

## ***Call for Papers***

# **7th International Conference “Work and Health”**

**Thursday and Friday, 10-11 February, 2022**

**School of Social Work, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland  
(FHNW), Olten, Switzerland**

The conference seeks to explore the specific focal topics **“Work and Emotions”** and **“Current Challenges”** in the context of **“Work and Health.”**

### **Focus 1: “Work and Emotions”**

Emotions are expressed as feelings, flow into modes of behavior, and are manifested in posture and body movement as well as in changes in the body. They are specific reactions by an individual, bound up with corresponding opinions or evaluations, that are expressed in cultural and social relations. Important emotions include fear, rage, desire, pleasure, insecurity, enthusiasm, shame, guilt, hatred, happiness, satisfaction, and joy. They show in what way persons are involved in an activity and find their expression in emotional utterances and reactions.

Emotions also have an important meaning in the world of work because they make it possible to recognize, beyond what is said in discourse, further meanings connected with work activity. That is because every emotion also functions as a signal. It may signal danger, for example, in connection with dissatisfaction and irritation when security regulations are not adhered to in the firm or risks to employees are deemed tolerable. But also, quite the contrary, emotions point to one's own individual role and positive inner feelings, the interior perspective on something in a person's life world. Such as the joy that wells up over having achieved a successful product through one's labor, or a sense of satisfaction with what you've achieved together with colleagues.

There are multiplex relations between work and emotions: employees can make use of their own emotions as tools or means of labor in the service process on the job: for example, the realm of emotional self-regulation. Such as when workers attempt to adhere to rules about emotions and their expression within the organization when it comes to how to interact with customers. Over and beyond that, emotions constitute a subject for thought in the workplace: for example, when in the service process employees seek to actively influence the feelings of customers, clients or patients in order to get them to cooperate in the provision of services. The emotions of employees can also be influenced by changes in the work situation or by change management processes. Emotions can serve as a source of moral sentiment, such as when an employee experiences an injustice, disappointed expectations or a loss in trust. In addition, emotions are of significance for the psycho-social health of employees. Thus, emotional dissonances at work can intensify employee burnout, while positive emotions in the workplace

can by contrast generate beneficial effects. A heavily specialized emotional culture has developed in the modern society of work, in which the Self and its relations with others come to the fore. That is discussed, for example, in connection with the subjectivizing of work. On one hand, an “objective and disengaged Self” is seen as a hallmark of this emotional culture, a Self seeking to adhere to a rational stance and concerned about self-control and self-restraint. Yet on the other, there is also the outgoing “sociable Self,” an individual holding back on certain emotions in an aim to establish effective relations with others. For that reason, in everyday professional life, the nexus between rationality, professional competence and self-control is seen as an important precondition for developing successful communication and cooperation in the workplace.

However, in the more recent debates in past years, the “expressivity of emotions” has also gained in importance as a new emotional form of social behavior. Thus, a high level of identification with one’s own job and the firm – as well as a work culture of appreciation, esteem, and recognition, grounded on and shaped by empathy and solidarity in action – are viewed as central for professional performance. The performance targets on the job must increasingly also do justice to emotional demands, such as when they contribute to furthering climate protection, social justice, or the sense of well-being of the staff.

Against this backdrop, papers by conference participants will endeavor to address and explore the following subtopics among others:

- The significance of emotions at work in respect to employee health;
- The importance of emotions in the world of work, as discussed for example drawing on ideas from A.R. Hochschild’s *The Managed Heart* or the diagnosis of “emotional capitalism” by Eva Illouz in her *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* or *The End of Love: A Sociology of Negative Relations*;
- The nexus between subjectivizing behavior at work on one hand, and the contradictory demands of work on the other, as this impacts on cooperation, e.g. the emotions that play a role in learning to interact with others (Böhle et al., Dunkel);
- The debate around “The New Worker” and “identity at work” (Durand), and the importance of the “role of affect” and Alain Ehrenberg’s “society of discontent”;
- The important role of emotions in the “digital economy” (Jordan);
- The genesis of “socio-emotional lacunae[s]” (Gottfried), whose gender relations are being rewritten within transnational migrations in the framework of global economies;

Welcome in the conference are both theoretical and empirical papers on the focal topic of “Work and Emotions.”

## **Focus 2: “Current Challenges”**

Globalization, digitalization, and demographic change are currently perceived as central characteristics of a fundamental ongoing transformation in today's society. They play an important role in the transformation of work worlds, through which new challenges arise for firms, organizations, and their employees, likewise in the field of action “Work and Health.”

Firms frequently require innovative solutions in grappling with technological, personnel-linked, and organization-related challenges. In connection with innovations, employees face questions of participation and codetermination, worker empowerment. For example, new qualification demands often arise; these can function to destabilize previous established compromises, creating insecurity and stress among staff. The associated pressure to conform and accommodate frequently also gives rise to health risks. Many workers are also threatened with job loss, and a fundamental new professional orientation often becomes a necessity, even among employees at an advancing older age,

With increasing age, the probability of developing personal chronic ailments also increases, and key reference persons in a person's life, such as one's own parents, often require support (assistance, caregiving in various forms).

Against this backdrop, the following questions (inter alia) arise regarding:

- The importance of health-related risks in connection with work worlds in dynamic flux;
- The measures instituted and pursued by the state and firms in the context of work and health;
- The compatibility of professional activity with provisioning of care and assistance for family members (“informal care”);
- The effects of impaired health on remaining in the labor market or accessing it within the vortex of the current (post)pandemic situation;

Both theoretical and empirical papers on this focus are welcome.

**In the framework of this international conference, various facets of the focal topic “Work and Emotions” as well as questions regarding “Current Challenges” and developments in the context of “Work and Health” will be discussed. Please include your proposal under one of the following sub-topics:**

1. Emotions
2. Health
3. Digital transformation
4. Internationalization
5. The social state and its welfare measures
6. Developments within the firm
7. Professional activity and informal care
8. Unemployment

## Submission of proposal

Potential presenters are requested to submit a proposal of max. 300 words using the digital conference tool ([www.fachtagung-eingliederungsmanagement.ch](http://www.fachtagung-eingliederungsmanagement.ch)). Proposals will be peer-reviewed and selected by members of the Conference Committee. Please indicate the subtopic under which your presentation proposal should best be classified and in which conference languages (German and English) you will be able to present and discuss.

**Proposal submission deadline:** ~~1 October 2021~~ / extended 25 October 2021

**Notification to applicants on their proposals:** 15 November 2021

Conference languages: German and English

For further information: [www.fachtagung-eingliederungsmanagement.ch](http://www.fachtagung-eingliederungsmanagement.ch)

## Conference organizers

- University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, School of Social Work (Olten, Switzerland)
- University of Bremen, Institute for Work and the Economy (Bremen, Deutschland)
- University of Vienna, Institute for Sociology (Vienna, Austria)

## Members of the Program Committee

- Privatdozent Dr. Guido Becke, Bremen University (Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Thomas Geisen, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, School of Social Work, Olten (Switzerland)
- Dr. des. Benedikt Hassler, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, School of Social Work, Olten (Switzerland)
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## Other partners:



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[www.iaw.uni-bremen.de](http://www.iaw.uni-bremen.de)

- Swiss Association of Sociology, Research Network Sociology of Health and Medicine / <https://www.sgs-sss.ch/en/research-networks/health-and-medicine-sociology/>

