

A Program of Organizational Therapy - “Checkmate to Stress” -

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Abstract

Introduction: *The aim of the paper is to discuss a new way to deal with organizational stress.*

Objectives: *We intend to emphasize the importance of the organizational group therapy by presenting a program that is meant to both improve and increase the strength of the working group and to make the activities that are carried out as a result of the decrease of non-productive behaviors and the installation of organizational health more efficient.*

Method: *We have presented a program of Organizational Therapy - “Checkmate to stress”, drawing its course, working metaphors and utility, program that can be customized according to the organization’s particularity and the individual’s characteristics.*

Conclusions: *Check mate stress presumes stress training, in the context of redesigning the job (position) and offering social support to the members of the working team.*

Keywords: *stress, management, learning, job, redesigning, organizational*

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I. Introduction

We have noticed that over the last period more and more publications have brought into discussion the possibilities of improving the stress state. However, these publications are mainly recommendations. Their efficiency is yet unknown. Let us look at some examples:

“For dealing with the stress effects, you should follow these steps:

1. Take a 10 minutes break every 2 hours of work. Learn to say “NO” without feeling guilty – the desire to please everyone represents an effort and a huge waste.
2. Plan your daily activities and be aware that not everything depends on you. Focus gradually on the tasks you want to accomplish. Even if you have the fastest mind, the transition from one activity to another will still make you tired eventually. Be aware that everything can go on without you and that you are not indispensable at your work place, at home or in society.
3. Try to discover the pleasant aspects of simple actions such as sleeping, eating, walking, without believing that this is all that life can provide you with.
4. Avoid getting yourself wrapped up in worries and tensions. Take a little break and then get back to your dialogue and action”.

Certainly, these are a few less professional examples, but within the organizational framework, a series of programs that are meant to support employees in successful dealing with stress have been made and developed. Our proposal is though one that starts from another perspective, namely that of organizational learning, one of the “modern” challenges of the organizational psychology. If stress is such a complex phenomenon that we have to live with, whether we like it or not and whether we agree with it or not, “*could we not learn how to react? Could we not learn new reactions in order to stop feeling unprepared and to reduce negative effects?*”. By learning about reactions to stress, we practically state that we can learn new attitudes and behaviors in order to be efficient from the organizational and individual point of view. Thus, we open a new perspective in approaching stress, the effects of which we have not learned so far, but which we would like to consider positive.

Strategies in dealing with stress

As we were saying, the programs of stress management have had different shapes, some being more efficient than others. These programs were designed on three large categories: preparing for stress, redesigning the job and social support.

In order to prepare employees as far as stress

is concerned, a realistic presentation of the job was proposed, “which should clearly specify, starting from the hiring stage, the nature of the work that the person involved will do” (Johns, G., 1999, p. 445). This kind of presentation is meant to be done also for promotions and for internal transfer. Researchers have stated that, as long as people know what to expect, they will definitely know whether they want to work in such a place or not, meaning they will be well prepared to fill a position with a certain level of stress.

Another proposal for stress management is redesigning the job. “Organizations can redesign jobs in order to decrease their stressful character. In theory, for this purpose, it is possible to redesign the jobs anywhere in the organization. An overloaded manager can get an assistant to take over some of his duties. Practically, the most organized efforts to redesign have tried to multiply the operational jobs, making them more stimulating and more interesting. This purpose is generally achieved by giving the employees more control over the rhythm of their work and allowing them to use more of their capacities and talents” (Johns, J., 1999, p. 445).

Certainly, redesigning comes with a new flow and with a proposal that tries not only to decrease the level of stress, but also to eliminate it, although we assess that this action also brings a series of weaknesses for the organization as well as for the employee. From the organizational point of view, the rhythm of work established by the employee can lead to a decrease of productivity. There can be problems concerning the roles and positions in the organization, as well as the decrease of authority. If the employee is “left” to work in his own rhythm, he will have difficulties in accepting the authority of the leader in a certain domain. Individually, an increase of the stress level can be noticed. Why? Because being determined to split his activities, the employee may feel that he will lose his “importance” or he can become interpretative, judging that he has received help because he is no longer efficient enough for that job or that somebody else is prepared to do his job. At the same time, splitting some responsibilities with others can lead to the increase of the stress level for the one who takes over those activities. This way, the one who will split the activities will do it mainly with the activities that he does not like, mostly the daily or the non-intellectual activities, fact that leads to routine and stress for the one who takes over. There are some critical points of view meant to point out that this strategy of stress management can project itself as a huge source of stress in the organization, as long as it is not well managed.

