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STAFF CARE

MANUAL FOR PROFESSIONALS FROM THE NGO SECTOR TRAINED TO WORK WITH VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, TRAUMATISED PERSONS AND PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Author

Dr. Hajdana Glomazić

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INTRODUCTION

"Staff care" (or "employee support") refers to the care and support that organisations provide to their employees in order to improve their well-being, job satisfaction, productivity and loyalty to the organisation. This care can include various aspects, such as emotional support, professional development, ensuring a healthy work environment and balancing the work and private life of employees (Böckerman, Bryson & Ilmakunnas, 2012; Maslach &Leiter, 2008; Saks, 2006).

Managing the health and well-being of employees in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in providing support to victims of human trafficking and people on the move is particularly important due to the demanding nature of the work and the challenges faced by staff. Working in these organisations can be very emotional and mentally draining. Staff in these NGOs, including professionals involved in the provision of services related to mental health and psychosocial support, often face upsetting and traumatic experiences of their users. A long-term exposure to such situations can lead to emotional stress, burnout at work, physical illnesses and high levels of absenteeism.

In addition, staff in these organisations often face various forms of stress associated with working in unpredictable situations. Therefore, staff care in an NGO must be a priority: it should be in line with staff needs, which includes providing adequate training and support, regular assessment of risks and the impact of stress on health, as well as establishing clear policies on working hours and work-life balance.

In addition, staff care in these organizations also refers to the development of a positive corporate culture that encourages open and transparent communication, supports employee initiatives and recognizes and rewards their efforts and contribution to the organisation. (Maslach &Leiter, 2008).

In short, caring for employees of NGOs that provide support to people who are victims of human trafficking, people on the move or victims who have gone through trauma is crucial to maintaining the well-being of employees and providing quality services to users. It is an important ethical principle that should not be ignored.

The two most frequently mentioned phenomena associated with people working in NGOs that provide services to people on the move and victims of violence are burnout and secondary trauma. Below we will briefly describe each of these terms.

1. BURNOUT AT WORK

Burnout at work, also known as burnout syndrome, is a growing problem in the modern work environment. Workers who are exposed to a high level of stress, long-term emotional exhaustion and a sense of helplessness may encounter this syndrome (Saks, 2006).

This problem can also be expressed among staff working in non-governmental organisations that provide mental health and psychosocial support services to victims of human trafficking and people on the move (who need help). Employees in these organisations are at increased risk of burnout due to the nature of their work. Such risks of burnout at work can have serious consequences for the health of employees, such as increased risk of physical illnesses, increased need for absences from work due to illness, difficulties in concentration at work, and low motivation.

Therefore, it is important that non-governmental organisations that provide mental health and psychosocial support services to their users adhere to high standards of care for their staff. This includes regularly assessing the risk and impact of stress on staff health, establishing clear policies on working hours and work-life balance, and providing appropriate training and support. Such measures ensure the well-being of employees and provide quality services to users, while at the same time protecting the organisation from the negative consequences of the risk of burnout at work.

Burnout at work has its emotional, physical and psychosomatic indicators, which we will list below (Toker & Biron, 2012):
Emotional indicators of burnout at work:

- Feeling of physical and emotional exhaustion
- Loss of sense of personal worth and self-esteem
- Negativism and pessimism
- Feeling of helplessness
- Emotional distress, a persistent feeling of sadness
- Withdrawal in social relations, frequent conflicts
- Frequent mood swings

Physical indicators of burnout at work:

- Sleep problems (waking up at dawn, difficulty falling asleep, sleepiness)
- Increased/decreased appetite and changes in body weight
- Absence from work, reduced efficiency, difficulty in concentration

Psychosomatic indicators of burnout at work:

- Frequent illness
- Headache
- Pain in back
- Heart palpitations
- Shaking hands
- Gastrointestinal complaints

Recognizing the indicators of burnout at work is crucial in order to prevent serious consequences for the health of employees in time. That is why it is important that organisations dealing with vulnerable groups and providing mental health services provide their staff with adequate training on recognizing indicators of burnout at work and how to combat them. In this way, preventive measures can be taken to ensure the well-being of staff and quality support for users.

