



The background of the slide features several stylized, glowing blue coronavirus particles. One prominent particle in the upper right quadrant has a realistic human eye in the center of its body. The particles have numerous spike-like protrusions. The overall color scheme is a mix of light blue and white, with a subtle gradient.

# Wat met ons mentaal welzijn in Coronatijden?

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VOKA

19.05.2020

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- \* Oprichter Ally Institute





# Check-in

**Stress  
is our worst  
nightmare**



# 1. Setting the scene

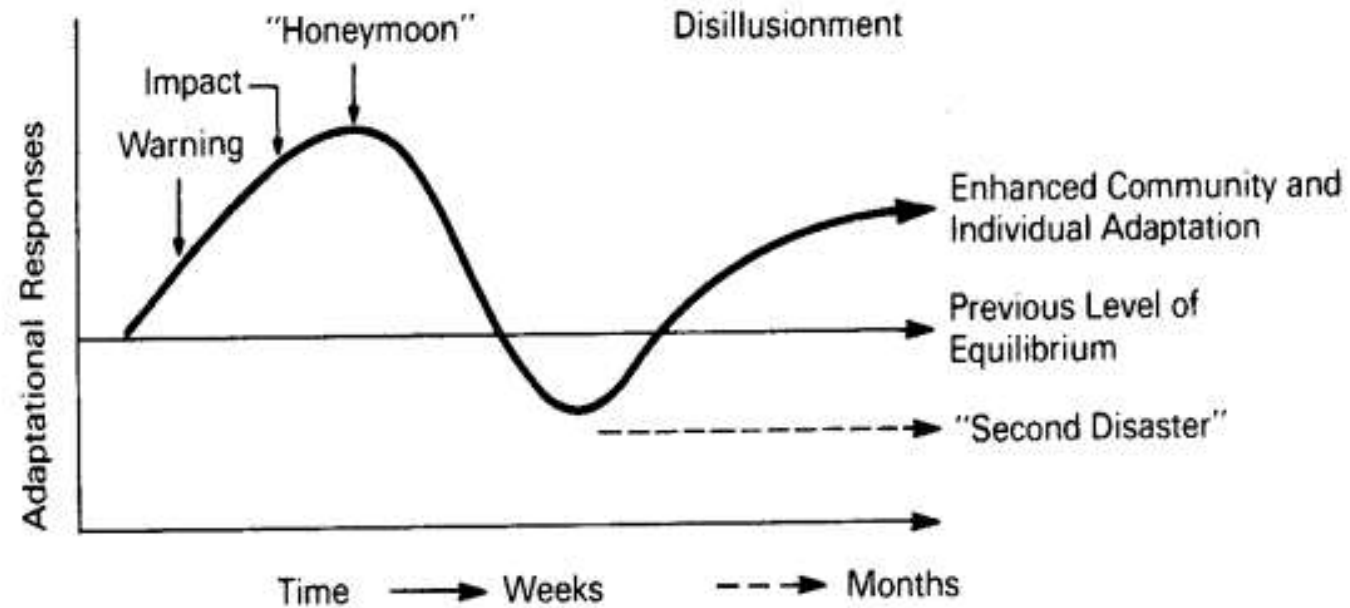






### 3. The impact of longevity

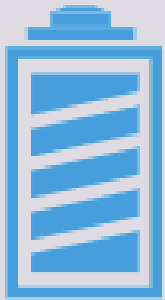
**FIGURE 1.2**  
*Phases of Response to Disaster*



*Beverley Raphael (1986). When disaster strikes.*

Hoe reageren  
we op  
collectieve  
noodsituaties?





