

Learn How to Live Stress-Free!

The do's and don'ts to avoid stress

Carole Spiers



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Carole Spiers MIHPE, FISMA

Learn How to Live Stress-Free!

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Learn How to Live Stress-Free! The do's and don'ts to avoid stress

1st edition

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Contents

Introduction	8
Stress Management: An Intelligent Personal and Professional Investment	10
Step One	12
How Stressed Are You?	12
Frequent Misconceptions	13
Definition of Stress	16
The Mechanics of Stress	17
Physical, Emotional and Behavioural Effects of Stress	21
What causes you stress at home and at work?	23
Step Two	24
The Individual Nature of Stress	24
The Relevance of Stress to Behaviour Types	26

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Levels of Stress in Changes in Lifestyle	31
Holmes-Rahe Life Changes Scale (1967)	32
Stress Inducing Situations	33
Step Three	34
Recognition and Management of Stress in your Team	34
Causes of Work-Related Stress in Your Organisation	38
Effects of Employee Stress on the Organisation	39
Preventing and Managing Stress in the Team	39
The Relationship Between Work and Home-Related Stress	40
Working With an Individual to Identify the Problem	42
Is the Problem Stress?	43
Self-Reported Stress	45
Stress-Related Absence Management	46
'Return-to-Work' Interviews	47
Conduct a Return to Work Interview	48
Conduct an Appraisal Interview	48
Improve Your Management Style	49
Organisational Stress Management Initiatives	50



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Step Four	52
Positive Action Against Stress – Building Resilience for Busy Executives	52
How to Deal With Your Personal Stress	54
Modification of Behaviour	55
Be More Assertive	55
Improve Your Time Management	58
Keep a Stress Diary	61
Manage Type-A Behaviour in Others	64
Indulge in Humour and Laughter	66
Take ‘Time Out’	67
Travel With Less Stress	67
Utilising External Help	69
Development of a Healthy Lifestyle	70
A Healthy Diet	72
Regular Exercise	74
Stretch and Do Useful Exercises at Work	77
Relaxation	79



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Relax Quickly – Everyday!	84
Get Uninterrupted and Sufficient Sleep	85
Increasing Leisure Time and Taking Up Hobbies	85
Modifying Our Perspective	87
Positive Thinking & Self Talk	87
Quick Fixes	89
Coping With Stressful Situations	90
 Carole Spiers' Personal Top 12 Tips For Busy Executives	
To Bounce Back From Pressure	91
Home Stress Management Contract	92
Work Stress Management Contract	93
 Carole's Executive Summary	94
 Personal Action Plan	97
 Recommended Reading	98
 The Author	102
 Stress Management Training, Workplace Counselling and Consultancy Delivering Quality Service to Industry and Commerce	105
 Continue Where This Toolkit Leaves Off!	108

Introduction



In the high pressure 24/7 working environment that is today's business culture, time is quite literally 'of the essence'. Managers need to value and recognise all members of their team in order to obtain the optimum output from each person and utilise everyone's abilities to the full. They also need to recognise the importance of 'pressure proofing' themselves and their staff, and acquire the necessary skills to do so.

This book is designed to enable you to gain an overview of all the vital components of effective pressure management and give you the tools to manage workplace stress more effectively. Learning how to pressure-proof your organisation and develop the personal resilience of key executives can put your organisation ahead of your competitors. Improved performance, increased profitability and a resilient workforce are the natural outcomes of this programme, enabling your organisation to meet new challenges with confidence

Key Outcomes

This book is focused on giving readers an overview of stress, its causes and effects, together with a range of strategies for managing stress in both self and others. It will enable the senior teams to appreciate how easily excessive pressure can turn to stress and how stress can make individuals and teams less effective.

At the end of the book, readers will be able to:

- **Calculate the true cost of workplace stress**
Absence, disruption, general under-performance – see how it all adds up
- **Identify where it starts – workplace pressures**
The many forms of pressure that develop into stressor-elements
- **Recognise stress-related signs and symptoms**
Familiar signs and signals that indicate an over-pressed employee
- **Implement proactive and preventive strategies**
Communicating in the team; being assertive; listening and influencing; learning to say ‘no’; developing a resilient mental attitude



Carole Spiers MIHPE, FISMA

World Authority on Corporate Stress

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Stress Management: An Intelligent Personal and Professional Investment

This workbook will give you instant access to strategies and tools for you to include within your management portfolio of skills.

How To.



I have also included many '**HOW TO...**' tools and these are there to give you instant access to solutions for a specific task or job.

The aim of this module is fourfold:

To:

1. Raise awareness of your individual stress levels and give you the necessary tools to managing them more effectively.
2. Enable you to recognise stress in others and help reduce it.
3. Identify causes and effects of stress.
4. Remind you of some management style issues and skills which, if used regularly, will help reduce stress levels in those working for you and indeed in yourself.

Some of the ideas are obvious and well known while others may be new. What is obvious to one person is not necessarily obvious to another. Additionally, because we are aware of a skill or technique doesn't necessarily mean we utilise it in our lives.

Some workplace pressure is a natural and often positive part of life, motivating us to achieve better and more effective performance. But when it becomes excessive, it can become stress and be destructive, resulting in a spiral of unpleasant feelings and behaviours. We can end up performing well below our abilities, often feeling unable to cope at all and sometimes staying off work. Our relationships are often also seriously affected, both at work and in our private lives. Our own stresses can reduce our ability to manage staff effectively, and we may indulge in habits of management that could be improved.

Through this programme and accompanying workbook, you will learn the practical tools and techniques you need to manage pressure more effectively, and so become a better manager, colleague and family member.

I wish you every success!



Carole Spiers

World Authority on Executive Stress

Carole Spiers Group

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Step One

Exercise 1

How Stressed Are You?

This simple questionnaire will give you an overview of your present stress level. Score each question with 3 for 'always', 2 for 'sometimes' and 1 for 'never'.

- I underestimate how long it takes to do things
- I tend to be late for appointments
- I nod or interrupt when people speak slowly
- Queuing makes me angry and irritated
- I often take on more than one job at a time
- I skip meals, eat rapidly or on the run
- My life seems to control me, rather than me controlling my life
- I walk briskly rather than stroll
- I know I drive faster than I should
- Trivial things easily irritate me
- I find fault and criticise others rather than praising them
- However tired I am, my mind is always busy and I lie awake at night worrying.
- I will do a job myself to ensure it is done properly
- I find it hard to make important decisions
- I avoid social occasions
- I deny or ignore problems in the hope that they will go away
- If something or someone really annoys me I tend to bottle it up
- When I play sport or games I really try to win
- I strive for perfection
- I avoid keeping count of all the major problems I have

Total See page 32 for scoring

Exercise 2

Personal Stress Awareness

I believe stress is:

When I experience stress I feel:

Frequent Misconceptions

There are many myths and misconceptions about stress, and people may possibly cause significant damage to themselves by basing their lives on these inaccuracies. Three of the most commonly quoted include the following.

'Stress Is Good For You'

It is often mistakenly thought that stress is good for people, when in fact long-term stress is invariably harmful. A certain amount of pressure can indeed motivate and can therefore be useful but stress is never so. A probable explanation of the myth that people perform well under stress is that in fact they perform well under pressure that is controlled, i.e. when that pressure is effectively managed.

Pressure is useful when our body and mind are finely tuned in a way that enables them to achieve optimum results and performance. A feeling of nervousness before giving a presentation will often result in increased mental acuity and responsiveness, which will stimulate the audience. The relevant factor in this context is pressure that is within our control. However, if one arrives late, inadequately prepared, and the laptop or projector fails to operate properly, then the presentation would indeed inevitably be stressful.

The word 'stress' itself is often applied incorrectly. Many people will use it when they have a temporary work overload, whereas in fact, stress only occurs when a person perceives (over a prolonged period) that they have insufficient personal resources to cope with a given situation.

We can think of stress as a light switch that our body turns on automatically under specific circumstances. The foundational basis of stress management is the need to learn how to turn the switch off. This is a learning curve that needs to be taught, as we have to train ourselves how to manage our body's natural response to perceptions of danger.

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'Suffering from Stress is a Sign of Weakness'

Many people think that if they admit to experiencing stress, it is a sign of failure, weakness or ineptitude. An individual working in an organisation where there are imminent redundancies, for example, may well seek to cover up any sign of stress in the belief that they may be regarded as unable to cope with their job and might therefore be regarded as expendable.



Employees can be wary of any mention of stress being attached to their work record in case it might prejudice their chances of promotion and so may not be inclined to discuss the problem with colleagues.

This is why it is so important that the workplace culture embraces the notion that to be stressed occasionally is a normal human condition and that to admit to it, initially to oneself, is the first step in modifying the situation or meeting the challenge.

'Stressors Affect Everybody Equally'

An employer or manager should appreciate that not all members of their team will react in the same way to any given problem. A stressful situation or task for one person may be perceived as pressure by someone else.

Managers and supervisors need to be aware of the symptoms of stress and have the skills and expertise to defuse or mitigate any issues before they become potentially serious or disruptive.

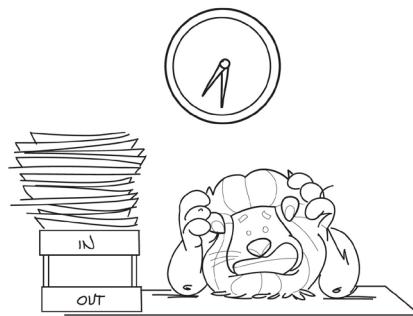
The facility to be able to talk over difficult situations can often help those employees who are under excessive pressure, and managers can often provide the first line of support in encouraging staff to take steps to combat the problem. This could be through an in-house referral, e.g. Human Resources and Occupational Health Departments; or to an external counselling service e.g. Employee Assistance Programme (industrial counselling service sponsored by the employer for the benefit of their employees) or another outside agency.

What Makes Events Stressful?

Negative events are more likely to be stressful than positive ones – although not exclusively so. Uncontrollable or unpredictable events are more stressful than those that are not, and ambiguous situations are often perceived as more stressful than those that are clear-cut.

Overworked people are invariably more stressed than those with fewer tasks to perform, and often have difficulty in balancing their home and work lives. They frequently cannot set their priorities correctly, and as a result, may only require something comparatively inconsequential to upset their emotional balance.

The key aim of everyone should be to endeavour to maintain an appropriate work-life balance, and that means – amongst other factors – making informed choices, setting priorities and employing effective time management techniques.



