

# Coping in Flexible Working Conditions – Engagement, Disengagement and Self-Endangering Strategies<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Flexible working conditions can lead to enhanced demands on employees. Workers in flexible jobs with few boundaries must manage themselves and take responsibility for work goal attainment. The health-related effects of flexible working terms are attributable to both the conditions and the manner in which demands and goal achievement are addressed, i.e., they are attributable to coping. Flexible working conditions can reinforce certain work behaviours, such as working despite illness. Based on the self-regulation of behavior theory, we compared such so-called self-endangering work behaviours to previously examined engagement and disengagement coping responses regarding employee health. To accomplish this, we used an online questionnaire through which 485 employees were asked about their working conditions, coping and well-being. The results showed that self-endangering strategies had a positive incremental effect on emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic complaints above and beyond engagement and disengagement coping strategies as well as work demands and work resources. In conclusion, self-endangering work behaviours should be considered when estimating the general health of workers under flexible working conditions.

## Keywords

Work stress – flexible work – coping – self-endangering work behaviours – engagement coping – disengagement coping

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