



Prifysgol Cymru
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Managing Stress in the Organisation

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Aim

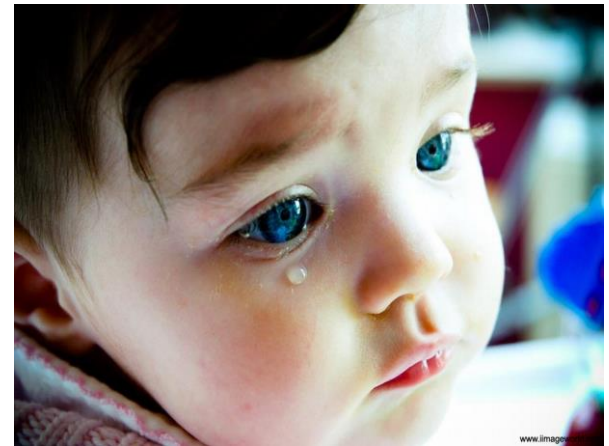
- Identify workplace stressors and explain how their effect might be mitigated



What is stress?

TO DO LiST

1. **SO**
 2. **MANY**
 3. **THINGS**
- 



Stress can be defined as:

According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE):

“Stress is the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them”

Other definitions include:

“Stress is a physical, mental or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension. Simply put, stress is any outside force or event that has an effect on our body or mind”



Three important definitions

1. **Stress** – the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.
2. **Stressor** – stressful events / situations that produce a reaction in the individual that is unpleasant.
3. **Stress Reaction** – physical and emotional response to a stressor (anxiety, depression to serious emotional disability).



Why Tackle Stress?

- 1 in 5 people say that they find their work stressful.
- Over half a million people report experiencing work-related stress at a level that they believed was making them ill.
- Each case of work related stress, depression or anxiety related ill health leads to an average of 30.2 working days lost
- Approximately 13.8 million working days were lost to work related stress depression and anxiety in 2006/7
- Work related stress accounts for over a third of all new incidences of ill health

(Source HSE commissioned research)



The Mechanics Of Stress

- Relates back to the time of the hunter-scavenger.
- Stress helped us survive danger.
- When a threat is perceived the brain sends message to stand and fight or run to escape the danger - 'fight or flight'.
- Cardiovascular and respiratory overdrive.
- Increased blood circulation and oxygenation.
- Blood sugar levels increase.
- Moves us into 'attack' mode.
- Also affected is the part of the brain that regulates emotion and in this state of alert it becomes difficult to be rational.
- In the modern world we have to 'control ourselves' and 'deal with it'.
- If this is excessive or prolonged it can lead to illness.

What are the possible causes of stress in the workplace?

Stressors:

Physical – heat, cold, pain, fatigue, injury, hunger etc.

Psychological – job security, money, relationships etc.

Stress Reaction:

