

# How to Manage Mental Health in the Future Workforce

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# Institute for Employment Studies

- Not-for-profit research & consultancy based in Brighton & London, UK
- Carry out major evaluation studies & advise employers
- Established in 1969
- 50 interdisciplinary staff with a major programme of research & consultancy on wellbeing & productivity at work

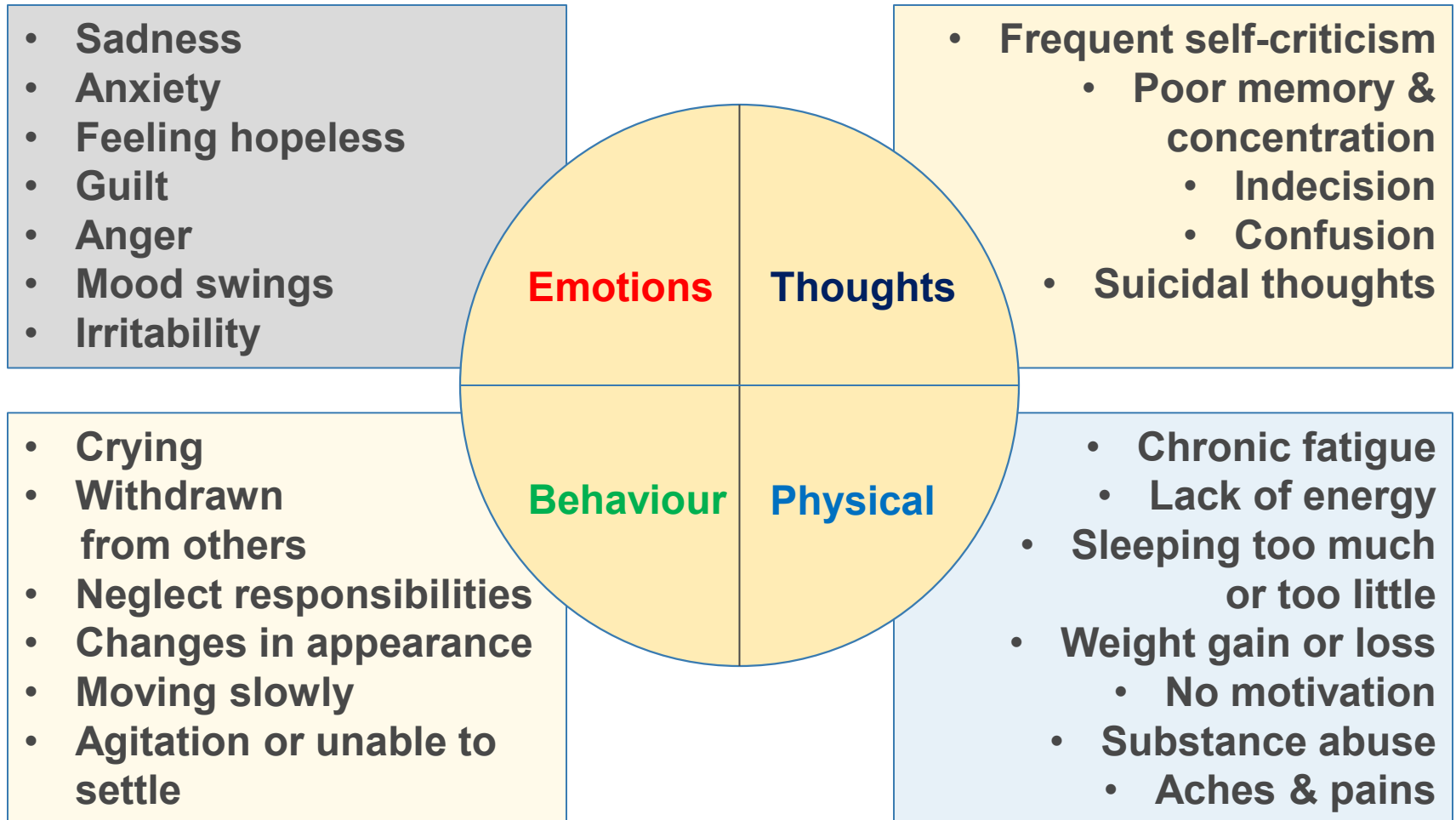
# Definitions

- Severe & enduring mental illness – eg Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia
- Common Mental Health problems – eg depression and anxiety – can be caused or exacerbated by work but non-work factors (eg finances, divorce) are important too
- Co-morbidity – living with more than one health condition (eg low back pain and depression in 25-30% of cases)

