



The British  
Psychological Society  
Wessex Branch

# Solent Seminars 2014

## **Quality of Working Life – What and Why?**

*Simon Easton* is a Chartered Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist and Senior Lecturer at the University of Portsmouth

## **Development of the Work-related Quality of Life Scale**

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## **Structural Model of Quality of Working Life**

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# Quality of Working Life – What and Why?

**Simon Easton**

**Senior Lecturer, Chartered and Clinical Psychologist  
Department of Psychology, University of Portsmouth**

# *A bit of history*

- *You will be punished in the Courts if your staff are unhappy!*
- *Your staff will work better if they are happy!*

# *You will be punished in the Courts of your staff are unhappy!*

- Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, employers in the UK have a duty under the law to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health and safety of their employees at work
- Subsequently, stress was targeted for action by employers by the Health and Safety Executive (*Reducing Risks, Protecting People, HSE, 2001*).


# *Your staff will work better if they are happy!*

Worrall and Cooper (2006) estimated that a low level of well-being at work cost about 5-10% of the UK's Gross National Product per annum.

- *Worrall, L. & Cooper, C. L. (2006). The Quality of Working Life: Managers' health and well-being. Executive Report, Chartered Management Institute.*

# *30-40% sick absence is stress related*

- Each case of work-related stress, depression or anxiety related ill health leads to an average of 30.6 working days lost.
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/why.htm> 11/08

- 
- *We must do something!*
  - *We must survey them!*
  - *What shall we survey?*



## How stressed are you?

The first obstacle to beating stress is recognising its existence. In order to reduce it the first vital step is to acknowledge that it is a problem. We should measure our stress on a regular basis. This could be done by simply completing the self-assessment questionnaire below. When completing this questionnaire, be as honest as possible: if your answer is 'NEVER' mark 1; if it is 'ALWAYS' mark 4.

	1	2	3	4
1. I blame myself when things go wrong	1	2	3	4
2. I bottle up my problems, then feel like I want to explode	1	2	3	4
3. I concentrate on my work to forget about my personal problems	1	2	3	4
4. I take out anger and frustration on those nearest to me	1	2	3	4
5. I notice negative changes in my behavioural problems	1	2	3	4
6. I focus on the negative rather than the positive	1	2	3	4
7. I feel uncomfortable when experiencing pressure	1	2	3	4
8. I feel that the role I play within my organisation is important	1	2	3	4
9. I arrive late for work or important meetings	1	2	3	4
10. I respond negatively to personal or professional demands	1	2	3	4
11. I feel guilty if I sit down or do nothing	1	2	3	4
12. I feel rushed, even if I am not	1	2	3	4
13. I have insufficient time to complete my work	1	2	3	4
14. I demand attention or respect from others	1	2	3	4
15. I avoid expressing my feelings	1	2	3	4
16. I undertake more than I can handle	1	2	3	4
17. I resist taking advice	1	2	3	4

## DASS

Items	Score
1. I find it difficult to get going in the morning	0 1 2 3
2. I find it difficult to get going in the evening	0 1 2 3
3. I find it difficult to get going in the middle of the day	0 1 2 3
4. I find it difficult to get going in the afternoon	0 1 2 3
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7. I find it difficult to get going in the evening	0 1 2 3
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99. I find it difficult to get going in the afternoon	0 1 2 3
100. I find it difficult to get going in the night	0 1 2 3

Please turn the page over

## STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE


Because everyone reacts to stress in his or her own way, no one stress test can give you a complete diagnosis of your stress levels. This stress test is intended to give you an **overview** only. Please see a Stress Management Consultant for a more in depth analysis.

Answer **all** the questions but just tick one box that applies to you, either yes or no. Answer yes, even if only part of a question applies to you. Take your time, but please be completely honest with your answers.