Definition of Stress

'Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excess pressures or other types of demands placed on them. It arises when they perceive that they are unable to cope with those demands.' (*UK Health and Safety Executive (2001)*)

Today, we are probably more likely to be 'threatened' by late or delayed aeroplanes, long hours, overwork, harassment, bullying or the thousand and one other causes of stress in our 21st Century workplace. However, the threats and prolonged pressures we face are often long-term rather than the instant ones that our forebears were likely to meet – and herein lies the difference

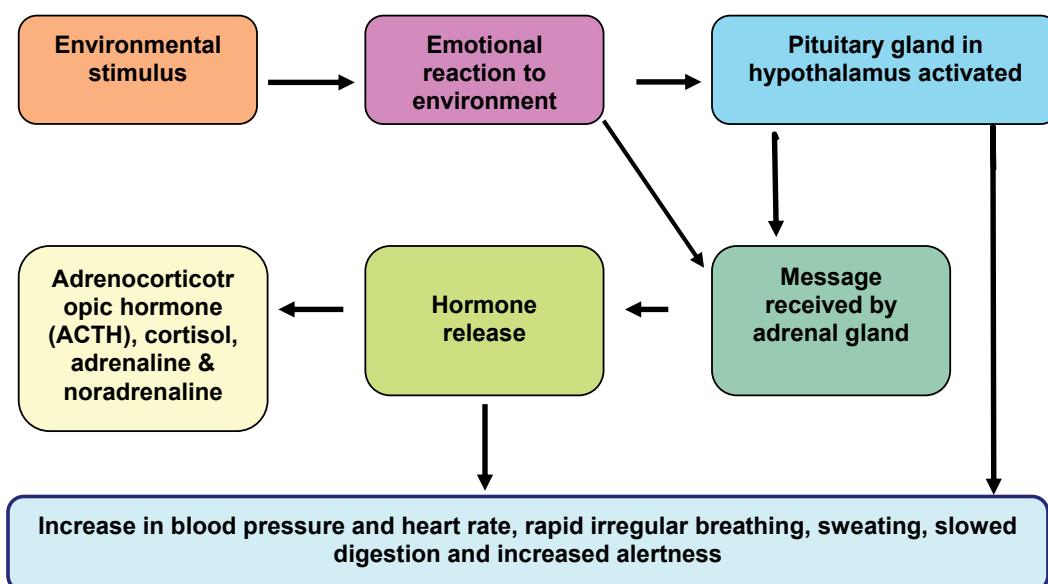


Fig. 1: Physiological Changes When Encountering Extreme Pressure

We can experience repeated stress responses throughout various periods of our working lives, to the extent that our bodies may be unable to recover, and this may eventually manifest itself as a stress-related illness.

We are often required to work against a background of corporate mergers, short-term contracts, downsizing and possible redundancy which can pose very real threats to our day-to-day lives. These developments can clearly increase the incidence of stress, while on a personal level, should we be unable to cope with our work, any prolonged stress may influence the development of a wide range of medical complaints and diseases.

Leaving aside the physiological reactions, what does the term 'stress' actually mean? Could it be that we have now found a 'label' that accurately describes one of the more significant side-effects inherent in 21st Century methods of working and living?

The Mechanics of Stress

The word 'stress' itself possibly derives from the Latin '*strictus*' meaning tight or narrow, or more likely from the Middle English '*stresse*' meaning hardship or distress.

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The originator of the biological concept of stress was the Nobel Prize winner Hans Selye (1907–82), a Canadian physician and medical educator born in Austria – and a pioneer in the field of stress research. Selye noted that a person who is subjected to prolonged stress goes through three phases: Alarm Reaction, Stage of Resistance and finally Exhaustion. He termed these responses the General Adaption Syndrome (GAS).

- *Alarm Reaction* is the fight or flight response when the body's resources are mobilised and includes the various neurological and physiological responses that occur when confronted with a stressor – i.e. anything that causes excessive pressure to an individual, whether it be from external sources, interpersonal relationships or internal tensions.
- *Resistance:* If we continue to experience stress, the body enters the second stage, during which it is more able to cope with the original stress but its resistance to any other stress is lowered. If the threat is brief, there are usually sufficient reserves available to adapt.
- *Exhaustion:* After prolonged resistance, energy reserves are depleted and breakdown occurs. We do not have the energy to continue with the adaptation to the stress and the body fails to return to normal. Depending on the individual and the stressor, continued stress can lead to 'burnout' (breakdown), serious disease, organ failure or even death.

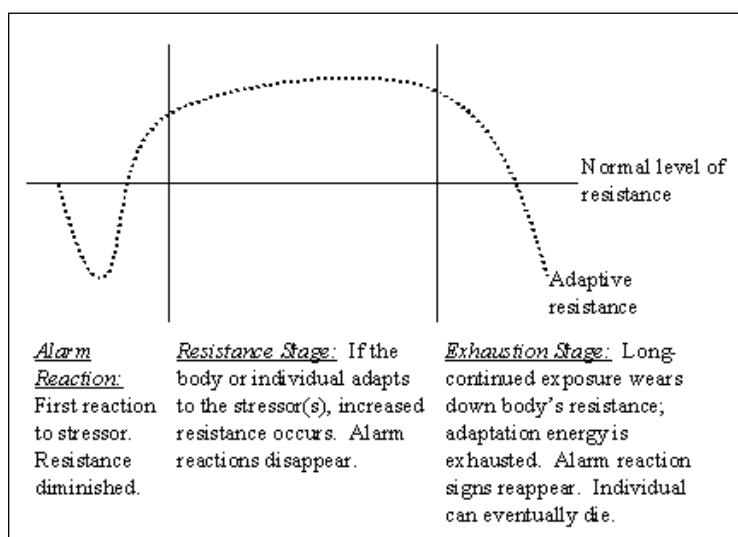
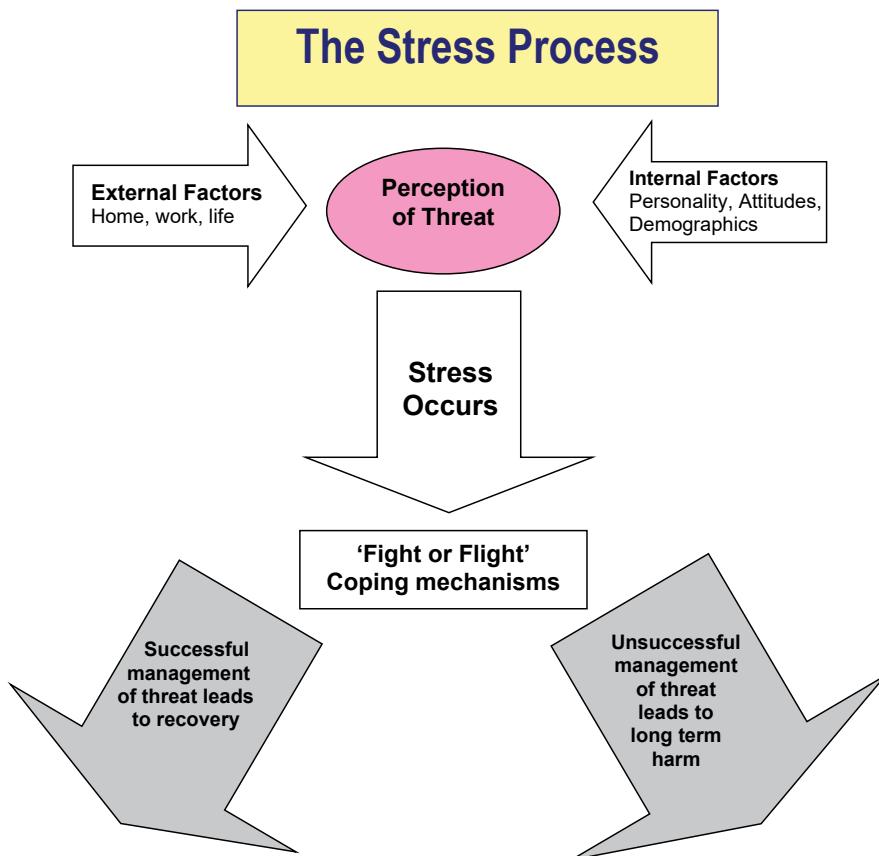


Fig. 2

What Causes Us Stress?

- ♦ Fundamentally it is the way that we think about a situation rather than the situation itself that causes stress.
- ♦ Problems occur when the pressure on an individual seems to be overwhelming or out of control. They will perceive themselves as not possessing the necessary skills to combat their stress and therefore feel unable to cope.

**Fig. 3****Exercise 3**

How do you react when experiencing stress?

Think of a stressful situation that has taken place in the past. How did it affect you?

Psychologically, physically and emotionally...

For example

Think back to the first time you had to give a presentation...how did you feel...how did your body react?

Situation

How did it affect you?



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Physical, Emotional and Behavioural Effects of Stress

Depending on the Individual, Stress Can Manifest Itself in Many Different Ways

Physical	Psychological	Behavioural
Palpitations, awareness of heart beating, chest pains	Mood swings	Susceptibility to accidents
Diarrhoea, constipation, flatulence	Panic attacks	Changes in eating habits
Indigestion	Morbid thoughts	Increased smoking
Loss of libido	Low self-esteem	Restlessness, hyperactivity, foot tapping
Muscle tension	Irritability	Over-dependence on caffeine
Menstrual problems	Feeling of helplessness	Changes in sleep patterns
Tiredness	Impatience	Out of character behaviour
Breathlessness	Anxiety	Voluntary withdrawal from supportive relationships
Sweating	Crying	Disregard for personal appearance
Tightness in the chest	Cynicism	Loss of confidence
Skin and scalp irritation, eczema and psoriasis	Withdrawal into daydreams	Sullen attitude
Increased susceptibility to allergies	Intrusive thoughts or images	Clenched fists
Frequent colds, flu or other infections	Nightmares	Obsessive mannerisms
Rapid weight gain or loss	Suicidal feelings	Increased absence from work
Backache, neck pain	Paranoid thinking	Aggressiveness
Migraines and tension headaches	Guilt	Poor time management

Fig. 4: Spiers, C., 'Tolley's Managing Stress in the Workplace' published by LexisNexis. 2003. ISBN 0 7545 1269