**100%**

**MURMUR**

**IMPACT  
CORONA**

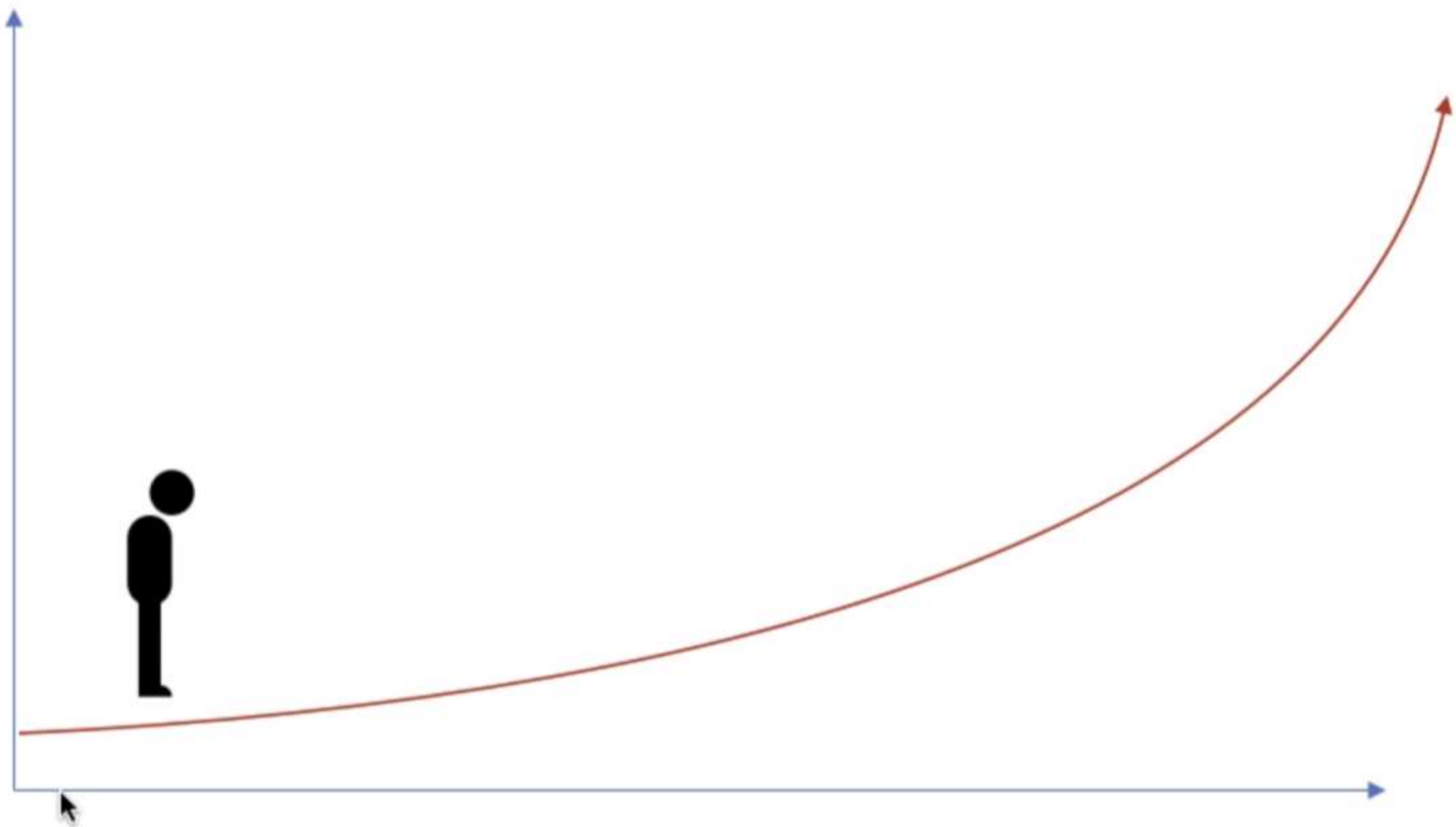
**MURMUR**



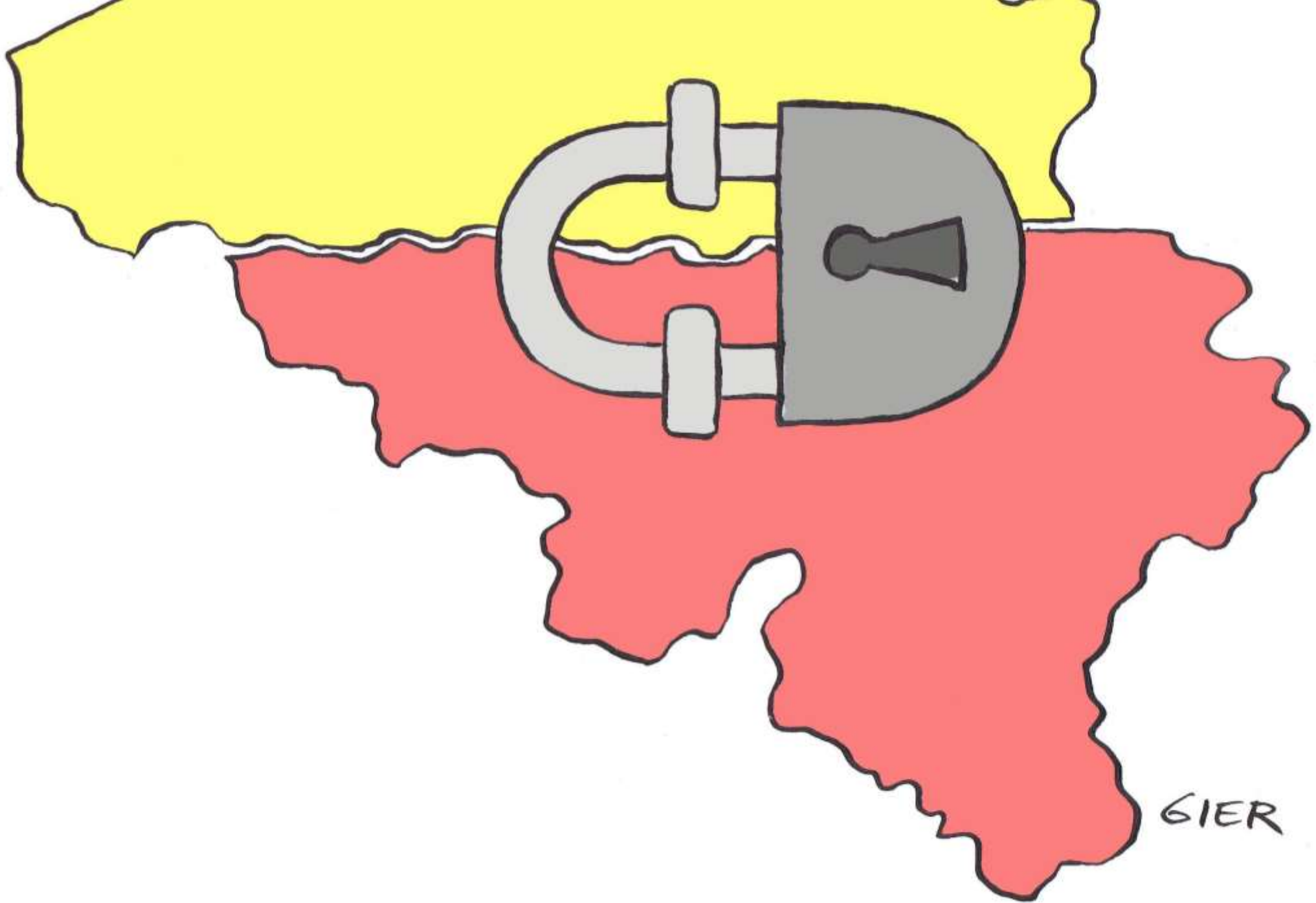


# Impact



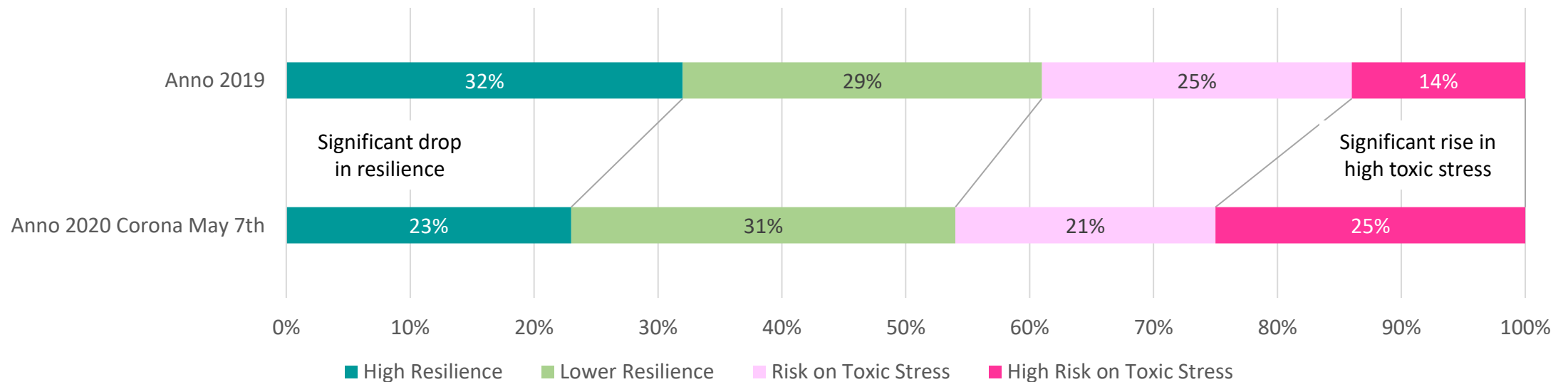






# Results on an Individual level

The level of high toxic stress has significantly increased among the Belgian active population (18 – 65 yrs) during the Corona-crisis



A high risk of toxic stress implies a high risk of long term illness and burn-out. For employees who stay at work it implies a loss of productivity. In 2016\*, Eurofound already reported a loss of 35% productivity, so the Corona-crisis makes this even worse. Besides the incremental negative impact on the mental wellbeing of the active population, this also has an enormous economical impact, knowing that every day an employee remains sick at home, this is associated with a cost of 1.000 €\*\*.

