3.3 Work Stress

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│    Managers      │      │   Skilled and    │      │  Organisational  │
│ should know the  │ ───> │    Motivated     │ ───> │   Effectiveness  │
│   Destressors    │      │    Employees     │      │                  │
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Summary of Work Stress

1. Stress is ones response to a disturbing factor in the environment and the consequences of such reaction.
2. Response to stress varies between individuals. How an individual experiences stress depends on past   experience and social support the individual has perception,
3. Stressors originate at the individual, group, organizational or extra-organizational level.
4. Outcomes of stress are very serious. Individual suffers from stress, so also the organisation which has to   pay in terms of absenteeism, reduced productivity and claims of damages from affected employees.
5. One serious consequence of stress is burnout. Burnout results from prolonged exposure to stress.
6. There are individual as well as organizational strategies to cope with stress.
7. Stress is negatively related to performance. Higher the stress, lower the performance. The earlier belief   that moderate level of stress enhances performance is not tenable now.
8. Illustration of Occupational Stress captures all elements of stress reasons, consequences and coping   strategies.
9. Personal, job and organizational stresses lead to emotional exhaustion.
10. Stress is universal. It affects people of all countries, all religions, male and female and all ages.

Meaning and Definition

Stress is an individual's response to a disturbing factor in the environment, and the consequence of such reaction. Stress obviously involves interaction of the person and the environment. To quote a definition: "Stress is an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and or behavioral deviations for organizational participants." The physical or psychological demands from the environment that cause stress are called stressors. They create stress or the potential for stress when an individual perceives them as representing a demand that may exceed that person's ability to respond.

Stress can manifest itself in both a positive way and a negative way. Stress is said to be positive when the situation offers an opportunity for one to gain something. Eustress is the tern used to describe positive stress. Eustress is often viewed as motivator since, in its absence, the individual lacks that 'edge' necessary for peak performance. It is negative when stress is associated with heart disease, alcoholism, drug abuse, marital breakdowns, absenteeism, child abuse and a host of other social, physical, organizational and emotional problems.

Stress is associated with constraints and demands. The former prevents an individual from doing what he or she desires. The latter refers to the loss of something desired. Aspiring to own.

a new BMW and not be able to mobilize the necessary cash is a constraint. Desiring to attend a social function but unable to do so because of Constraints and pressing official work amounts to a demand. demands can lead to potential stress. When they are coupled with uncertainty of the outcome and importance of the outcome, potential stress becomes actual stress. Stress is high when there is uncertainty of outcome and the outcome is significant.

Why is not stress

To make the meaning of stress more clear, it is useful to state what does not constitute stress. Each of the following does not amount to stress:

Stress is not simply anxiety or nervous tension: These symptoms do not constitute stress. People exhibiting these behaviors may not be under stress. Similarly, individuals who are under stress may not exhibit anxiety or nervous tension.

Stress need not always be damaging: People frequently experience stress without any strain at all. Daily life activities may be stressful, but not at all harmful.

Stress is not always due to overwork: Stressed out individuals are not those who are overworked. Stress may also result from having too little to do.

Stress cannot be avoided: It is necessary to realise that stress is an inevitable part of life, and that it cannot be avoided. What can, however, be avoided are the negative reactions to the stress.

Body has limited capacity to respond: Stress is body's biological response mechanisms. But the body has only limited capacity to respond to stressors. The workplace makes a variety of demands on people and too much stress over too long a period of time will exhaust their ability to cope with the stressors.

Stress Experience

Not all individuals experience stress with same intensity. Some people overact to stressors and get highly stressed. Some others have the stamina, endurance and composure to cope with any stressors. How an individual experiences stress depends on: (i) the person's perception of the situation, (ii) the person's past experience, (iii) the presence or absence of social support, and (iv) individual differences with regard to stress reactions. (See illustration between stressors and Stress).

- Perception
- Past experience
- Social support
- Individual differences

The Environment   The Individual
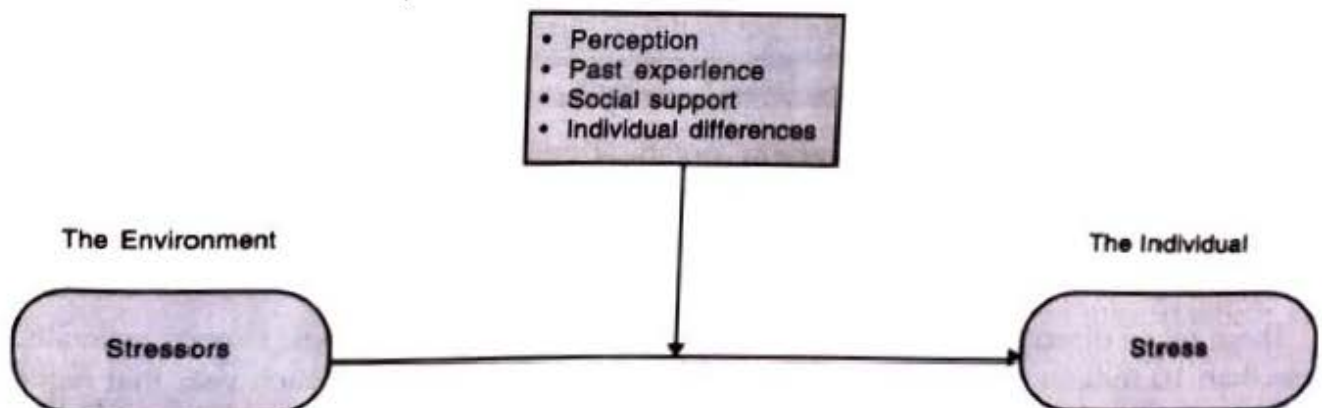
Stressors   Stress

