

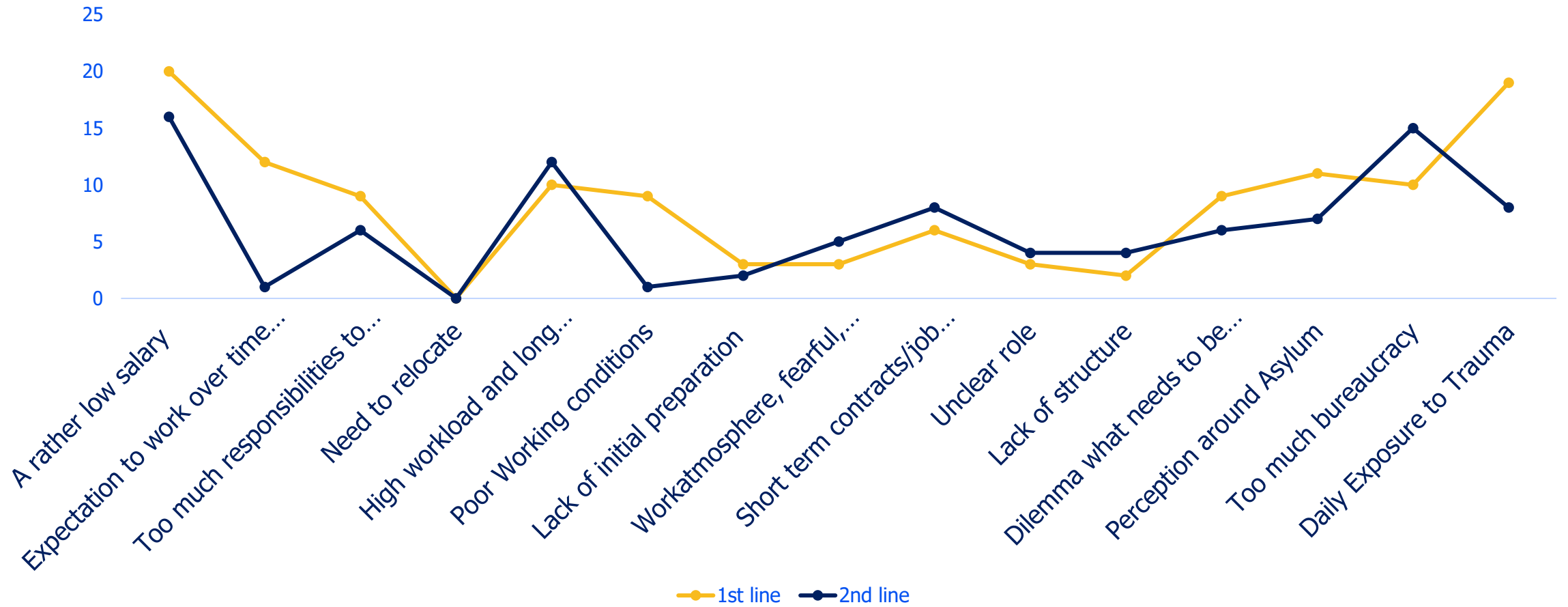
The welfare of staff working in asylum and reception

2nd of Oct 2024, EMN LUX

Sharon Kassahun, EUAA Vulnerability Team



EASO Mapping exercise – stressors and position





EUAA Vulnerability Experts Network (VEN)

Enhance the practical cooperation among Member States, exchange, learn and identify common and joint needs

Practical Tools and Guidance

Support authorities to adapt the international protection procedures and reception conditions to the special needs of vulnerable persons

Support to EUAA operations

Integrate considerations on vulnerability issues in all EUAA activities



Mid 2019, MS experts part of the Vulnerability expert network (VEN) pointed out a need to focus on Staff welfare.

In Sept 2019 a survey was developed and shared with three of EASOs networks, for the purpose of understanding:

Nature of stress and main triggers of stress in first line support?

What is in place in terms of good practices in MS?