Another strategy of stress management is social support. “The social support refers only to the

strong connection between people. This aspect can affect stress by offering gradual encouragements to self-esteem, information, care and humor and even material resources. Research shows that the benefits of social support have two sides. First, people in a powerful social network present themselves better both physically and psychologically. Secondly, these people can deal better with stressful moments, the network of social relationships acting as a bumper against stress” (Johns, J., 1999, p. 445). Personally, I consider that this strategy is one of the most efficient among the ones mentioned until now, but even this one can raise some problems if it is not correctly understood and approached. One of the problems is when the employee in search for social support under the circumstances of high emotional stress confesses about the activity he is involved in, providing information that should not be known by people outside the company, especially in this kind of moments in which individuals feel the need to talk, to be understood and accepted. The need for support cannot be understood as a weakness, especially if the one who uses a stress management strategy occupies a high place in the organization hierarchy.

We have checked some of the most important stress management strategies in order to underline the need to emerge some strategies that can make the employee deal with the stressful situation, to accept it and to manage it as well as he can. This is why we state that the strategy we are about to suggest will contain the preparation for stress as well as the social support, because we consider that only together, these strategies can successfully find their role and place in the organizational context. It is important for the stress management to make itself useful to the employee, but also to the work place, with everything it involves, meaning relationships, organizational culture, participation, involvement and organizational trust.

Some aspects concerning organizational learning

We have mentioned before the learning of the reaction to stress, which is involved in the program of organizational therapy. This is why it is necessary to point out some elements of organizational learning.

The process of learning was approached especially by the psychology of learning and education of the adult. Before pointing out some important aspects of organizational learning, we propose to give a short presentation of the way in which this process was presented in the psychology of learning. *Learning* is defined as acquiring a new behavioral answer following a special training (Sillamy, N., 2000). The fresh nature of the acquired behavior and knowledge

makes it possible that through learning, the adaptation to the environmental condition is provided and the way to development and improvement is opened, other than the one resulted directly from the process of growing up. If we relate learning to behavior, we have to keep in mind the next three criteria established by D. Fontana (Glăveanu, V., 2008, “Communication” – the XXIXth International Congress of Psychology, Berlin).

Although most of the studies conducted in the educational field are the result of the preoccupations of school psychologists and, consequently, the act of learning is often confused with the didactic one, we must not ignore the amplex and implications of this type of activity. Not only children or pupils learn, but adults do too. Learning does not take place only in schools, but also in the family and professional environment. Learning is not exclusively the attribute of the formal educational system, but it is also open to informal, less systematic influences (Glăveanu, V., 2008, “Communication” – the XXIXth International Congress of Psychology, Berlin).

Adult education was born from the necessity to study the particular way in which adults learn. Of course that such a project starts from the characteristics of adult persons and it distinguishes between the psychosocial education conditions of children/young people and grown-up people. Among the leading ideas taken into consideration by the adult education, here are some empirically validated assumptions:

- Adults are self-oriented and independent in learning;
- Adults already have a past experience that needs to be used;
- Adults are willing to learn relevant things for them;
- The learning motivation comes mainly from within;
- A relaxed, supporting climate leads to better results in learning (Harris, Desimore, 1993, apud Noghiu, 2006, quoted in Glăveanu, V., 2008, “Communication” – the XXIX-th International Congress of Psychology, Berlin).

There have been many discussions about the organizational learning, especially taking into consideration learning achieved by the adults who are in the first stage of the working process or who are looking to improve their abilities or for a new specialization. From our point of view, organizational learning can involve the process in which one assimilates new ways to deal with a phenomenon such as stress.

“The origins of *organizational learning* have not helped the individual approach (a perspective much

closer to adult learning), but they have essentially concerned the dynamics of higher learning: group, department, organization as a whole. The history of the concept of organizational learning starts from the studies of Peter Senge, Cris Argyris, Donald Schon and Margaret Wheatley (Cors, R., 2003). Today, there is a rich literature on this continuously growing subject, in which the main directions of investigation concern defining and applying the organizational learning, the characteristics of the organizations that learn, stimulating through continuous professional learning, the social and organizational impact of learning and so on” (Glăveanu, V., 2008, Communication – the XXIXth International Congress of Psychology, Berlin).

