

## How To Manage A Stress At A Workplace

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Dennis Jaffe opined that approximately 60% of our waking productive lives at work. This being a truth it means that work becomes a significant factor in employee stress. Consequently, reducing organisational stress has taken on greater urgency in the current economic climate where there is the need to do more with less. Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes employee feel frustrated, angry, or anxious. Stress can be defined as perceived forces or stimuli impinging upon the individual which may create demands on the individual. It suggests a mismatch between an individual's capabilities and her/his work environment in which either excessive demands are made from the individual or the individual is not fully equipped to handle a particular work situation. Everyone sees situations differently and has different coping skills. For this reason, no two people will respond exactly the same way to a given situation. Workplace stress is caused by factors at the organizational, group and individual levels. It can have a negative impact on the health, performance, productivity and behavior of employees in the organization. It can cost the organization. Thus, workplace stress needs to be managed effectively.

### **SOURCES OF STRESS:**

Employee can experience stress from four basic sources:

**Environment** – Environment can attack an employee with extreme and competing demands to adjust. Examples of environmental stressors include weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, unsafe and substandard housing, and crime.

**Social Stressors** – Employee can experience multiple stressors arising from the demands of the different social roles we occupy, such as parent, spouse, caregiver, and employee. Some examples of social stressors include deadlines, financial problems, job interviews,

presentations, disagreements, demands for your time and attention, loss of a loved one, divorce, and co-parenting.

**Physiological** – Situations and circumstances affecting individual body can be experienced as physiological stressors. Examples of physiological stressors include rapid growth of adolescence, menopause, illness, aging, giving birth, accidents, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and sleep disturbances.

**Thoughts** – Employee brain interprets and perceives situations as stressful, difficult, painful, or pleasant. Some situations in life are stress provoking, but it is individual thoughts that determine whether they are a problem for them.

## **TYPES OF STRESSORS**

Situations that are considered stress provoking are known as stressors. Stress is not always a bad thing, sometimes it is also a good for the organisation (known as eustress). Stress is simply the body's response to changes that create taxing demands. Many professionals suggest that there is a difference between what we perceive as positive stress, and distress, which refers to negative stress. In daily life, we often use the term "stress" to describe negative situations. This leads many people to believe that all stress is bad for them, which is not true.

Positive stress has the following characteristics:

- Motivates, focuses energy
- is short-term
- is perceived as within our coping abilities
- Feels exciting
- Improves performance

Negative stress has the following characteristics:

- Causes anxiety or concern
- Can be short or long-term
- Is perceived as outside of our coping abilities
- Feels unpleasant

- Decreases performance
- Can lead to mental and physical problems

## MODEL OF STRESS

Stress is neutral, it often has negative connotations and is used as a synonym for overstress. It must be emphasized that some stress can be positive and beneficial and is actually necessary to make us effective in the tasks we set ourselves. It is the amount of stress that causes problems. According to Hans Selye, there are four dimensions of stress.

1. **Over (hyperstress):** Where there is too high a workload and the demands of the job are greater than the individual officer is likely to manage.
2. **Under (hypostress):** Where there is too little work to do and this leads to under-stimulation, boredom, depression and possibly lack of motivation
3. **Desired (eustress):** When there is something really challenging and motivating to do.
4. **Undesired (distress):** Which makes one feel exhausted, irritable and frustrated.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS

The functioning of organisation and leadership plays an important role in building the stress among employees. Organisation can prevent employee stress by taking an initiatives. However, it is very important to keep stress levels in the organisation to a minimum. If an organisation wants to keep its employees stress free, they organisation need to understand the causes and symptoms of stress and the strategies that can be employed to the benefit of the organization and that individual. HR managers play a vital role in identifying and managing stress within the organization. They must see the problems that cause stress first hand and will often be the first point of contact when an individual is feeling stressed. There are various strategies by which an organisation can reduce the stress level among the employees are those are as follow:-

1. Present relevant and significant information to keep employees informed about the organisation especially during periods of uncertainty and change.

2. Encourage open discussion where employees should be able to ask questions and get answers.
3. Organisation should use conflict management strategies, the most suitable or a mixture, depending on the circumstances.
4. Help individuals set realistic goals and make suggestions for doing the same thing differently.
5. Ensure that employees have the resources and skills they need and offer opportunities for learning and development.
6. Identify employee and team accomplishments.
7. Treat employees with respect and dignity.
8. Support to promote a friendly social climate by providing opportunities for social interaction among employees and establishing a zero-tolerance policy for harassment.

## **INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS**

It is not only sufficient that only organization should take an initiatives to minimize the stress level among employees, but employees should also take actions to reduce their stress. Hence, to reduce the stress level, he should understand the reasons and consequences of stress. Understanding one's own personal sense of stress is a necessary part of the process that will enable coping mechanisms to develop. There are many strategies, that can be adopted by the individual to reduce the stress and those are as follow:

1. Develop time management skills by organizing the day, creating a balanced schedule, not overcommitting. Employee should perform his task on time. Reduce meeting time – set time limits, plan an agenda and stick to it. Consequently, he will feel less overwhelmed.
2. Develop task management by prioritizing tasks, breaking projects into small steps, delegating responsibility and being willing to compromise.
3. Improve emotional intelligence -the ability to manage and use emotions in positive and constructive ways. Overcome differences, repair wounded feelings and defuse tension and stress.



4. Break bad habits, negative thoughts and behavior, which add to employee stress at work: resist rigorously; clean up act; flip your negative thinking and do not try to control the uncontrollable, particularly the behaviour of other employees.
5. Employee should do something that's healthy for his body or mind when he is feeling stressed can help you feel better
6. Recognise things that are working well, celebrate successes and meet challenges with humour. .
7. Writing, drawing or some other creative way of expressing what you feel can often help a person work through difficult feelings
8. Keep things in outlook. Find ways to balance work and family life. Take care of yourself- eat healthy, keep fit and sleep enough.
9. Employee should speak to employer or peers in a way employee feel comfortable, as if he will feeling stressed at work. In some situations, simply sharing your thoughts and feelings with someone leads to reduce stress. If it is work-related, it is HR manager's duty to take reasonable steps to try to resolve the problem.

Sometimes people react to stress by becoming angry or upset, or by blaming someone else for the situation. Or they may feel so overwhelmed that they avoid the stressful situation, pretend it isn't happening, or even try to escape through alcohol or other drug use. These are negative or unhealthy ways to deal with stress that can wind up adding to the pressure the person is feeling and cause more problems over time. Sometimes stress might push or motivate people to take action to handle the situation that's causing the stress, if it's something over which they have some control. Sometimes people are able to keep a positive outlook and think of good things that could come from the situation. Getting more information, asking for help, doing something to relax, taking a break until you feel calmer, or approaching the problem one step at a time are all positive ways to respond to stress.

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