# Finnish Institute of Occupational Health



# Towards Successful Seniority®

PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK

JUKKA VUORI, HEIDI RISTOLAINEN, TOMMY LARVI, TIINA SALOKANGAS, KIRSI AHOLA, PETRI KOIVISTO, PÄIVI JALONEN, TEIJA HONKONEN, SALLA TOPPINEN-TANNER, KATARIINA SALMELA-ARO

#### Towards Successful Seniority® group method

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# For participants in the Towards Successful Seniority® group

Welcome to the group! We have developed the Towards Successful Seniority® method as a tool to assist in career management, maintaining personal resources, expertise development and stress management in today's changing work life. In planning the contents of the method, we used expert information and research related to continuous learning, coping at work, motivation and the promotion of general well-being. The topics examined during the programme support the drawing up of a personal plan of action to help you achieve your work life targets, the starting point for which is the identification of your existing strengths and development opportunities.

As our expectations of work and the ways in which we replenish ourselves during leisure time vary and change according to our life situation, it is important to occasionally stop and examine our personal situation. We hope that you will share your expertise, experience and suggestions with the group. Through active participation in the discussions you can find new career-related perspectives and solutions and reinforce your ability to deal with possible setbacks.

You may forget some of the things discussed in the groups, so it is a good idea to write down the best ideas and insights in your Workbook. In this way, the Workbook can serve as your career guide after the programme. The form at the end of the Workbook contains questions that would be good to discuss with your supervisor after the programme. Discussing matters and considering various solutions together is often helpful, even in more challenging situations.

Enjoy the Towards Successful Seniority® programme!

The authors

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### Programme contents



#### **SESSION 1**

- The Towards Successful Seniority programme
- Identifying personal strengths and interests
- The importance of leisure time as a means of counterbalancing work
- Your plans and expectations regarding your future career



#### **SESSION 2**

- What skills would be beneficial to develop and how can I develop them?
- What changes might take place at work and how should I deal with them?
- What opportunities could arise from changes?



#### **SESSION 3**

- What different roles exist in work organizations?
- What kind of issues may cause social conflicts and how to prevent and resolve conflict situations?
- What is social support and what is its significance for wellbeing?
- How can networks promote work performance? What networks do you already have and how could you extend them?
- How could you better manage your workload?



#### **SESSION 4**

- How do you know that you are well?
- What are the warning signs of stress or burnout and how can they be managed?
- What flexible working time arrangements are available to you?
- What are your goals in terms of work, development and well-being?
- An action plan for achieving your targets.

# Session 1

#### What are the topics of the first session?

- → The Towards Successful Seniority® programme
- → Identifying personal strengths and interests
- → The importance of leisure time as a means of counterbalancing work
- → Your plans and expectations regarding your future career

# Personal strengths and skills

The following is a list of personal strengths and skills that are beneficial in different ways in different work tasks. Tick all the strengths that describe you at this moment. You can add any missing strengths in the space at the end of the list.

i nave:	
Organizational skills	Performance skills
Planning skills	Good knowledge of human nature
Problem-solving skills	Language skills
Good written expression	Interaction skills
Good verbal expression	Group work skills
Persuasion skills	Creative problem-solving skills
Leadership skills	Long experience
Motivational skills	Extensive knowledge
Customer service skills	Knowledge of procedures
Logical reasoning skills	Induction skills
Numerical reasoning skills	Marketing skills
Technical skills	Listening skills
Mathematical skills	Negotiation skills
Project leadership skills	Social skills
Decision-making skills	

I am:	
Capable of learning	Service-orientated
Able to see the whole picture	Honest
Tolerant of uncertainty	Quick
Able to see the essential	Systematic
Able to make choices based on values	Patient
Able to give good advice	Creative
Able to give constructive feedback	Realistic
Able to work independently	Alert
Able to co-operate	Positive
Farsighted	Efficient
Able to resolve conflicts	Physically strong
Flexible	Empathetic
Thorough	Innovative
Enterprising	Methodical
Calm	Precise
Energetic	Resourceful
Reliable	Composed
Conscientious	Competent
Friendly	Economical
Responsible	Conciliatory
Hardworking	Practical