Relationship between Stressors & Stress

Perception refers to a psychological process whereby a person selects and organizes stimuli into a concept of reality. Employees' perception of a situation can influence whether or not they experience stress. A simple transfer from one place to another.

may be perceived by one employee as an opportunity to see new places and learn new things. The same transfer may be understood by another employee as extremely threatening and indicating unhappiness of the management with his or her performance

Past Experience: Whether a person experiences stress depends on his or her past experience with a similar stressor. Writing anonymous letters against the boss or giving leads to the newspaper and getting false stories published in them against the boss are common among disgruntled employees. Over a period of time, the boss will get used to such allegations, though initially he or she underwent stress.
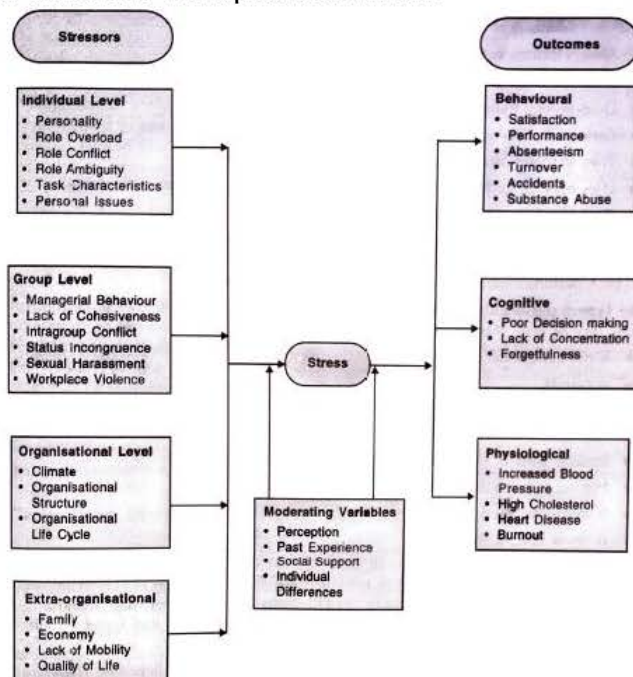
The relationship between experience and stress is also based on reinforcement. Positive reinforcement or previous success in a similar situation can reduce the level of stress that a person experiences under certain circumstances; punishment or past failure under similar conditions can increase stress under the same circumstances.

Social Support: The presence or absence of other people influences how individuals in the workplace experience stress and respond to stressors. The presence of co-workers may increase an individual's confidence, allowing that person to cope more effectively with stress. For example, working alongside someone who performs confidently and competently in a stressed situation may help an employee behave in an identical way. Conversely, the presence of fellow workers may irritate some people or make them anxious, reducing their ability to cope with stress.

Individual Differences:

Individual differences in motivation, attitudes, personality and abilities also influence whether employees experience work stress, and if they do, how they respond to it. What one person considers a major source of stress, another may hardly notice it. Personality characteristics, in particular, may explain some of the differences in the ways that employees experience and respond to stress. Type A individuals, for example tend to experience more stress than Type B personalities.

A Model of Occupational Stress

Stressors

Individual Level
- Personality
- Role Overload
- Role Conflict
- Role Ambiguity
- Task Characteristics
- Personal Issues

Group Level
- Managerial Behaviour
- Lack of Cohesiveness
- Intragroup Conflict
- Status Incongruence
- Sexual Harassment
- Workplace Violence

Organisational Level
- Climate
- Organisational Structure
- Organisational Life Cycle

Extra-organisational
- Family
- Economy
- Lack of Mobility
- Quality of Life

Stress

Moderating Variables
- Perception
- Past Experience
- Social Support
- Individual Differences

Outcomes

Behavioural
- Satisfaction
- Performance
- Absenteeism
- Turnover
- Accidents
- Substance Abuse

Cognitive
- Poor Decision making
- Lack of Concentration
- Forgetfulness

Physiological
- Increased Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Heart Disease
- Burnout

Above is the illustration of a typical model of occupational stress. As illustrated in the figure, stressors lead to stress, which in turn, lead to a variety of consequences. The model also contains several variables that help moderate the stressors-stress-outcome relationship. A moderator is a variable that causes the relationship between stress and outcomes to be stronger for some people and weaker for others.

Stressors Sources of Stress

Stressors originate at individual, group, organizational and extra-organizational levels (See illustration Model of Occupational Stress)

Individual Level Stressors

These relate directly to a person's personality and job responsibilities. Experts estimate that more than 10 million workers have computer-related vision problems each year that require a trip to an optometrist. Forty per cent of these people use special glasses while working with Video display terminals.

