

Article Mental Health in Clubs Berlin - Live DMA

Working in a nightclub involves being part of a community and contributing to the creation of a club culture with specific values and aesthetics that make it unique and appealing to both staff and visitors. However, it also requires resilience to cope with the psychological stressors and challenges associated with working in the nightlife industry.

This project is a collaboration between the Clubcommission Berlin, the Psychosomatic Clinic of Charite Berlin, the German Psychology Association, and the FernUni in Hagen. Our multidisciplinary team comprises psychotherapists, psychologists, organizational psychology researchers, social pedagogues, and professionals from the nightlife industry.

In the initial stage of our research on "Mental Health in Clubs," conducted with 10 Berlin clubs, including well-established institutions like Tresor Berlin & Ohm, Renate & Else, Gretchen, RSO Berlin, Fitz Roy & Lark, Zenner, and SchwuZ, we identified key stressors through focus group discussions and a digital survey with the staff.

These stressors include:

1. Irregular sleeping patterns
2. Dealing with guests (classism, sexism, racism, and drug consumption)
3. Work-life balance
4. Communication structure and culture within the organization
5. Dealing with personal consumption
6. High staff turnover
7. Irregular and unforeseen working hours



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Night workers in clubs have been overlooked by the healthcare system thus far, with no customized or accessible preventive, early intervention, or treatment measures for mental health care, mainly due to a lack of data about this working environment.

We are currently testing the short-, mid-, and long-term effects of various psychosocial interventions with the aforementioned clubs to enhance the resilience of club workers and improve working conditions on an organizational level. The tested psychosocial interventions include:

1. Psychoeducation workshops for staff tailored to the identified challenges
2. Psychoeducation and leadership workshops for managers and executives
3. Coaching and supervision for executive managers and staff
4. In-house workshops to develop organizational strategies
5. Short-term cognitive-behavioral therapy
6. Mindfulness training (MBSR and MSC)
7. Mindfulness-based healing sessions (sound baths, breathwork, and neurogenic training)
8. Peer-to-peer support groups
9. Roundtable discussions for night workers around mental health

Our objective is to determine the most effective interventions for strengthening the resilience of staff, management, and the clubs themselves. This information will enable us to establish an accessible structure for preventive mental health care in collaboration with the healthcare system of Germany. The project is scheduled to conclude in 2025, providing a list of actionable recommendations and an evidence-based occupational mental health care program for the nightlife sector to be presented to health insurance. And the results of the project can also be useful for other industries.

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Furthermore, we aim to build on the results of this research and share knowledge with Live DMA members, fostering collaborative efforts to make mental health care more accessible for night workers across Europe.

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