Physical – heart, stomach, tension

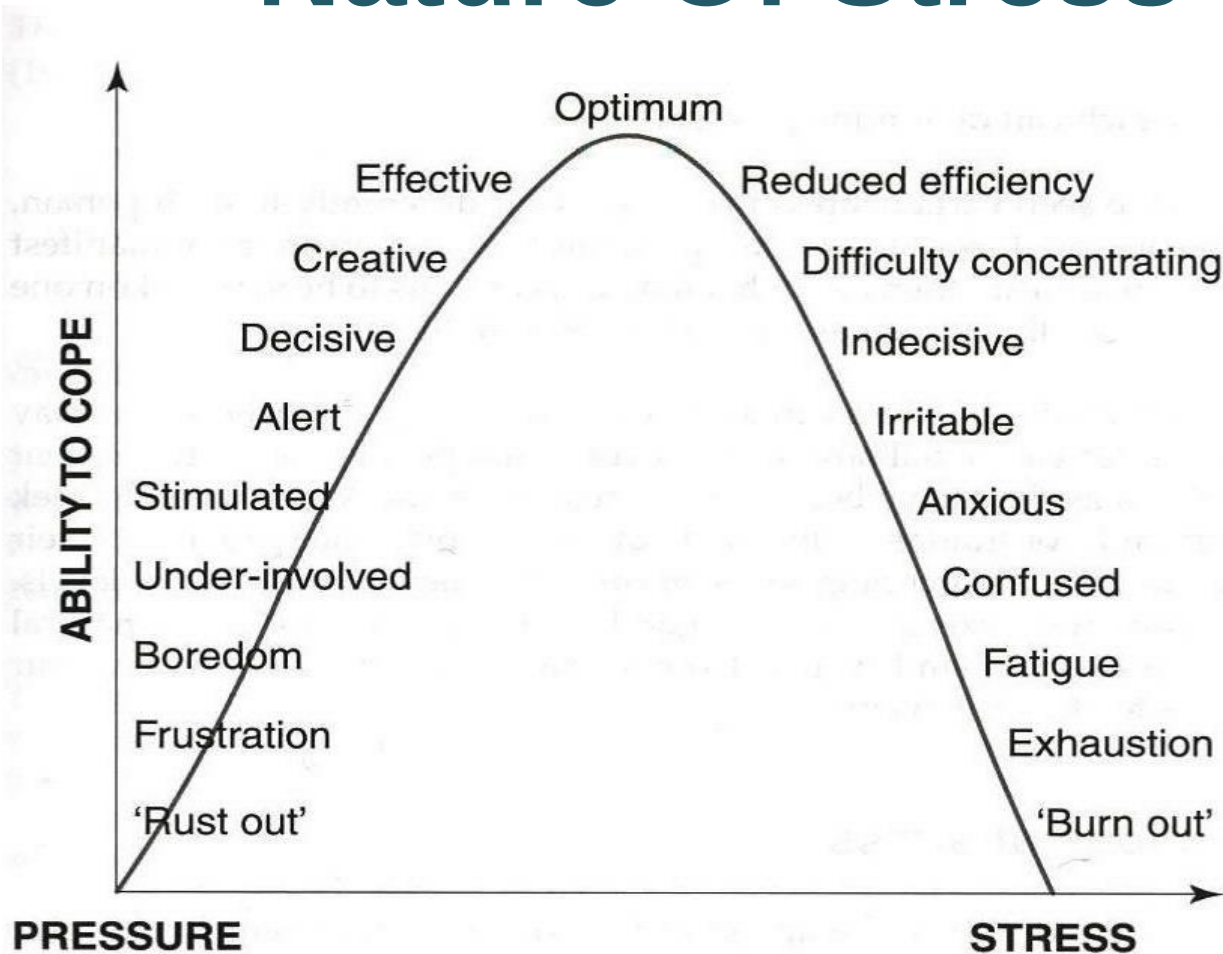
Psychological – anxious, apprehensive, annoyed, depressed

Causes of Stress in the Workplace

- Physical Environment
- The Organisation and how it is Managed
- Role in the Organisation
- Relationships within the Organisation
- Career Development
- Personal and Social Relationships
- Equipment
- Individual Concerns



Nature Of Stress



Is It An Illness?

- It is not a disease or illness.
- It can lead to increased problems with ill health if it is prolonged or particularly intense, including heart disease, back pain, anxiety and depression.
- It can also lead to unhealthy practices such as drinking too much caffeine, alcohol or smoking cigarettes.

Who Can It Affect?

- It is not a sign of individual weakness.
- It can affect anyone.
- When someone feels that they cannot cope with what is being asked of them at work.
- Some groups are considered to be at a higher risk such as the young (movement into long term employment), single parents, elderly workers and the disabled.
- No-one is immune.



Factors that lead to stress

Remember, stress affects people in different ways and what one person finds stressful can be normal to another.

Factors such as their background, age, skills, personality, personal circumstances et al, will all be factors in whether someone becomes stressed by a situation and how they cope with that stressor.