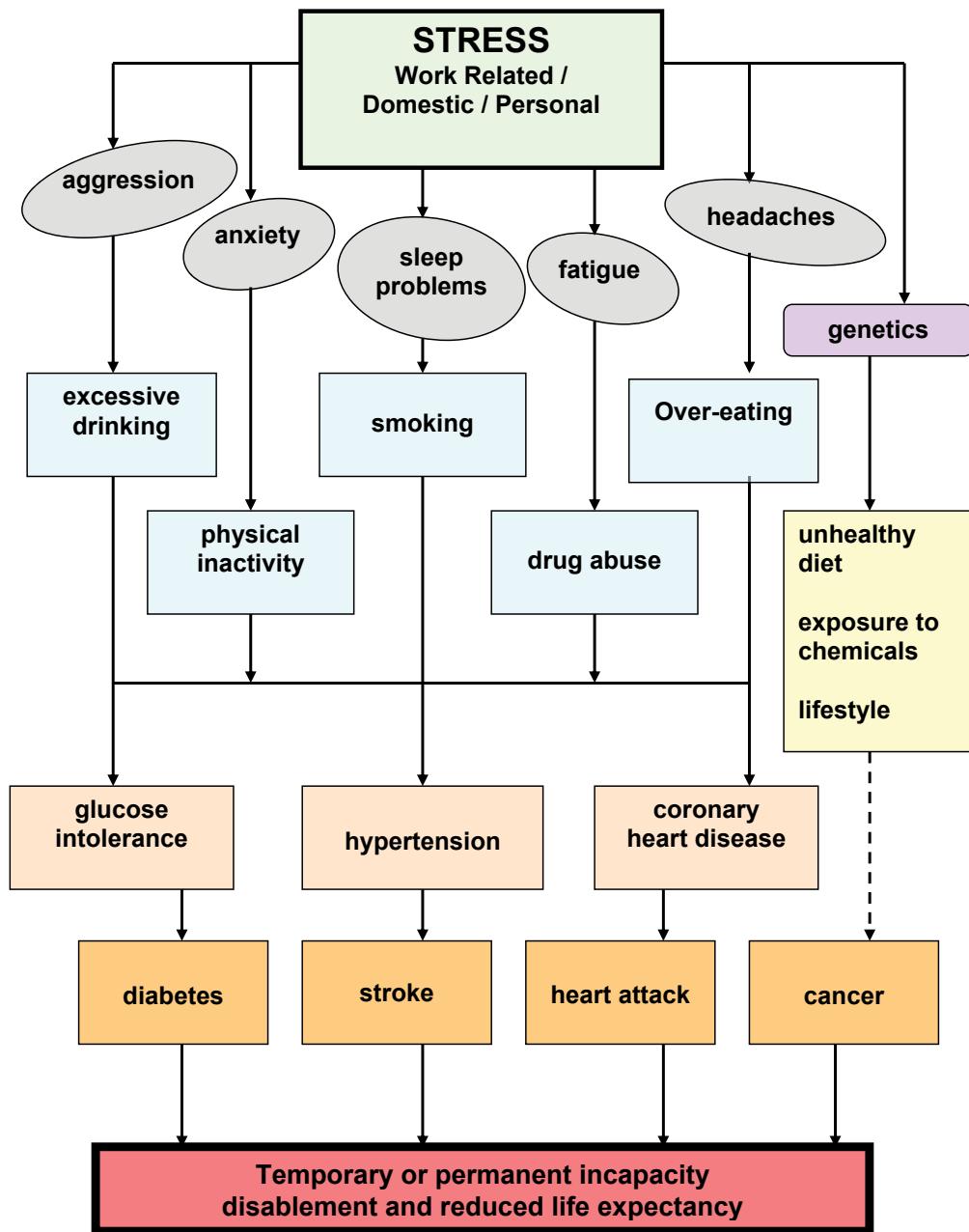
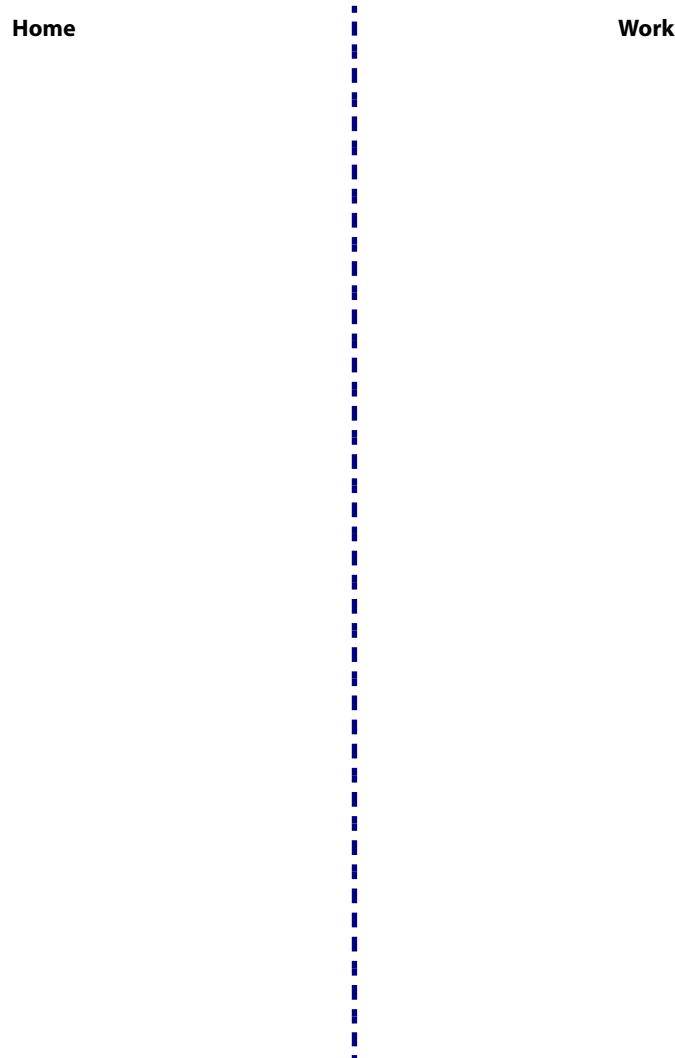


Fig. 5

Exercise 4

What causes you stress at home and at work?



Step Two

The Individual Nature of Stress

Whilst a modicum of pressure is necessary to ensure that we are kept motivated, excessive pressure can turn into stress that adversely affects our everyday life, our health, our performance and our personal relationships – as can be seen in Figs. 4 & 5.

When we are exposed to stressors, either in a social or working environment, we may react emotionally by becoming anxious or depressed, de-motivated, restless or possibly angry. Such exposure also usually affects our behaviour. We may start to overeat, or become withdrawn in an effort to seek release from tension. Some may find themselves driving dangerously, too fast, or being quick-tempered and irritable with their family, friends or colleagues.

Symptomatically, an individual may not recognise their own change of behaviour and is often likely to deny it when it is brought to their attention. This is because it is usually not possible to see ourselves objectively – particularly when we are under excessive pressure.

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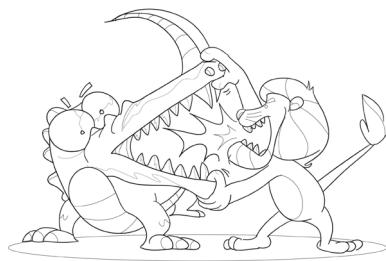
¹Based on Fortune 500 ranking 2011. Copyright © 2015 Schlumberger. All rights reserved.

Stress-related behaviour patterns – when sustained over a prolonged period – may well cause illness, and in severe instances, premature death or suicide. Other effects may be physiological: e.g. heated arguments (particularly when prolonged) can cause an increase in blood pressure and/or heart rate; gastric problems can lead to ulcers; and muscle tension can cause headaches, stiff neck, back pain and disturbed sleep. All these effects are clearly detrimental to health and wellbeing and can cause dysfunction and possibly serious illness.

We are all susceptible to stress and are therefore vulnerable to its consequences. Although each of us has different levels of natural immunity and ability to cope, no one is entirely exempt.

We are all at risk, although our individual susceptibility depends on our:

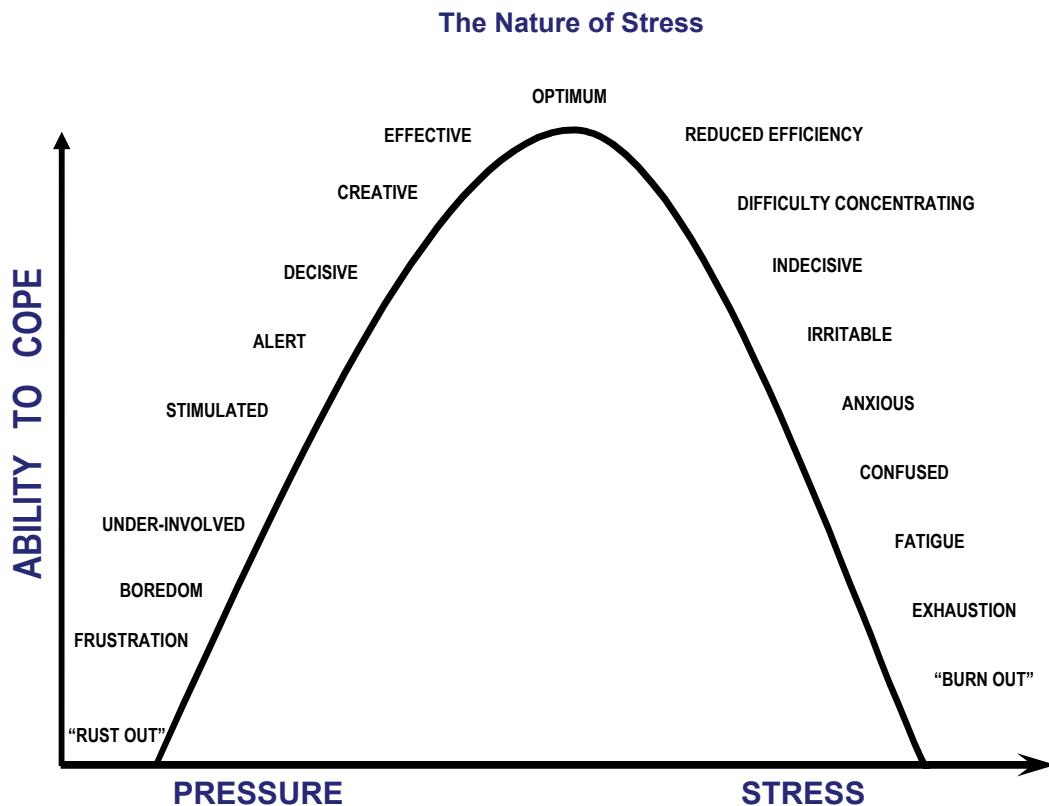
- ♦ life experiences and conditioning
- ♦ state of health and beliefs
- ♦ personality type
- ♦ inherited genetic influences



Other factors include our:

- ♦ age and gender
- ♦ religion, culture and race
- ♦ income and level of education
- ♦ family, social partnership and parental status

– all of which can determine predisposition.

