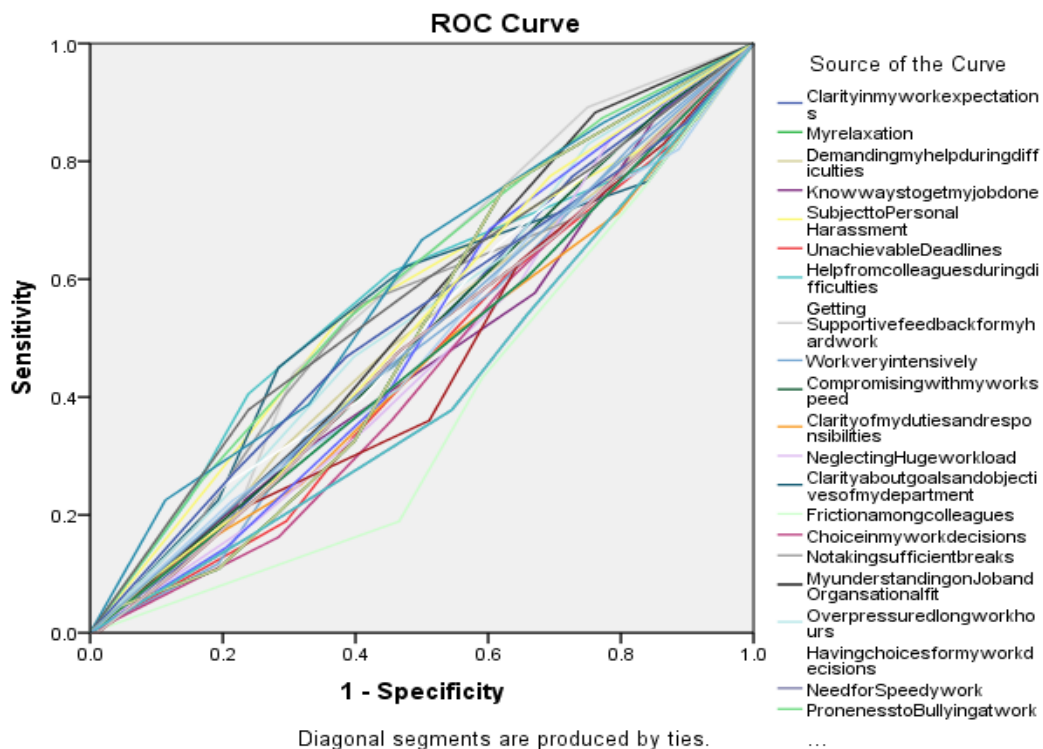
Test Result Variable(s)	Area
Clarity in my work expectations	.469
My relaxation	.366



Demanding my help during difficulties	.571
Know ways to get my job done	.523
Subject to Personal Harassment	.485
Unachievable Deadlines	.495
Help from colleagues during difficulties	.499
Getting Supportive feedback for my hard work	.455
Work very intensively	.495
Compromising with my work speed	.583
Clarity of my duties and responsibilities	.516
Neglecting Huge workload	.439
Clarity about goals and objectives of my department	.495
Friction among colleagues	.599
Choice in my work decisions	.483
No taking sufficient breaks	.513
My understanding on Job and Organizational fit	.446
Over-pressured long work hours	.511
Having choices for my work decisions	.454
Need for Speedy work	.585
Proneness to Bullying at work	.589
My awareness on others being bullied at work	.491
My challenge against bullying	.550
My confidence for stoppage of bullying at work	.569
Unrealistic time pressures	.473
Dependence on line managers for sharing problems at work	.467
Getting support from my colleagues	.556
My opportunities to question managers for change	.620
Getting respect from my colleagues	.463
Consulting staff to offer change at work	.620
Communicate to line managers on any dissatisfied work means	.467
My flexible work time schedule	.446
My flexible working location	.446
Colleagues understanding to my problems	.366
Clarity of my work responses to changes	.540
Support via emotionally demanding work	.366
Strained work relationships	.585
Encouragement from my line managers	.366



b) The below given chart highlights on how the impact of stress variables differs based on profession:



Case Processing Summary

Gender ^a	Valid N (listwise)
Positive ^b	111
Negative	88
Missing	24

- Larger values of the test result variable(s) indicate stronger evidence for a positive actual state.

a. **The test result variable(s):** My understanding on Job and Organisational fit, Communicate to line managers on any dissatisfied work means has at least one tie between the positive actual state group and the negative actual state group.

b. The positive actual state is male.