Spontaneous	Careful
Diligent	Emotional
Convincing	Co-operative
Cautious	Competitive
Enthusiastic	Self-confident
Active	Open-minded
Able to take the initiative	Lively
Consistent	Brave
Handy	Inquisitive
Genial	
Optimistic	
Quick-witted	
Write down something particularly posit you have succeeded in doing very well (so produced).	

### Transferable skills

1. What kind of different work tasks does your job currently involve? I them briefly below.	)escribe
2. What kind of skills do you need in your present job? You can use the strengths and skills to assist you.	list of
3. In what other tasks could you utilise these skills? Consider environg other than work and leisure time activities.	ments

#### Work and leisure time

Leisure time is important for counterbalancing work. Below is a list of possible work situations. What kind of pastimes or hobbies could revitalize you in these situations? Of course, leisure-time activities are very personal and different people are revitalized by different things. Finish up by circling the hobbies that would suit you.

SITUATION AT WORK	EXAMPLE OF A GOOD PASTIME OR HOBBY
It is difficult to see the concrete end result of my work.	
My work mainly involves taking care of others.	
Work sometimes feels dull or lacks challenge.	
My work tasks often have strict deadlines.	
My work mainly involves technical equipment.	
I mainly work alone.	

# The importance of leisure time for maintaining well-being

The rhythm of work and rest and of strain and recovery is important. Constant strain wears down a person's fundamental biological system. It may require determination to hold on to your leisure time, because the boundaries of working hours have become blurred as work increasingly reaches into our free time.

Completely free, unallocated time and activities that differ from work refresh a person's mind. No single area of life can meet all basic human needs. Thus, a full life with work and leisure, family, friends and hobbies makes it possible to sustain well-being.

Well-being needs regular attention. The harmful effects of overextending your resources are emphasized with age, because recovering from strain is slower. A link between the health-promoting effect of leisure time and the quality of work has also been found. For example, people whose work and life situations are particularly stressful have been found to recover in their leisure time more slowly than those who are not so burdened.

#### **Think**

Do you recover sufficiently in your leisure time? How would you like to spend your leisure time? Does your leisure time offer enough contrast to your work?				

## Career expectations

#### What long-term expectations do you have of your work and your career?

For example, think about the direction you would like your work tasks to move in and the kind of work group you would be happy in.

What expectations do you have in relation to the balance between work and your personal life?

How about leisure time or retirement?

You can also consider your present situation and the things that you would like to remain unchanged.

## The importance of goals in life

People have goals in their career and their personal lives that direct their activities towards the future and influence what they accomplish. Our goals also influence our well-being and how good our life is. When we set goals, they should be personally important but realistic and achievable. Goal-setting is also influenced by the people around us, our work life and other life events.

However, for one reason or another, we do not always achieve our goals. Sometimes our own targets change along the way due to, for example, changes in our life situation. When the achievement of a goal is interrupted for reasons beyond our control or made difficult by external conditions, it is good to redirect our goals. Rather than continuing to work endlessly on something, it is better to move on by setting new or revised goals that are more achievable.

Session 2

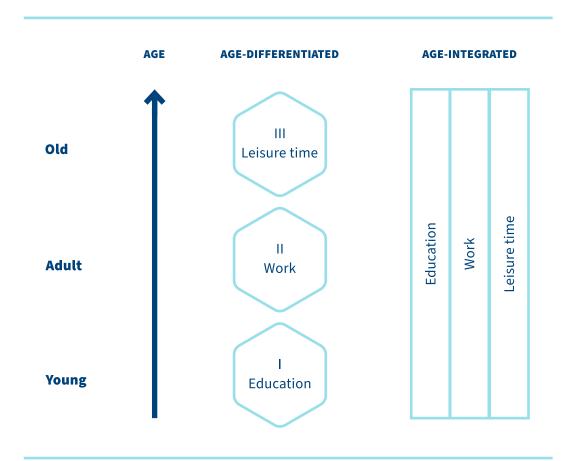
#### What are the topics of the second session?