International Stress Management Association UK  
Promoting stress prevention and well-being

	Yes	No
1. I frequently bring work home at night		
2. Not enough hours in the day to do all the things that I must do		
3. I deny or ignore problems in the hope that they will go away		
4. I do the jobs myself to ensure they are done properly		
5. I underestimate how long it takes to do things		
6. I feel that there are too many deadlines in my work / life that are difficult to meet		
7. My self confidence / self esteem is lower than I would like it to be		
8. I frequently have guilty feelings		
9. I find myself thinking - I am not good enough		
10. I feel that I am not doing enough		
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100. I feel that I am not doing enough		
TOTALS		




*Here is a picture of two dolphins. If you can see both dolphins, your stress level is within the acceptable range.*

*If you see anything other than two dolphins, your stress level is too high and you need to stay home and rest.*

# *Interventions for stress; Do they work?*

- An evaluation of effects of a worksite stress management programme showed no effects for job—related measures, such as absenteeism and job satisfaction.
- Worksite stress management with high-risk maintenance workers: A controlled study. Peters, K; Carlson, J. *International-Journal of Stress Management*. 1999 Jan; Vol 6(1) : 21—44
- A review of research on organisational stress management interventions concluded that focus on both the sources and the symptoms of occupational stress would offer the greatest opportunity for combating chronic job stress.
- Giga, S I., Dr, Noblet, A.J, Faragher, B and Cooper, C L. (2003) 'The UK perspective: a review of research on organisational stress management interventions', *Australian Psychologist*, 38: 2, 158 — 164

- 
- In a Cochrane review, van Wyk and Pillay-Van Wyk (2010) identified **3 studies** which demonstrated a beneficial effect of stress management training intervention on job stress.....
  - .....**only one** of these showed that any substantial benefit was sustained over the medium-term.

- 
- A focus on stress alone may be overly simplistic.....

# *Influences on someone's experience in the work setting*



## The key factors underpinning someone's experience in the work setting...

[illegible]

## The key factors underpinning someone's experience in the work setting...

Hackman and Oldham (1976)	Taylor (1979)					
Skill variety	Wages					
Task Identity	Hours					
Task significance	working conditions					
Autonomy	nature of the work					
Feedback	individual power					
	employee participation					
	fairness and equity					
	social support					
	use of one's present skills					
	self development					
	a meaningful future at work					

## The key factors underpinning someone's experience in the work setting...

Hackman and Oldham (1976)	Taylor (1979)	Warr et al (1979),			
Skill variety	Wages	work involvement			
Task Identity	Hours	intrinsic job motivation			
Task significance	working conditions	higher order need strength			
Autonomy	nature of the work	perceived intrinsic job characteristics			
Feedback	individual power	job satisfaction			
	employee participation	life satisfaction			
	fairness and equity	happiness			
	social support	self-rated anxiety			
	use of one's present skills				
	self development				
	a meaningful future at work				
	social relevance				

## The key factors underpinning someone's experience in the work setting...

Hackman and Oldham (1976)	Taylor (1979)	Warr et al (1979),	Mirvis and Lawler (1984)		
Skill variety	Wages	work involvement	equitable wages		
Task Identity	Hours	intrinsic job motivation	equal employment opportunities		
Task significance	working conditions	higher order need strength	opportunities for advancement		
Autonomy	nature of the work	perceived intrinsic job characteristics	safe work environment		
Feedback	individual power	job satisfaction			
	employee participation	life satisfaction			
	fairness and equity	happiness			
	social support	self-rated anxiety			
	use of one's present skills				
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## The key factors underpinning someone's experience in the work setting...

Hackman and Oldham (1976)	Taylor (1979)	Warr et al (1979),	Mirvis and Lawler (1984)	Baba and Jamal (1991)		
Skill variety	Wages	work involvement	equitable wages	job satisfaction		
Task Identity	Hours	intrinsic job motivation	equal employment opportunities	job involvement		
Task significance	working conditions	higher order need strength	opportunities for advancement	work role ambiguity		
Autonomy	nature of the work	perceived intrinsic job characteristics	safe work environment	work role conflict		
Feedback	individual power	job satisfaction		work role overload		
	employee participation	life satisfaction		job stress		
	fairness and equity	happiness		organisational commitment		
	social support	self-rated anxiety		turn-over intentions		
	use of one's present skills					
	self development					
	a meaningful future at work					
	social relevance of work or					