A survey by Industry lobby 'Associated Chamber of Industries in India' 2012 showed that due to demanding schedules and high stress levels, nearly 78 per cent of corporate employees in India sleep less than six hours a day, leading to severe sleep disorders.

It is not that all jobs are stressful. The real issue is the one of square pegs being disparately fitted into round holes. Individuals are made up differently. Some need the adrenalin rush that comes with jobs where uncertainty and pressure cooker environment come with the territory. These people would be seriously underwhelmed if they found themselves in assembly line work which does not give them control. Others enjoy steady single tracked jobs in which they can work within their comfort zone. When these two cross currents get mixed up, it can derail lives of people.

Some individuals are so sensitive that anything in the work environment that is going to frustrate their motivation to work will land them up in stress. Quite a few are sandwiched between taking care of elderly parents while also raising children. The most common individual level stressors are type of personality, role overload, task, personal, role conflict and role ambiguity.

Personality Type: In respect of personality, two concepts: Type A personality are relevant in this context.

The Type A personality is stress-prone as it is associated with the following behavioral patterns:
- Always moves, walks and eats rapidly.
- Feels impatient with the pace of things, hurries others, dislikes waiting
- Does several things simultaneously.
- Feels guilty when relaxing.
- Tries to schedule more and more in less and less time. Uses nervous gestures such as clenched fist, banging the hand on the table.
- Does not have time to enjoy life.

The achievement orientation, impatience and perfectionism of individuals with Type A personalities may create stress in work circumstances that other persons find relatively stress free. Type A personalities, in this sense, bring stress on themselves.

The Type B personality, on the other hand, is less stress prone. Following are the typical characteristics of Type B personality:
- Is not concerned about time.
- is patient.

- Does not brag
- Play to fun, not to win.
- Relaxes without feeling guilty.
- Have no pressing deadlines.
- Is mild-mannered.
- Is never in a hurry.

Role overload: Too much of work causes stress to an employee. The story of Reddy, stated in the opening case, is illustrative of work overload causing stress. Excess workload has become the norm these days as more and more organizations have reduced their workforce and restructured work, leaving the remaining employees with more tasks and fewer resources of time to complete them.

Role conflict: Role conflict occurs where people face competing demands. There are two types of role conflict in organizations; inter-role and personal. Inter-role conflict occurs when an employee has two roles that are in conflict with each other. Inter-role conflict is common in matrix organizations where subordinates will be shared by matrix bosses. Personal conflict occurs when personal values clash with organizational goals. For example, offering bribe to corner an order may help the organisation. But such practice will conflict with the ethical value of the executive as an individual.

Role ambiguity exists when employees are uncertain about their responsibilities, functions, performance expectations and levels of authority. This tends to occur when people enter new situations, such as joining the organisation or taking foreign assignment, because they are uncertain about tasks and social expectations.

Task characteristics are also individual level stressors. Tasks are more stressful when they involve decision making, monitoring equipment, or exchanging information with others. Traffic is major is a major stressor for salespeople and bus drivers. As traffic intensity increases in future, so will stress levels.

Fuzzy job expectations, deadline pressures, noisy work exposures, frayed marriages, deteriorating health and the like take a heavy toll. What is revealing is the stress proneness of smart phones. While use of phones before bed may seem like s form of keeping up, it may in fact be disturbing sleep and leading to disengagement and stress at work the next day.

Personal Issues: Spoiled relationship, marital problems, low self-esteem and anxiety are personal stressors. Anxiety arises out of worries about children, home management, and expectations of parents and spouse. Low self-esteem is common with small-town employees moving to big cities and urban workplaces. Long hours of work, lack of children support and travel leading to poor work-life balance are marital problems. Indians in general are high in intelligence and low in emotional intelligence. They do not communicate effectively, have problems in interpersonal relationships and are not emotionally stable. Small problems can cause havoc.

A study by Nielson, a research firm, reveals that Indian women are the most stressed in the world. 87 per cent of women respondents opine that they are stressed and pressured for time 82 per cent say they do not have time to relax, and 64 per cent feel stressed or overworked most of the time.

As we go into the future, a 24-hour work model will bring new challenges. Increasing number of professionals will be required to work during night shifts. Adjustment of the body clock to the new routine, health risks and stress related hazards will be serious issues the

OB experts need to face in the coming years. Night shifts result in gastrointestinal disorders and abnormal heart rhythms. There can be chronic gynecological problems for women (women will also be required to work over nights in such industries as call centers). Mental symptoms can be so severe that a stressed night shift worker can almost be unmanageable. The night shift worker will be more vulnerable to stress because of sleeping patterns, emotional problems and family commitments while juggling a varying work timetable, sometimes with little social support.

Group Level Stressors

Group level stressors are caused by group dynamics and managerial behaviour. Managers create stress for employees by: (i) exhibiting inconsistent behaviour, (i) failing to provide support,(ii) showing lack of concern, (iv) providing inadequate direction, (v) creating a high productivity environment, and (vi) focusing on negatives while ignoring good performance.

In addition, managerial style causes stress in employees. Broadly, a manager may be authoritarian or participative. Authoritarian manager expects employees to fall in line, follow the orders, and entertain no disagreement. Opposite is the essence of participative style. Obviously, authoritarian management promotes stress-prone environment. Sexual harassment is yet another group level stressor. Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that affects the job-related performance of an employee adversely. One example of sexual harassment is the male supervisor threatening to fire a female employee if she fails to accept his sexual advances.