- → What skills would be beneficial to develop and how can I develop them?
- → What changes might take place at work and how should I deal with them?
- → What opportunities could arise from changes?

## Studying, work and leisure time

According to modern thinking, studying and learning are no longer linked to a certain stage of life. Earlier it was assumed that life was divided into three stages: (I) studying when young, followed by (II) settling into work life and (III) retirement.

Today, studying, work and leisure time can alternate and be intertwined throughout life, depending on your work and life situation and your interests. Studies benefit you (better pay, new work tasks, maintenance of professional skills, mental development, etc.), your employer and society.



#### Source

Riley MW & Riley JW Jr: Structural Lag: Past and Future. In: Age and Structural Lag: Society's Failure to Provide Meaningful Opportunities in Work, Family, and Leisure, pp. 15-36. Ed. Riley MW, Kahn RL & Foner A. John Wiley & Sons, New York 1994.

Salokangas T, Vuori J & Huuhtanen P: Kohti hallittua työuraa ja eläkeprosessia – Katsaus eläkkeelle siirtymiseen vaikuttaviin tekijöihin ja työuran jatkamisen edistämiseen. Työ ja ihminen 19 (2005) 3: 307–325.

#### Take a small test

## How do you learn? You are the expert regarding your own way of learning. What is the natural way for you to assimilate new information? In a group Independently By doing By watching By writing By listening By speaking By reading Quickly Slowly In small pieces In entities In the daytime In the evening

Source: The Finnish Diverse Learners' Association

# Developing at work

Which strengths and skills would be both important and beneficial to develop in terms of your profession, performing work, or expectations and targets related to your career? Would you like to learn new skills or expand and update existing skills?

#### Choose 1 or 2 of the skills on the previous page and think about how and where you could develop them.

Consider, for example, whether these skills could be developed at the workplace.

Is it necessary to take part in a course or other training?

Would development take place independently or in a group?

Skill 1:				
How can	I develop it?			
Skill 2:				
How can	I develop it?			

# Managing changes

#### Example case J: Why does J feel uncertain in this situation?

J has been working at the same workplace for a long time. Now the workplace is implementing changes that mean that J would become a member of a work group. J has previously mainly worked alone. J feels insecure about his future.				

# Work and career changes

<b>1. Think about possibl</b> What kinds of situations m			and in your fut	ure career.
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	19			
<ol><li>What options do you</li><li>Who could you talk to about</li></ol>		issues?		
How could you prepare for How would you act during	r the situation			
-				
1				

### Information interview

A visitor will join the group to be interviewed. During the interview, group members will have the opportunity to ask about the visitor's decisions and future work life plans: Where do they work, how did they end up in their job, what does work mean to them, how have they dealt with changes in work life, etc.

ask the visitor.			

2. 2Information interview notes.				