2. SECONDARY TRAUMA

Secondary traumatisation, also known as empathy syndrome or excessive compassion, is a problem faced, among others, by staff in non-governmental organizations that provide mental health and psychosocial support services to victims of human trafficking and people on the move. Workers who are confronted with the continuing traumatic experiences of users often develop a sense of empathy that can turn into excessive compassion, which can then lead to secondary traumatisation.

Secondary traumatisation manifests itself through various symptoms, such as constant care for beneficiaries, lack of motivation, exhaustion and low self-esteem. These conditions, if not recognized in time (as with burnout), can lead to emotional stress and long-term exhaustion, which can affect the quality of services provided by the organisation. Secondary traumatisation is experienced indirectly - through witnessing or learning about the consequences of trauma experienced by another person, which is why the risk is high among helping professions, such as: health workers, social workers, counselors and psychotherapists, psychologists, psychiatrists (Van Dernoot Lipsky & Burke Harris, 2019; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). The manifestation is similar to that of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), and the indicators are, among others, the following:

- Intrusive and involuntary memories associated with the traumatic event
- Avoidance of recalling the traumatic event
- Changes in feelings and thoughts (inability to recall certain aspects of the traumatic event; prolonged duration of negative emotions and inability to feel positive emotions)
- Increased excitement (difficulties in concentration, increased irritability, outbursts of anger for no reason)

3. MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES FOR IMPROVING THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF STAFF CARE

Health care in the workplace should not only be the responsibility of individuals, but should be created and ensured at the organisational level. Therefore, the institutions have an obligation to provide certain measures and activities that will help solve this issue in a systemic way. This includes adopting appropriate policies and procedures that will ensure a healthier working environment, as well as educating employees about the importance of taking care of their own health. Only when appropriate solutions are adopted at the organisational level, a healthy and productive work environment for all employees can be ensured.

There are several significant measures and activities that NGOs can undertake to improve the institutionalisation of staff care.

In order to highlight the importance of staff care in the organization, the NGO can **create a framework for staff care** as a first measure. The activities that could be related to this measure are the following:

- Recognize the importance of staff care and make staff psychological well-being a primary concern.
- Develop a comprehensive, context- and gender-sensitive staff care framework.
- Develop written policies that include guidelines for work hours, absences, training and counselling for employees, and other forms of support.
- Provide a report that includes information about the psychological stress of the job, in order to recognize the symptoms in advance and take appropriate steps.
- Promote a culture of staff care practices and an understanding that the organisation will respond to the needs of employees.
- Develop measures to protect the mental health of staff in cases of stressful events.
- Regularly assess staff care needs and adjust the staff care program.
- Facilitate the practice of self-care among staff.
- Ensure confidentiality and security that during the search for support in the event of "burnout at work" the employment and/or reputation of the employees will not be jeopardized.
- Integrate personnel concerns into planning and budgeting procedures.

In the process of improving the institutionalization of staff care, the next measure could be the **definition of a staff care policy**. Defining the staff care policy in an organisational sense can be done through several activities:

- Defining objectives - The first step is to define the objectives and expectations of the staff care policy. The goals should relate to supporting employees, strengthening work with vulnerable groups and traumas, and improving the quality of the working environment.
- Drafting of the policy - After defining the goals, a staff care policy should be drawn up that includes rules, procedures and standards for working with employees.
- Education - Employees should be educated about the staff care policy, so that they understand its goals and rules, as well as how to comply with them.
- Monitoring - It is necessary to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the staff care policy and to monitor whether the goals are achieved and whether the policy is effectively applied.
- Reporting and transparency - NGOs should report to donors and other relevant parties on the implementation of staff care policies and be transparent in showing how funds are used to support employees.
- Adaptation - NGOs should adapt to changes in the working environment and adapt to the needs of employees, so that the policy of caring for personnel is effective and relevant at all times.
- Accountability - Responsibility for implementing and monitoring the staff care policy should be shared between management and employees, to ensure that each has a role to play in supporting employees.
- Flexibility - NGOs should be flexible in the implementation of staff care policies, in order to adapt to the needs of employees and the working environment.