## The key factors underpinning someone's experience in the work setting...

Hackman and Oldham (1976)	Taylor (1979)	Warr et al (1979),	Mirvis and Lawler (1984)	Baba and Jamal (1991)	Ellis and Pompli (2002)	
Skill variety	Wages	work involvement	equitable wages	job satisfaction	Poor working environments	
Task Identity	Hours	intrinsic job motivation	equal employment opportunities	job involvement	Resident aggression	
Task significance	working conditions	higher order need strength	opportunities for advancement	work role ambiguity	Lack of involvement in decision making	
Autonomy	nature of the work	perceived intrinsic job characteristics	safe work environment	work role conflict	Unable to deliver quality of care preferred	
Feedback	individual power	job satisfaction		work role overload	Balance of work and family	
	employee participation	life satisfaction		job stress	Shiftwork	
	fairness and equity	happiness		organisational commitment	Workload	
	social support	self-rated anxiety		turn-over intentions	Professional isolation	
	use of one's present skills				Lack of recognition	
	self development				Poor relationships with supervisor/peers	
	a meaningful future at work				Role conflict	
	social relevance of work or				Lack of opportunity to learn new skills	

## The key factors underpinning someone's experience in the work setting...

Hackman and Oldham (1976)	Taylor (1979)	Warr et al (1979),	Mirvis and Lawler (1984)	Baba and Jamal (1991)	Ellis and Pompli (2002)	Denvir et al., (2008)
Skill variety	Wages	work involvement	equitable wages	job satisfaction	Poor working environments	Pay and benefits assessment of work
Task Identity	Hours	intrinsic job motivation	equal employment opportunities	job involvement	Resident aggression	Autonomy-fulfilment
Task significance	working conditions	higher order need strength	opportunities for advancement	work role ambiguity	Lack of involvement in decision making	Work pressures and the individual (work-life balance)
Autonomy	nature of the work	perceived intrinsic job characteristics	safe work environment	work role conflict	Unable to deliver quality of care preferred	Management-leadership-values
Feedback	individual power	job satisfaction		work role overload	Balance of work and family	Pride in organisation: general perceptions of workplace
	employee participation	life satisfaction		job stress	Shiftwork	Happiness
	fairness and equity	happiness		organisational commitment	Workload	Intention to leave
	social support	self-rated anxiety		turn-over intentions	Professional isolation	progress
	use of one's present skills				Lack of recognition	
	self development				Poor relationships with supervisor/peers	
	a meaningful future at work				Role conflict	
	social relevance of work or				Lack of opportunity to learn new skills	

# *Some common themes.....*

Hackman and Oldham (1976)	Taylor (1979)	Warr et al (1979)	Mirvis and Lawler (1984)	Baba and Jamal (1991)	Ellis and Pompli (2002)	Denvir et al., (2008)
Skill variety	Wages	<b>work involvement</b>	equitable wages	<b>job satisfaction</b>	Poor working environment	Pay and benefits assessment of work
Task Identity	Hours	intrinsic job motivation	equal employment opportunities	job involvement	Resident aggression	Autonomy-fulfilment
Task significance	<b>working conditions</b>	higher order need strength	opportunities for advancement	work role ambiguity	Lack of involvement in decision making	<b>work pressures and the individual (work-life balance)</b>
Autonomy	nature of the work	perceived intrinsic job characteristics	<b>safe work environment</b>	work role conflict	Unable to deliver quality of care preferred	Management-leadership-values
Feedback	<b>individual power</b>	<b>job satisfaction</b>		work role overload	Balance of work and family	Pride in organisation: general perceptions of workplace
	<b>employee participation</b>	life satisfaction		<b>job stress</b>	Shiftwork	<b>happiness</b>
	fairness and equity	<b>happiness</b>		organisational commitment	<b>workload</b>	Intention to leave