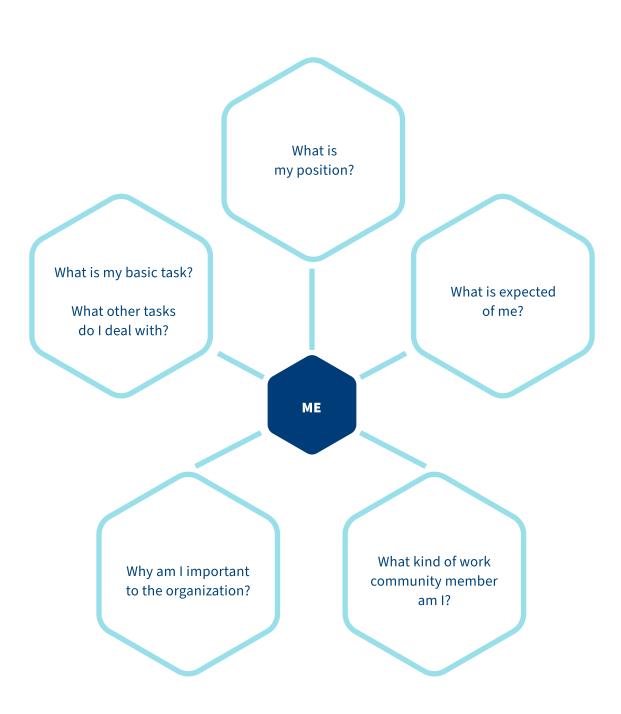
# Session 3

#### What are the topics of the third session?

- → What different roles exist in work organizations?
- → What kind of issues may cause social conflicts and how to prevent and resolve conflict situations?
- → What is social support and what is its significance for well-being?
- How can networks promote work performance? What networks do you already have and how could you extend them?
- → How could you better manage your workload?

# Me as a member of the work community

#### **Think**



# Resolving work community conflicts

Example	e case	M: How	did the	conflict	arise?
---------	--------	--------	---------	----------	--------

New empl	loyees jo	oined M's	s department	. One d	lay M's	superviso	r assigned	l a chal	lenging	task,
but one w	hich M f	elt they	performed w	ell.						

Later, M accidentally overheard colleagues wondering why the task had been given to M even though, in their opinion, M was not at all qualified for it.

### Personal network

1. When you think about the past six months, who have you talked to about issues related to your work life?
Write the names of the most important people in the space below. If you want you can outline your network on page 31.
2. What have you discussed and what are the positive impacts of the discussion in terms of your work? For example, have you received support in resolving a difficult situation?
3. Think about what issues you would like to or feel you should discuss with your supervisor.

# Expanding networks

#### Which people or parties would it be good to have more interaction with?

Think about people who could be of assistance in your work or who would have information about issues related to your work.

These people can be important sources of feedback, or co-operation with them could further the completion of work tasks.

List one to four people.

Person 1:	
Why interac	ction would be important?
How I could	promote interaction?
Person 2:	
Why interac	ction would be important?
How I could	l promote interaction?

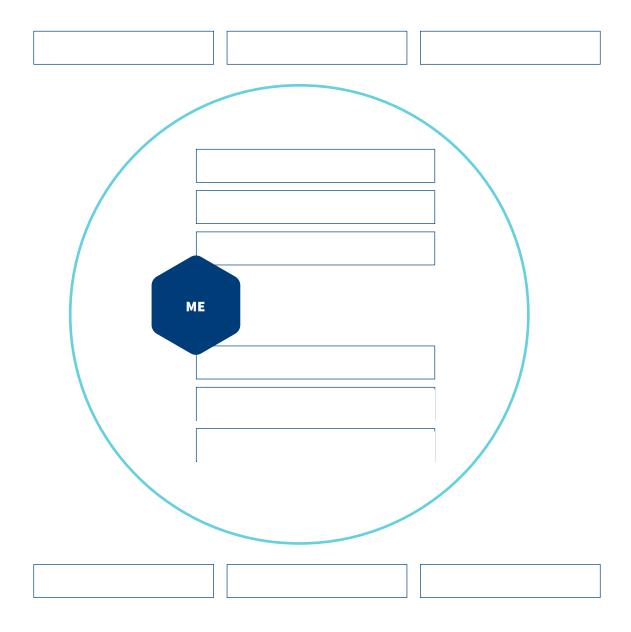
Person 3:	
Why interact	ion would be important?
How I could <sub>I</sub>	promote interaction?
Person 4:	
Why interact	ion would be important?
How I could <sub>I</sub>	promote interaction?

