

Mental health and Stress among phd students.

Massimo Miglioretti

Bicocca Center for Applied Psychology (BiCApP),
Department of Psychology, University of Milano
Bicocca



Index

- 1) What is stress and when are people stressed?
- 2) Stress in Accademia and for phd students: are there specific stress factors in Accademia?
- 3) Which strategies can you use to protect yourself from stress?



Job stress: definition

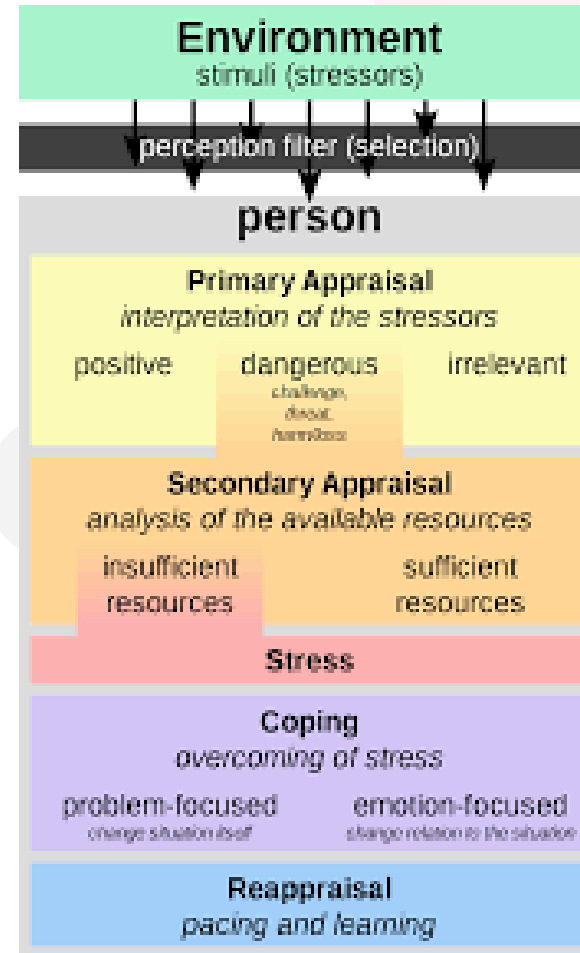
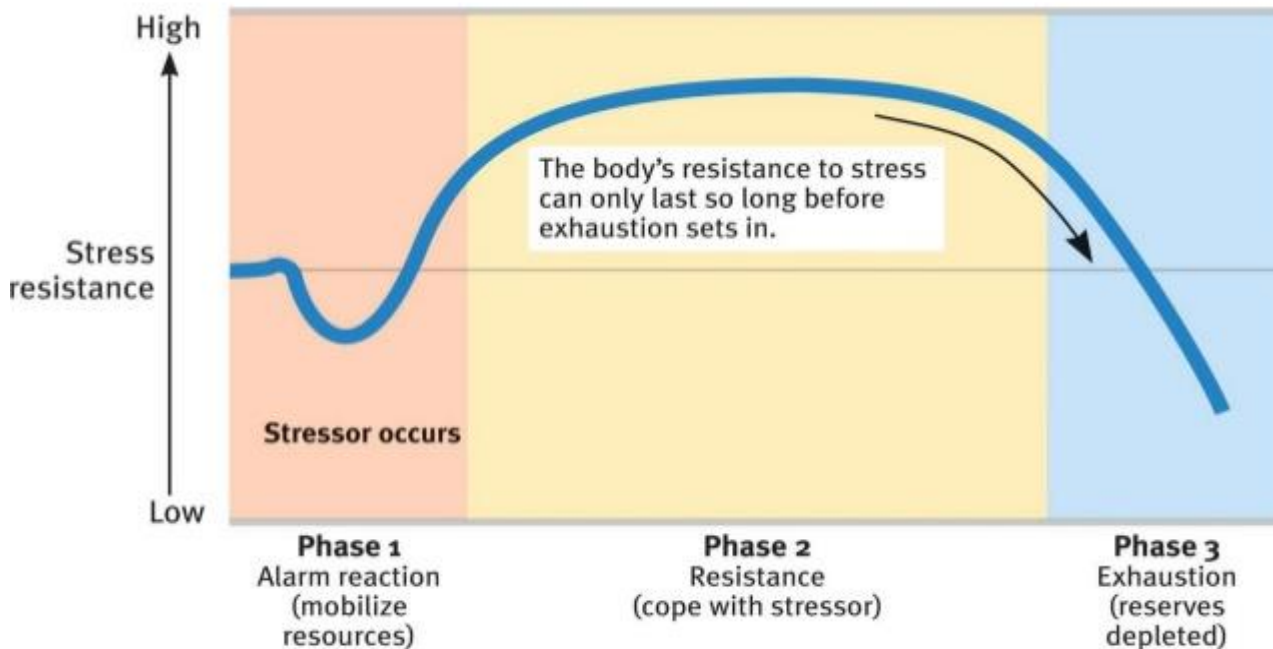
- 1) Stress is a personal experience that can be both positive and negative, however, chronic stress can damage physical and psychological well-being, leading to poor outcomes, decreased productivity, and increased social costs.
- 2) Stress is a state, which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions and which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with the requirements or expectations placed on them.