Another serious interpersonal stressor is the rising wave of physical violence and aggression in the workplace. It is estimated that more than 1,000 employees are murdered at work each year in the US. Workplace violence includes assaults, rape and threats using a weapon.

Cohesiveness is a major source of stress free environment. Cracks will result in things falling apart and creating stress-prone environment.

Intra-group conflict arises because of disputes among group members resulting in decreased performance. Decreased performance triggers off series of dysfunctional consequences, stress being are of them.

Status refers to social ranking given to an individual because of the position he or she Occupies in a group. Status in congruency arises when there is disagreement among members of the group about an individual's status. He or she is exposed to stress, when disagreement affects pay and perks.

Organizational Stressors

Organizational stressors affect large number of employees. Organizational climate is a prime

Example: A high pressure environment that places chronic work demands on employees fuels the stress response. Poor lighting, loud noise, improper placement of furniture and a dirty and smelly environment create stress.

Global competition, downsizing, and the constant state of being electronically tethered to the office are adding to the stress.

Organizational structure defines the level of differentiation, the degree of rules and regulations, and where decisions are made. Excessive rules and lack of participation in decision that affect an employee are examples of structural variables that might be potential stressors.

Organizational life cycle: Organizations' like human beings pass through a life cycle. The life cycle of an organisation comprises eight stages- (i) birth, (ii) growth, (iii) policy, (iv) procedure, (v) theory, (vi) religion, (vi) ritual, and (vi) last rites. In this cycle, the organisation is born and then has its growth. Policies are developed to guide decisions and these are carried out through procedures. These procedures are refined and made more efficient with theories about efficiency. In time, organisation may develop characteristics of a religion, it may worship the way it does things. Performance is by ritual, things are done by habit without questioning. The death and last rites of the organisation will ordinarily follow. Each stage of the life cycle poses its own challenges and problems. While the early stages are exciting, the latter ones create anxiety and tension.

A Successful Manager coping with stress

10 Ways of Coping with Executive Stress

1. Practice meditation and relaxation.
2. Taking time to manage it.
3. Social support helps resist adverse effects of stress.
4. Get a good night's sleep.
5. Take a time-out.
6. Control the situation.
7. Pace the day on a flexible basis.
8. Open up to others. Free and frank talk minimizes the stress impact.
9. Relaxing avoiding distracting thoughts, sitting in an isolated location, comfortable breaths and repeating a peaceful word
10. Cognitive restructuring- replacing irrational or maladaptive thoughts with rational ones.

Extra-organizational stressors

Extra-organizational stressors are caused by factors outside the organisation. For instance, conflicts associated with one's career and family life is stressful. Home life certainly impacts one's attitudes and performance at work. Death of a spouse, injury to one's child, war, failure in school or at work, an unplanned pregnancy and similar other life events can be stressful. Socio-economic status represents a combination of: (i) economic status as measured by income, (i) social status assessed by educational level, and (ii) work status as indexed by occupation. These stressors are likely to become more important in the future.

Daily Hassles

There is yet another category of stressors. Standing in a long line at an ATM and getting stuck in a traffic jam, (typically called daily hassles or background stressors) are but only two examples of daily hassles. These are the minor irritations of life that we all face time and again: delays, noisy cars and trucks, other people's irritating behaviour, and the like. By themselves, these background stressors do not warrant much coping or even a response from an individual, although they do produce unpleasant moods. But they have the potential to add up to a more stressful incident, if the daily hassles are allowed to add up and persist. (See illustration) carries hassles and uplifts, minor positive events that make one feel good - even if temporarily.
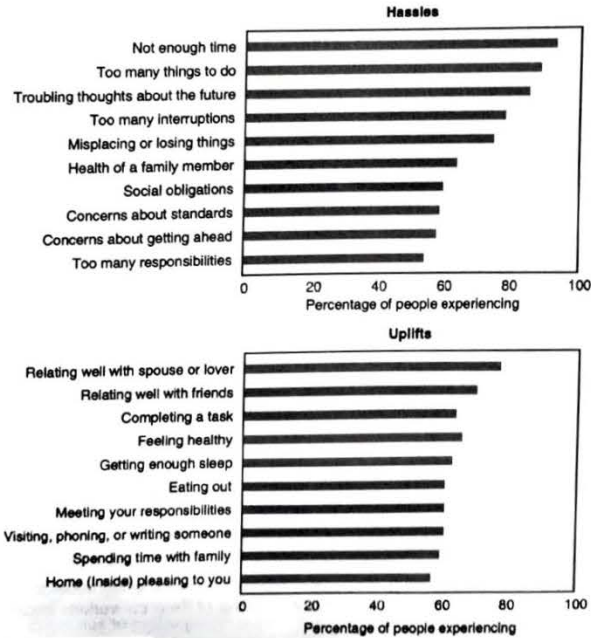
Everyday Hassles & Uplifts

Outcomes

Behavioral scientists are of the opinion that stress has behavioral, cognitive and physiological outcomes. Research is now in progress to correlate stress with work-related behavíour and cognitive outcomes. These studies indicate that stress is negatively related to job satisfaction. And, Organizational commitment and performance and positively related to turnover. Negative outcomes of stress can be elaborated as follows:

Physical Problems: A high level of stress has been associated with a host of physical disorders such as heart disease, arthritis, ulcer, high blood pressure and high levels of cholesterol. It is also pointed out that stress can cause cancer.