## My network

#### What does your personal network look like?

Draw a diagram of your network. Inside the circle, add the names of the people with whom you currently talk about work or from whom you receive support regarding issues related to your work. Who are they?

Outside the circle, write down the names of people you would like to co-operate more with. How could you make them part of your personal network?



# Tips for making contact

#### The following points can help you contact different people:

- → Find out who you could contact.
- Think in advance about what you want to say.
- → Write down notes in advance.
- → Practice the discussion if necessary.
- → Keep the atmosphere positive.
- → Ask whether you can contact the person again if necessary.
- → Remember that most people like to help!

# Controlling your workload

You are finding it difficult to complete all your work tasks on time. How would you react if your supervisor offered you more work?

Think about which issues you would bring up in the discussion in order to resolve the situation constructively. Write down some points to remember or a few short responses.

St He	Supervisor: Hi, this report needs to be finished as soon as possible. How soon do you think you can do it?				

#### Role of the observer

People often tend to view themselves critically. It is important to get positive feedback, because it helps us understand what we do well. Emphasizing someone's positive aspects helps them learn and change their behaviour more effectively than negative feedback.

Tell the person what you liked and what you felt worked well.  Also tell them why you felt something went well.			
You can write notes during the role-play in the space below.			

# Session 4

### What are the topics of the fourth session?

- → How do you know that you are well?
- → What are the warning signs of stress or burnout and how can they be managed?
- → What flexible working time arrangements are available to you?
- → What are your goals in terms of work, development and well-being?
- → An action plan for achieving your targets.

## Relaxation through breathing

Find a comfortable position. You can lie or sit down. Calmly breathe in and out a few times at your own pace. Concentrate on your breathing.
_
Place your hand on your diaphragm and deeply breathe in and out a few times. Hold your breath and count to five after each exhalation.
_
Continue breathing normally at your own pace. Finally, as you exhale, curl yourself up and blow out all your "extra" steam.

Source: Hakanen et al. Voiman lähteet. 6th ed. Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Helsin-ki 2008.

## Stress management

Have you noticed warning signs indicating that you are overworked or stressed? Write down these signs in the table and plan how you could counteract each one.

WARNING SIGNS	COUNTERACTION PLAN

## Time management as a tool for managing stress

Time seems to be our most important natural resource today. However, although there is always more available and everyone gets the same amount, 24 hours per day, there never seems to be enough of it. By planning our overall use of time and organizing what we do, we can have a significant impact on how controllable our time is.

The three main themes of time management are

- 1. Setting objectives and priorities
- 2. The use of time management tools and
- **3.** Keeping things organized.

When we set targets and their priorities, we consciously decide in advance what to focus on, the order in which things will be done and what we will postpone for the time being. Not everything in life has to be done at one time or at full speed. When we can concentrate on one thing at a time, the sense of urgency often disappears.

There are plenty of time management tools available. One of the simplest methods is to make a timetable for daily and weekly jobs. A systematic approach is also important for time management. This means being orderly and consistent. The aim is to avoid wasting time on looking for and constantly pondering over things. This also helps bring order to your mind. A smooth everyday routine also helps with time management. In order to promote this, it is a good idea to try and resolve any problems that hamper your daily life.

#### **Think**

What are your priorities?

Do you have enough time for different jobs and issues?

What arrangements could improve your time management?

## Lifestyle as a way of maintaining well-being

#### Do you get enough sleep?

Sufficient, good quality sleep is important to a person's health. Sleep restores the body's functional capacity and alleviates physical tiredness. When you sleep well and sufficiently, your mind is refreshed and your mood is good. On average, adults need eight hours of sleep per day to maintain the brain's normal information processing capacity. However, the need for sleep is individual: some people naturally need more or less sleep. Therefore, as well as paying attention to the amount of sleep you get, it is also important to consider how you cope during the daytime. If you are not tired during the day, a smaller amount of sleep may be enough.