Objective and subjective job stress

General Adaptation Syndrome [GAS]

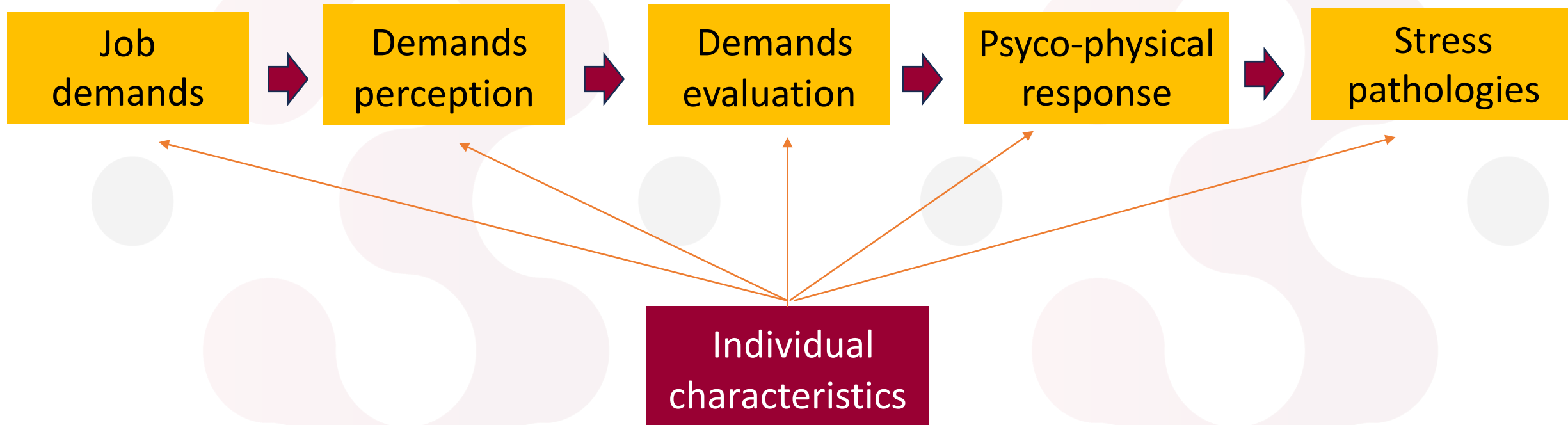
(Identified by Hans Selye):

Our stress response system defends, then fatigues.