Area Under the Curve

Test Result Variable(s)	Area
Clarity in my work expectations	.507
My relaxation	.487

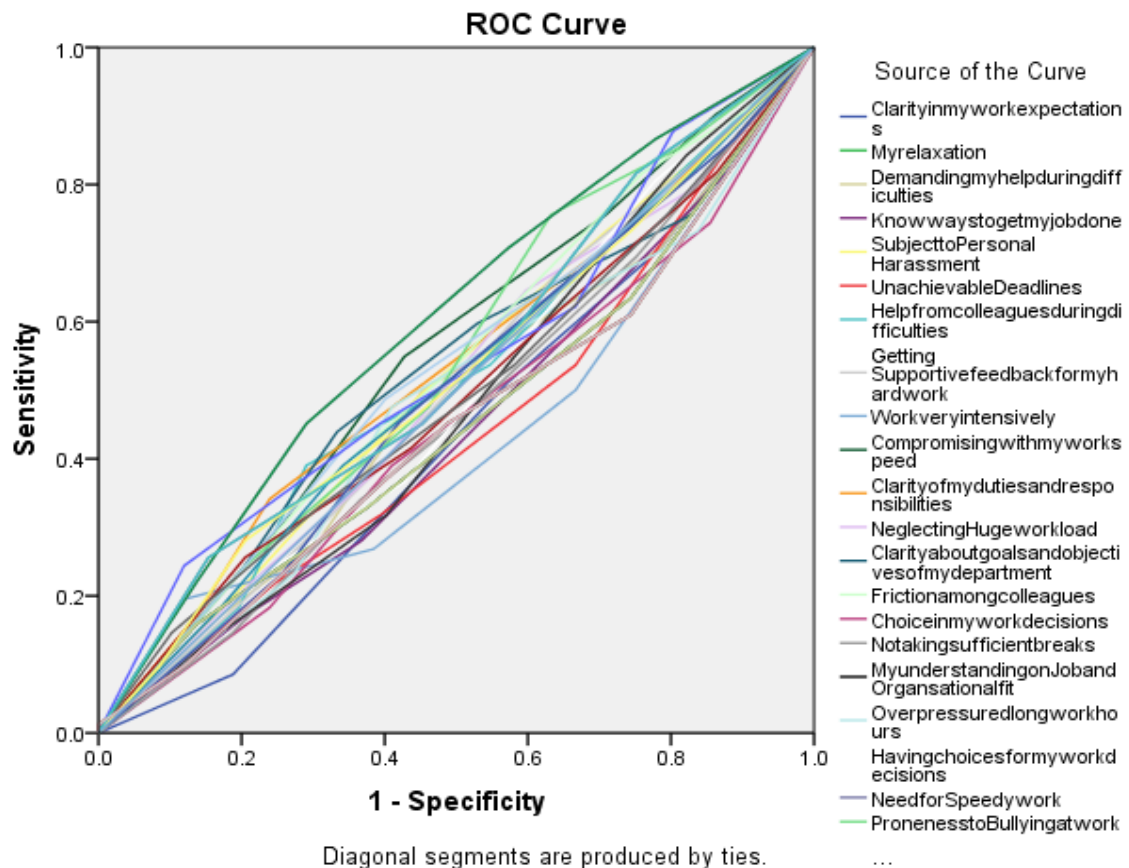


Demanding my help during difficulties	.504
Know ways to get my job done	.475
Subject to Personal Harassment	.559
Unachievable Deadlines	.454
Help from colleagues during difficulties	.569
Getting Supportive feedback for my hard work	.579
Work very intensively	.485
Compromising with my work speed	.505
Clarity of my duties and responsibilities	.456
Neglecting Huge workload	.473
Clarity about goals and objectives of my department	.549
Friction among colleagues	.373
Choice in my work decisions	.447
No taking sufficient breaks	.540
My understanding on Job and Organizational fit	.509
Over-pressured long work hours	.537
Having choices for my work decisions	.521
Need for Speedy work	.416
Proneness to Bullying at work	.593
My awareness on others being bullied at work	.541
My challenge against bullying	.482
My confidence for stoppage of bullying at work	.454
Unrealistic time pressures	.502
Dependence on line managers for sharing problems at work	.528
Getting support from my colleagues	.590
My opportunities to question managers for change	.471
Getting respect from my colleagues	.568
Consulting staff to offer change at work	.471
Communicate to line managers on any dissatisfied work means	.528
My flexible work time schedule	.509
My flexible working location	.509
Colleagues understanding to my problems	.487
Clarity of my work responses to changes	.522
Support via emotionally demanding work	.487
Strained work relationships	.416
Encouragement from my line managers	.487

The test result variable(s) has at least one tie between the positive actual state group and the negative actual state group.



c) The below given chart highlights on how the impact of stress variables differs based on Educational Qualification:



Case Processing Summary

EducationalQualification ^a	Valid N (listwise)
Positive ^b	82
Negative	117
Missing	24

• Larger values of the test result variable(s) indicate stronger evidence for a positive actual state.

a. The test result variable(s): My understanding on Job and Organsational fit, Communicate to line managers on any dissatisfied work means has at least one tie between the positive actual state group and the negative actual state group.

b. The positive actual state is Assistant Professor.



