


TOP STORY

Help for emergency workers – early training to strengthen emotional skills

Dealing with stress and feelings should be part of training rescue workers

They are often the first people at the scene of an accident. They save lives. But the job of an emergency worker is associated with a lot of stress. This often results in exhaustion and emotional strain, but this doesn't have to be the case. A study by the Initiative Health and Work (iga) shows that teaching emergency workers how to strengthen their emotional skills during their job training has a protective effect.

Emergency workers are exposed to a variety of stressors. They have to deal with injuries and death every day, often working under time pressure. They are hindered from doing their work or are insulted, including by the people who they are actually trying to help. As part of a study by the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Public Sector in North Rhine-Westphalia, 64% of the 812 emergency workers surveyed stated that they were the victim of verbal, non-verbal and/or physical abuse at least once in 2017.

These kinds of attacks can result in not only physical injuries, but also stress and burnout. 'A worker who has been the victim of violence in the workplace not only receives the necessary medical assistance from their accident insurance institution, but also the necessary psychological support', said Professor Joachim Breuer, Director General of the DGUV. 'But it's also important that they are equipped with the right skills to deal with difficult situations in their job, ideally this should happen during their initial job training.'

This is where training in emotional skills and competencies (ESaC) comes into play. This involves training people how to deal with their own feelings, such as fear, grief or anger. It is already being successfully used for police officers, teachers and care workers for the elderly.


Photo: chabala – stock.adobe.com

Emergency workers are exposed to high levels of emotional stress during their work. They often report feeling depressed and anxious. It makes sense to help them develop stress-management skills during their initial job training.

The study looked at whether ESaC courses during the initial training of rescue workers helps them to cope better. The feedback from participants was consistently positive. They reported a significant improvement in their ability to deal with their own feelings. The training also protected them from emotional exhaustion and cynicism. The study recommends the inclusion of ESaC as part of the curriculum for training to become an emergency worker. Other professions with a strong focus on interaction with other individuals, such as day-care workers and special-needs workers, could also benefit from the positive effects of ESaC training. The study was published in iga. Report 37.

Web: www.iga-info.de › Veröffentlichungen
 › iga.Report 37 (German only)

FYI
iga

The Initiative Health and Work (iga) is a joint initiative between the Federal Association of Company Health Insurance Funds, the DGUV, the Federal Association of the AOK and the Association of Substitute Health Funds. Its aim is to prevent work-related health hazards through OSH and Workplace Health Promotion.



A busy year ahead

Dear Reader,

At the start of a new year, we open our calendar and it's already full with appointments, reminders, birthdays and even the first to-do lists for the year. There they are again – all the challenges, big and small, that we had happily forgotten about while we looked back at the previous year.

Some people shape their calendar, others just manage it. But in a world that sometimes changes faster than we are aware of, we want to constantly review and change what we do. When should we try new ways of doing things, opening ourselves to new ideas? What do we need to keep and where is there room for improvement? This isn't an easy task, because we want to achieve a lot in 2019. We stand behind social security and safe, healthy jobs for everyone, even beyond 'normal' employment relationships. We are continuing to work on establishing a cultural change in companies, institutions, schools and day-care centres, which sees prevention as part of everything people do. Also worthy of special mention is the fact that the DGUV Kompakt newsletter is celebrating its 10th anniversary – ten years of the latest news from Germany's social accident insurance system.

That's how we're filling up our calendar – confidently and not losing sight of the reality. We're looking forward to staying in touch with you in 2019!

Professor Joachim Breuer
Director General of the DGUV

'Democracy and inclusion are two sides of the same coin'

Germany is well on the way to becoming more inclusive. This is the result of an interim report on the National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). In order to give all people the opportunity to take their own place in an accessible society, the Federal Cabinet has agreed to continue the National Action Plan 2.0 until the middle of 2020. DGUV Kompakt spoke with Jürgen Dusel, Federal Government Commissioner for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities.

Mr Dusel, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified by Germany on 24 February 2009. Where does Germany stand after 10 years of the CRPD?

As a result of ratifying the CRPD, the rights of people with disabilities were specified and improved. The CRPD gives us the impetus to truly improve the living conditions of people with disabilities.

A lot has happened in the last ten years on our journey to becoming a more inclusive society. I'm thinking of areas such as accessibility, participation in working life and inclusive education. But we still have a long road ahead of us.

One of the focus areas of the updated National Action Plan is inclusion and digitalisation. What opportunities do you think digitalisation provides for people with disabilities?