There were many discussions about the conceptualization way of the “organizational learning” and once this concept appeared, the idea of the organization that learns also appeared. Peter Senge defines the organization that learns (learning organization) as being “the organization that constantly increases its capacity to create its own future. For such an organization, the simple survival is not enough. Learning for surviving or adapting learning is truly important and needed. But for a learning organization, adapting learning needs to be associated with the generative one, because it increases our capacity to create” (Senge, P., 1990, p. 14). Another definition that mainly states the individual element says “the learning organization is the one that makes the learning process easier for all its members and it is constantly transforming” (Pedler, E., et al., 1991, quote in Zlate, M., 2004, p. 67).

How are these organizations different? The organizational learning associates itself with a series of new management-organizational directions (see Marinca, 2006):

1. Long term and horizontal planning;
2. Team work and cooperation;
3. Diversity as a resource;
4. Split authority and control;
5. Focusing on people and adopting the theory of the servant leader.

To these ones we add:

6. The synergic approach of organizations;
7. Using the techniques of group activation and participation stimulation;
8. Active dealing with problems;
9. Sustaining organizational innovation;
10. Stimulating the creativity of the employees;
11. Valuing the technological progress;
12. Increasing communication between managers / leaders and employees;

13. Focusing on the outside bonds and the cultural differences.

How is organizational learning or the organization that learns perceived? This was one of the discussion themes proposed in a meeting of the experts in organizational learning that took place at the University of Wisconsin, in January 2003 (see Cors, R., 2003). Among the answers given, the differences between the two phrases and their area of over positioning are pointed out:

- The learning organizations are considered to be advanced guards in the business area;
- Organizational learning seems more academic meanwhile the organizations that learn are types of organizations that you develop in practice;
- Organizational learning states the means, meanwhile the organizations that learn state the purpose.
- These terms have been “contaminated” by inefficient programs in the past.

To the question “what is it exactly stated through the organizational learning” the same group has offered the following examples:

- Individual training programs;
- Decision groups that start from objective data, dialogue and reflection;
- Huge training programs for some organizational abilities;
- Constant effort to promote learning in order to increase performance.

Until now, it seems that we are confronted with an ideal organizational profile, even though nowadays organizational learning has a lot of adepts and sustainers, there are a series of researches that *overrule this approach* because of the vague character of the learning terms and organization, of the uncertain level in which it takes place or of its validity (see Pitariu, H.D., Budean, A., 2007). The questions raised from the beginning in front of the researchers were:

- Who learns: the person or the organization?
- What is the relationship between individual learning and organizational learning?
- Which are the assessment criteria in the organization?
- What is learned?
- How is this process learned and how can it be sustained?

The utility of organizational learning in the wide context of organizational development was noted on a reduced level (individual or group), but also on a large one (community). By summing-up the main findings in this field, Rebecca Cors (2003) emphasizes three general features of the organizations that learn:

- Promoting permanent improving;

- Promoting innovation;
- Protecting the community development.

In conclusion, it can be stated that organizational learning is a research area in continuous progress and numerous clarifications are necessary. However, “the organization that learns is maybe the best-known challenge among postmodern approaches in the area of organizations. This is becoming more and more a trend, because it guides the organization towards continuous (permanent) learning and offers the acquirement of important competitive advantages” (Marinca, 2006, p. 141, quoted in Glăveanu, 2008, XXIXth International Congress of Psychology, Berlin). Starting from these considerations, we think that certain aspects of the stress phenomenon can be learned, readjusted, as well as popularized within the work group.

II. Method

Stress between organizational learning and psychotherapy or “checkmate stress”

Before presenting the “checkmate stress” program, we intend to emphasize the importance of the organizational group therapy by revealing some characteristics.

Organizational group psychotherapy

Organizational group therapy derives from the classical group therapy, but what makes the difference is the proceeding setting, the matter to be discussed and especially the fact that the group proposed for psychotherapy is part of an organization.

In non-directive group therapies (developed by Rogers), the ones we also started from in this approach, generally the group shapes the therapy session, therefore the therapist develops an atmosphere of trust and support, which is also the same thing the organizational therapist is planning to do in order to fight against stress inside the team. If the therapist maintains himself in the situation, he would rather invent/create new situations that the group members will adapt to, starting from the group suggestions.

Another type of group therapy that we have considered efficient within the organization is the Gestalt group therapy. “Gestalt therapy allows the persons to discover themselves, to create themselves by meeting the others” (Mitrofan, I., Stoica, S.D., 1999, p. 217). Therapy aims to increase individual responsibility for their own behavior, feelings, thoughts, including those of which the individual is unaware. Because of these goals, Gestalt therapists avoid searching the causes behind behaviors, feelings and thoughts. Could this type of therapy be used in the team work? We agree it could;

maybe not entirely, but fragmented, so that in dealing with the situation it is better for the working team to have a high level of responsibility and activity involvement. However, at the same time, we think it is important to analyze the mechanisms and causes that lead to a certain type of reaction, because only a proper awareness on them could lead to an optimal organizational psychotherapy.