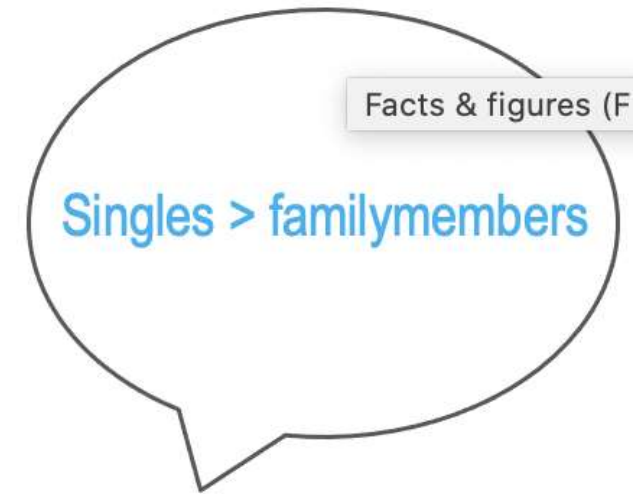
\* Eurofound (European Working Conditions Survey, 2016: Job quality in Belgium: <https://werk.belgie.be/nl/nieuws/een-analyse-van-de-jobkwaliteit-belgie-2015?id=45604>

\*\* Based on figures of SECUREX



# Other results

- Evolution ssince start of lockdown (beginning of March, 2020):
  - Focus;
  - Sleepproblems;
  - Purpose;
  - Taking decisions;
  - The feeling of not being able to cope;
  - Enjoyment;
  - Avoidance behavior;
  - Negative emotions;
  - Loss of optimism.





## SLOTS.

Be realistic: you can't maintain your focus for hours on end.

**MUST DO.** Therefore it's better to work in 45-minute slots (no distractions) with 5-minute breaks in between. If you have children, work in 20-minute slots with 10-minute breaks. Once you've gone through this cycle 3 times take a longer break outside with the children.

Reward yourself in a healthy way when you've completed a task.



## REWARD YOURSELF.



## ROUTINE.

And last but definitely not least: install a routine to help you switch to 'home' after work.

At the moment our home situation is also 'tainted' with work and that can make it extra difficult to let go.

**MUST DO.** Tidying up is a good transition from work to home mode. Don't leave your work stuff lying about in the living room so you can relax fully.

The same goes for your children, by the way.

# Tip for the employee



Do all kinds of thoughts intrude while you're working?

