

WELLBEING 101: REDUCE YOUR TEAM'S STRESS

In the course of a busy working day, it is likely that the stress levels of your team members will fluctuate. However, a team that is collectively stressed over a prolonged period of time will be less productive and efficient, and its members less happy and engaged. When team stress occurs it is therefore important to take the necessary steps to help manage and reduce it. Following the steps in this checklist will help you to do this effectively.

Using this checklist

- Work through each of the **statements** in this checklist below.
- Put a **checkmark** against the statements that you are certain you agree with.
- For those that you do not, you should read the **advice** provided to help you make a positive contribution to monitoring or reducing your team's levels of stress. (You may wish to still read the advice even if you have checked the statement.)
- Then record an **action** that flags something that you are going to start doing or a change that you are going to make to reduce your team's stress.

Statement	✓	Advice	Action
<i>I recognise signs of stress in my team</i>		Look out for low team morale, declines in productivity, inner team conflict, individuals being withdrawn, or visible signs that people are not enjoying their work.	
<i>I take temperature checks from time to time</i>		Check in by speaking to team members one to one, or make general suggestions for improvements to morale at a team meeting. Perhaps issue an anonymous feedback form to ask how people are feeling.	
<i>I make roles, responsibilities and objectives clear</i>		Uncertainty about purpose and direction can contribute greatly to team stress. If you feel that the team is losing sight of individual objectives or how they contribute to greater organisational goals, hold a team meeting to provide a recap, and encourage questions.	
<i>I ensure the team's workload is realistic and manageable</i>		Before giving employees additional work, ask them if they can honestly incorporate it into their existing workload. If they cannot, discuss the reasons behind this, and what you might be able to do to help them.	
<i>I reduce bureaucracy and 'red tape' where possible</i>		To identify how bureaucracy might be reduced in your team, hold a meeting with your employees and ask them to consider what changes would help them to work more efficiently.	

Statement	✓	Advice	Action
<i>I trust team members to work independently</i>		Empower team members by giving them space and responsibility to complete their work. Empowered team members generally feel autonomous and trusted, and as a result, often less stressed and anxious than disempowered employees.	
<i>I keep my team updated</i>		Inform your team members about any issues in the team or organisation that are relevant to them. Even if you need to share negative news, this will allow your team members to have the information they need to gain clear understanding of how they will be affected.	
<i>I provide appropriate development</i>		If you detect a skills gap within your team, ensure that your team members receive the appropriate development before asking them to undertake new or challenging tasks.	
<i>I recognise and reward my team's efforts</i>		Offer team members an extended lunch break, or a late start or early finish A simple heartfelt 'thank you' can go a long way.	
<i>I encourage team members to discuss problems or idea</i>		This will help to foster a culture of collaboration within your team, and help your team members to feel supported. However, it is important to make it clear that any significant issues should be addressed with you directly in the first instance.	

Statement	✓	Advice	Action
<i>I work to resolve conflict between team members</i>		It's vital to help resolve any conflict between team members as soon as you become aware of it. This might involve meeting with team members individually to discuss the issue, or facilitating a meeting between the employees involved to help them resolve the situation.	
<i>I signpost external sources of advice and support</i>		Team members who are particularly stressed may require some additional support to help them cope. Your HR department or Occupational Health Advisor (if you have one), should be a good source of further information and support for employees who feel stressed.	