

Mental health and leadership. Practices and policies

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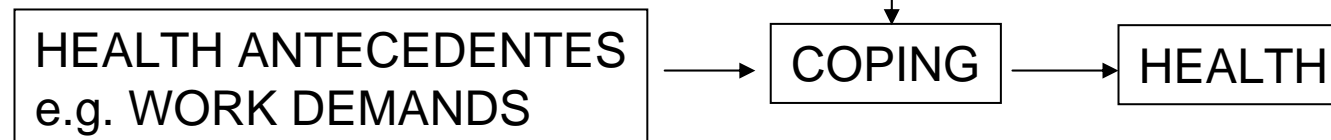
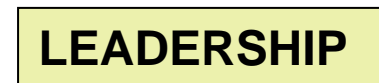
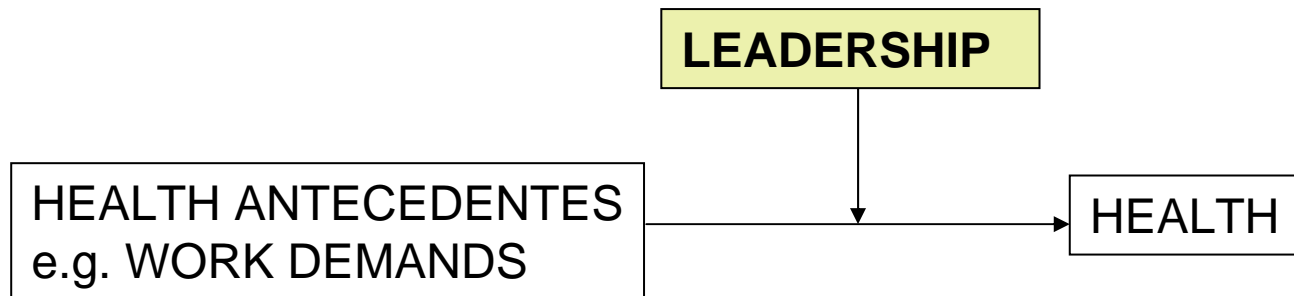
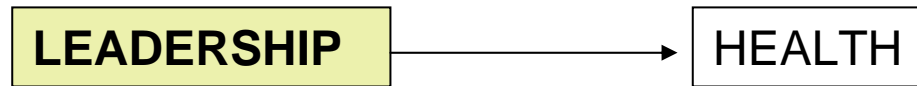
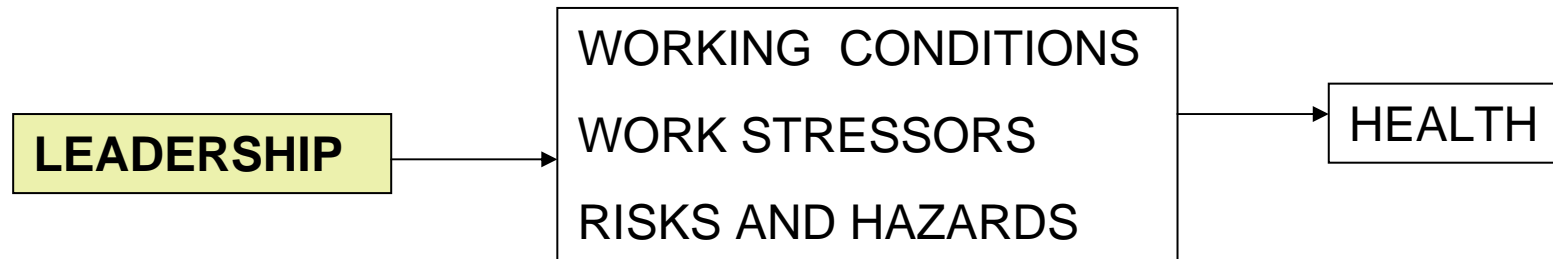
Outline

- Why leadership practices are considered in relation to mental health in companies?
- How leadership practices relates to mental health?. Usefulness of theoretical models and empirical evidence.
- Multi-level approach to leadership practices for mental health.
- Leadership-mental health policies. Are they congruent with leadership practices?
- Relational capital and mental health promotion.
- Summary.

Why leadership practices are related to health in companies?

- Supervisors and middle managers are expected to fulfill leadership functions, and thus have an extra influence potential on the employees' behaviors and attitudes to promote mental health and to prevent risks and hazards
- It implies to identify and promote the leadership competences that contribute to the above formulated aim.

How leadership relates to health?.



**Which are the competences
relevant for leadership?.
A model.**

- **Are these competences relevant to promote healthy employees?**
- **Are there other practices that prove effective in health promotion?**
- **Which ones?**
- **Which are the most productive theoretical models of leadership competencies to promote employees' health?**

Leadership practices and mental health at work-unit level

- Managers and supervisors lead groups and teams and it introduces new complexities in the leading process and its effects on health
- Emergent phenomena need to be taken into account when people work in groups and teams: cohesion, interaction, group moral, group identity, group climate and culture, fairness procedural justice,... are relevant to understand not only individual mental health but group mental health.

Leadership practices and mental health at work-unit level

Leaders' behavior may play an important role on:

- The physical and social context in which groups and teams work.
- The “appraisal rules” that members of the group follow to share the appraisal of the situation
- The shared emotions and affects of group members
- Interactions to collectively cope with stressful situations in order to avoid the negative effects of stress.

How much leaders are aware of their role in the unfolding process of collective stress?

Which good practices could be identified at collective level?

Policies on leadership and their influence on mental health.

- Companies should define a policy that acknowledges the role of health in pursuing the interests of the organizations main stakeholders groups, employees being one of them, and that makes sense from the point of view of corporate social responsibility.



Policies on leadership and their influence on mental health.