**Fig. 6**

Our vulnerability to stress can also be influenced by life events that may put us under additional emotional strain.

However, some people are more resilient than others as they have better coping resources and know when to seek support and/or guidance.

In the main, people often need to adapt their behaviour and learn coping skills in order to manage their stress levels. Relaxation, rest, exercise and a good diet all help to build natural resistance to stress and to boost our immune systems by lowering our reactions to stressful events.

The Relevance of Stress to Behaviour Types

Type A and B Behaviour

The questionnaire in Fig. 7 will help you to assess whether your usual behaviours are likely to make you more prone to stress.

Circle one number for each of the statements below which best reflects the way you behave in your everyday life. For example, if you are generally on time for appointments, for the first point you would circle a number between 7 and 11. If you are usually casual about appointments you would circle one of the lower numbers between 1 and 5.

Casual about appointments	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Never late
Not competitive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Very competitive
Good listener	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Anticipates what others are going to say (nods, attempts to finish for them)
Never feels rushed (even under pressure)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Always rushed
Can wait patiently	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Impatient while waiting
Takes things one at a time	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Tries to do many things at once, thinks about what to do next
Slow deliberate talker	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Emphatic in speech, fast and forceful
Cares about satisfying him/herself no matter what others may think	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Wants good job recognised by others
Slow doing things	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Fast (eating, walking)
Easygoing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Hard driving (pushing yourself and others)
Expresses feelings	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Hides feelings
Many outside interests	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Few outside interests
Unambitious	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Ambitious
Casual	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Eager to get things done

PLOT SCORE BELOW
TYPE B TYPE A
14 84 154

Fig. 7 Source: Cooper's adaptation of the Bortner Type A scale

Which behaviour type are you?

Type A and Type B behaviour are personality types that identify those individuals that are likely to be stress prone. The original research by Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman found that typically patients with coronary heart disease exhibited remarkably similar personalities and that by testing for these characteristics susceptibility to coronary heart disease could be predicted.

Type A individuals show the behavioural styles and associated coping styles that cause them to have a high predisposition to suffer stress-related problems, whereas those showing Type B characteristics are more likely to be able to cope with stress.

The previous worksheet uses the Bortner Type A scale. After completion of the questionnaire calculate your score and then compare the results with the descriptions below.

Your actual score is on a continuum from extreme Type A to extreme Type B. A significant number of people will be near the centre and may exhibit both Type A and Type B traits.

Type A from 84 to 154

Typical Type A behaviours are likely to include impatience, aggression, ambition and competitiveness, and Type A individuals are likely to be hard working, setting high goals for both themselves and others. They will have a great sense of time urgency, often setting unnecessary deadlines to drive themselves forward. They will find it difficult to relax and are likely to have a feeling of guilt if they are taking “time out” for themselves. Evidence of these traits include high levels of energy including doing everything in a rush, often trying to do more than one thing at a time, completing sentences for other people and having explosive mannerisms such as table banging or shouting.

Type B from 14 to 84

Typical Type B behaviours are almost the reverse, i.e. not showing the above traits, but also Type B individuals will be more in tune with themselves in that they feel no need to impress others with their achievements in order to gain personal satisfaction. They will be much more able to relax and if they engage in physical activities they are likely to be in less competitive sports or will regard taking part as more important than winning. They are much less likely to suffer from anticipatory emotions such as anxiety.

NB: It is important to realise that this scale is non-judgemental. It should not be taken as implying that the characteristics of either Type are better, it merely indicates that people who have a high Type A score have a greater need to be aware of how stress may affect them and develop their coping skills accordingly.

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People with high Type B scores may wish to learn the skills of assertiveness and be aware that they might on occasions appear to be rather too laid back. As in all personality indicators, one of the great advantages is that it helps us to understand and value the differences that we each bring to our work and our lives.

Exercise 5

I experience Type A behaviour when...

Situation 1

What I do

What I could improve upon

Situation 2

What I do

What I could improve upon

**Type 'A' and 'B' Behaviour
Getting the balance right!**

- Slow down – why race the clock?
- Tackle one task at a time – enjoy it...
- Learn to occupy your time whilst waiting
- Avoid getting angry over things you can do nothing about
- Avoid creating unnecessary deadlines, and cluttering up your calendar with appointments
- Organise your daily activities to avoid queues
- Accept the mistakes and trivialities of yourself and others
- Enjoy playing – not just simply to win
- Smile and give love and affection
- Practice being a good listener
- Learn to relax
- Look around and appreciate nature and your environment



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Some Advice for Type 'B'

You may on occasion need to borrow some of the skills from your Type A colleagues. This is especially so if you are a team leader or you are not naturally assertive by nature. Remember to borrow them when appropriate, then let go and return to your less stressful Type 'B' philosophy.

Levels of Stress in Changes in Lifestyle

Our experiences of having previously dealt with situations and people, whether adaptively or maladaptively, will make a difference to how we react and cope with our future life events.

The loss of a close relation or life partner is acknowledged as being a highly stressful event, whilst marriage and divorce also rate high on the scale – albeit that marriage is ostensibly a happy event.

It is instructive to appreciate the common thread that links these events. In the vast majority of cases, it is the emotional impact of change that (fortunately) is usually short-lived and self-limiting. However, when we have a severe emotional reaction to an event or circumstance that is prolonged, this can then cause psycho-physiological damage.

Unfortunately, such an occurrence is by no means exceptional in today's often frenetic and pressurised lifestyle. In addition, economic, political and social stressors must also be taken into account. These may include such factors as crime, increased violence, natural disasters such as flooding, uncertainty, social isolation and media intrusion, together with the sheer pace of life in the 21st Century.

How many stressors are you trying to juggle?

In 1967, psychiatrists Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe examined the medical records of over 5,000 medical patients as a way to determine whether stressful life events might cause illnesses. Patients were asked to tally a list of 43 life events based on a relative score. A positive 0.1 correlation was found between their life events and their illnesses. Thus, the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) or the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale was born.

To put this into perspective, consideration needs to be given to the fact that this questionnaire is asking you to look back at your life events, making the data retrospective. Use Fig. 8 to check out how many stressors you have to manage in your life. The aim of this exercise is to identify which of these events you have experienced lately. If your score is high, don't get worried about it, as the aim is to find out what is going on in your life – those stressors that you have no control over.

If you are experiencing many of these, try and balance your life with those stressors that you do have some control over, e.g. if you are going through a bereavement, try not to move house at the same time, or change job. It is about trying to use the resources that you do have to their best.

Holmes-Rahe Life Changes Scale (1967)

Read through the list below and tick the lifestyle changes you have experienced in the last twelve months. Then total up the points and compare your score to those outlined below. The points indicate your likelihood of illness. Do bear in mind, though, that whether an event is a source of stress or not depends on how you view it, and that your level of stress may relate to the number of the events you have recently experienced.

There are no right or wrong answers.

Death of a partner	100	Responsibility change	29
Divorce	73	Child leaves home	29
Separation from partner	65	In-law problems	29
Jail sentence or being institutionalised	63	Personal achievements realised	28
Death of close member of family	63	Partner starts or stops work	26
Illness or injury	53	Starting a new school	26
Marriage	50	Leaving school	26
Loss of job	47	Changes in living conditions	25
Reconciliation with partner	45	Changes in personal habit	24
Retirement	45	Trouble with employer	23
Health problem of family member	44	Change in working hours	20
Pregnancy	40	Change in residence	20
Sex problems	39	Change in recreation	19
Addition to family	39	Change in church/spiritual activities	19
Major changes at work	39	Change in social activities	18
Changes in financial status	39	Small mortgage taken out	17
Death of friend	37	Change in sleeping habits	16
Changes in number of disagreement with partner	35	Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change in line of work	36	Major change in eating patterns	15
Large mortgage taken out	31	Holiday	13
Mortgage or loan foreclosed	30	Christmas	12
Minor violation of law	11		

Fig. 8

150–199 points increases your likelihood of illness by 40 per cent

200–299 points increases your likelihood of illness by 50 per cent

300 points and over increases your likelihood of illness by 80 per cent

Source: Holmes & Rahe (1967). Holmes-Rahe life changes scale.

Journal of Psychosomatic Research, Vol. 11, pp. 213–218.

The Importance of a Support Network

In light of the above, it is essential to be aware that coping with stress can be made demonstrably easier with support from colleagues, family or friends. Strong and caring relationships are of primary benefit in helping any individual learn to cope with pressure and how to counteract stress.

Stress Inducing Situations

In addition to major life events, there are also many situations during our normal day-to-day home and working lives which, depending on the circumstances, can act as sources of stress. The following examples are intended to demonstrate the types of situations that can result in stress and how they typically manifest themselves.

- We may have the inclination and belief that we have the resources to carry out a particular task, but in fact, **the task may in reality exceed our ability to cope with it**. This mismatch in capacity may be due to adverse environmental factors such as excessive noise, heat or cold that can weaken our resolve or hinder our performance. In addition, resources that we thought we could rely on may not, in the event, actually be available to us.
- **Too high a self-expectation**, or the excessive demands that others may make upon us, can engender a need to prove ourselves. Our subsequent inability to cope or to perform at the required standard can easily cause us stress.
- **Having inadequate internal resources** with which to meet a challenge, or too little control over a situation, may also cause stress. We may be asked to complete a particular job but have insufficient skills or equipment to do so, thereby making the situation potentially stressful. Once given the appropriate support, however, it is possible to view the situation or problem as a challenge that can be evaluated and met, thereby keeping us out of the 'stress zone'.
- We have all experienced occasions when the anticipation of an unwelcome or embarrassing event has caused us great anxiety, but in reality the expected problem either did not materialise or the magnitude was less than expected. It is often the case that **we over-estimate the problem and under-estimate our resources**.
- Stress can also be caused by **the lack of opportunity to utilise one's own ability effectively**. For example: someone may seek work to pay off a mortgage or loan and has taken a job that gives them no other satisfaction than the monthly salary gained. The experience of working daily with little or no job satisfaction may well induce feelings of frustration and anxiety that can eventually become stressful.

Scores for Stress Questionnaire

20-30	Fairly laid back and calm. Maybe more challenge might provide greater motivation
31-45	A reasonable balance. Be prepared to adjust when the balance tips.
46-60	You are highly susceptible to stress, working hard but not achieving as much as you could. You are 'too busy to be stressed'

Step Three

Recognition and Management of Stress in your Team

It may be considered to be a good sign to see an employee sitting behind their desk, but merely being present affords no indication that an individual is achieving his or her optimum performance level.