Health-related impact of stress is said to extend to the children of workers experiencing stressful conditions over long periods of time. Particularly, men experiencing stress on their jobs take it to their families thereby victimizing their children (see Illustration) makes it clear that health-related impact of stress is serious and widespread including even psychological consequences.

TABLE
HEALTH-RELATED CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

Medical Consequences	Behavioural Consequences	Psychological Consequences
Heart disease and stroke	Smoking	Family conflicts
Backache and arthritis	Drug and alcohol abuse	Sleep disturbances
Ulcers	Accident proneness	Sexual dysfunction
Headaches	Violence	Depression
Cancer	Appetite disorders	
Diabetes		
Lung disease		
Cirrhosis of the liver		

Stress and Task Performance: As stated above, stress affects performance adversely. This is not enough of a statement. Elaborating further, it may be stated that even low levels of stress disrupts production. Higher thee levels of stress, greater will be work disruption Stress is derailing productivity. Stressed workers are less engaged, exhibit higher absenteeism are generally less productive

Stress and Workplace Aggression also called desk rage; aggression refers to lashing out on others in response to stressful encounters on the jobs. Desk rage occurs due to perception of injustice meted out at work place.

Stress & Alcoholism Alcohol and drug abuse are related to high levels of stress. In addition to threatening their own well being employees who attend work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs pose a serious threat to the well being of their co-workers because of more proneness to on the job accidents.

Absenteeism and Turnover Stresses employees exhibit more withdrawal symptoms like absenteeism, and turnover than non stressed workers.

Stress and Burnout burn out is another consequence of stress.

Burn out

Burnout is a troublesome outcome of stress. It is desirable to examine burnout in detail. Burnout is a state of mind resulting from prolonged exposure to intense emotional stress. It Manifests through emotional exhaustion and a combination of negative attitudes.(See attitudinal characteristics of burnout). Shows the distinction between stress and burnout.

| ATTITUDINAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BURNOUT	
Attitude	Description
Fatalism	A feeling that you lack control over your work.
Boredom	A lack of interest in doing your job.
Discontent	A sense of being unhappy with your job.
Cynicism	A tendency to undervalue the content of your job and the rewards received.
Inadequacy	A feeling of not being able to meet your objectives.
Failure	A tendency to discredit your performance and conclude that you are ineffective.
Overwork	A feeling of having too much to do and not enough time to complete it.
Nastiness	A tendency to be rude or unpleasant to your co-workers.
Dissatisfaction	A feeling that you are not being justly rewarded for your efforts.
Escape	A desire to give up and get away from it all.

Attitudinal Characteristics of Burnout

STRESS VS. BURNOUT	
Stress	Burnout
The person feels fatigued	The individual encounters chronic exhaustion.
The person is anxious	The individual is hypertensive.
The person is dissatisfied with his or her job	The individual is bored and cynical about the work.
The person's job commitment has dropped off	The individual's job commitment is virtually nil; he or she is mentally detached from the organisation.
The person feels moody	The individual feels impatient, irritable and unwilling to talk to others.
The person feels guilty	The individual encounters mental depression.
The person is having difficulty concentrating; he or she he or she tends to forget things	The individual does not seem to know where is; forgetfulness is becoming more and more frequent.
The person undergoes physiological changes	The individual begins to voice psychosomatic complaints such as increased blood pressure and heart beat.

Stress Vs Burnout

Burnout occurs due to prolonged exposure to stress and that too in phases as shown in (See illustration – A Model of Burnout). The three key phases of burnout are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feeling a lack of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion, as (See illustration – A Model of Burnout), is due to a combination of personal, job and organizational stressors. People who expect a lot from themselves and the organizations in

which they work tend to create more internal stress, which, in turn, leads to emotional exhaustion. Similarly, emotional exhaustion is fuelled by having too much work to do, by role conflict and by the type of interpersonal interactions encountered at work. Frequent, intense face-to-face interactions that are emotionally charged are associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion.

Over time, emotional exhaustion leads to depersonalization, which is the state of psychologically withdrawing from one's job. This finally results in a feeling of being unappreciated, ineffective or inadequate. The additive effect of these three phases is a host of negative attitudinal and behavioral outcomes.
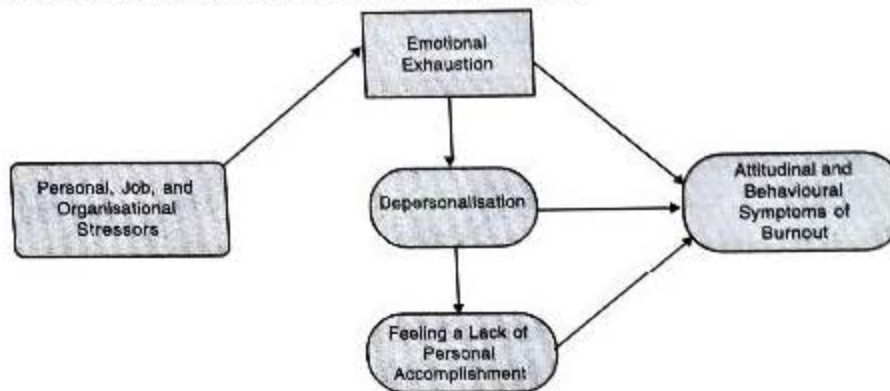
Model of Burnout

Stress Management

Stress reduction strategies may be categorized into: (a) individual strategies, and (b) organizational strategies.