What is lacking with regard to staff wellbeing service provision?

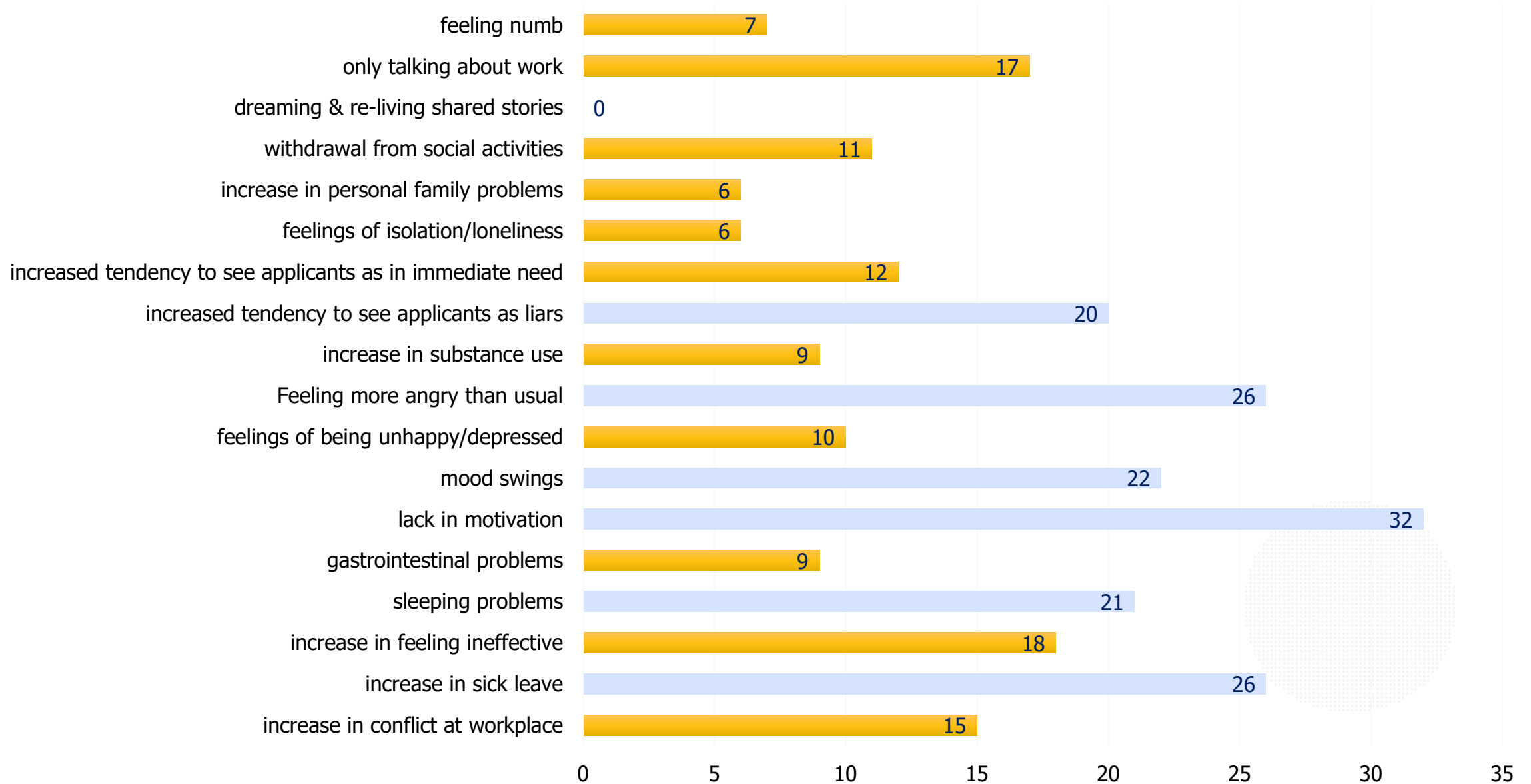
How can EASO be of support?