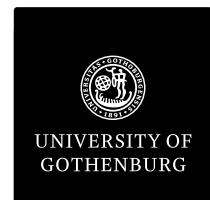
Managing employee performance by regular appraisal and monthly target-setting is one way of identifying the quality and quantity of work being carried out. Where an individual appears to be spending unduly long hours in the office or regularly taking work home, then it is appropriate to enquire as to the reason why the workload cannot be completed during normal office hours. It should be established whether this situation is due to work overload or because there appears to be a capability issue regarding time management, job knowledge or work ability. Either way, a management intervention is required in order to remedy the position.

Another damaging effect of prolonged stress on work performance is the extent to which individuals may eventually find that their sustainable powers of creativity and rational thinking have been compromised or weakened.

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Early indications of stress in others include a perceptible change in individual behaviour, or an exacerbation of an existing personality trait. In circumstances where individuals are under excessive pressure and consequently have difficulty in coping, they are likely to exhibit behavioural changes and attitudes that are generally out of character.

Initially, such changes may be minor and possibly inconsequential, such as occasional disagreements with colleagues. However, where more extreme symptoms are observed, such as social withdrawal or a pronounced over-reaction to ordinary events, then the individual should be approached by their manager in order to endeavour to ascertain the reason(s).

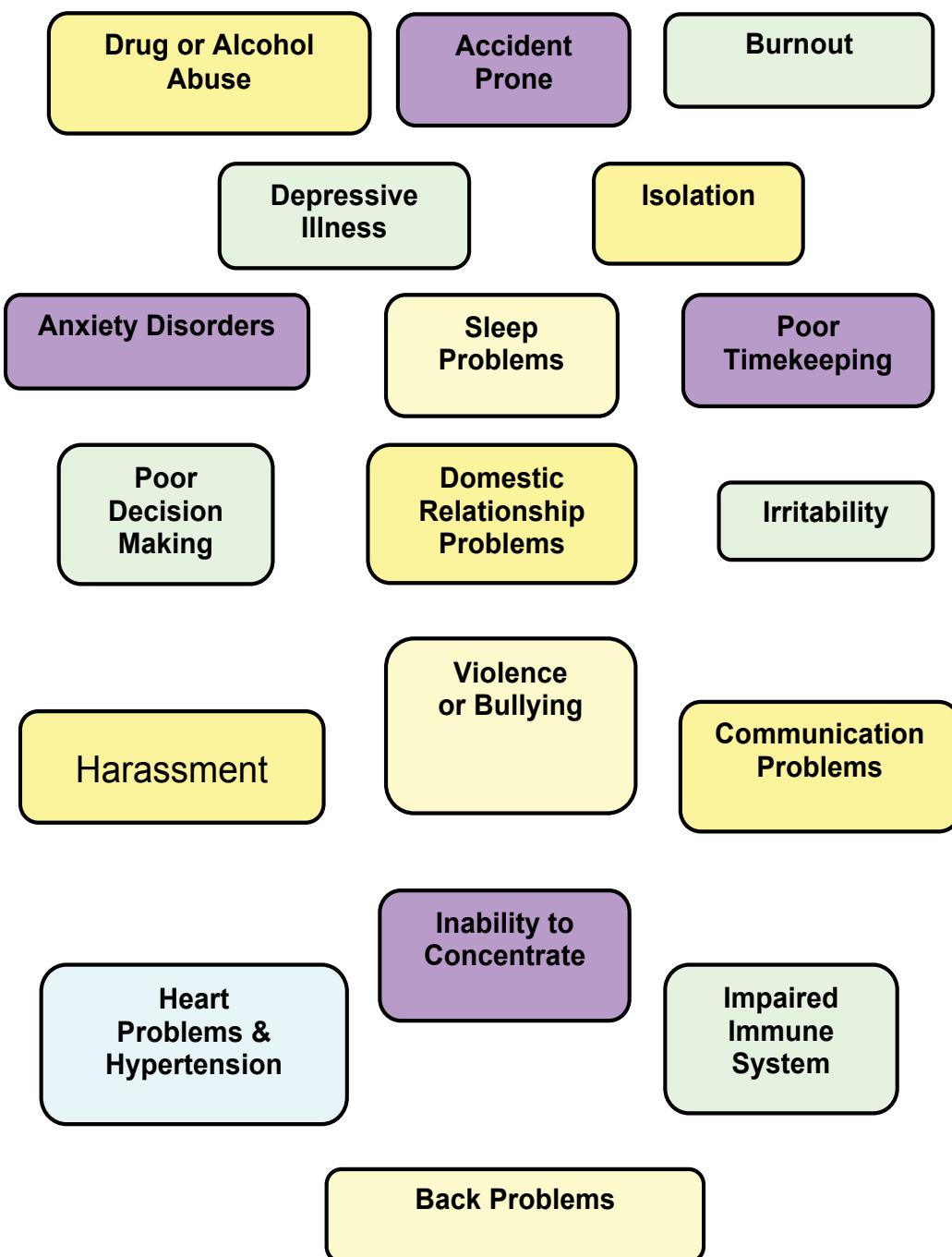
Exercise 6

Do you recognise any of these signs of stress in your team?

Workplace

- Late for work, long lunch breaks
- Reduction in output
- Poor memory
- Lack of personal care
- Withdrawal socially
- Poor time management
- Low morale/commitment to employer
- Poor performance
- Low efficiency
- Clock watching, leaving early
- Frequent mistakes or accidents
- Impaired judgement
- Loss of temper, mood swings
- Poor decision making
- Failure to meet deadlines
- Absenteeism
- Conflict in workplace relationships
- Poor quality control

Indications of Work-Related Stress in Individual Employees

**Fig. 9**

Early Recognition of Stress

Managers need to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their teams and be adept at recognising when staff under their supervision, are under-performing or behaving unusually. Early recognition of frequent changes in mood and/or behaviour will enable appropriate support to be offered and performance to be reviewed before any serious health or safety issue arises.

Some of the Warning Signs

The following are just some of the warning signs that give an indication that stress may be adversely effecting the organisation:

- Increased absenteeism and/or frequency of minor sickness.
- Reduction in work performance, without any apparent reason.
- Tendency to lose concentration on the job in hand.
- Increase in workplace errors, accidents or 'near misses'.
- Change in timekeeping habits, for example persistent lateness.
- Working long hours without any apparent need (although this may be indicative of problems outside of work, i.e. that being at work is preferable to being at home).
- Seemingly withdrawn before and during meetings (possibly with frequent trips to the washroom) or failing to make any contribution to the subject under discussion.
- Taking an irritable or aggressive stance with business associates, customers and/or suppliers.
- Receiving increasing complaints from clients or customers.
- Avoidance of face-to-face contact (e.g. emailing someone who is sitting in the next office).
- Loss of ambition, for example failing to apply for promotion.

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”

Causes of Work-Related Stress in Your Organisation

Exercise 7

Tick those that you think might be the causes of work-related stress in your organisation:

Physical Environment	Equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> poor physical working conditions <input type="checkbox"/> insufficient space <input type="checkbox"/> lack of privacy <input type="checkbox"/> open plan <input type="checkbox"/> inhuman layout <input type="checkbox"/> too hot or too cold <input type="checkbox"/> badly lit <input type="checkbox"/> too noisy <input type="checkbox"/> poor ventilation	<input type="checkbox"/> not suitable for the job or environment <input type="checkbox"/> old and/or in poor condition <input type="checkbox"/> unreliable/not maintained <input type="checkbox"/> regular/constant breakdowns <input type="checkbox"/> badly sited <input type="checkbox"/> requires individual to adopt fixed and uncomfortable posture <input type="checkbox"/> adds to noise and heat levels
The Organisation	Personal and Social Relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient staff for workload size <input type="checkbox"/> too many unfilled posts <input type="checkbox"/> poor co-ordination between departments <input type="checkbox"/> insufficient training to do job well <input type="checkbox"/> inadequate information given <input type="checkbox"/> no control over workload <input type="checkbox"/> rigid working procedures <input type="checkbox"/> no time given to adjust to changes	<input type="checkbox"/> not enough opportunities for social contact while at work <input type="checkbox"/> sexism and sexual harassment <input type="checkbox"/> racism and racial harassment <input type="checkbox"/> conflicts with family demands <input type="checkbox"/> divided loyalties, own needs and organisational demands <input type="checkbox"/> bullying
Way The Organisation Is Managed	Relations With Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> inconsistency in style and approach <input type="checkbox"/> emphasis on competitiveness <input type="checkbox"/> 'crisis' management all the time <input type="checkbox"/> information seen as power <input type="checkbox"/> procedures always being changed <input type="checkbox"/> over-dependence on overtime <input type="checkbox"/> shift work	<input type="checkbox"/> poor relations with the boss <input type="checkbox"/> poor relations with colleagues and subordinates <input type="checkbox"/> difficulties in delegating responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> personality conflicts <input type="checkbox"/> no feedback from colleagues or management
Role In Organisation	Individual Concerns
<input type="checkbox"/> role ambiguity <input type="checkbox"/> role conflict <input type="checkbox"/> too little responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> no participation in decision making <input type="checkbox"/> lack of managerial support <input type="checkbox"/> responsibility for people and things	<input type="checkbox"/> difficulty in coping with change <input type="checkbox"/> not confident in dealing with interpersonal problems <input type="checkbox"/> not assertive <input type="checkbox"/> not good at managing time <input type="checkbox"/> lack of knowledge about managing stress