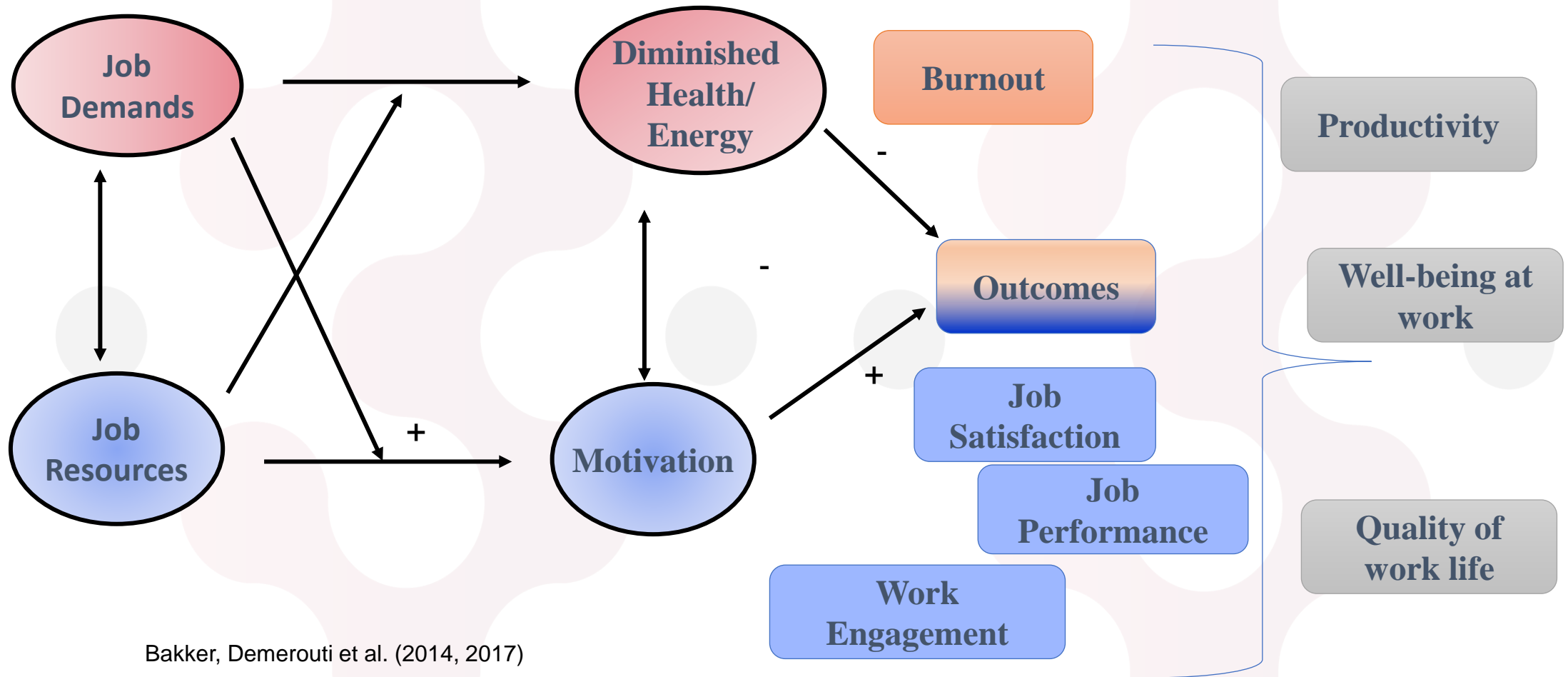


Transactional Theory of stress (developed by Lazarus and Folkman)

The process of job stress



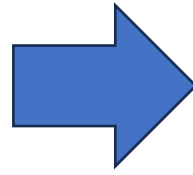
Job demands – Resources Model



Bakker, Demerouti et al. (2014, 2017)

Phd students stress and mental health - 1

Systematic review and meta-analysis of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation among Ph.D. students

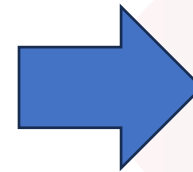


Emily N. Satinsky^{1✉}, Tomoki Kimura², Mathew V. Kiang^{3,4}, Rediet Abebe^{5,6},
Scott Cunningham⁷, Hedwig Lee⁸, Xiaofei Lin⁹, Cindy H. Liu^{10,11}, Igor Rudan¹², Srijan Sen¹³,
Mark Tomlinson^{14,15}, Miranda Yaver¹⁶ & Alexander C. Tsai^{1,11,17✉}

- The prevalence of depressive symptoms estimated among phd students was 24%;
- The prevalence of anxiety symptoms estimated was 17%.
- The prevalence of depressive or anxiety symptoms in the generale population ranges from 5% to 7% worldwide.