- a clear policy from the company about leadership is also needed in order to facilitate it.
- If the company wants their leaders to be the “face” for the employees there has to be a clear policy of leadership empowerment.
- HR-M&D policies should also be defined and clearly communicated.

Policies on leadership and their influence on health.

- Employees' psychological contract is partly established with the organization and partly instantiated through the interaction with the immediate manager.
- immediate managers have to be clear enough about the policies of the company and the limits of their entitlement to generate expectations and engage in promises to the employees.

Are there in the company clear policies installed that back up middle managers' and supervisors' practices to promote employees' health

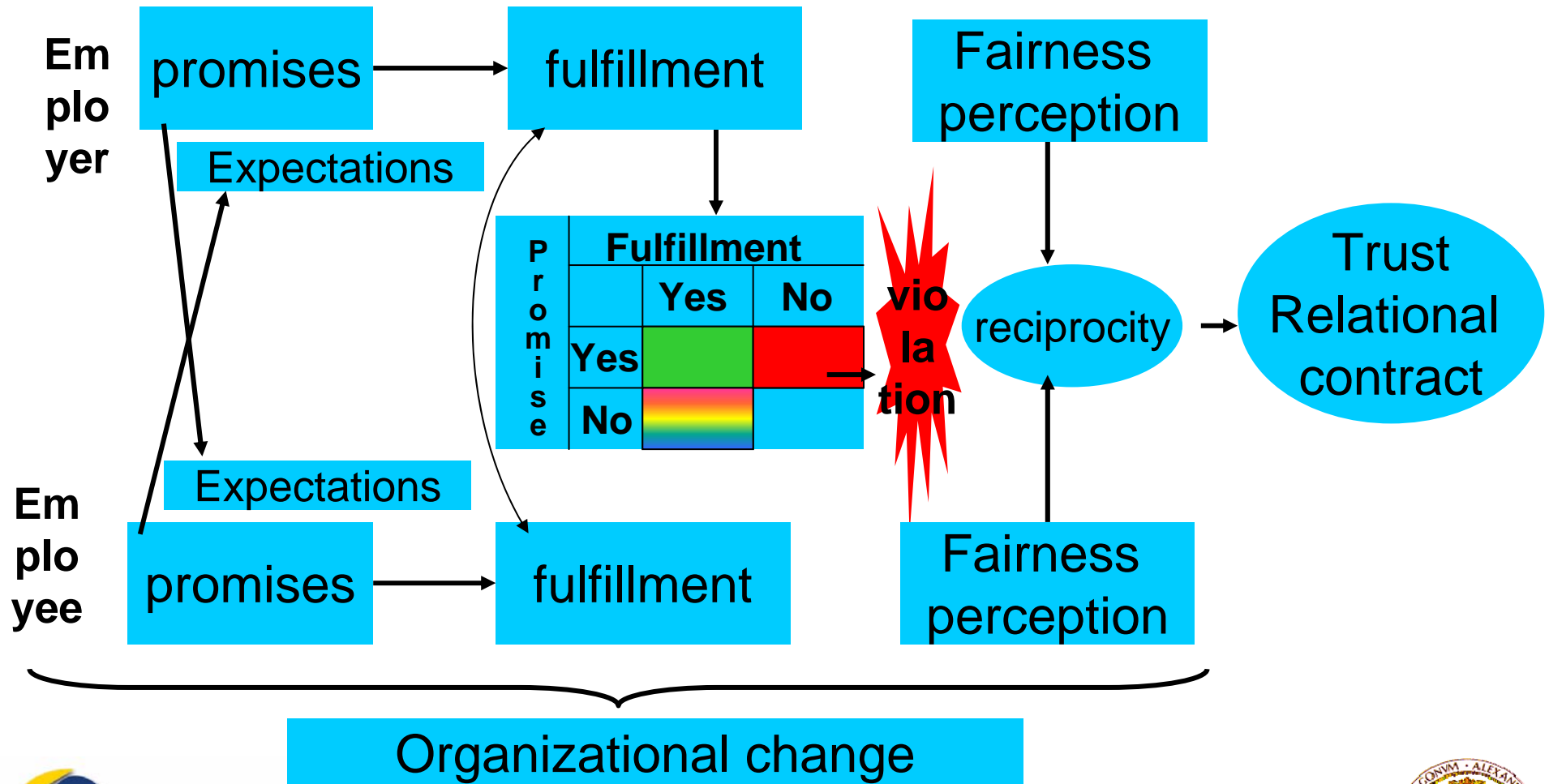
Congruence or dissonance in a company between

- the policies (at the company level) and
- leaders' practices (at the group and individual level) relevant to establish a positive relation with mental health in the company .

Building relational capital in the company

- Most of the stressors mentioned in the introduction to this forum are related to policy issues.
 - the reduced job security given that more insecure forms of employment are often used;
 - the growing conflict between the demands of the modern workplace and other areas of life (e.g. family, especially for women)
 - the potential strategic changes (downsizing, relocation, etc.) to cope with the crisis situation.
- All these are complex situation that may deteriorate trust in the relations between employees and the employer, because the perception of lack of fulfilment, or even violation of the promises made.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT: Psycones Model



Building relational capital in the company

- Employees' trust in the company is an essential phenomenon for the company's success.
- Leaders' trustworthiness, induced through their competent leadership practices, is an important asset in the generation of employees' trust. It can add social capital to the company.
- However, the policies of the company could deteriorate or destroy this social capital if policies and practices are not aligned.
- A culture of trust is more needed than before.

How can a trust-based culture be successfully developed under the present conditions in companies?



- In the next presentation we will see cases that will give creative responses to some of the questions I raised in this presentation.



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Thanks for your attention

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