Sleep maintains our brains. This is why sufficient sleep is important for a person's functional capacity. Maintaining alertness, the ability to function in new situations, and learning and creativity are particularly important in the work of today's information society. A sleep deficit of even two to three hours per day has been found to significantly decrease brain functioning. A person suffering from sleep deficit finds it difficult to stay alert, think flexibly, learn new things, or think of potential solutions. According to research, a continuous sleep deficit also affects physical health. The consequences of sleep deficit in terms of metabolism include a weakened capacity to fight off infections caused by viruses, weight gain and a risk of developing high blood pressure, adult-onset diabetes or coronary disease.

A moderate, regular lifestyle helps promote good sleep. Stress, in contrast, is one of the most significant factors contributing to poor sleep. For example, the reduction of stress factors at work and the development of stress management methods play a key role in achieving good sleep.

### **Ensuring a healthy lifestyle**

Heavy alcohol use is the cause of many health and work ability problems. The majority of heavy drinkers are of working age. Heavy drinking increases the risk of health hazards resulting from alcohol use. The greatest increase in alcohol use has occurred among women and young people. Alcohol causes organ damage more quickly among women than men.

Not smoking is one of the most important ways in which to promote the health of the population. More than half of those who smoke on a daily basis would like to quit smoking. Quitting smoking is one of the most important decisions a person can make to promote their health.

Exercise maintains physical and mental health in the same way as good nutrition. When you exercise, your overall quality of life improves as a result of mental well-being and better health. Two thirds of working-age Finns do not get enough exercise to have a positive effect on their health. Natural everyday exercise is especially important with regard to promoting weight control and health. Examples of such exercise include walking, gardening, shovelling snow or cleaning.

Think							
How do you look after your own well-being?							
Is your current well-being at a sufficient level?							
What else could you do to improve your well-being?							

## Work content and related expectations

	Examp	le	case	L:	Where	did	the	joy	/ go?
--	-------	----	------	----	-------	-----	-----	-----	-------

had been working as a nurse in a hospital for a long time. Suddenly a head nurse's position pened up and L was asked to take it. L hesitated but finally agreed to accept the position. Aft some time, however, L noticed that the work was no longer enjoyable.	er
	_

## Flexible working time arrangements

#### **Sabbatical**

A sabbatical refers to a longer-term unpaid leave of absence from work. Some sabbaticals may also be statutory, for example, study leave.

#### **Part-time work**

Part-time work refers to work in which the employee's working hours are shorter than regular working hours.

#### **Reduced working hours**

Reduced working hours refer to a temporary solution in which the employee and the employer agree to reduce the length of the employee's working day for a fixed period.

#### **Partial retirement**

Taking partial retirement means changing from full-time work to part-time work, in which case a pension covers part of one's diminished earnings.

#### Note

Possibilities for working time arrangements may vary. All agreements must always be negotiated with your employer.

### Controlled transition to retirement

People who are thinking about applying for early retirement often unintentionally act, for a variety of reasons, as if they are drifting out of work life. This process diminishes a person's motivation to focus on their work, learn new things and obtain satisfaction from their work.

People whose transition to retirement takes place in a controlled manner and according to plan are more satisfied with their life during retirement than those who have applied for retirement on the basis of factors that "encourage departure from work". For this reason, it is a good idea to talk to other people about retirement in order to reinforce alternative solutions.

Think
Do you have plans concerning retirement?
What kind of thoughts does retirement arise?
What expectations do you have of retirement?
What about your expectations of your career before you retire?

## Work-related goals

Think about the goals related to work and well-being that you hope to have achieved six months from now.