23 countries participated (21 MS plus Serbia and Norway); a total of 89 responses.

Findings were analysed and compiled into an internal mapping report.

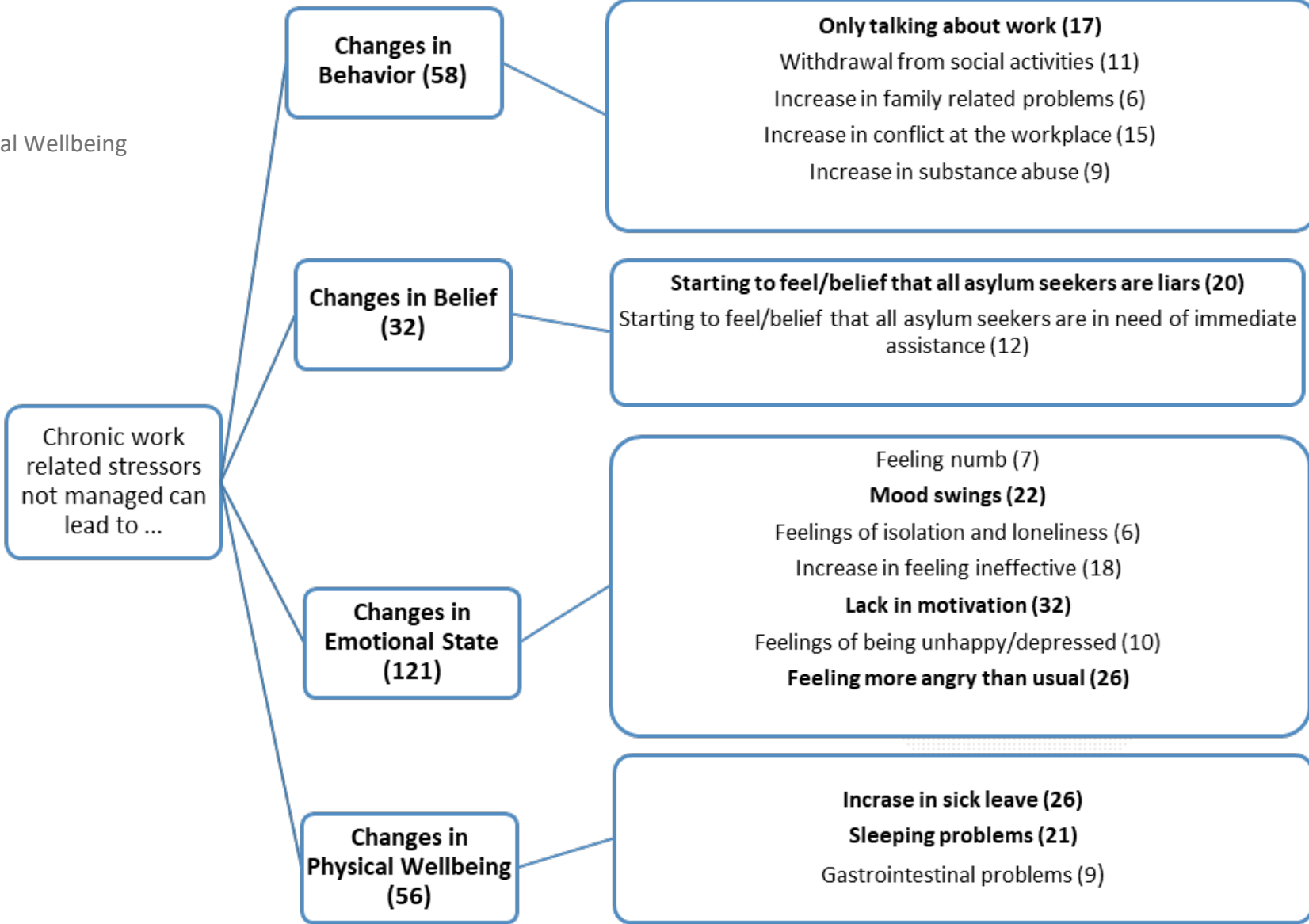
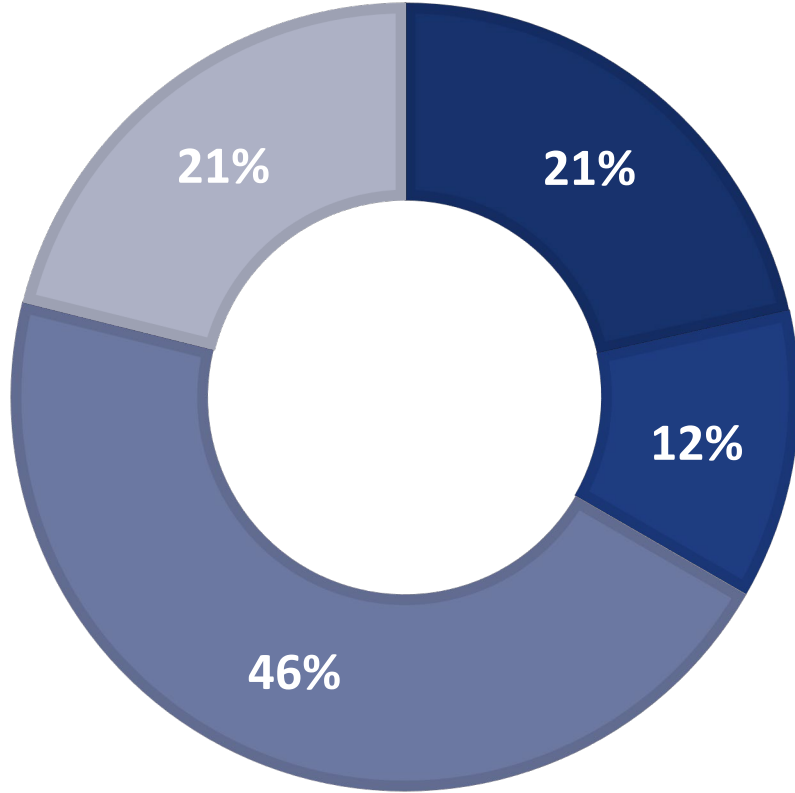