Area Under the Curve

Test Result Variable(s)	Area
Clarity in my work expectations	.436
My relaxation	.450
Demanding my help during difficulties	.486
Know ways to get my job done	.444
Subject to Personal Harassment	.517
Unachievable Deadlines	.442
Help from colleagues during difficulties	.514
Getting Supportive feedback for my hard work	.503
Work very intensively	.431
Compromising with my work speed	.554
Clarity of my duties and responsibilities	.532
Neglecting Huge workload	.503
Clarity about goals and objectives of my department	.523
Friction among colleagues	.533
Choice in my work decisions	.448
No taking sufficient breaks	.465
My understanding on Job and Organizational fit	.456
Over-pressured long work hours	.480
Having choices for my work decisions	.491
Need for Speedy work	.537
Proneness to Bullying at work	.541
My awareness on others being bullied at work	.476
My challenge against bullying	.528
My confidence for stoppage of bullying at work	.492
Unrealistic time pressures	.544
Dependence on line managers for sharing problems at work	.498
Getting support from my colleagues	.512
My opportunities to question managers for change	.599
Getting respect from my colleagues	.493
Consulting staff to offer change at work	.599
Communicate to line managers on any dissatisfied work means	.498
My flexible work time schedule	.456
My flexible working location	.456
Colleagues understanding to my problems	.450
Clarity of my work responses to changes	.517
Support via emotionally demanding work	.450
Strained work relationships	.537
Encouragement from my line managers	.450

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- It was found that 82% of respondents always have heavy work-load within the organisation.



- 82% of the respondents feel much pressurised to take up the results.
- It has also been found that majority of them have opinion that their efforts are always not recognised in the Institution.
- There is no compromise for not finishing the work. "Either Do or Die" is one of the philosophies adopted to tame the individuals achieve the targeted goals.
- 76% of the respondents are not clear of their goals and are disinterested to work.
- Majority of them agree to come to teach in Autonomous colleges so that they gain experience, and can earn something. In short, if they don't get job elsewhere they end up their career in teaching.
- 92% of the respondents (majority of the Professors and Associate Professors) have agreed to dump their work load and get them shared among their peers or subordinates (Assistant professors/ Lecturers).
- 86% of the Assistant professors, who are aged less than 30 years have positive attitude towards stress. Since they are aggressive and dynamic, others take advantage of their sincerity or dedication.
- Even frequent quarrels happen when there are sudden changes in rules, formalities inside the college. Sudden uninformed deadlines could even block their employee's thinking process and get them repelled from working in that organisation anymore.
- There are very many chances for the politics to emerge as these colleges are based on communities, which infact could discriminate from not taking the most prospective candidates but taking-in of those out of favoritism.
- Many work to their core, the best. But are neither recognised, rewarded nor respected.
- The 'law- makers are themselves meant to be the law -breakers'. Things are expected to happen much faster during the last minute.
- Many get distressed as they are emotionally hurt by other's feelings or actions arising out of greed, jealous, hatred or revenge. Such actions could be in the form of bullying others, frequent criticisms etc....
- To a great extent, the work environment or organizational rules and regulations (in terms of work-force diversity, overloaded work, non-flexible working schedule etc...)



- Besides this, 89% of the respondents perform duties productively but are threatened of their dismissal or resignation, any time of their tenure.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

- If the institution concentrates and gives more importance for financial problems, Unsatisfactory Work, working environment then, the level of depression rate will be reduced comparing with the present level.
- Since the individual often get stressed due to organizational changes, proper communication should be given to reduce such stress. Seek professional help when appropriate.
- Employees can exercise regularly and get enough sleep. Make time to enjoy an activity outside the work place.
- If he/she dislikes something at home or work, try to change those things that bother him/her. "Griping" doesn't solve much.
- Maintain a positive attitude; which makes it easier to live and work with others. Learn about the various relaxation methods available to help all ease their daily tensions.
- Do activities that help everybody feel relaxed and content (e.g., taking a brisk walk, stretching, or imagining you are in a favorite place).

VIII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Work stress is a real challenge for college teachers and their employing institution. As institution and their working environment transform, so do the kinds of stress problems that employees may face. It is important that our workplace is being continuously monitored for stress problems. Further, it is not only important to identify stress problems and to deal with them but to promote healthy work and reduced harmful aspects of work. Work in itself can be a self-promoting activity as long as it takes place in a safe, development and health-promoting environment.

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