Describe the target situation as accurately as possible. For example, you can consider your work tasks, working hours, work environment, skills and relationships with other members of the work community.

with other members of the work community.
Do you have goals related to reconciling work and other parts of your life and how could you promote your own well-being?
Are there any changes expected in your work tasks or work community?
What kind of goals could you set for these changes?
How could you act in response to these changes? What goals do you have concerning your well-being?
How could you promote your well-being at work?
Would you like to get more exercise, more rest, or spend more time on hobbies?

## Action plan

### What kind of action plan do you have to ensure that you reach your goals related to work and working life?

Write down interim goals that will help you reach your ultimate goals. In addition, write down the date by which you hope the necessary measures will have been taken.

Goals relate	d to your work situation, work	content and work arrangements
First step		taken by.
What I will o	lo:	
Second step		taken by
What I will o	lo:	
Third step		taken by.
What I will o	lo:	

#### Goals related to learning and self-development

First step		taken by.
What I will d	o:	
Second step		taken by.
What I will d	o:	
Third step		taken by.
What I will d	o:	

#### Goals related to your own well-being and leisure time

First step		taken by.
What I will d	o:	
Co coul atom		As lean bu
Second step		taken by.
What I will d	0:	
Third step		taken by.
What I will d	0:	

Summarize your plans regarding work life in one or two sentences. In addition, illustrate your plan and your target in the empty picture frame on page 55 in the form of a drawing, by gluing pictures or in any other way you like. Later, you can hang the picture on the wall of your office, for example.

My plan is to			
Date:			
Name:			

### Test your drinking habits

### 1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

- 0. Never
- 1. Monthly or less often
- 2. Two to four times a month
- 3. Two to four times a week
- 4. Four or more times a week

## 2. How many servings of alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?

- 0.1-2
- 1.3-4
- 2.5-6
- 3. 7-9
- 4. 10 or more

### 3. How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?

- 0 Never
- 1. Less than monthly
- 2. Monthly
- 3. Weekly
- 4. Daily or almost daily

## 4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?

- 0. Never
- 1. Less than monthly
- 2. Monthly
- 3. Weekly
- 4. Daily or almost daily

## 5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?

- 0. Never
- 1. Less than monthly
- 2. Monthly
- 3. Weekly
- 4. Daily or almost daily

#### 6. How often during the last year have you needed a drink first thing in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?

- 0. Never
- 1. Less than monthly
- 2. Monthly
- 3. Weekly
- 4. Daily or almost daily

## 7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?

- 0. Never
- 1. Less than monthly
- 2. Monthly
- 3. Weekly
- 4. Daily or almost daily

## 8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?

- 0. Never
- 1. Less than monthly
- 2. Monthly
- 3. Weekly
- 4. Daily or almost daily

9.	Have	you	or someo	ne else been	
inj	ured	as a	result of	your drinking?	)

- 0. No
- 2. Yes, but not in the last year
- 4. Yes, during the last year

## 10. Has a friend, relative or doctor or other health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested that you cut down?

- 0. No
- 2. Yes, but not in the last year
- 4. Yes, during the last year

Now add up your points to get your personal score.

My score:	Date:

#### Risks incurred by your drinking

- 0-7 low
- 8-10 slightly increased
- 11–14 clearly increased
- 15-19 high
- 20-40 very high

This questionnaire was created by the World Health Organization (WHO).

A man is a heavy drinker if he

- consumes 7 or more servings of alcohol at one time
- consumes more than 24 servings of alcohol per week

A woman is a heavy drinker if she

- consumes 5 or more servings of alcohol at one time
- consumes more than 16 servings of alcohol per week

# Form for feedback or performance appraisals with your supervisor

Attached is a list of topics you can bring up with your supervisor. An empty space has been provided at the end for any other important questions that may have come up during the programme.

have come up during the programme.
→ What goals do you have regarding your work and career? Are these goals realized in your present job?
→ What opportunities do you have to use your expertise in your present job?
→ How would you like to develop your professional skills?
→ What needs do you have to develop your work ability and promote your well-being at work?
→ What changes would you like to see in your work?