Individual Strategies

First step in managing stress is to understand that the individual is exposed to stressors. We cannot manage stress unless we know what causes stress and how these causes are affecting us psychologically, physiologically and organizationally. (See sign of stress) contains series of stressors. If the employee has any of these signs of stress, he or she needs to adopt coping strategies immediately. Individual strategies to cope with stress

Physical Signs	Emotional Signs	Mental Signs	Relational Signs	Spiritual Signs	Behavioural Signs
Appetite changes	Bad temper	Lacking humour	Isolation	A feeling of emptiness	Pacing
Headaches	Anxiety	Dull senses	Defensive	Apathy	Swearing
Fatigue	Nightmares	Lethargy	Intolerance	Inability to forgive	Substance abuse
Insomnia	Irritability	Boredom	Resentment	Cynicism	Nail biting
Indigestion	Depression	Indecisiveness	Loneliness	Loss of direction	Slumped posture
Colds	Frustration	Forgetfulness	Nagging	Doubt	Restlessness
Weight change	Oversensitivity	Poor concentration	Lower sex drive	Need to prove self	Risk aversion
Teeth grinding	Mood swings	Personality changes	Aggression	Negative outlook	Eating disorders
Tension	Fearfulness	Stuck in past	Abuse	Gloom	Headaches

Signs of Stress

include muscle relaxation, biofeedback, meditation, cognitive restructuring, time management, physical fitness, sleep and laughter.

Muscle Relaxation: This involves slow and deep breathing, a conscious effort to relieve muscle tension and an altered state of consciousness. The technique is inexpensive, may require a trained professional to implement initially.

Biofeedback: A biofeedback machine is used to train people to detect and control stress related symptoms such as tense muscles and related blood pressure. The machine translates unconscious bodily signs into a recognizable cue (flashing light or beeper). Muscle relaxation and meditative techniques are then used to alleviate the underlying stress.

Meditation: Several meditation techniques are used with results being positive and majority of them are derivatives of Eastern philosophies. Included in this category is Zen Meditation or Sumran. Perhaps, the most widely practiced technique everywhere is the transcendental meditation (TM) of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. TM practiced 20 minutes twice daily helps reduce stress significantly.
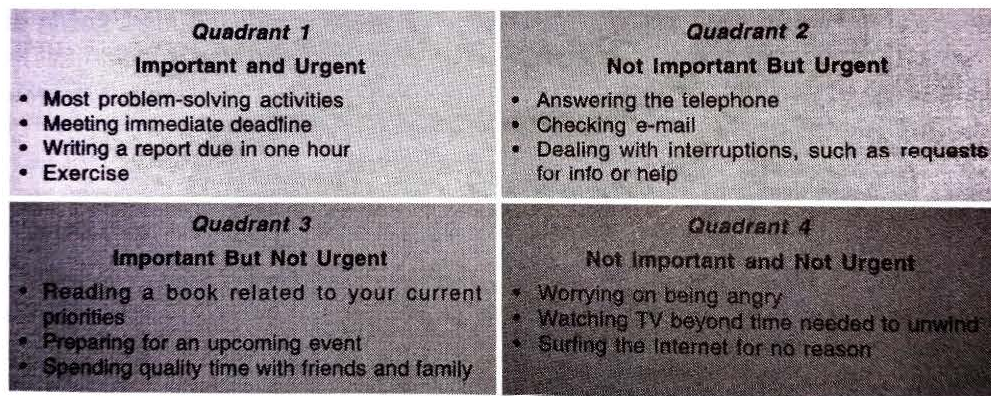
Cognitive Restructuring: Cognitive restructuring involves two steps. First, irrational or maladaptive thought processes that create stress are identified. One such thought is entertaining a premonition that something evil is going to befall on you. The second step consists of replacing these irrational thoughts with more rational ones. The fear of evil befalling can be overcome by reasoning and rationalizing events and their consequences. Cognitive restructuring would alleviate stress by encouraging a person to adopt a more reasonable belief about the outcomes associated with events

Time Management: Most of us are poor in time management. The result is feeling of work overload, skipped schedules and attendant tension. The truth is, if one can manage time effectively, he or she can accomplish twice as much as the person who is poorly organized.

Some basic principles in time management are: (i) preparing daily a list of activities to be attended to; (ii) prioritizing activities by importance and urgency; (iii) scheduling activities according to the priorities set; and (iv) handling the most demanding parts of a job when one is alert and productive.

Physical Fitness: Regular exercise coupled with intake of healthy food helps relieve oneself from stress. Keeping this in mind, growing number of organizations ensure that their employees maintain proper weight by eating properly and exercising regularly. Monetary incentives for doing so are not uncommon.