Before non-governmental organisations start creating and drafting policies for staff care, it is necessary to carry out certain **preparatory actions**. They consist of several activities, and refer to the following:

- Analysis of needs - The first step is to analyse the needs of employees. The NGO should consider what are the main challenges that employees face and what are their needs in relation to staff care.
- Development of goals - After analysing needs, the NGO should develop goals for staff care. These goals should be clear, specific and measurable.
- Choice of methods - the NGO should choose methods to achieve staff care goals. This may include providing access to mental health resources, providing training and workshops, and/or creating an inclusive and supportive work environment.

- Defining procedures - the NGO should define procedures for implementing methods for staff care. These procedures should be clear, specific and easy to understand.
- Testing and revision - The NGO should test the staff care policy and revise it according to the results of the testing. This will ensure that the protocol works as it should and adapts to the needs of the employees.
- Education and communication - the NGO should provide education to employees about the staff care policy and communicate it with employees, to ensure that everyone understands how to apply it.
- Monitoring and evaluation - the NGO should monitor and evaluate the implementation of the staff care protocol, to ensure that the goals are achieved and that they are adapted to the needs of the employees.

The next measure could be the development of **protocols and procedures**. They are important because they serve as guidelines for the organisation in providing staff care. They help ensure that staff care is carried out in a consistent and systematic way, and that appropriate support is provided to employees. Without clear guidelines, an organisation can struggle with uncertainty about what is expected of it, how it should respond in certain situations, and how it should support its staff.

On the other hand, when an organisation has clear and consistent procedures and protocols, it can provide a sense of security and support to staff at times when they are stressed or overwhelmed. It can also help build trust between the NGO and its employees, because then they know that the organisation cares about their health and well-being.

In the context of staff care in an NGO, it is important to ensure that the staff care policy is not just a mere form or theoretical conceptualization, but is actually implemented. Developing protocols and procedures helps in the practical implementation of the staff care policy and ensures that staff care is provided in a consistent and systematic manner. This can help maintain the mental health of employees and reduce the risk of burnout at work.

Therefore, the staff care policy should have a **list of procedures and protocols** that need to be developed in order to adequately manage this process. Proposed procedures that NGOs should create for staff care are:

- Stress management - the NGO should create procedures to support employees in managing the stress that occurs when working with vulnerable groups.
- Colleague support - the NGO should create procedures to support colleagues working with vulnerable groups, such as mentoring and support groups.

- Supervision - the NGO should create procedures for access to supervision with experts who are trained to understand the specific challenges of working with vulnerable groups.
- Understanding the culture - the NGO should create procedures to empower employees to understand the culture and history of the vulnerable groups they work with.
- Self-care - The NGO should create procedures for accessing self-care practices such as meditation, yoga, and other forms of physical and mental recovery.
- Flexibility - NGOs should create procedures for access to flexible working hours and conditions in order to adapt to the specific needs of the vulnerable groups they work with.
- Accessibility - the NGO should create procedures for access to tools and technologies that will help employees to make work with vulnerable groups as accessible as possible.
- Evaluation - the NGO should create procedures for evaluating the staff care program in order to determine whether the procedures are effective and whether changes are needed.

The next measure could be **support for staff care**. Supporting the welfare of NGO employees is extremely important, as organisations providing services in areas such as mental health, psychosocial support and assistance to victims of human trafficking and people on the move can often be at risk of stress. As we have mentioned several times, this can lead to a high burden on the health of employees.

Supporting staff care can help preserve the mental health of employees and reduce the employee turnover rate. When an organisation supports employees and cares about their health and well-being, it can help build trust and loyalty towards the organisation. It can also help to improve the quality of the service provided, because satisfied and healthy employees can perform their work better.

