

Work Stress

Everyone experiences work stress both employees and employers. Regardless of the cause, when too much stress occurs your physical and mental health can be affected.

Workplace stress that is positive, keeps employees motivated. However, work stress can make employees sick, physically and/or mentally and this leads to higher absenteeism from work and increased costs for the employer.

In the workplace, stress can be the result of any number of situations. Some examples include:

Categories of Job Stressors

Examples of Sources of Stress

Factors unique to the job

- workload (too much or too little)
- pace / variety / meaningfulness of work
- not having the ability to make your own decisions about our own job or about specific tasks
- shiftwork / hours of work / overtime
- skills / abilities do not match job demands
- lack of training and/or preparation (technical and social)
- lack of appreciation
- physical environment (noise, air quality, etc.)
- isolation at the workplace (emotional or working alone)

Role in the organization

- role conflict (conflicting job demands, multiple supervisors/managers)
- clear understanding of your responsibilities and expectations of your job.
- level of responsibility (higher levels = higher stress)

Career development

- under/over-promotion
- job security (fear of layoff either due to the economy, or a lack of work to do)
- career development opportunities
- overall job satisfaction

Relationships at work (Interpersonal)

- supervisors (conflicts or lack of support)
- coworkers (conflicts or lack of support)
- subordinates (people who report to you)
- threat of violence, harassment, etc. (threats to personal safety)
- lack of trust
- lack of systems in workplace available for reporting and dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Organizational structure/climate

- participation (or non-participation) in decision-making
- management style
- communication patterns (poor communication / information flow)
- lack of systems in workplace available to respond to concerns
- not engaging employees when undergoing organizational change
- lack of perceived fairness (who gets what when, and the processes through which decisions are made). Feelings of unfairness magnify the effects of perceived stress on health.

Work-Life Balance

- role/responsibility conflicts between home and work
- family exposed to work-related hazard

Tips to Deal with Stress in Your Workplace

- Consider the common causes of work stress and how they could be affecting yourself and your employees. Look for the possible source of the work stress.
- Talk to a colleague, family member or close friend
- Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other trusted professional
- Treat all co-workers with fairness and respect
- Learn and be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of work stress
- Learn about community resources that can provide training, skills and counselling for those needing support
- Look for ways to improve social connections and build support in the workplace
- Survey the employees to find out the causes of their work stress
- Provide workplace health and wellness programs that address eating healthy, being active, getting enough sleep and other healthy lifestyle choices
- Think positively

Recommended Resource for your workplace :

“Coping with Stress” published by Heart and Stroke Foundation.

To download or order copies of **“Coping with Stress”** booklets for your workplace:

- http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iklQLcMWJtE/b.5590155/k.3B4A/Heart_disease_Coping_with_stress.htm

Start the Conversation.... Open the lines of Communication!

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