Sound Sleep: The simplest way of managing stress is sound sleep every night. But that itself is a luxury for many, particularly techies. As stated above, techies are known to sleep only 3 to 4 hours a day. Some sleep 8 hours a day, though 5 to 6 hours of sound sleep is enough adequate.

Laughter/Yoga This is one therapy which does not cost anything to you no fee, no body bending and leg twisting, no running and no holding breaths. All you have to do is to laugh as much and as loudly as you like and can. Practiced regularly, laughter gets unexpected benefits. It throws out stale air from lungs, and fills stress buffer them with oxygen. More important, laughter acts as Happiness which laughter brings adds to better quality of life.

Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2
Important and Urgent	**Not Important But Urgent**
• Most problem-solving activities • Meeting immediate deadline • Writing a report due in one hour • Exercise	• Answering the telephone • Checking e-mail • Dealing with interruptions, such as requests for info or help
Quadrant 3	**Quadrant 4**
Important But Not Urgent	**Not Important and Not Urgent**
• Reading a book related to your current priorities • Preparing for an upcoming event • Spending quality time with friends and family	• Worrying on being angry • Watching TV beyond time needed to unwind • Surfing the Internet for no reason

Time Management Matrix

Laughter clubs are sprouting in Bangalore. There are clubs exclusively for women, the are other which are open to both. When you take a stroll in the morning, you can observe group of elderly people circling around, clapping, making unusual sounds besides Membership is free laughing Participants claim positive benefits from those yoga centers.

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Organizational Strategies

Besides individuals practicing coping strategies, organizations too have been developing

and implementing stress-reduction strategies. Some of these programmes focus on a specific issue or a problem, such as alcohol or drug abuse, career counselling, job allocation or burnout. Still other programmes may target a specific group within the organisation, as for example-training in relaxation skills.

Organizational coping strategies help reduce the harmful effects of stress in three ways: (1) identify and then modify or eliminate work stressors, (ii) help employees modify their perception and understanding of work stress, and (ii) help employees cope more effectively with the consequences of stress.

The popular distressing strategies include (See Organizational coping strategies)

- Limited and flexible work
- Job sharing
- Telecommuting
- Employee assistance programmes
- Wellness programmes
- Social support system
- Job redesigning
- Selection and placement

Redesigning Jobs Higher job demands and absence of worker control make a job stressful. A major concern in job redesign is to enhance worker control. Increased worker control reduces job stress and enhances productivity.

Job redesigning can be carried out in more than one way. First is to shift workers from individuals to team - based roles, in which they have greater control on their jobs. Second is telecommute jobs in which employees perform part of their works at home.

Organizational Coping Strategy

Social Support System Social support is a highly effective organizational strategy to with the cope stress. Social support refers to friendship, marriage, cultural norms, or membership of an organisation. Given social support, an individual's capacity to resist stress enhances. These and other initiatives help in the following ways: Support can enhance health directly by providing a setting in which needs for affection, approval, social interaction, and security are met.

- Support can act as a buffer between the person and health hazards. As the level of social support increases, health risks decline for individuals exposed to stressful conditions.
- Support facilitates information sharing with others. One can learn from others the possible ways of stress reduction.
- Support facilitates resources-giving. Time spent with others can result in their offering to help by giving money, advice or other resources needed to minimize stress.

Job Sharing Gaining in popularity, job sharing involves two or more employees assume duties of a single job, splitting its responsibilities, salary and benefits. Sharing of benefits is done on the basis of time spent on the job.

Job sharing has benefits. First, stress stemming from overwork is minimized. Second. Organisation gets the benefit of drawing on the talents of more than one individual. Third, two employees working on a single job can be less expensive than one full-time employee. There are drawbacks nevertheless. First, responsibilities divided means accountability is split too and hence is buck-passing game. Second, it may be difficult to identify compatible pair of employees who can successfully coordinate the intricacies of one single job. Third, fringe benefits, otherwise available to a full-time worker, are lost for employees who share the job. Job sharing is more appropriate in professional positions like banking and insurance.

Telecommuting also called teleworking; telecommuting involves working from home or a site close to home rather than commuting a longer distance to the office every day. Teleporting frees an employee from commuting long distance. This is a great relief for employees working in Bangalore which is known for traffic snarls and jams. An employee welcomes the freedom of telecommuting offers in forms of flexible hours, informality of dress, in between working for home and being free from routine office environment. There is also worker flexibility in which an employee is trained in several jobs and can be deployed as circumstances demand. Flexible work offers an exciting and varied work experience to an

employee. India has the highest number of telecommuters. More than 50 per cent of the people work from home either totally or partially.

Limited Work This involves limiting the number of hours that employees are expected to work and giving them flexibility in scheduling those hours. This work and life better. arrangement enables balance.

Employee Selection and Training. This is the starting point in coping with stress. Management can avoid hiring stress-prone individuals and those with thigh external locus of control. Similarly, training can increase an individual's self-efficiency and thus lesson stress.