In order to support staff care, organizations can implement appropriate activities, such as:

- Provide access to mental health resources such as counselling and support groups.
- Organize trainings and workshops to develop skills for working with stress and emotions.
- Promote a proper balance between work and private life.
- Create an inclusive and supportive work environment, where every employee feels accepted and respected.
- Promote a culture of openness and transparency, through various communication channels, to enable employees to express themselves freely and present their questions and concerns.
- Promote the physical health of employees, through the organisation of sports activities, providing access to fitness centres or providing free health examinations.

Specific staff care practices may include:

- Professional training - Training employees to understand the specific needs and circumstances of the vulnerable groups they work with.
- Peer support - Employees should have access to peer support and a mentoring program that supports them in working with vulnerable groups.
- Supervision - Employees should have access to supervision with professionals who are trained to understand the specific challenges of working with vulnerable groups.
- Cultural mediator - Employees should have access to a cultural mediator to understand the culture and history of the vulnerable groups they work with.
- Self-care - Employees should have access to self-care practices such as meditation, yoga, and other forms of physical and mental recovery.

4. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crisis management is important in every organization, including NGOs that provide mental health services and psychosocial support to victims of human trafficking and people on the move. Crisis management in these organisations is important because it enables timely and effective management of crisis situations that can negatively affect employees. Crisis situations in these organizations may include security threats, experiences of violence, or any other situation that may cause stress or trauma to employees.

The implementation of crisis management allows the organization to react quickly and timely in such situations and to provide appropriate support to its employees. This includes the implementation of protocols and procedures that are applied in the event of a crisis or stressful situation in order to protect employees and provide them with adequate support.

In addition, the implementation of crisis management in these organisations shows employees that the organisation cares about their health and well-being, and that it is committed to the development and implementation of staff care practices. This helps the organisation to keep quality employees and to ensure the quality of services provided.

Crisis management related to staff care in an NGO refers to the planning and implementation of protocols and procedures that should be applied in the event of a crisis or stressful situation, which may affect the health and well-being of employees. This includes:

- Planning - The first step in crisis management is planning. NGOs should have plans ready for different crisis situations. Plans should include employee protection measures, as well as a procedure for communication and coordination in a crisis situation.
- Education - Education of employees on how to deal with a crisis situation is an important part of crisis management. Information should be provided on how to protect yourself from danger and how to position yourself in crisis situations.
- Access to mental health - Access to mental health resources should be provided for employees directly or indirectly affected by the crisis.
- Communication - Effective communication with employees is important in a crisis situation, to ensure that everyone has the necessary information and knows the next steps.
- Post-crisis support - After the crisis has passed, it is important to provide support to employees who were directly or indirectly affected. This may include counselling, support groups or other forms of support.
- Analysis and evaluation - After the crisis is over, it is important to analyse and evaluate how the organisation responded and what can be improved in the future.

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR STAFF CARE

Responsibility for staff care in organisational terms can be different in different organisations. In some organisations, responsibility is at the top of management, while in others, responsibility is at the individual level. Some of the main stakeholders who are responsible for staff care in an organisational sense are:

- Management - Management is responsible for creating and implementing policies and procedures related to staff care. They are responsible for ensuring that staff have access to the necessary resources and support they need to work with vulnerable groups.
- Human Resources - The Human Resources Department is responsible for the implementation of policies and procedures related to staff care. They are responsible for ensuring that employees have access to peer support and supervision.
- Employees - Employees are responsible for accepting and implementing staff care policies and procedures in their daily work. They are also responsible for empowering themselves and colleagues in working with vulnerable groups.

6. CONNECTING NGOs AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In today's dynamic and globalized world, it is extremely important to create effective and productive connections between different sectors of society in order to achieve common goals and progress. One of the key segments of such cooperation is the partnership between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. Developing a cooperation strategy between these two sectors is the foundation for achieving sustainable development, solving social problems and encouraging innovation.