Top ten stressful life events

1. Spouse's death
2. Divorce
3. Marriage separation
4. Jail term
5. Death of a close relative
6. Injury or illness
7. Marriage
8. Fired from job
9. Marriage reconciliation
10. Retirement



*Holme and Rahn –
Scaling of Life Changes in the “Journal of Psychosomatic Research”*

Daily Stressors

Environmental stressors;

- ✓ unsafe neighbourhood, pollution, noise, uncomfortable living conditions

Family and relationship stressors:

- ✓ problems with friends, romantic partners and family members; caring for a chronically ill family member, rebellious teens, marital disagreements

Work stressors:

- ✓ job dissatisfaction, exhausting workload, insufficient pay, office politics

Social stressors;

- ✓ poverty, discrimination, isolation, unemployment



Internal Causes of Stress

- Uncertainty or worries
- Pessimistic attitude
- Self-criticism
- Unrealistic expectations or beliefs
- Perfectionism
- Low self-esteem
- Excessive or unexpressed anger
- Lack of assertiveness



Signs of Stress

- As a manager you have a duty to ensure that work does not make your team ill. Understanding how to spot the signs of stress in your team, and then know what to do to reduce stress, will help to achieve this.
- There are some clear signs that people are experiencing stress at work. If they are detected early, action may be taken before the pressure becomes a problem, and will be easier to reduce and eliminate the causes.
- It is important that everyone looks out for changes in a person's or a group's behaviour

Signs of Stress

Stress can show itself in many different ways.
There are **three** main signs or effects on individuals

- 1. Emotional symptoms*
- 2. Psychological symptoms*
- 3. Behavioural symptoms*



Remember you are particularly looking for changes in the way people behave that could be linked with excessive pressures. If the person has always had the signs it may not be an indication of stress

Emotional symptoms

- Moodiness
- Agitation
- Restlessness
- Short temper
- Irritability, impatience
- Inability to relax
- Feeling tense and “on edge”
- Feeling overwhelmed that they cannot cope
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness
- More sensitivity
- Guilt
- Frustration



Psychological symptoms

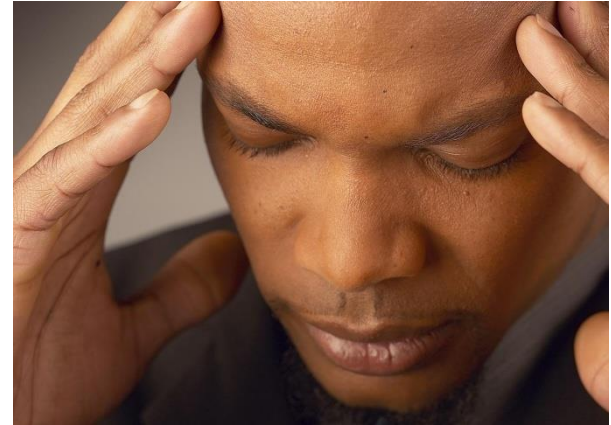
- Memory problems
- Indecisiveness
- Inability to concentrate
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Poor judgement
- Seeing only the negative (glass half empty)
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying
- Loss of objectivity, confusion
- Fearful anticipation, morbid thoughts

Behavioural symptoms

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastination, neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)
- Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
- Overdoing activities
(e.g. exercising, shopping)
- Overreacting to unexpected problems
- Susceptibility to accidents

Physical symptoms

- Headaches or backaches
- Muscle tension and stiffness
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Insomnia
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Weight loss or gain
- Skin breakouts (hives, eczema)
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds



Practical Stress Management

- Become knowledgeable about stress
- Come to terms with your feelings
- Develop effective behavioural skills
- Establish and maintain a strong network
- Develop a lifestyle to strengthen you against stress
- Remember your spiritual development

Practical Stress Management

Methods associated with:

- Physiology
- Psychological
- Behavioural



Practical Stress Management

Indulge in humour and laughter.



Practical Stress Management

Take 'time out'.



Any Questions?

Thank you for your Participation





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