Employee Assistance Programmes Originally conceived as alcohol abuse programmes, most current employee assistance programmes (EAPs) are designed to deal with a wide range of stress-related problems both work and non-work related. EAPs tend to be based on the typical medical approach to treatment and involve the following-

- Diagnosis: Employees with a problem ask for help. EAP staff attempt to diagnose the problem.
- Treatment: Counseling or supportive therapy is provided. If in-house EAP staff is unable to help, employee may be referred to appropriate professionals.
- Screening: Periodic examination of employees in highly stressful jobs is provided to detect early indicators of problems.
- Prevention: Education and persuasion are used to convince employees at high risk that something must be done to assist them in effectively coping with stress.

EAPs may be internal company-run programmes or outsourced. Irrespective of the arrangement, crucial to the success of any EAP is trust. Employees must trust that: (1) the programme can and will provide real help, (2) confidentiality will be maintained, and (3) use of the programme carries no negative implications for job security or future advancement. If employees do not trust the programme or company management, they will not participate.

Hindustan Unilever has unique programme, called Vitality Index'. This measures an employee's four health parameters- body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood Sugar level, and converts readings into a score. HUL conducts this on an annual basis, the idea being to keep employees aware of their health. HCL has an EAP that helps its employees in the online and telephone modes. Recently, the IT major added the people mode too, and made it available to employees and their immediate families. The company maintains 12 external counselors who visit HCL locations on a scheduled basis. BPCL has had an 'employee satisfaction enhancement department' for 13 years. Its brief was to address professional problems. It has now expanded it to personal issues too.

Wellness Programmes Wellness programmes, often called Health Promotion Programmes, focus on employee's overall physical and mental health. Simply stated, any activity an organisation engages in that is designed to identify and assist in preventing or correcting specific health problems, health hazards, or negative health habits falls under wellness programmes. This includes not only disease identification but lifestyle modification too. Among the most prevalent examples of such programmes are those emphasizing hypertension identification and control, smoking cessation, physical fitness and exercise, nutrition and diet control and work and personal stress management.

Stress & Performance

As stated earlier, stress is negatively related to performance. In other words, higher the stress, lower the performance. Earlier, it was believed that moderate levels of stress would energize employees and enhance their performance. But this belief is not held to be true now. The assumption valid now is that performance will be disrupted even by relatively low levels of stress. There are valid reasons in support of this assumption. First, even relatively mild stress distracts an employee. Individuals experiencing stress tend to focus on the unpleasant feelings and emotions rather than on the task at hand and as a result, their performance suffers. Second, prolonged or repeated exposure even to mild levels of stress may have harmful effects on health and this may interfere with effective performance. Finally, it is said that as arousal increases, task performance may at first rise, but at some point begins to fall. The precise location of this inflection point (the point at which the direction of the function reverses) seems to depend on the complexity of the task being performed. The greater the complexity, the lower the levels of arousal at which a downturn in performance occurs.
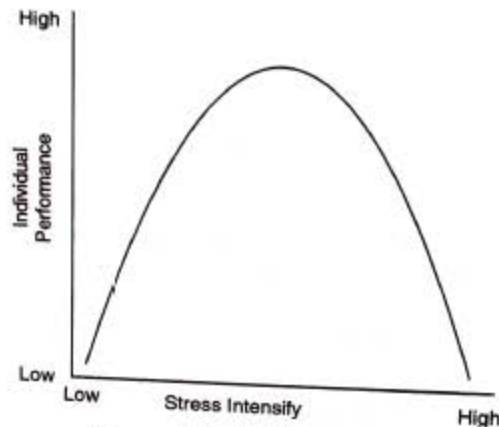
Stress & Performance

There are exceptions to the general rule that stress interferes with performance. Some individuals, for example, are at their best in times of crises. They rise to the occasion and turn in exceptional performance at times of high stress. This may result from the fact that they are truly experts in the tasks being performed, making their inflection points very high. People who are exceptionally skilled at a task may cognitively appraise a potentially stressful situation as a challenge rather than a threat. And, as we noted earlier, by not cognitively appraising a situation as a threat, stress reactions are unlikely to occur. Thus, whether stress can disrupt or enhance performance depends on several different factors (e.g., complexity of the task being performed, personal characteristics of the individuals involved and their previous experience with the task.

Key Terms
1. **Work Stress:** Stress refers to response to the events that threaten or challenge a person. Work stress refers to the harmful physical and emotional responses that people experience on their jobs. The events that threaten or challenge a person are called stressors.
2. **Burnout:** A syndrome of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion coupled with feelings of low self-esteem or low self-efficacy, resulting from prolonged exposure to stress.

3. **Cognitive Restructuring:** The process of irrational and negative thought process with rational and positive thought processes. Cognitive restructuring helps alleviate stress by rationalizing events and their consequences.
4. **Wellness Programmes:** Programmes that help employees with various problems they may face in their personal lives. At times, such programmes supplement or take the place of similar programmes sponsored by trade unions. In such cases, they are known as member assistance programmes.
5. **Employee Assistance Programmes:** Systematic efforts to train employees in a variety of things they can do to promote healthy lifestyle. Usually, the programmes include workshops in which employees can learn many things to reduce stress and maintain their health.
6. **Desk Rage:** Desk rage refers to lashing out at others in response to stressful encounters on the job.