I think digitalisation offers great opportunities for people with disabilities to participate. But we mustn't make the same mistake of only thinking about the needs of people with disabilities after the digital transformation has finished. We need to think about accessibility from the very beginning. This will allow us to reach more people and do things such as opening up new job opportunities for people with disabilities.

What milestones have you set yourself for the legislative period?

One issue that is close to my heart is abolishing blanket disenfranchisement of voting rights. I want to live in a country where all people feel that they have the same worth. There are often anachronistic ide-

as of human beings that are behind disenfranchisement. For example, people who work in an enterprise specifically set up for disabled people are often also quite interested in politics. There are about 85,000 people in Germany whose right to vote is deprived by blanket disenfranchisement. I think this puts German democracy to shame. And given the history of Germany, we need to be particularly aware of not depriving specific groups of people of their basic democratic rights.

'I want to live in a country where all people feel that they have the same worth. There are about 85,000 people in Germany whose right to vote is deprived by blanket disenfranchisement. I think this puts German democracy to shame.'

Jürgen Dusel

However, I'm also concerned with major issues such as a significant further improvement in the capacity of people with disabilities to participate in working life. This is an important part of inclusion. The situation certainly has improved. There are currently around 1.2 million people with disabilities working in jobs subject to statutory social security contributions, the highest number ever. However, we mustn't ignore the fact that around a quarter of all employers who are obliged to employ disabled persons, around 41,000 businesses, do not have a single employee with a disability. I find this unacceptable. We have to

come up with a way of changing this. In my opinion, the last resort for companies that do not employ a single person with a disability should be a significant increase in the compensatory levy.

Another important topic for me is affordable, accessible housing. Given that our society is also getting older, I believe that accessibility must be a key benchmark for new housing construction. In my opinion, only accessible housing deserves to be called social housing.

What is especially important to you?

People with disabilities are all completely different. They have different needs, and so the issue of accessibility needs to be addressed differently. Wheelchair users might need a ramp for their house. As a highly visually-impaired person, I can climb stairs well, but I'm quite happy to get audio assistance. Hearing-impaired people sometimes need a sign language interpreter in order to participate. For me, it's important to raise awareness of the fact that there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to assisting people with disabilities. This is precisely what we experience time and again in public debate.

Getting back to the world of work. It's still harder for a person with a disability to find a job. How can this situation be improved?

Many employers still have misconceptions about the work performance of people with disabilities. This is often because they simply don't know any. That's another reason why going to school together and growing up together is so important. I can give you an example of that from my own life. I did my A-levels at a mainstream school and was one of the few kids with a disability there. It was important for me, but just as important for the children without disabilities. Those of them who later took on responsibility for recruitment are now more likely to hire a person with a disability. They know from their own experience that a visual impairment doesn't stop a person from learning, working and being creative. People who haven't had this experience might think, 'How could someone who is almost blind do this job?' That's why going to school together is so important. It has a ripple effect right across society.



Photo: Andri Weiland – www.gesellschaftsbilder.de

The Federal Cabinet has agreed to continue the National Action Plan 2.0 until mid-2020. A key focus area is inclusion and digitalisation. People with disabilities have been actively involved in the update, following the principle of 'Nothing about us - without us!'

You're familiar with the work of statutory accident insurance. What can it do to promote inclusion in the workplace?

The statutory accident insurance system stands for good rehabilitation and reintegration into working life. As a provider of rehabilitation, it has many contacts in the world of work and thus also good opportunities to approach employers. It can promote the issue, be it through further education or in its interaction with occupational physicians. I'm happy to draw the attention of other rehabilitation providers to the commitment of Germany's statutory accident insurance system. Take a look! Here's an organisation that already has an action plan and even updated it to version 2.0. It's also learned that an action plan is also a great way to get results that you didn't even expect. Other institutions can follow your example.

Taking another look at the future: which long-term plans are on your agenda?

There's a particularly tough nut that I'd like to crack. Accessibility should also be mandatory for private providers of products and services intended for the general public. For example, accessibility in restaurants and cinemas. But this should also apply to flats or ATMs, which are almost impossible for

'The general public also includes people with disabilities. I fail to see why a patient with a disability can't enter a medical practice because it doesn't have wheelchair access. This is no longer acceptable.'