Consequences of the work at hand and main symptoms



Types of changes noted by staff in percentages

- Changes in Behavior
- Changes in Belief
- Changes in Emotional State
- Changes in Physical Wellbeing



Suggestion of activities to reduce the risk of such negative impact

Group supervision

external supervisor/outside view
helpful/structured but still a team
intervention

Multidisciplinary case conferences

seen as an effective way to discuss
complex cases/everyone works as a
team/opportunity to share and hear
opinions of other professionals

Peer-to Peer-support (informal)

A way of sharing of responsibilities to
reduce stress/even if peers are not
trained useful to share fears or
doubts/colleagues or peers really
understand what one is faced
with/more open/trusting and
compassionate

Team building activities

Being together in a non stressful
way/creates friendly
environment/establishes closer working
relationships also with colleagues from
other departments/strengthens the
overall team spirit

One-on-one meetings with supervisor

Manager is responsible to refer to
internal and external
support/clarification of daily
activities/helps that they know about
one's work situation

Counsellor/Psychologist

When a serious incident occurs
professional support is needed / in a
real crisis situation availability of
professional staff is mandatory

... and the development of a **clear action plan** by the employer on how to roll out these interventions

Also requested a need for clearer structure and information on the topic ...



... the wider the awareness of policies and access to interventions without stigmatisation



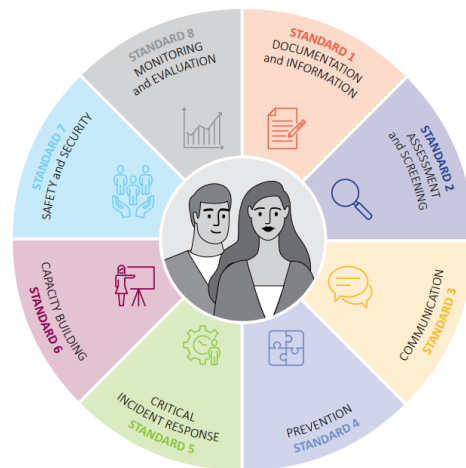
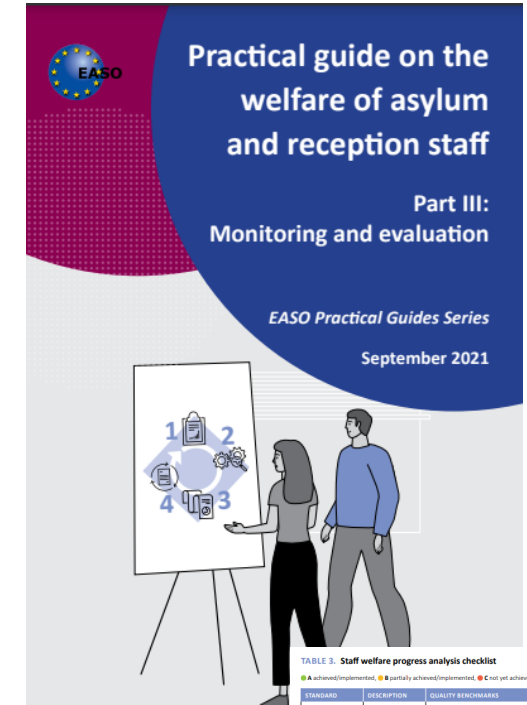
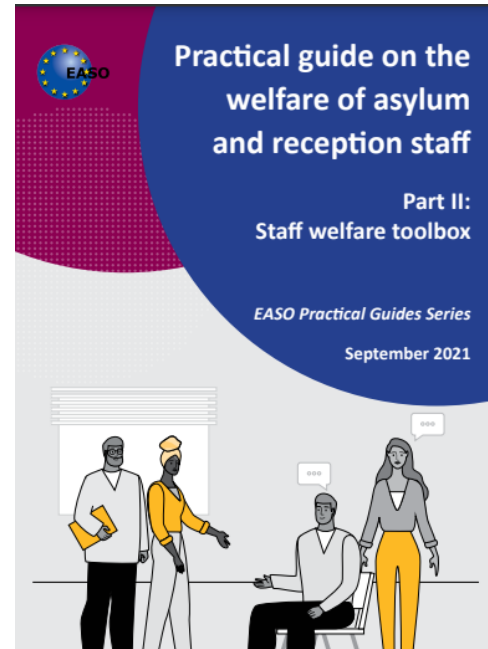
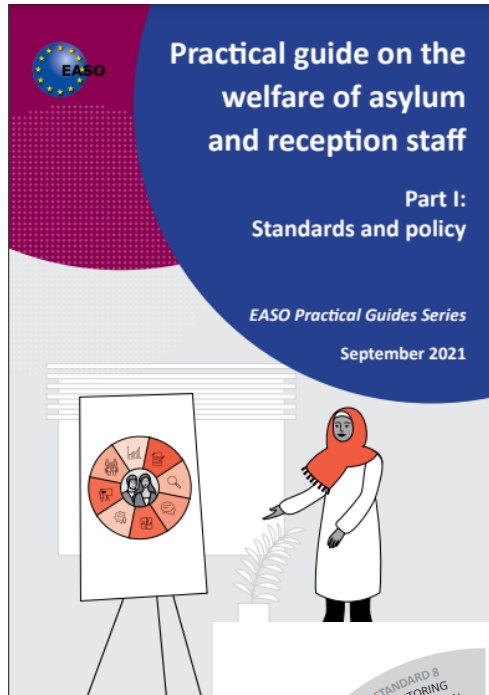
the more activities are attended by staff

and staff feels cared for and trusted

thereby increasing motivation and staff satisfaction

which will potentially lead to better achievements of organisational objectives overall.