Perhaps one of the most effective methods of organizational therapy is experiential therapy in general, and especially working with metaphor. “The metaphor is one of the most largely used methods by experiential therapists. Unconsciously, the therapist always uses the metaphor to help the clients. Within a team/group of work, there will always be a metaphor for each member of the group and a therapist’s metaphor, which is built and used considering the problem faced. The experience of each individual in relationship with a “certain” metaphor will be exclusive. Therefore, the learning of certain behaviors/reactions for a particular situation will occur, for the members who have not explored such a behavior/reaction so far. The most appropriate metaphor in the organizational context and which we plan to use is the situational metaphor, which “represents a way of challenging self-exploration of the insight” (Mitrofan, I., Stoica, S.D., 1999, p. 231), which was successfully used in optimizing groups. We revised some of the main elements of a few types of group therapy, which can be successfully transposed and exploited in the organizational field in order to increase efficiency in the working team and to get to a better knowledge or a direct confrontation of certain problems.

The design of stress on chess board

We have started with the idea of the complexity of stress and chess, and the necessity for the game in human existence. In order to achieve this model, we used all the chessmen, approaching pawns in a general manner, and not finding them a proper usage for the moment. Players of this game will be represented by the two major sides of stress, eustress versus distress. At first, it is important to mention that we do not wish to get into the complexity of this game, but we will use it as an instrument to acquire a more complex knowledge on this phenomenon. In other words, it will be a “pawn” in achieving our goal.

The chessboard has 64 small squares and it is horizontally bi-divided. The distribution of forces of each side is equal. Considering the positive/negative nature of the two concepts of stress, we chose to represent eustress by white chessmen, and distress by black ones. As in chess, every player has a king, a queen, two bishops, two knights and two rooks; in the

same way in our game the two forces will have the same chessmen, and each of them will represent one of the stress valences.

The representation of stress dimensions using chessmen

As we mentioned before, we will deal with all the important chessmen, approaching them separately and trying to reveal similarities between their roles and the characteristics of stress.

The most important chessman of the game is the *queen*. We have seen that it has increased in importance and intensity, since the discovery of chess until today.

To develop this design we have chosen the white queen to be *the motivated dimension of eustress*, and the black queen to be *the demotivated dimension of distress*. The impact of this side of stress is much stronger than the other one, therefore the queen is the motivational input. The queen is the one who actually emphasizes the fact that efficiency needs planning, delegation and, why not, asking others for support. The queen is also the one who can lead to total failure by not assuming the risks and deserting. Mostly, all these can also be said about the king, but what makes the difference between the two chessmen is that the queen will not “throw” itself using a new mechanism. It will always use those mechanisms that are surely effective and certified by prior using. The queen has that valence of femininity, which does not go further until it is safe. Moreover, due to this valence of femininity, the queen does not always have the courage to fight, choosing to pull back. The queen will have an important role in winning, but also in losing the game. Those are the unique and particular features of the queen.

The *king*, as we said, has much in common with the queen. They are the main chessmen and the king is the one to announce victory/defeat because he is the only chessman who can go to checkmate or be checkmate. Without the queen, the king lacks the grace of movements, “the versatility” given by the feminine feature and is led by the desire to win at all costs. One thing is sure: even if he wins or not, the king will manifest “manhood” by throwing himself into the fight. Therefore, the king is the motivated/demotivated dimension of eustress/distress and his reactions are noble. It will definitely have the responsibility for time management and the demand to clarify actions, being less forward to delegate or ask for support, which counts as a sign of weakness. Instead, it will be the one prone to substance “abuse”, without thinking of the consequences. It would rather die in battle than give up and be declared a coward. In both the king’s and the

queen’s case we will take into account the inner motivation with direct impact on knowledge and (so) psychological motivation.