Developing a cooperation strategy with the private sector is a process that creates clear frameworks, goals and instruments for the successful implementation of the partnership. This approach makes it possible to better understand the needs, challenges and opportunities brought by joint action.

One of the key reasons for developing a cooperation strategy with the private sector lies in the fact that both partners, both non-governmental organizations and companies, have specific resources and capacities that can complement each other and provide greater value together. The private sector provides financial support, technological innovation and managerial experience, while NGOs contribute expertise, local presence and understanding of social and environmental issues.

The benefits of cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the private sector are numerous. In the first place, this partnership contributes to increasing the efficiency and sustainability of jointly implemented projects, thus achieving a greater social impact. Also, an opportunity is created for the development of innovative solutions for social problems and the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge through intersectoral cooperation. Through these benefits, the cooperation strategy can contribute to strengthening the reputation and brand of the partners involved in the cooperation.

Developing a strategy of cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the private sector represents a crucial step in establishing strong and sustainable partnerships that can bring a positive impact on society as a whole. Through joint action, capacity building, exchange of knowledge and experiences, these partnerships enable the creation of innovative solutions to overcome various social challenges. This not only achieves the goals of individual organizations, but also contributes to wider social progress, creating a world in which everyone will have better opportunities for success and a quality life.

However, there are also certain obstacles in connecting the private sector and non-governmental organizations. One of the main obstacles is the diversity of goals and priorities. Businesses usually aim for profit, while NGOs pursue social goals. Therefore, aligning those goals can be challenging. Also, there is a risk that companies use their power and influence to take control of non-governmental organizations or direct their activities in accordance with their own interests.

In addition to all that, connecting the private sector and NGOs requires clearly defined processes and procedures to ensure transparency and accountability. However, if the obstacles are successfully overcome, cooperation between the private sector and non-governmental organizations can bring numerous benefits for both parties, as well as for society as a whole.

In the following, we will give several suggestions related to the way in which NGOs can interest the private sector in joint cooperation.

- Finding common interests - the NGO should identify common interests with the private sector and demonstrate how cooperation will help to achieve those interests. For example, an NGO can show how a project can help a company to increase its social responsibility or to increase its reputation.
- Demonstration of potential benefits - the NGO should demonstrate how cooperation with the private sector will bring benefits to both parties. This may include creating new jobs, increasing revenue or increasing efficiency.
- Demonstration of previous successes - the NGO should demonstrate previous successes in cooperation with the private sector, in order to show that it is capable of fitting into the business framework and achieving results.
- Raising awareness - the NGO should undertake activities to increase awareness of the importance of cooperation with the private sector, in order to promote the importance of the project and its contribution to society.
- Offer an opportunity for networking - the NGO should offer an opportunity for networking, in order to increase awareness of the project and to attract potential partners.
- Provision of technical support - the NGO should provide technical support to potential partners from the private sector, in order to facilitate joining the project and reduce risk.
- Providing market access - the NGO should provide market access to potential partners from the private sector.
- Providing access to resources - the NGO should provide access to resources to potential partners from the private sector.

Developing a strategy of cooperation between NGOs and the private sector should include several steps that need to be completed, in order to increase the possibility of establishing a successful cooperation.

- Concrete activities - The cooperation strategy should include concrete activities that will be implemented in order to achieve common goals. These can be projects, campaigns, education, etc.
- Deadlines - The cooperation strategy should include the deadlines when specific activities will be implemented. This is important in order to ensure that projects and activities are carried out according to plan and that the desired results are achieved.
- Responsibilities - The cooperation strategy should include the responsibilities of each party. This means that each party should know their responsibilities in the project and adhere to them.
- Adaptation - The cooperation strategy is adapted to situations on the ground, constantly evaluated to ensure that it is effective and that the desired results are achieved. It should coordinate with other relevant strategies and plans to ensure that it does not conflict with other activities, as well as to achieve maximum synergy.
- Communication - Communication and transparency are also important factors in developing a cooperation strategy. It is necessary to establish communication channels and regularly contact the private sector to ensure that the strategy is understood and that the desired results are achieved.