# Mental Illness in Europe

- Today, 38 per cent of EU citizens are affected by mental illness but only 25 per cent of them receive any treatment
- The direct and indirect costs of mental illness across Europe is over €460bn – or 3.4 per cent of GDP – a significant impact on Productivity
- In some parts of Europe the quickest way to get acute medical care for a severe mental illness is to get arrested
- All EU countries require employers to conduct psychosocial risk assessments – though compliance & enforcement is often poor
- Future challenges of ageing, technology-driven hybrid working, increasing work intensity & precarious work

# Symptoms of Depression



# Possible Work Causes of Poor Mental Health at Work

- Job insecurity
- Excessive workload
- Over qualified
- Under qualified
- Bullying
- Violence
- Conflict
- Isolation
- Unattainable targets
- Toxic workplace
- Unsupportive manager/co-workers
- Insufficient resources
- No control
- No work-life balance
- Technology

# Mental Health Stigma

Two kinds of stigma:

- **Social Stigma** – prejudicial attitudes & discriminating behaviour directed at individuals with mental illness resulting from the label they have been given
- **Self or perceived stigma** – internalised stigma on the part of the individual causing feelings of shame & low self-esteem

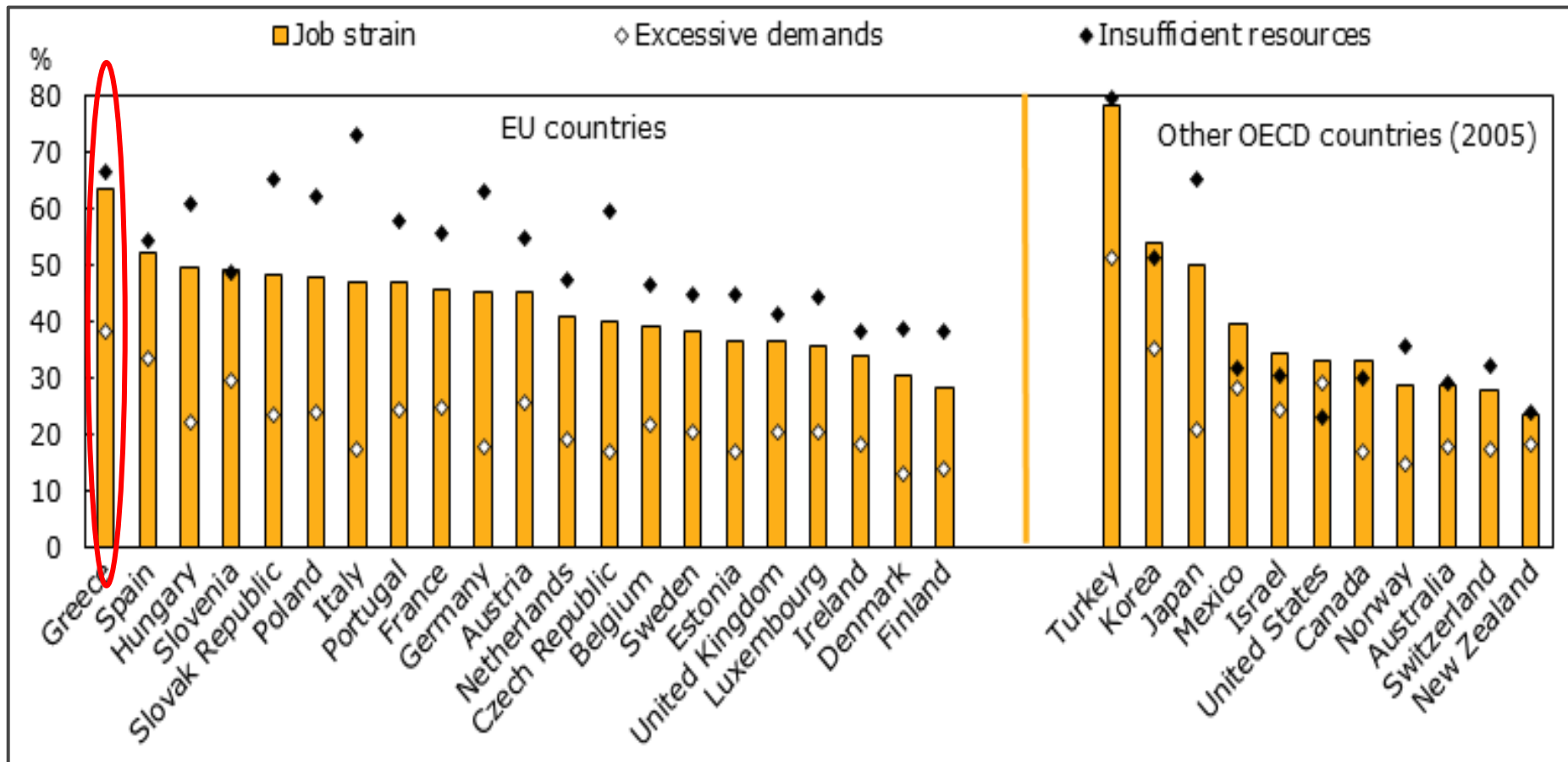
Over half of young workers with mental illness say that stigma prevents them from seeking support