OUTCOME: EASO's 3-fold Practical guide



My self-care plan template

AREA OF SELF-CARE	SELF-CARE PRACTICES TO START / TO BE CONTINUED	EVALUATION FREQUENCY	ADDITIONAL PRACTICES TO TRY
Physical (eat regularly, exercise, etc.)			
Emotional/spiritual/mental (engage in counselling sessions, do meditation exercises, acknowledge own achievements, spend time in nature, etc.)			
Professional (maintain work-life balance, manage time, engage in capacity building, etc.)			
Personal/social (meet / video call / phone friends and family, etc.)			
Financial (create a budget to improve quality of life)			

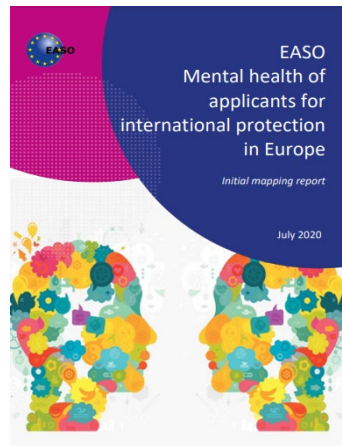
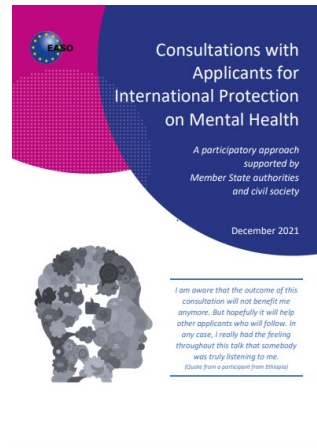
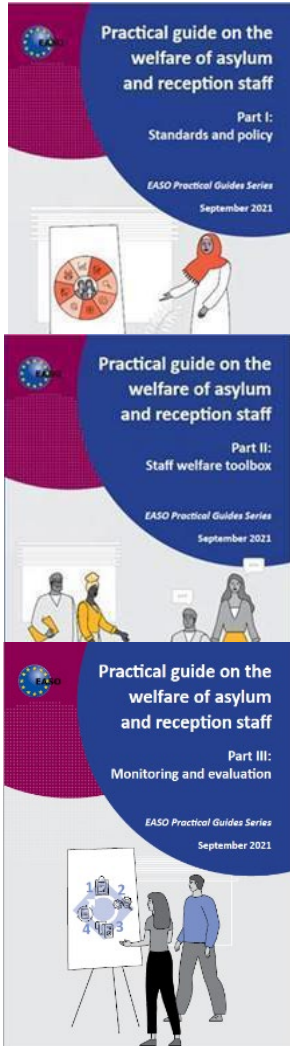
TABLE 3. Staff welfare progress analysis checklist

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	QUALITY INDICATORS	A	B	C	D
1. Documentation and information	Authorities have a documented staff welfare strategy in place that is communicated through relevant and agreed channels	A staff welfare strategy lays out how staff well-being is defined and the measures in place to support staff well-being The staff welfare strategy is easy to access, concise and in a language all staff can understand All staff are systematically informed of the staff welfare strategy, action plan and staff welfare measures available, and how to access support	●	●	●	●
2. Assessment and screening	Authorities enable managers to gain the basic skills to assess and screen their teams on matters relating to staff well-being	HR departments and managers have the skills to develop clear job descriptions and relevant screening questions for selection purposes Managers are qualified to identify basic physiological and psychological signs and needs in their team members	●	●	●	●
3. Communication	Authorities provide clear and public communication through various agreed platforms and channels	Managers and staff engage by using relevant, truthful, transparent and respectful communication skills A structure is established for all staff to engage in personal exchange formats on both professional tasks and well-being with their respective line managers	●	●	●	●
4. Prevention	Authorities provide accessible preventative measures to promote and protect mental health among their employees	Staff and managers have access to a wide range of services to identify signs of stress, prevent stress and promote mental health generally Staff and managers have access to support activities and services (provided in-house and/or externally)	●	●	●	●
5. Critical incident response	Authorities provide specific support to staff who have experienced a critical incident	Staff and managers have access to health promotion activities An independent, trained person (or team) of confidence is appointed within the authority and can be consulted after critical incidents Clear guidance is in place for managers on how to follow up after a critical incident Staff and managers have information on how to request and access specific support after a critical incident has occurred	●	●	●	●