Further on, we reach one of the chessmen that, without analysis, makes us think of adaptation. It is the bishop (“fool” in Romanian). Usually, this term has a negative valence, because it is used for those who have mental problems. Personally, I would say it is a lack of adherence to general rules, unanimously accepted. “Fool” is a term also used for describing those who act differently from most of the people, but our fool, or better said the metaphor “fool” in this design of stress, embodies the psychological dimension of adaptation/maladjustment. What do we mean by psychological adaptation? We are referring to compromises that we make in stressful situations, in reaching composure, and why not, individual satisfaction in organization. In other words, we are not successful and appreciated and we will try to compensate that by obtaining results in extraprofessional activities. On the other side of the chessboard, there is the “black bishop” (fool). Both black and fool... Yes, it is the dimension of maladaptive psychological dimension of stress. In this case, we take into account, for example, the projection, meaning that in stressful situations the individual does not succeed in assuming his own mistakes. He tries all the time to blame others for his own mistakes (damages). We expect bishop’s (fool) reactions to be always new, atypical, different. Yet, the bishop (fool) can create some patterns, reacting on past experience and it will be labeled because of that, or he will continue to surprise, in order to keep the intensity of his brilliance, shocking with new, original reactions. The emotional implication of this dimension is obvious. In its madness, this chessman will create large, wide action paths, it will create support for the king’s and queen’s possible advance, being loyal and always around, although he does not always have the best solutions.

The knight (horse) makes us think of action, and much more, the knight (horse) is associated with physical activity, submission, and a vehicle of achieving certain goals. By his greatness, the knight (horse) is far from being a mobility representative. Instead, the knight (horse) makes large and straight moves, although they are often the same. This is how I would characterize this chessman. In this design, I have considered that, for this chessman, the setting/unsetting dimension of stress at the behavioral level is a proper representation. The knight (horse) acts methodically, goes in the designated direction (the well-known expression “you walk like a horse”), if psychological speaking, the horse is motivated by the master (king), he

behaviorally sets himself, meaning that it goes further or on the contrary he gives up because he is tired and becomes indifferent to apostrophizing. As we said, the knight (horse) experiences actions that have been proven effective over time. What should we do with restive horses? With powerful horses, with horses, which constrain and impel you to certain moves, just because they want or cannot go on the usual track? Then we will have setting/unsetting behavioral stress reactions based on novelty and originality. Despite all these, the knight (horse) is bold and will throw himself on the chessboard with confidence, submission and humility. However, he will keep a certain distance from the queen and the king, sometimes serving without understanding them, making his presence felt through his actions, through promptness or sudden turnover.

The rook, by its simple representation, leads you to an architectural world, dominated by a depressed dynamism, but towering by its simple presence. The rook makes the king adapt more quickly and makes his adaptation optimal. It is more rigid and moves in one direction, which is why we have considered this chessman the symbol of the behavioral-adaptive dimension of stress (eustress/distress). Why do we consider the rook an element with roots in adaptation? Perhaps because of the gender ambiguity. Is the rook a metaphor for the guardsman always prepared to sacrifice for the supreme leader, always ready to risk his own existence? Or is the rook seen as the prototype of a woman who starts from a position of equality with men and demonstrates she does not give in the fight? Although the rook does not tend to surprise, beating over the old ground in safe directions and apparently always the same, let us not forget that this chessman is the only one that rooks.

What I want to emphasize is the fact that the rook obviously captures the dual position of stress reaction, namely the fact that on the level of the behavioral adaptation dimension we have reactions based on prior experience and reactions based on novelty and originality. The rook is the one who sacrifices itself, hoping the king will be saved, effectively adapting or not to the given situation. We also have to revise the rook as a metaphor for the distress dimension, that the rigidity would not allow to overcome certain issues to a successful integration, thus protecting the success of good.

Brief program of organizational therapy inside the work team for an effective stress management

The program we have suggested can be customized according to the organization's particularity and the individual's characteristics, but we can draw the course of the program, working metaphors and its utility.

To whom is the program addressing?

The program addresses to a working team (a department, a sector of a department) within an organization that, together with the psychologist, will know and discover what are the stressors they cope with considering the particularity of the activity. We mention that these factors will be extracted from the eight main stress categories in the organization.

How shall we show the situations that people will deal with in the program?

The psychologist will create situations for each meeting, for each category of organization-specific stressor, without telling the participants at the beginning of the program what category it is. They will find in the debriefing part which was the stressor and how did it feel. At the beginning of the program, the psychologist will have to create situations, especially by using organization-specific stressors and then he will create stressful situations that will not necessarily be team-specific, but will have the purpose to prepare the group and individuals to cope with another stressor in order to reduce much more of the surprise caused by it and to make the team operate at high parameters.

Here is an example of a situation: *"You are hired in a new employment position in the organization. Although you have another qualification, until your new status regulation you have to do the same type of the activity as the people in the department you have been elected."*

How many participants would we have?