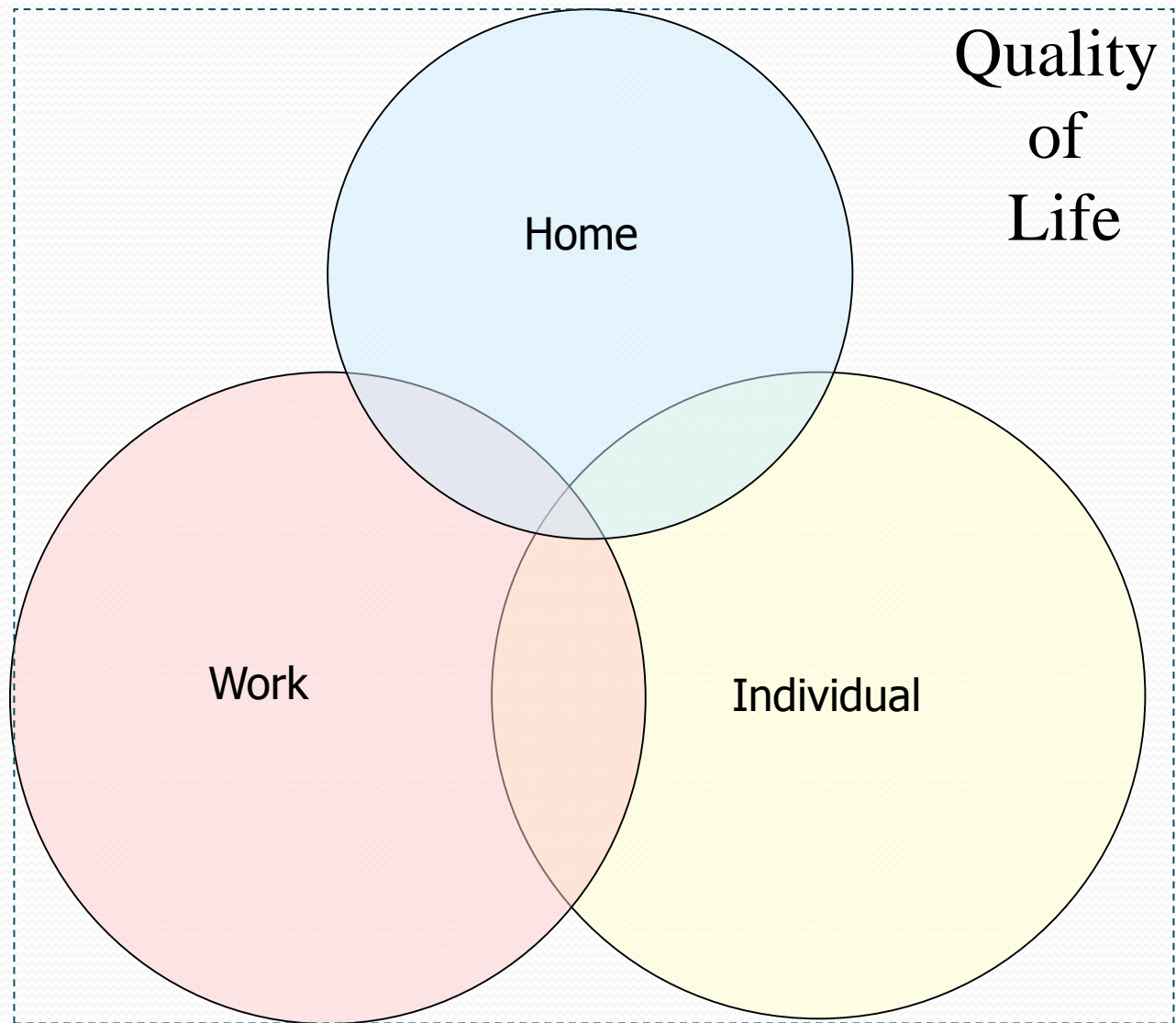
# *“Quality of Working Life”?*

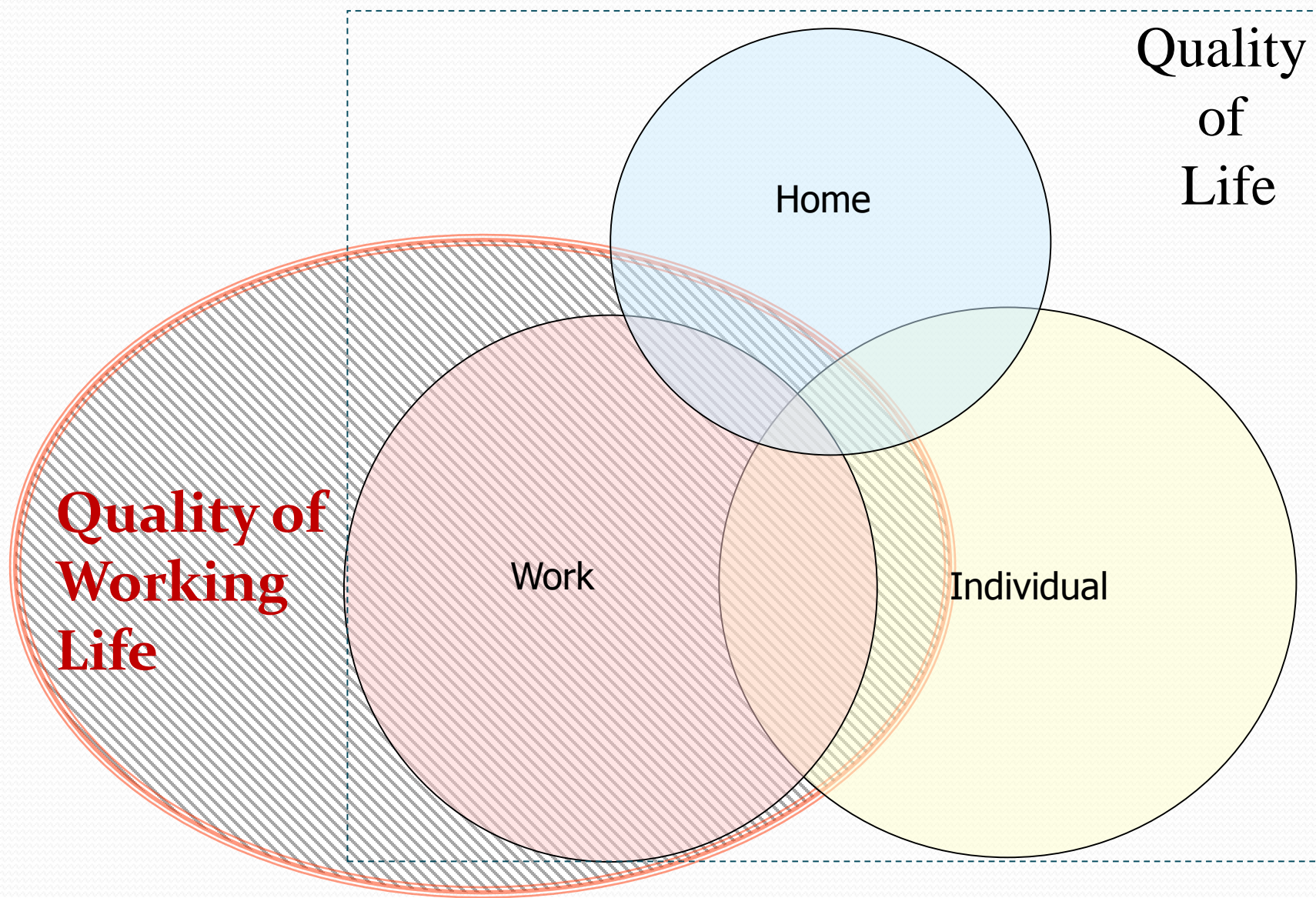
- One of the earliest uses of the term “Quality of Work Life” appears in the work of Mayo in studies of the way environment affected workers’ performance (Mayo, 1960).

*Quality of Working Life* has been differentiated from the broader concept of *Quality of Life*.

- However, Elizur and Shye,(1990) emphasise that quality of work performance is affected by *Quality of Life as well as Quality of working life*.

*Elizur D & Shye S (1990) Quality of work life and its relation to quality of life. Applied Psychology: An international review. 39, 3, 275-291.*