Effects of Employee Stress on the Organisation

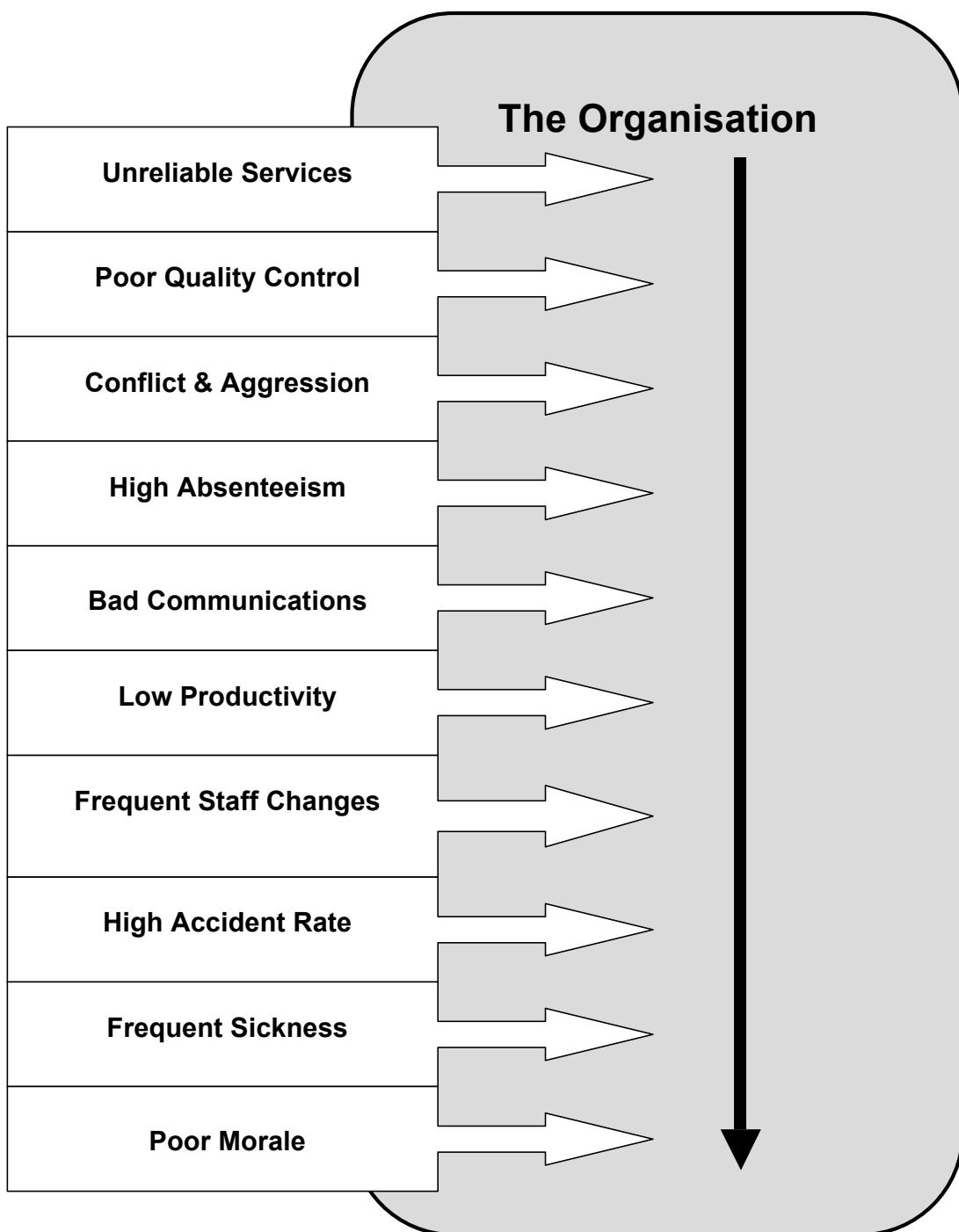


Fig. 10

Preventing and Managing Stress in the Team

There is a difference between the type of pressure that motivates and inspires and that which fatigues and stunts creativity. Individuals differ in their responses to pressure depending on their experience – pressure that is completely manageable to one person will cause stress in another. It is the responsibility of management to evaluate what level of pressure is reasonable.

**Fig. 11**

The Relationship Between Work and Home-Related Stress

While the pressures of work are often more than sufficient to result in us experiencing stress, the likelihood of this will be increased still further if we are also subject to excess pressures in other parts of our lives.

Stress, whatever its cause, does have a detrimental effect on the work performance of employees and will make it difficult for them to withstand the pressures of work.

Employees are exposed to a range of work-related stressors (from the left in Fig 12) whilst home based stressors are indicated from below. The individual will have the ability to cope with some of these pressures from either source and these are shown as being bounced off by the employee. The danger occurs when individuals are facing pressures that exceed their ability to cope and they then combine to increase the risk of stress-related injury and ill-health.

Providing stress awareness and coping skills training at work will benefit employees regardless of the cause of their stress.

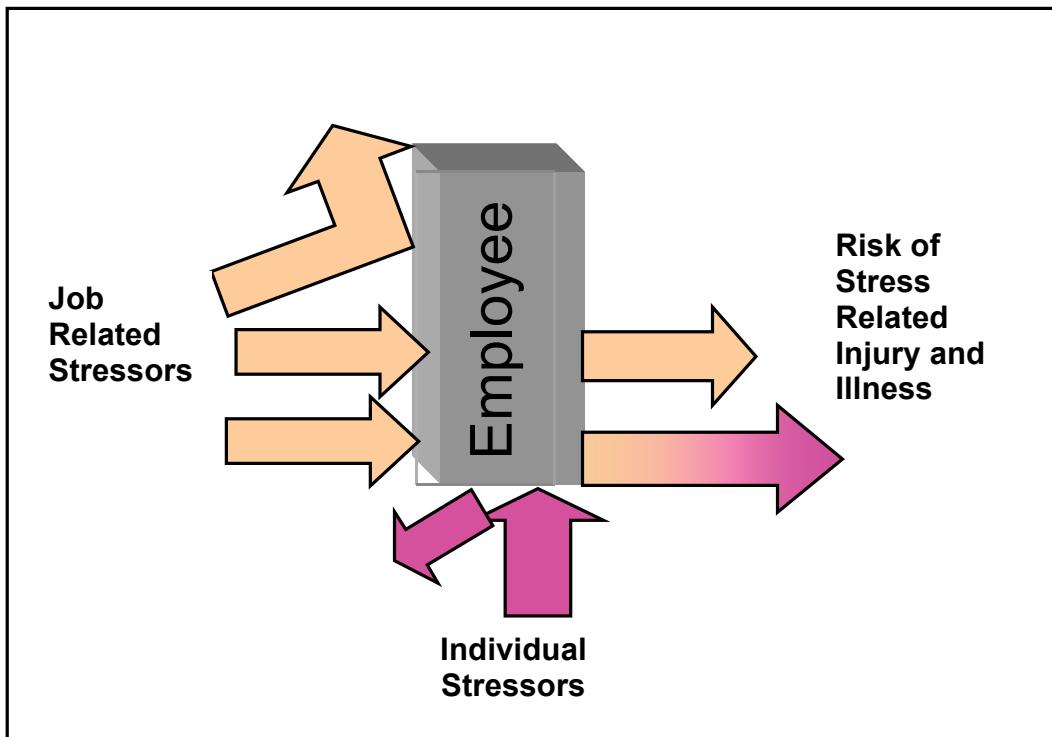


Fig. 12



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Summer Academy courses

Working With an Individual to Identify the Problem

When an employee's work performance falls below an acceptable standard, or just seems not as good as usual, it is worth considering if stress is an issue. Fig 13 will help you evaluate individual cases and identify what actions can be taken to support the individual.

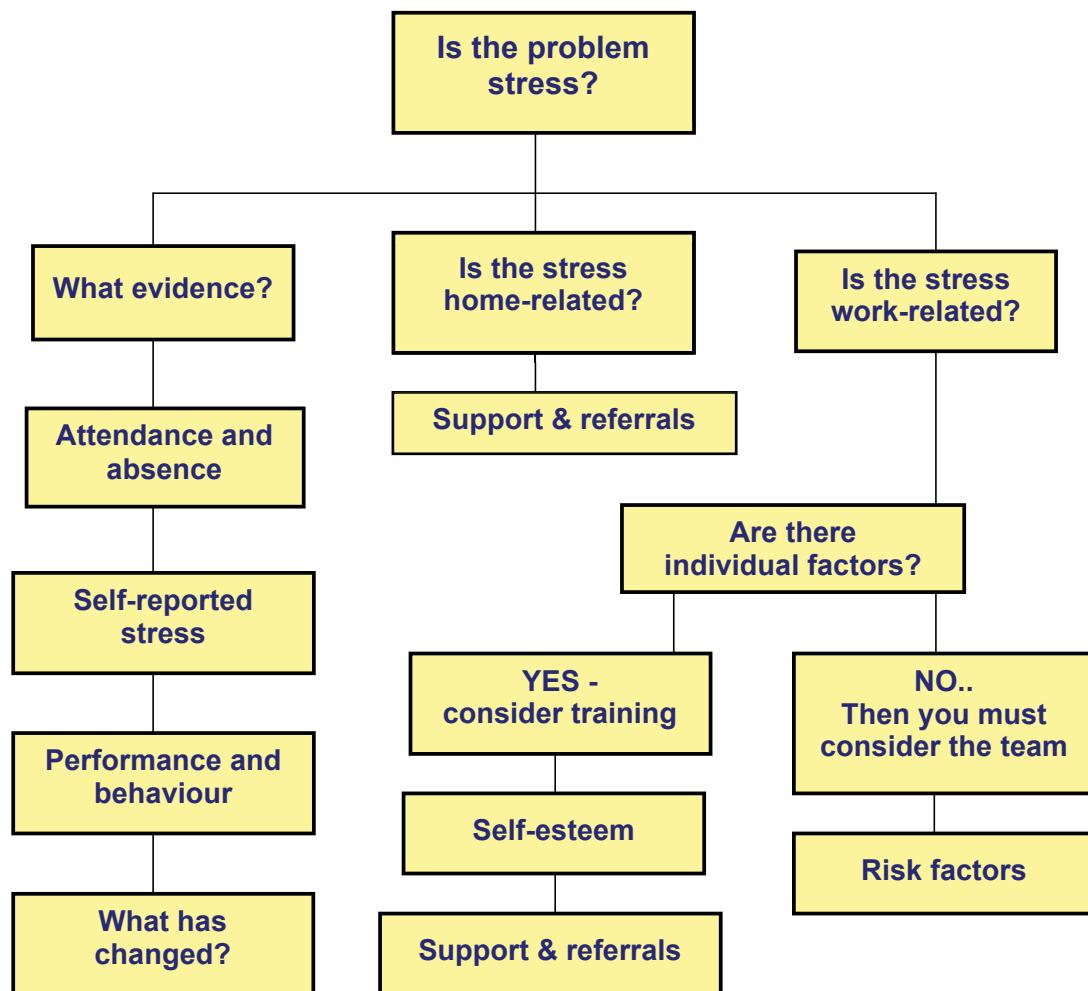


Fig. 13

Is the Problem Stress?

Get to the root of the problem

How To.



Sometimes a member of staff will report that they are overloaded and are under more pressure than usual. In some cases the reasons will be apparent to them and they will not hesitate to tell you the cause. In other cases they might not be sure themselves. Even if they can identify the causes they may be reluctant to disclose the real reason and offer a more general phrase such as "my workload is heavy". These individuals could be reporting the first signs of stress. It may help to use the checklist on the next page to see what has changed in their work that has triggered this extra pressure.

