



Managing the Stressed Employee

The impact of personal hardship and adversity in the workplace

The webinar will begin soon



Managing the Stressed Employee

The impact of personal hardship and adversity in the workplace

ICW Group Risk Management Services



Today's Presenter:

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Sr. Risk Management Consultant





“Every life has a **story**...
If you take the time to **read it.**”



Job Stress Defined

Harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

Important Statistics

- 83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress.

The American Institute of Stress (2022). Workplace Stress.

- Stress causes around one million workers to miss work every day.

The American Institute of Stress

- 50% of US workers are not engaged at work as a result of stress.

The American Institute of Stress



Personal Factors



Family problems



Medical problems



Substance abuse



Financial problems



Legal problems



Marital problems

Job Factors



Reorganization



Demotion



Harassment/bullying



Overworked




Hazardous
surroundings



Fear of being
replaced or let go



Supervisor
relationship

A group of four business professionals (three women and one man) are gathered around a conference table in a meeting room. They appear to be in a discussion, with some looking thoughtful or concerned. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue gradient at the bottom.

Why should we be **concerned?**

Job Stress Can Result In...

Health Issues

- Cardiovascular disease
- Substance abuse
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Psychological disorders
- Suicide, cancer, ulcers, impaired immune function
- Workplace injuries

Work Issues

- Job concentration disrupted
- Self-initiative reduced
- Trust in others diminished
- Resentment
- Depression
- Burn-out

Adversely Impact an Organization

- Poor attendance
- Low employee morale
- Decrease in productivity
- Quality defects
- Poor customer service
- Workers' compensation fraud
- Safety workplace injuries
- High employee turnover
- Difficulty qualified candidates



Costs to Organization

U.S. businesses lose up to **\$300 billion** yearly as a result of workplace stress.

American Institute of Stress

Depression leads to **\$51 billion** in costs due to absenteeism and **\$26 billion** in treatment costs.

Mental Health America

Work-related stress causes **120,000** deaths and results in **\$190 billion** in healthcare costs yearly.

Goh, J., Pfeffer, J., & Zenios, S. A. (2015)

“At least **85%** of all work accidents are caused by the inability to cope with emotional distress.”

– E.M. Gherman,
Stress and the Bottom Line



“The **vast majority** of accidents contain a substantial human factor, often irrational or irresponsible action, indicating the involvement of mental or emotional duress in accident causation.”

– *University of Texas*



Fall Accident Case Study



How do we manage the
stressed employee?

Management Approaches

- Recognize the Signs
- Open Communication
- Offer Resources
- Adjust Workloads
- Encourage Self-Care
- Set Realistic Expectations
- Regular Check-Ins
- Foster Supportive Environment
- Seek Professional Help



Most Common Workplace Stressors

American Institute of Stress – 2022

39%

Amount
of work

23%

Supervisor
relationship

19%

Work-life
balance

6%

Job security

Stress Warning Signs

- Isolation
- Deterioration of personal appearance
- Loss of interest
- Carelessness
- Poor work quality
- Increased absenteeism
- Lowered productivity



Stress Coping Methods

- Talking to a friend/colleague/spouse (55%)
- Exercising (40%)
- Eating (35%)
- Stepping away from work (35%)
- Taking a day off (32%)
- Drinking after work (24%)





Supervisor Role

1. Practice empathy
2. Make yourself available
3. Know what you can offer
4. Check in regularly to make sure they're doing OK
5. Consider workload
6. Be transparent and consistent
7. Listen first, suggest second



Senior Management Role

- Planning, organizing, and leading
- Policies and procedures
- Supervisor training
- Personal commitment



Senior Management Role (continued)

- Manager/team member relationship
- Design of work tasks
- Interpersonal relationships
- Managing workloads
- Career concerns
- Environmental conditions



7 Steps to Help Manage Stress

1. Eat a balanced and nutritious diet starting with breakfast
2. Get a good night's sleep
3. Volunteer time and services
4. Seek professional help
5. Keep moving – Exercise 30 minutes a day
6. Express your feelings – you're not alone
7. Get to the root of it – remove the stressor or try new coping strategies

A Few Ways Organizations Can Help

- Allow some control over schedules
- Include employee input in decision making
- Balance responsibility & authority necessary for tasks
- Set reasonable limits & timelines
- Recognize a job well done
- Resources – health club membership, elder-care & on-site or near-site childcare
- Employee Assistance Programs and Wellness Programs
- Review work distribution process – Fair & effective?
- Social interaction among workers
- Compatible work schedules

Stress Management Checklists

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Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace Checklist for Supervisors

There has been a reported rise in the number of individuals experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders in the United States. This checklist provides recommendations for supervisors to help support mental health and alleviate stressors for workers.