PHD POLL REVEALS FEAR AND JOY, CONTENTMENT AND ANGUISH

Graduate students mostly love what they do, but workload pressures continue to take their toll, finds *Nature's* 2019 PhD survey. **By Chris Woolston**



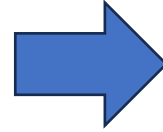
36%

of respondents have sought help for anxiety or depression caused by PhD studies. One-third of them sought help from places other than their institution, and 18% sought help at their institution but didn't feel supported.

Phd students stress and mental health - 2

Perceived stress and physical health among French university PhD students

P. Haag^{a,b,*}, R. Shankland^d, E. Osin^c, É. Boujut^g, F. Cazalis^e,
A.-S. Bruno^f, P. Vrignaud^a, M.-C. Gay^a



- Results indicated that stress is a critical issues among phd students.

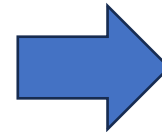
It Must have been Burnout: Prevalence and Related Factors among Spanish PhD Students

Miguel A. Sorrel^{id}, José Ángel Martínez-Huertas^{id} and María Arconada



- The results indicated that burnout rates are high in this group, especially for the emotional exhaustion dimension.

In Italy?



- Work group of Italian Association of Psychology to study and promote well-being at work in university. At now, we have not systematic collection of data about stress and well-being in phd students.

Stressors for phd students

Job demands

- Workload
- Pressure to publish
- Low job control
- Closedness of decision making within the team
- Work-family conflict
- Family-work conflict
- Time pressure
- Social isolation
- Conflicts in the relationships at work

Environment characteristics and phd phases

- The beginning of phd
- Have phd funding
- Uncertainty of doctoral processes
- Environmental comfort

Job and personal resources

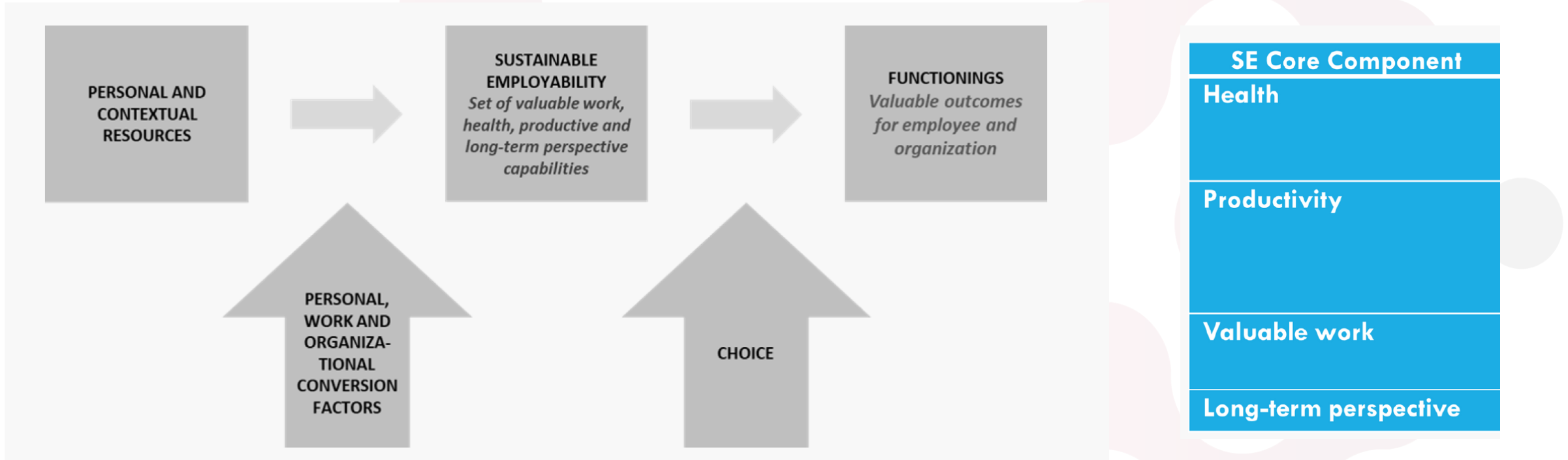
- Supervisor support
- Inspirational leadership style of supervisor
- Sense of belonging in scholarly community
- Interest in future academic career
- Having a partner and children
- Doubt regarding abilities or strengths
- Peer relationships and support