Take a minute to write down what's occupying your thoughts so you can revisit those worries at a more opportune time.

**MUST-DO.** If you like you can use this worry diary.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

CAN I DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

NOPE. WHO CAN HELP ME?



## GIVE ME A BREAK

### What should I do during my breaks?

If you're working from home you may have a tendency to spend too much time indoors. The restrictive measures due to COVID-19 make things even more difficult in that regard.

Still, even in these times we have to avoid the pitfalls of staying indoors and not getting enough exercise. Take frequent breaks and spend them in a healthy way.

## TIPS

### AS SAID.

As we said earlier, work in 45-minute slots and take 5-minute breaks in between. For those of us with children that's 20 minutes of focus, 10-minute breaks and a longer break after three cycles.

**NO-NO.** Checking Facebook or the latest news updates regarding the coronavirus does NOT count as a break.

### So what do I do in those 5 minutes?

Get up and walk around for a bit. If weather permits and you have a garden: go outside, do some stretch exercises, get something to drink (**NO-NO:** alcohol and caffeine) or do a few breathing exercises.

### EXERCISE.



Don't skip your lunch break. Take your lunch in a different room and keep up a healthy diet: eat lots of vegetables and drink water.

**MUST DO.** During lunch break close your laptop and mute your smartphone.

Take a 30-minute walk at least once per day. Go for a stroll alone or with your family.

**MUST DO.** Pay attention to what you see, hear, smell and feel around you. If you go for a walk with the kids you can turn this into a game.



The gym and group sports are not an option right now so find an alternative.

**MUST DO.** Go cycling or jogging outside. Do yoga and stretch exercises at home, or dust off that unused home trainer. It takes some creativity but you may even discover a sports discipline you never knew you would like.

Make sure you have enough me time.

**MUST DO.** Take at least 30 minutes per day for yourself to catch your breath.



## DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF.

What if it all gets too much? What if you're constantly worrying about others?

**MUST-DO.** This situation demands a lot of flexibility from all of us so don't be too hard on yourself.

### TIPS



#### IT'S NORMAL.

Every now and then you won't be as efficient or things will go wrong but that's normal. After all, in these bizarre times there are certain things you can't control.

Juggling too many balls is even more difficult than before **so cut yourself some slack.**

#### It's hard on everyone: you, your family, your colleagues...

Assume that everyone is doing their best and keep communicating in a unifying way. This also means being lenient towards others.

**MUST DO.** How do you communicate in a unifying way? State the facts - indicate how they make you feel - say what you need and formulate a request.

For instance: you've consulted me several times in the past hour (fact) - I'm not really happy about that because I always lose my concentration (feeling) - I need to be able to focus (need) - would you mind not contacting me in the next hour (request)?



#### STATE THE FACTS.





# EVERYONEOK.BE

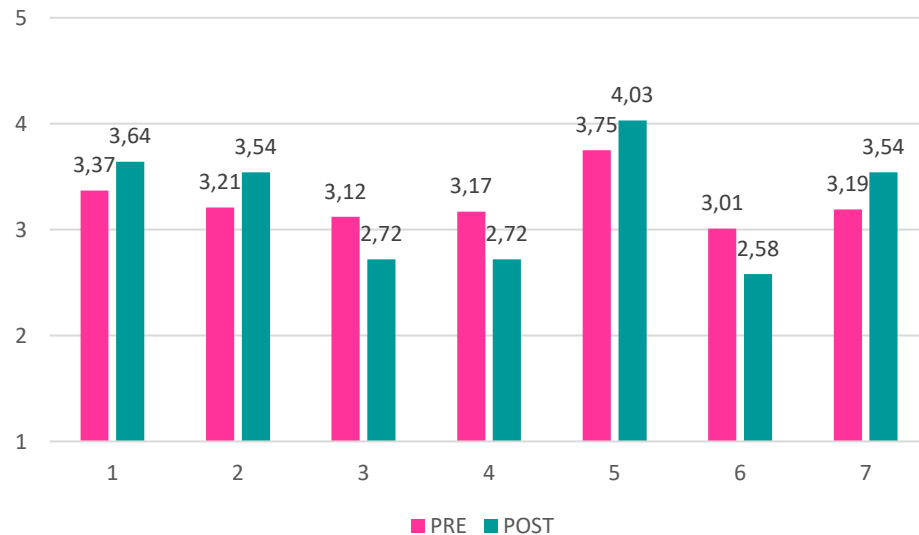
FIRST RESULTS

MARCH 2020

# Results on an Individual level

## Impact of the Intervention

- ✓ Resilience scale Ally Institute (7 items on a 5-point scale from 1-5)