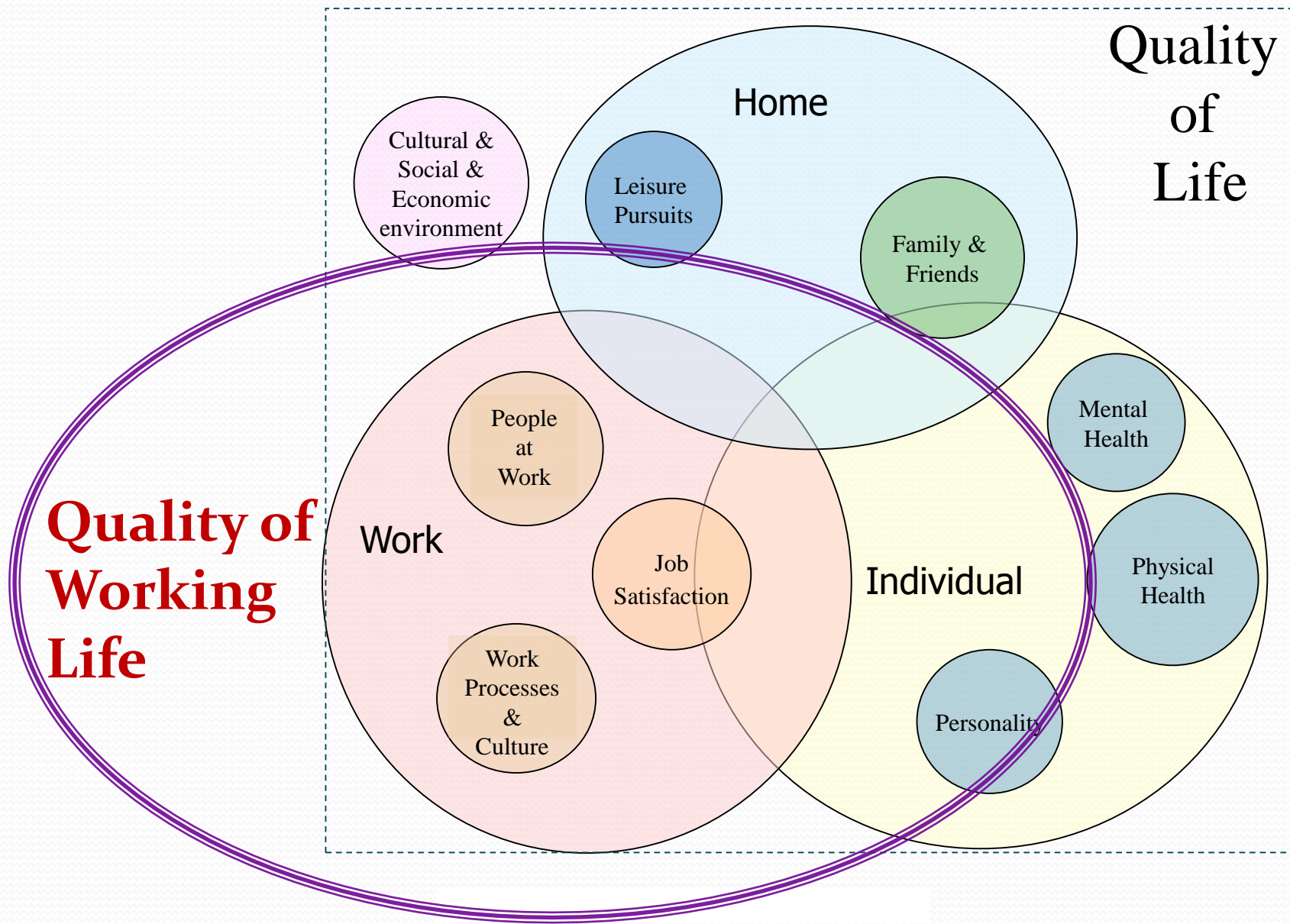
Quality  
of  
Life

Home

Work

Individual

Quality of  
Working  
Life




## *A working definition*

- **‘Quality of Working Life** is that part of overall quality of life that is influenced by work... the widest context in which an employee would evaluate the influence of work on their life.’

## *A working definition*

- **‘Quality of Working Life** is that part of overall quality of life that is influenced by work... the widest context in which an employee would evaluate the influence of work on their life.’

- 
- This consideration of Quality of Working Life as the greater context for various factors in the workplace such as **job satisfaction** and “**stress**” may offer opportunity for:


- *more effective*


and therefore

- *more cost-effective* interventions in the workplace.




*Your staff will work better if they are happy!*  
*Survey them!*

- 
- *We must do something!*
  - *We must survey them!*
  - *What shall we survey?*

- 
- *We must do something!*
  - *We must survey them!*
  - *What shall we survey?*

*.....Quality of Working Life!*

- 
- *We must do something!*
  - *We must survey them!*
  - *What shall we survey?*

*.....Quality of Working Life!*

*But how!*

# *How to measure QoWL?*

- Healthy Hospitals Employee Survey
- Quality Practice Setting Survey
- Quality of Working Life Pulse Survey
- Sirgy and et al (2001) A measure of QWL
- New tool for measuring quality of working life.  
Vinopal; Eurofound; etc.....

# *How to measure QoWL?*

- Healthy Hospitals Employee Survey
- Quality Practice Setting Survey
- Quality of Working Life Pulse Survey
- Sirgy and et al (2001) A measure of QWL
- New tool for measuring quality of working life.  
Vinopal; Eurofound; etc.....

***Which one should we choose?***

User Manual for the  
Work-Related Quality of Life  
(WRQoL) Scale  
A Measure of Quality of Working Life



Simon A Easton  
Darren L Van Laar