You can use this list of possible causes to identify what has changed and what is causing the additional pressure. It is not anticipated that you go through this as a tick box exercise with the employee concerned, but use it more as an *aide memoire* so that you can cover a wide range of possibilities. Remember, this is a fact-finding exercise not a counselling interview. This tool should not be used with anyone who is already showing signs of being disturbed or stressed. It should not be used to discover and discuss feelings.

Once the problem has been identified, you can then move on to discuss whether the situation can be changed. Try to involve them in identifying the solution, using questions like "What would need to happen to improve this situation?", "What would you like to see changed?"

Getting to the Root of the Problem Checklist

What has changed?

Remember to use open questions – why, when, where, what, how, who?

- ◆ additional duties
 - where are they coming from
 - is it permanent or seasonal
 - is it being received from elsewhere via matrix management or customer requests
- ◆ change of duties
- ◆ staff shortages
 - are they temporary
 - are they off sick
 - are their absences stress-related
 - is everybody pulling their weight
- ◆ is equipment working well
- ◆ has the environment changed
 - office location
 - overcrowding
 - housekeeping issues, lighting, noise, cleaning etc
- ◆ are there new managers, team members
- ◆ has the shift pattern changed
- ◆ is there confusion about roles
- ◆ was there a specific incident
- ◆ is the employee in overall good health
- ◆ have there been changes in their domestic situation
- ◆ have they received training for the job

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Self-Reported Stress

You may be uncertain as to what action you should take if a member of your team comes to you and says, "I am feeling stressed".

Firstly and most importantly, you should take their remarks at face value. Remember stress is an individual response to pressure and you will not be aware of how they actually feel. It will almost certainly have taken courage to admit to you that they are suffering from stress.

By accepting what they are saying and dealing with them with understanding and empathy, you will help them to accept that stress is not a sign of weakness and that it is a normal human condition which we all face at some time or other in our lives.

The last thing that they would wish to hear is you uttering platitudes such as "pull yourself together" or even worse "other people can manage, so why can't you?"

Listening Skills

It is worth reinforcing here the difference between "hearing" and "listening" – see fig 14.

Hearing is a physical sense, and by itself makes you aware of the message. However, in order to understand the meaning of the message, there is a need for the intellectual skills that are called into play when "active listening" is taking place.

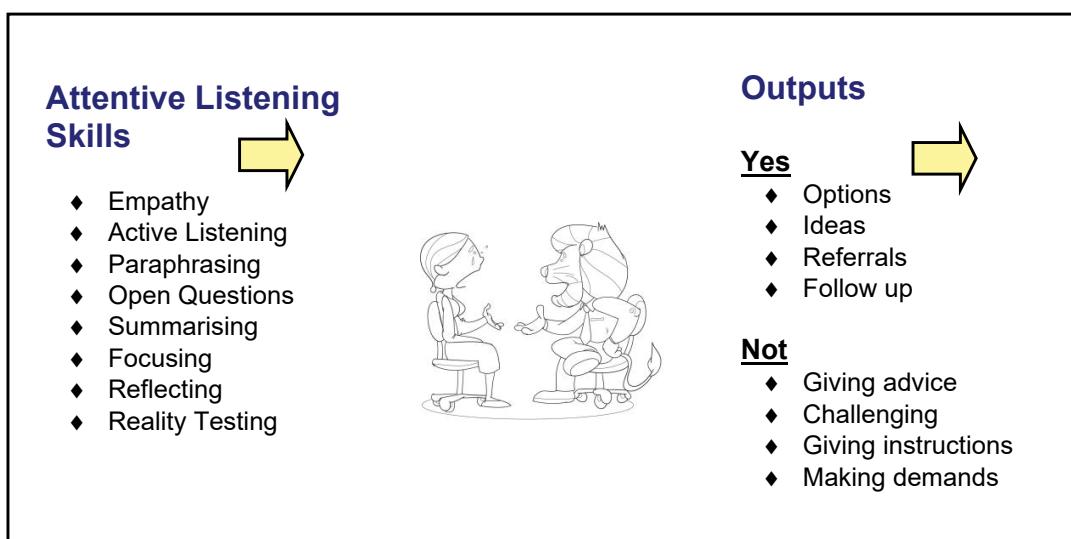


Fig. 14

Stress-Related Absence Management

If the early warning signs of stress are ignored by an employee and/or their manager, the end result will often be an extended period of absence from work – with all the attendant additional pressures on the employee's team and colleagues.

The link between attendance and stress is so well proven that absence statistics are often used as an indicator of hot-spots of stress within an organisation. The figures are also often used as a control to measure the effectiveness of stress awareness interventions.

Attendance problems caused through stress fall into two main categories:

- The **long periods** of sickness absence of those already suffering from stress are immediately apparent and form a large part of the absences in most organisations.
- Whilst it is too late to prevent the stress that has made these employees ill, actions can be taken by actively managing the return to work to minimise the time away and at the same time reduce the risk of the stress recurring.
- It is far more important to monitor the **short absences** that may be the first sign of excessive pressure. Typically, absences that fall into a pattern, such as every Monday, or ones that are linked to particular operational requirements such as reporting periods, are likely to be stress-related.

Remember to look at the pattern of absence not at the declared reasons. Stress is typically under-reported as a reason for absence especially in the early stages and reasons given may be just a cold, back pain or headaches. This under-reporting could be for several reasons: it may be that the individual has not recognised that they might be suffering from stress, or that they are reluctant to admit that this is the problem.

Successful intervention at the early stages of stress-related absences will create a culture that will enable staff to admit to stress-related ill-health problems without feeling that there is any stigma attached and without feeling that their future prospects are damaged. The earlier the condition is diagnosed, the sooner action can be taken and it may be possible to avoid the excess pressure turning into stress and the associated long-term sick leave that often then ensues.



'Return-to-Work' Interviews

'Return to work' interviews are an integral part of managing sickness absence and present an excellent opportunity for managers to explore, on a one-to-one basis, the reasons for absence, and to offer employees support, where appropriate. It may well be that absence is not actually caused through ill health, but is merely a mechanism for taking time off to deal with pressing personal problems. A 'listening ear' and some flexible management can possibly reduce the risk of unscheduled absence, and give employees the opportunity to take more responsibility for their attendance.

Where it is apparent that there is an ongoing health problem, there may be the opportunity for the organisation to offer support to employees, either via the occupational health department or through private medical care.

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Inés Aréizaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old
Education: Chemical Engineer

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Conduct a Return to Work Interview

How To.



- Plan the interview in advance at a mutually convenient time and place
- Conduct the interview in private ensuring an atmosphere of confidentiality
- Set boundaries of confidentiality and agree a time frame
- Allow enough time for the employee to fully explain their situation
- Agree a return to work plan so that the employee is not overwhelmed with work. This is especially important when the employee is returning from a period of long-term absence
- Make a written record of the interview for future reference



Conduct an Appraisal Interview

How To.



- Appraisal interviews should start and end with something positive, with any negative issues in the middle. Remember to get the person to talk, use listening skills so they can see you are genuinely interested and encourage participation in any decisions such as setting goals or objectives.
- Use listening skills and try to understand their point of view and give them support. Don't be abusive or exploit them. Try to be fair, and discrimination will not be a problem. Value what they do.
- Staff should know exactly what their job consists of with a written job description. Delegation should be done clearly: on a daily basis they should know exactly what you expect them to do, when you want it done and how much you wish to be kept informed of their progress.
- Give regular objectives, preferably in writing, 3 monthly, 6 monthly or yearly. Employees should have a part in deciding what they are. Objectives should be reviewed regularly.

- Be assertive, honest with yourself and with others. Tell them if they do something that annoys you, but take issue with what they did, don't make it a personal attack. Being passive and saying nothing may result in an eventual aggressive response when you cannot hide your feelings any longer.
- Praise individuals when they deserve it. You may want to ask yourself if you have a moral right to tell people off if you don't also tell them when they do well.
- Consult over deadlines and targets where you can and make them realistic.
- Make sure the working environment is appropriate. Try to avoid giving them boring or repetitive work.
- Try to behave calmly yourself, don't rush about, speak more slowly, try not to become annoyed and angry unnecessarily.
- Be aware of the importance of confidentiality in your dealings with staff and of the limits of confidentiality.
- If you are presented with a problem that may be beyond your own skills and resources to deal with, make sure you know where to get help.

Improve Your Management Style

How To.



- Expect the best from people and you are likely to get it. Encourage a 'can do' culture in a realistic way. Encourage people to come up with ideas for how they may be able to achieve things, not reasons why they cannot do them.
- Encourage feedback: people appreciate the chance to say how they perceive you and you may get valuable insight.
- Be approachable, listen to them whenever you get the opportunity, develop a reputation for being a good listener.
- Argue for their reasonable needs with upper management.
- Reduce uncertainty to a minimum, give them information about whatever is going on. Often the bad news is better than not knowing, at least then they can start to come to terms with it and plan what they are going to do.
- Watch working hours, theirs and yours. You cannot expect 100% performance for 14 hours a day, from them or from you. Make sure they take proper breaks away from the job, even if brief.
- Encourage them to make time for planning activities and improving relationships with others.
- Try to maintain an awareness of what you are inclined to do that may be unhelpful, and learn from what your own managers do or have done in the past that you found unhelpful.
- Try to foster an atmosphere where they can enjoy their work and each other's company.
- Think about team building opportunities and social meetings. Build relationships with your staff, find out about their families and life outside work and any problems they may be experiencing.

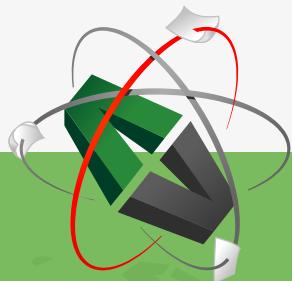
- Keep your sense of humour and smile appropriately.



Organisational Stress Management Initiatives

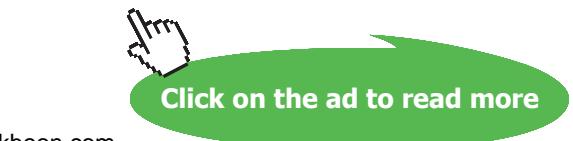
Bearing in mind the cost of stress in terms of lost production, lost sales and problems with staff retention, organisations are strongly advised to consider how they can best manage stress effectively. Support in the form of coaching/counselling for employees who experience workplace stress will lessen the impact on the organisation as a whole and keep costs to a minimum. The following initiatives will assist with this process:

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- **Rationalise the Stress Management Function**

Review the developing needs of the organisation and its workforce. Provide a business case for the provision of stress management support.