Be a compassionate leader and establish a supportive tone.

- Raise awareness about stressors and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and substance use by:
 - Talking about the types of specific stressors that relate to your particular workforce and sector, as well as their impact on mental health (e.g., high rates of depression and anxiety disorders, increased substance use).
 - Sharing [insider stories](#) so that workers know they are not alone if they are if mental health or substance use issues.
 - Sharing a story about stress for you and what you are doing to address it to mental health or substance use.
 - Sharing a story about stress for you and what you are doing to address it to mental health or substance use.
 - Showing a strong understanding and communicate that the group is all in to helping, show vulnerability, and encourage them to tell workers that it's normal to feel stressed and encourage them to talk to workers that they can't return to feel stressed and encourage them to tell workers that it's normal to feel stressed and encourage them to talk to workers that they can't return to feel stressed.
- Implement an "open door" policy for workers to express their problem and how they are doing.
- Check in with workers periodically to ask them how they are doing and if they need support.
- Hold frequent group meetings to promote connectedness and that management can do to support them.
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Reducing workplace stress benefits **everyone** and can lead to improved morale, increased productivity, fewer sick days, better focus, fewer workplace injuries, an enhanced quality of life, and improved physical health (e.g., better sleep, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system).

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Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace Checklist for Senior Managers

There has been a reported rise in the number of people experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders. This checklist provides recommendations for senior managers to help support mental health and alleviate stressors for workers.

Be a compassionate leader and establish a supportive tone.

- Tell staff you are committed to supporting their mental health and well-being. To restore your commitment, consider:
 - Issuing an organization-wide statement about the importance of addressing workplace stress and supporting worker mental health and well-being.
 - Identifying specific staff in your organization whom workers can contact with concerns about job-related stressors.
 - Framing a judgement-free workplace by ensuring that workers can ask for help without facing negative consequences in the workplace.
- Raise awareness about workplace stressors and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and substance use by:
 - Talking about the types of stress for your general population, specific to your workforce and sector, and mental health (e.g., high rates of depression and anxiety disorders, increased substance use).
 - Sharing [insider stories](#) so that workers know they are not alone if they are struggling with mental health or substance use issues.
- Be transparent. Ensure communication takes place regularly to help alleviate the stress of uncertainty and to defuse misinformation and rumors that might be circulating.
- Consider creating a mental health task force or committee that includes representatives from different levels of your organization (i.e., not only senior managers) to talk about existing and emerging workplace stressors and ways to reduce them.
- Build a culture of connection and encourage coworkers to be supportive of one another by:
 - Creating peer support networks around common issues that workers can be formal or informal. Each network might have a trusted or remote work sessions (in-person or virtual) for their coworkers and lead conversations that give other staff a chance to talk about issues, tell their stories, and brainstorm potential solutions.
 - Encouraging coworkers to check in on each other and/or create a "buddy system," as helping others improves an individual's sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. For example, reduce coworkers to break into small teams and ask them to call or email each other weekly or biweekly to check in.

Reducing workplace stress benefits **everyone** and can lead to improved morale, increased productivity, fewer sick days, better focus, fewer workplace injuries, an enhanced quality of life, and improved physical health (e.g., better sleep, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system).

[Source: Statista](#). Estimates that for every dollar U.S. employers spend treating common mental health issues, they receive \$4 back in improved health and productivity.

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Managing Stress at Work

We will never completely remove stress from our life, but identifying and managing stress factors can help maintain a positive and healthy lifestyle for our team members and ourselves.

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Questions?
Contact us:

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Thank You!

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