Jürgen Dusel

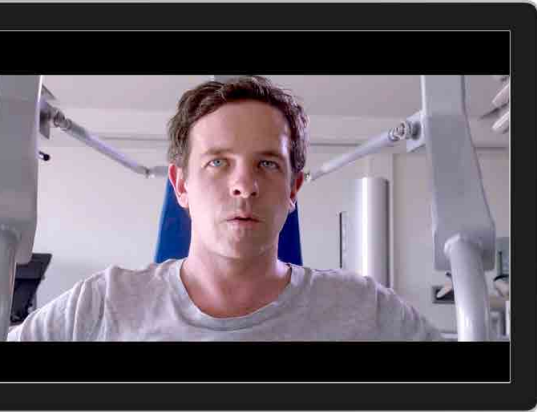
the visually impaired to use. In my opinion, this is quite clearly stipulated in Germany's Basic Law. Article 14 states that property shall be guaranteed and in Paragraph 2 it states that property entails obligations. Its use shall also serve the public good. This is my starting point, because the general public also includes people with disabilities. I fail to see why a patient with a disability can't enter a medical practice because it doesn't have wheelchair access. This is no longer acceptable.



Photo: Henning Schacht

Jürgen Dusel
Federal Government Commissioner for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities

Fighting to return to normal life



'I'll Be Back' won first prize at the 9th Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards in the category 'Medical Films'.

Every day, almost 2,900 people in Germany have an accident at work or during their commute. In order to treat particularly serious injuries, Germany's social accident insurance institutions operate their own

network of hospitals and clinics, the BG Hospital Group. Patients at a BG clinic receive the highest standard of medical care and fully integrated rehabilitation. What this means exactly can be seen in the short film 'I'll Be Back'. It's based on the true story of engineer Felix Roth. As a result of a car accident on his way to work, he is taken to a BG hospital with serious injuries. After several operations, Felix Roth fights step-by-step to return to his normal life. At his side are a team of medical experts and the rehabilitation manager from his social accident insurance institution. The film inspires courage. After months of hard work and struggle, Felix Roth can finally leave the clinic. He then returns to his company and his old job.

Watch the short film:

Web: www.bg-kliniken.de > medien > filme (German only)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Breuer takes up professorship in Lübeck

On 1 October 2018, Professor Joachim Breuer, Director General of the DGUV, took up the newly created position of Chair of Insurance Medicine at the University of Lübeck. 'I'm looking forward to this new responsibility and especially to working with young people. I also want to draw special attention to the origins of insurance medicine. This includes the effects of different contribution systems, philosophies and the way statutory insurance steers medical practices. I believe there is still a lot of research to be done here.'

The Institute of Social Medicine and Epidemiology's Research Centre for Insurance Medicine is the first chair of its kind in Germany. It investigates the reciprocal influence and dependence between (statutory) insurance regulations and medical treatment. The focus is on the effects of contribution systems, definitions of ben-



The Tower Building from 1912 – emblem of the University of Lübeck.

efits and services, as well as objectives in the field of insurance. Other focus areas include the economic and social effects of complete systems, as well as the design of different models.

Photo: Thomas Berg / Universität zu Lübeck

German Paralympic Media Award 2019

On 20 March 2019, Germany's biggest media prize in the field of disabled sports will be presented in Berlin. Detailed information about the award, the categories and participating in the award ceremony is available at:

Web: www.dguv.de/gpma (German only)



IMPORTANT DATES

27 February – 1 March 2019
GfA Spring Congress
of the German Society for Occupational Science 2019
DRESDEN
www.gfa2019.de

20 March 2019
German Paralympic Media Award 2019
BERLIN
www.dguv.de/gpma

20 – 22 March 2019
Annual Science Conference of the German Society for Occupational and Environmental Medicine (DGAUM)
ERFURT
www.dgaum.de/termine

NUMBER OF THE MONTH

13,625

... new workplace accident pensions were registered in 2017. That's 507 fewer pensions than in the previous year.

LEGAL INFORMATION

Published by: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV), Dr Joachim Breuer (Director General). The DGUV is the umbrella association of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions for the public sector and for trade and industry.

Publishing committee:

Dr Renate Colella (Chair), Udo Diel, Dominique Dressler, Professor Dr med Axel Ekkernkamp, Markus Hofmann, Gabriele Pappai, Dr Udo Schöpf, Karl-Sebastian Schulte

Editorial team: Gregor Doecke, Kathrin Baltscheit, DGUV, Glinkastr. 40, 10117 Berlin

Editorial team: Kathrin Baltscheit, Stefan Boltz, Diana Grupp, Anne Schattmann

Layout: Christoph Schmid, www.christophschmid.com

Publisher: Quadriga Media Berlin GmbH, Werderscher Markt 13, 10117 Berlin

Printing: DCM Druckcenter Meckenheim

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

 **@DGUVKompakt**

News live from the editorial team:
www.twitter.com/DGUVKompakt

Contact

KOMPACT@DGUV.DE
WWW.DGUV.DE/KOMPACT