Developing a strategy of cooperation between non-governmental organisations and the private sector represents a crucial step in establishing strong and sustainable partnerships that can bring a positive impact on society as a whole. Through joint action, capacity building, exchange of knowledge and experiences, these partnerships enable the creation of innovative solutions to overcome various social challenges. This not only achieves the goals of individual organizations, but also contributes to wider social progress, creating a world in which everyone will have better opportunities for success and a quality life.

7. CREATION OF A MARKETING MESSAGE DIRECTED BY THE NGO TOWARDS THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH COOPERATION

Effective communication is the key to success in many areas, including establishing cooperation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. In this context, the creation of a clear, convincing and well-thought-out marketing message by non-governmental organisations towards the private sector has a significant role in building successful partnerships.

Creating an effective marketing message by NGOs directed to the private sector requires an understanding of the goals, values and interests of both sectors. The communication approach must be adapted to the specific target group, and the message must emphasize the benefits and values that the NGO can offer to potential partners from the private sector. If the message is conveyed correctly and effectively, the chances of attracting resources and support for projects and activities of non-governmental organizations increase.

In order to create a good marketing message, an NGO must analyse its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis), as well as research the interests, needs and expectations of the private sector. Also, it is important to correctly choose the communication channels and tools that will be used to convey the message, as well as to adapt the tone and style of communication to the target audience.

The benefits of creating a good marketing message by NGOs aimed at the private sector are numerous. First of all, an effective message can help attract financial resources, material resources and professional support. In addition, a clear and convincing message can contribute to building a strong brand and reputation of an NGO, which will further increase its recognition and attractiveness to potential partners. Ultimately, a successful marketing message can improve understanding and cooperation between NGOs and the private sector, leading to more successful and sustainable projects and initiatives.

Therefore, creating an effective marketing message by non-governmental organizations to the private sector is a key factor in establishing successful partnerships and cooperation between these two sectors. Through thoughtful and persuasive communication, non-governmental organizations can attract the attention, resources and support of private companies for their projects and initiatives, which will ultimately result in strengthening joint capacities and achieving positive changes in society. Creating such a marketing message requires thorough analysis, understanding the target group and proper use of communication tools, in order to achieve the desired results and success in building long-term partnerships.

- **An example of a marketing message that an NGO can create for the private sector**

"It is with great respect that I write to you on behalf of our non-governmental organisation, which is actively addressing key social challenges and meeting the needs of our community. Now we are focused on the project of improving education and empowering young people in our environment.

Your support would be invaluable to us in achieving the desired results and achieving our ambitions in this significant undertaking. Your contribution would improve the quality of life in our community and provide help to those who need it most.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude for any possible support you could provide us. If you are interested in cooperation, please contact us so that we can provide you with all the necessary information.

- **An example of a marketing message – when vulnerable groups are involved**

When an NGO works with vulnerable groups, the creation of a marketing message should be especially careful and tactful. The message should:

- Respect the privacy and dignity of a sensitive group and refrain from any attempt to exploit the situation or create sensationalism.
- Express empathy towards the vulnerable group and show that the NGO understands their needs and challenges.
- Demonstrate expertise and experience in working with a vulnerable group and that it is capable of providing support and solutions to problems affecting that group.
- Focus on solutions and concrete results that the NGO can achieve with the vulnerable group, instead of focusing on the problem.
- Relate to the social responsibility of the private sector and show how NGO support can contribute to social welfare.

An example of the message:

"Our non-governmental organisation is dedicated to providing support and solutions for vulnerable groups in our community. Our team of experts has experience in working with people in difficult situations and understands their needs and challenges. By partnering with us, your company will have the opportunity to contribute to social welfare and help solve important issues. It will also gain new knowledge and experience. Please consider supporting our project and contact us for more information."

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Adress:
Antonie Grubisikj 5
1000 Skopje, North Macedonia
T +389 23103560
E martin.hiebsch@giz.de
I www.giz.de

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