# Job Demands vs Resources

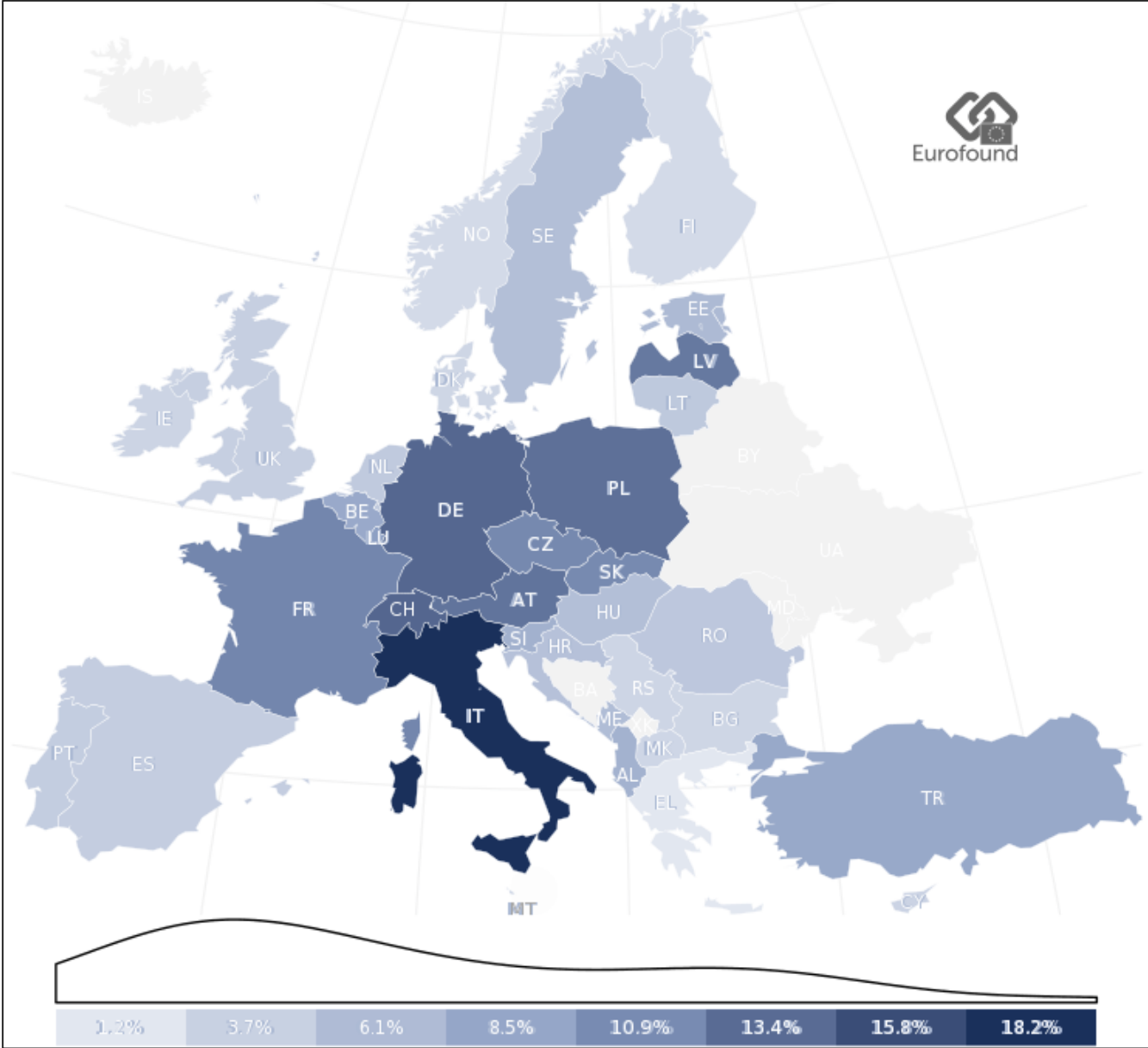




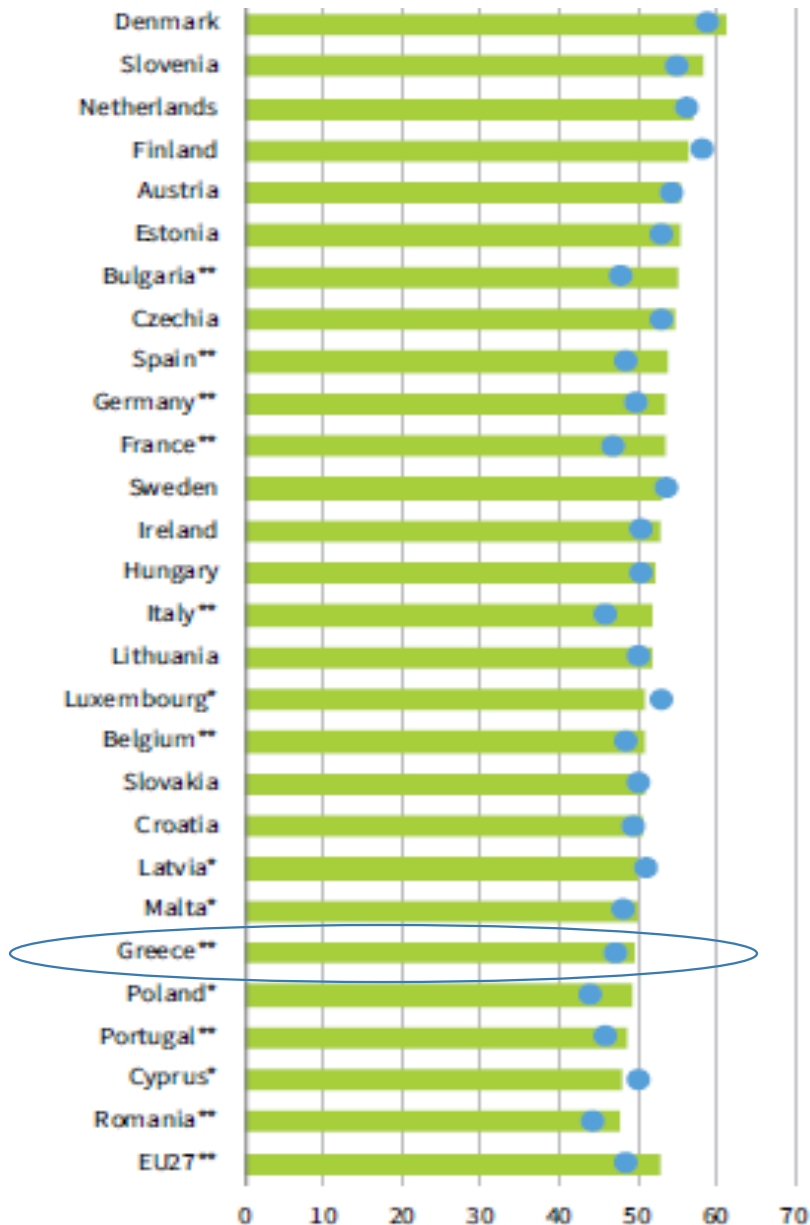
# Job Strain in the EU & Beyond



# Do your colleagues help & support you? (% 'never or rarely')



# Mental Health in the EU27: April–July 2020



Data collected by Eurofound during COVID19

Survey of 20,000 people over 18 years old

Used WHO5 – a short measure of mental wellbeing which has been internationally verified

Mental health scores in Greek adults was among the lowest in the EU in April & below the EU average

By July the scores had improved considerably – close to EU average

Similar trends for both '*life satisfaction*' and '*optimism*'

# How 'Good Work' helps Mental Health

- Easy to conclude that all workplaces are a risk for psychological wellbeing
- Employers have a 'legal duty' to assess risk and make accommodations
- But, for many employees, work has positive therapeutic benefits – especially if it is 'good work'

# Elements of 'Good Work'



# Making it Happen - 5 Action Areas

- Reduce mental health stigma & encourage disclosure
- Carry out risk assessments – look for elevated risk of stress, intense work demands & deadlines
- Think about job redesign to help increase job control & autonomy
- Invest in line manager capacity-building & awareness
- Use phased return-to-work plans with input from employees

# Questions

- How supportive is your business of workers with mental health problems? How are their careers affected?
- Do you have any senior executives who have been open about their own mental health?
- How easy is it for workers to disclose to their boss that they have a mental illness?

# Further information:

[www.employment-studies.co.uk](http://www.employment-studies.co.uk)

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