

## Occupational Psychology

### Stress Scenarios

A little stress at work can actually do you good - helping focus and preparing the body for action. Some studies even suggest that it can improve memory. But prolonged stress can lead to both physical and mental problems, and long-term absence. And that's when it becomes a problem for both the employee and the company they work for.

Consider each of the scenarios below, rate the potential seriousness or stress rating of the stress for you personally (0-10), and assess what coping mechanisms you could put in place to manage with the situation.

| Scenario                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Potential stress rating | Effective coping strategies | Individual or organisation issue? |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| It's Friday afternoon and you are looking forward to finishing work for the week. You are going out of town for a family wedding this weekend. At 4pm, you get an email from your boss about an assignment she needs you to complete by Monday morning.                  |                         |                             |                                   |
| You have had conflict with a particular co-worker for some time, for no real reason. One day, this person begins to publicly berate you in the hallway for stealing his client, or some other offense. You're caught off guard, embarrassed and want to defend yourself. |                         |                             |                                   |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <p>You have just found out that your department's budget has been cut and that the project you are employed to work on, and oversee, might be cancelled due to these significant budget cuts.</p>                                            |  |  |  |
| <p>Your organisation has merged with another, and because your role is now effectively redundant, you have been assigned to a completely new one in an area that you know nothing about.</p>                                                 |  |  |  |
| <p>Your boss has overloaded you with tasks that are not in your job description because another member of staff is off on sick leave. You have a strong desire to help out and please your boss, but you have no idea what you're doing.</p> |  |  |  |
| <p>You're asked to work on a collaborative project with a group of co-workers who you do not see eye-to-eye with. The project is set to take place over the period of three months.</p>                                                      |  |  |  |
| <p>You have a new supervisor at work who doesn't seem to like you. No matter what you do, he/she is always critical of your efforts. You are beginning to think that you'll never be able to please him/her so what is the point.</p>        |  |  |  |