1. I enjoy the things I do during the day
2. I get a sense of pride from my life/daily activities
3. I feel mentally exhausted
4. I find it hard to recover my energy level
5. I have a good relationship with the people around me (eg family, friends, neighbours)
6. If I have a hard time, I tend to pin down on everything that is not going well and these things then become an obsession
7. I find meaning in my life, I have the feeling that I am able to commit to a higher goal

All items significantly improved from PRE to POST, so after intervention  
significance level of .001  
Range of scale 1-5 n= 11218 respondents

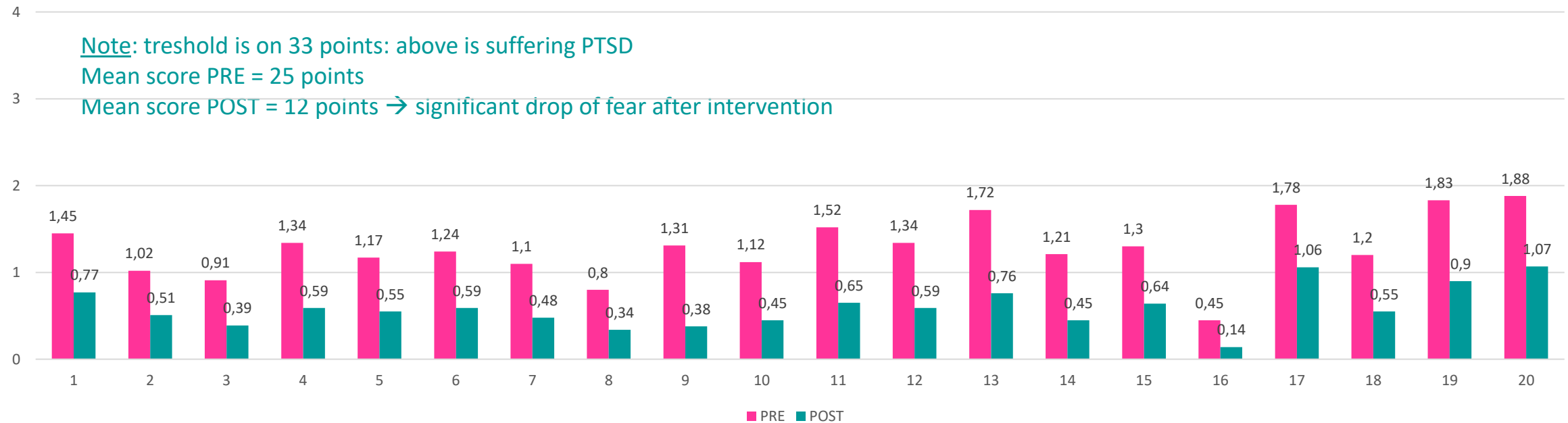


# Results on an Individual level

Note:  
We stopped the PCL-5 after a first response-evaluation on March 30th due to respondent fatigue

## Impact of the Intervention

- ✓ PCL-5 (PTSD Checklist for DSM-5) (20 items on a scale from 0-4)



All items significantly improved from PRE to POST, so after intervention  
significance level of .001  
based on n= 3479 respondents

## Conclusion:

- People who participated in this study, are really suffering from a higher level of toxic stress, probably due to COVID-19 – this level keeps on rising...
- The intervention helps them to reduce this level of toxic stress as well as feelings of anxiety and distress
- This intervention bring them back into the “ok”-zone.





Future  
perspectives?





# Opportunity

/o-por-tu-ni-ti/

1. The chance to do something which could be rewarding or beneficial.
2. A job or career position which is suitable and available.