Actions for stress management in Academia

| | Primary prevention | Secondary prevention | Terzary prevention |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| Individual | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness training • Health promotion, e.g., exercise • Relaxation, Meditation • Personal and interpersonal skill training • Coping skills training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling |
| Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team buiding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict management • Peer support groups | |
| Organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working time and schedules • Management training, e.g. mentoring • Support in Phd project development • Environmental redesign • Have a specific phd well-being program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Career planning | |

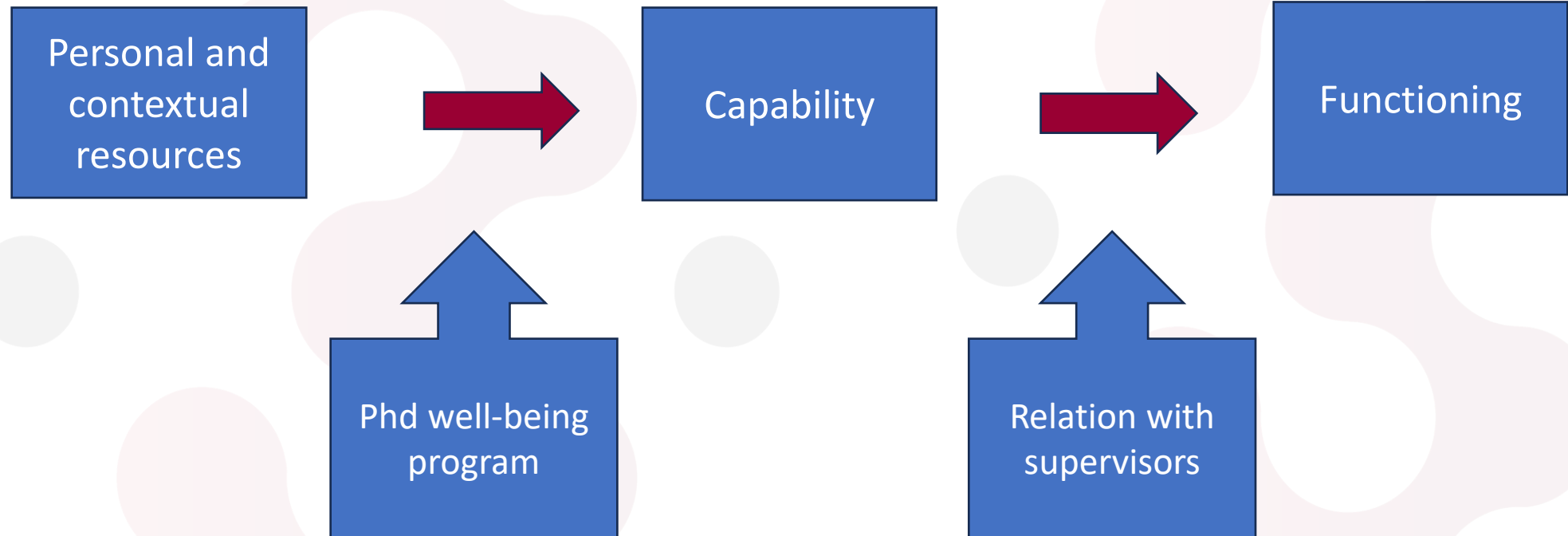


The Sustainable Employability Model



Sustainable Employability could be defined as *the worker freedom – in terms of valuable work, health, productive and long-term perspective capabilities – of achieving valuable outcomes for employees and organizations.*

Actions to promote a sustainable phd program



Thank you!

massimo.miglioretti@unimib.it