Ongoing and related efforts

PG on the welfare of reception and asylum staff

Guidance Development (2019/20)
Mental Health, Reports (2020/21);



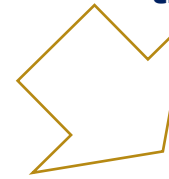
Leading reasons

- negative / Traumatic experiences in the country of origin
- events taking place in detention in the country of asylum / transit
- current uncertainty and lack of future perspective

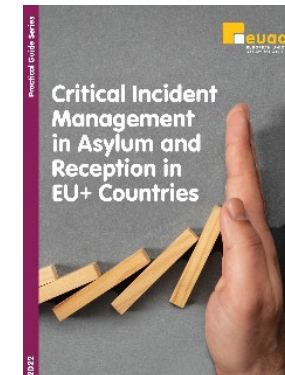
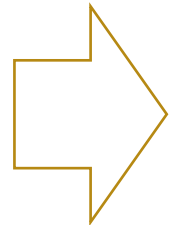
Reactions

- increase in drug use / self-medication
- depressive symptoms become more visible
- worsening mental health state
- self-harm, arson and an increase in suicidal tendency was pointed out

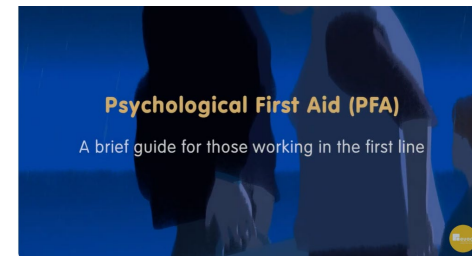
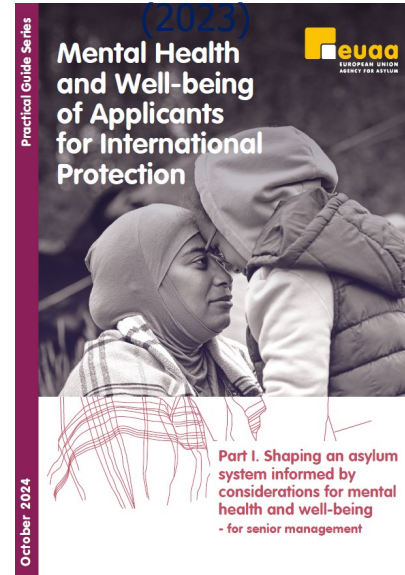
JOINT REPORT by the EMCDDA and EUAA (2023)



Critical Incidents Report (2022)



3-fold guidance on MHW
Forthcoming
Animation & self help tools



Animation linked to the EASO Practical guide on the welfare of asylum and reception staff



[Animation](#) on the Importance of early identification of signs of stress, 2021

Many thanks!

For more information please contact:
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or visit: www.euaa.europa.eu





- EUAA/EMCDDA, *Professionals working in reception centres in Europe: an overview of drug related challenges and support needs*, 2023.
- *Three pocketbooks on psychological distress accompanied by instructions*: EUAA, *How can I support my child during difficult times?*, June 2023.
- EUAA, *How can I deal with situations in which my parents seem sad, worried, or angry?*, June 2023.
- EUAA, *How to handle situations when my friend or sibling is sad, angry or does dangerous things?* June 2023.
- EUAA, *'Psychological First Aid Video'*, YouTube, 2023 and the accompanying *instructions*.
- EUAA, *Critical incident management in the field of asylum and reception – A mapping of practices*, 2022.
- EASO, *Consultations with Applicants for International Protection on Mental Health A participatory approach – supported by Member State authorities*, December 2021.
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