The program will include a total of 10 to 20 subjects. We have mentioned why we need to have a total of 10 to 20 subjects. In each session, each member of the team will need to have a role and create a scenario for his role. Therefore, each one will practice the position of the white/black king, white/black queen, white/black bishop, white/black knight, white/black rook and he will have to experience new types of reactions that are totally opposite to the way they are used to react in stressful situations. In this context, the phenomenon of learning emerges, because related to certain situation, each individual will have to acquire new types of reactions learned from their colleagues, or simply discovered in this new organizational climate. From one week to another, each individual will have to prepare his "role" and learn the specific types of stressors for each chessman.

How long will the session last and how will its course be?

The meetings will last 2-3 hours, and overall the program could have a minimum of ten meetings, because if the program includes 10 participants, they

should be able to explore all ten suggested roles. The manifestation of the different ways of reaction for each situation of each session will last approximately 30-45 minutes, and the rest of the time will be dedicated to discussions on how each participant felt when experiencing a new type of reaction either positive or negative. The psychologist will insist upon new things that participants have learned both about them as individuals and as part of a working team in the organization. To increase the level of involvement, the participants could receive certain awards for the most original stress reaction of the day or the most surprising reaction of the day.

Can there be other methods transposed into practice?

There are certainly other methods. Our suggestions are only a rough guide. The goal to “learn new reactions to stress” is important. We believe that an interesting version could be achieved in the organization if each department assumes a role on the chessboard and expresses stress reactions. Here we have in mind the interdepartmental stressors. Also, programs for leaders/managers could be elaborated, where each individual would respond in turn to organizational stressful situations, using all types of specific reactions for certain chessmen.

III. Conclusions

The utility of checkmate stress program

We believe that this suggested program has numerous advantages. In the first place, it can be assumed both by the working team (as it would be desirable) and by the entire organization. The working team approach implies the progress (evolution) of the working team, the progress of each member, because everyone will learn new things about themselves, but also about the other members of their team. They will learn which are the vulnerabilities of each member and in which situations they need to be supported. Thus, this program can be changed into a strengthening and designing program of a working team.

The individual will discover himself through the reactions he expresses, both positive and especially negative, and this experience will be useful not only for his work in the current work team, but also in working with other teams he may be involved in the future.

Such programs, besides having the role to develop an effective stress management, are a pylon in extending communication abilities between team members, and are also contributing to the increase of the trust between them. At the end of the program, they will surely provide support to each other easier, they

will become more honest and cooperative and they will learn to appreciate each other.

Learning certain stress reactions will speed up the evolution (development) of the individuals, the working team and the entire organization. We believe that only by experimental learning, the devastating effects of stress will be reduced and the organization performance will continuously improve. Knowing the work team members outside the context of the work is in agreement with the suggested context of optimization. Only an organization in which members know each other very well can obtain long-term results. The therapeutic characteristic (nature) of this program is determined by the fact that it is also addressing those individuals who suffer because of stress and those who prefer avoiding a stressful situation instead of facing it. Whether they want or not, whether it is convenient or not, the program will lead to directly coping with a certain situation and in difficult moments the team will become a support for the individual.

As we have anticipated, the program of stress management suggests an interaction between several existing strategies, adapted to stress dynamics. Therefore, the training stress strategy involves dealing with organizational situations, which the members of the team may experience in their activity and this reduces the limits of this approach, which we have pointed out before and are related to the ethical area.

The area of redesigning the job is also present in this program because certain chessmen (white queen) have specific reactions as authorizing activities. Others deal with time management, categorizing responsibilities. Therefore, the members of the team learn to redesign their job, being able to easily integrate the new members of the team.

It goes without saying that social support is present, because in chess only together the chessmen can lead to victory, or on the contrary to loss. The working team becomes a sort of “a second family”, where roles and statuses are clearly differentiated, and relationships are based on trust, respect and cooperation. The metaphor of stress itself, as we said, suggests affiliation to a group, a team. The chessman that each participant will identify with will vary depending on the organizational context. It is also important to understand that every stressful situation in the organization is unique and involves relatively unique reactions to stress, but every situation can be prevented with specific reactions to certain categories. We can identify ourselves with specific reactions of a certain chessman, but it is better to use the reactions of all the chessmen, because only this can assure success.

In a concluding sentence, *check mate stress* presumes *stress training, in the context of redesigning the job (position) and offering social support to the members of the working team.*

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