- **Strategy/Policy/Procedure**

All organisations should have a policy for managing stress, designed for the protection of the employee and the employer. Policies should be constructive and not adversarial if they are to be effective.

- **Stress Management Training**

Stress Awareness training for employees at all levels in the organisation is desirable with the aim of encouraging a supportive corporate culture and philosophy.

- **Management Training**

All those with a supervisory or management role should be given training to assist them in managing well and reducing stress levels in their staff.

- **Workplace Employee Counselling Support**

Management training should ideally include listening/counselling skills so that when managers are faced with having to assist their staff with work-related stress issues and/or personal problems they will feel more capable in doing so. Knowing how to approach an individual can be highly constructive and can produce a very effective response.

- **First Contact Support Teams**

Consideration should be given to training volunteers in workplace counselling skills to help deal with employees' stress-related issues; providing boundaries, limitations and professional competence levels.

- **External Coaching/Counselling Services**

Increasingly organisations are providing support for employees via telephone and face-to-face coaching/counselling services.

- **Stress Mediation**

Providing neutral arbitration between management and employees: preventative action in order to avoid situations escalating.



Step Four

Positive Action Against Stress – Building Resilience for Busy Executives

There are a variety of actions that individuals can take to manage their stress levels and to prevent them from developing into more serious problems. In view of the fact that no single method works well for everyone, it is necessary that each individual finds an appropriate method which works best for them. In the main, the positive actions we can take fall into three categories:



1. **Modification of behaviour**
2. **Development of a healthy lifestyle**
3. **Alteration of mindset**

Even something as simple as positive thinking (although it may not seem that simple at the time) will go a long way towards effective stress management.

All of us prefer to be among people who are lively, interesting and positive, rather than tired-out, negative and boring. How we are perceived by others is important for our own self-image, but when stressed this can be easily forgotten.

There may be times when it is necessary to seek professional help, guidance or support. Where this is the case, it should not be seen as a sign of failure or weakness. On the contrary, it is a sign of strength to be able to recognise our body's warning signs and to take appropriate action. Only in that way can each of us ensure the continuation of good health, and retain control of our lives.

These points are just as relevant to our working environment as they are to our personal lives, and managers should be aware that these considerations are as applicable to their teams as they are to themselves. It is important that they create an environment where stress-related issues can be acknowledged, discussed and properly addressed at an early stage.

It is often found that those very individuals who are the most vehement in denying that they have a problem with stress are the ones who are most in need of help, and it requires a trusting relationship to be established for these issues to be dealt with properly.



Once some success has been achieved in dealing with a particular aspect of stress, it is recommended that the method by which this was accomplished is remembered together with the learning that comes from it. When future events in life overtax our coping resources, we will hopefully be able to then draw, with advantage, upon our previous experience.

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Jane, Chinese architect

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How to Deal With Your Personal Stress

Many people in executive positions experience stress at some point in their lives. You may find yourself challenged by work, relationships and domestic responsibilities, and may feel unable to seek help and support. Fig 15 will help you to evaluate and manage your personal stress.

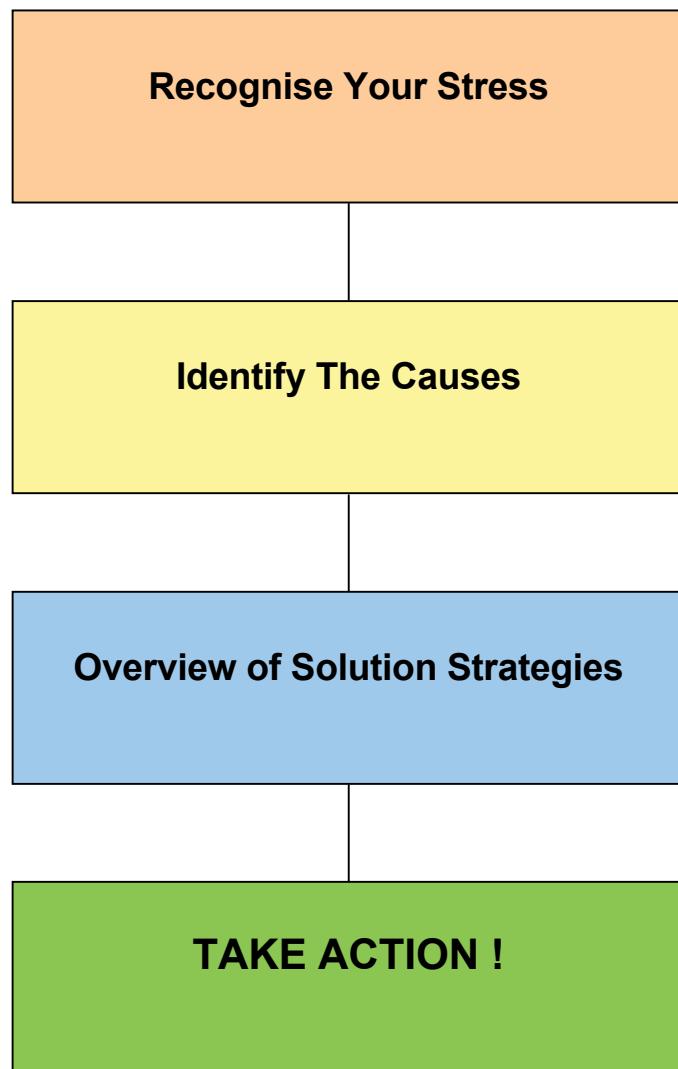


Fig. 15

Modification of Behaviour

In terms of changed behaviour, proactive interventions that can be made include:

- 1.1 Being more assertive**
- 1.2 Improving time management**
- 1.3 Managing ‘Type A’ behaviour in others**
- 1.4 Indulging in humour and laughter**
- 1.5 Taking ‘time out’**
- 1.6 Travelling with less stress**
- 1.7 Utilising external help**

Be More Assertive

How To.



Many people find it extremely difficult to say ‘No’. They put themselves in invidious situations by accepting additional work or tasks when they have, in reality, insufficient time to complete them. The consequences are often disappointment in oneself and in others that invariably leads to both physical and psychological stress and a reinforcement of a poor self-image and reduced self esteem. People can exhibit four distinctively different types of behaviour – aggressive, indirectly aggressive, passive and assertive – and for people who find it difficult to say ‘no’, assertiveness and time management training can both be extremely valuable.

Being assertive is being able to: It is not about:

Listen to others	Expressing anger
Verbalise what you feel and need	Aggression
Negotiate	Selfishness
Compromise	Being superior to others
Respect others	Always getting your own way
Enjoy self-confidence and control	Insisting on non-negotiability



Being recognised as non-assertive can allow others to ‘walk all over you’, because you effectively surrender control to them. By comparison, being assertive equates to standing up for your personal rights, and expressing your thoughts, feelings, wishes and beliefs directly, honestly and spontaneously in ways that are not detrimental to the rights of others.

Assertive people take responsibility for their actions and choices, and even in cases of failure, notwithstanding the obvious disappointment, their self-confidence and self-respect will remain intact.

The expressing of negative feelings, at the appropriate time, also avoids the build-up of resentment – thereby helping assertive people to manage their stress more successfully.

It is important to note that it is not possible for a non-assertive person to change overnight. It takes time, practice and commitment.

If people find it difficult to say ‘no’, then serious consideration should be given to attending a training course on assertiveness – either trainer-led or by distance learning – and there are also some excellent reference books available on the subject.

Individuals who frequently find themselves acting aggressively – shouting, being intimidating and generally making others frightened of their anger – might also consider taking assertiveness training.

Aggressive behaviour not only alienates other people but, if persistent, can also seriously damage the person’s health – by releasing too much adrenaline into the body with the consequent impact on blood pressure.



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Basic Guidelines for Assertive Behaviour

- **Acknowledge your own feelings, to yourself.** If, for example, you feel angry, it can be helpful to acknowledge that feeling, even if you decide not to express it.
- **Be clear about how you feel and what you actually want.**
- **Be clear and direct in what you say.** Misunderstandings often happen as a result of unclear messages.
- **Adopt a sound inner dialogue.** What are your *real* thoughts about the situation you are currently facing?
- **If necessary, keep repeating your message.** Often people are not really listening to what you are saying and may introduce 'red herrings' into the conversation – therefore, try repeating your message in order to receive some acknowledgement of receipt.
- **Use appropriate body language to back up your assertive behaviour.** Adopt an open, relaxed posture with the head erect, and face the other party square on. Establish eye contact, and keep your voice steady and firm.
- **Keep calm and stick to the point.** Relaxation exercises, such as deep breathing, may help.
- **Respect the rights of the other person.** In some situations compromise is a preferable outcome (as with negotiation).

Exercise 8

I could be more assertive if I stopped...

I could be more assertive if I started...

I know I will be more assertive when I find myself...

Improve Your Time Management

How your time is managed is a key factor in determining the level of stress in your life. Many individuals complain bitterly that they are always short of time, but this can often be caused by:

How To.



- A lack of assertiveness
- Being unable, or apprehensive about, delegating tasks to others
- Having an excessive workload
- Allowing time to be wasted – or not using time productively
- Prioritising jobs and tasks incorrectly

By comparison, good time management is about:

- Establishing priorities
- Making a list of what **must** be done, should be done, and if possible, what the person would **like** to be able to do
- Eliminating time-wasting activities
- Getting into the habit of focusing on essentials
- Learning to say '**no**' and being able to delegate effectively
- Scheduling daily (uninterruptible) time to organise daily activity
- Not making excuses for **not** doing something
- Making a list of achievable goals or targets

One of the most difficult aspects of time management is assessing goals and whether or not they are achievable. For example, are the goals that you are trying to achieve realistic in the time available, and are they, in fact, what is really needed? This is sometimes difficult to ascertain and quantify, because individual goals can often be subsumed within the general needs of the organisation. This is why it is important to identify short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, and list tasks accordingly.

It may even be that someone else is actually responsible for the problems an individual is experiencing with personal time management – in which case, they may need to work together in order to remedy the difficulty.

It is also important to set aside time for planning and relationship building. Bear in mind the Time Management Matrix (shown in Figure 16) and reduce the time you spend dealing with crises and deadlines (Quadrant 1) by employing more planning and relationship building (Quadrant 2). You can create the time you need for this by reducing unimportant activities (shown in Quadrants 3 and 4).

Do not forget that if a task is deemed important or urgent to someone else, this doesn't necessarily mean it is important to you (unless that someone is your MD!).



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The Time Management Matrix

	Urgent	Non urgent
I M P O R T A N T	1. Activities Crises/Panics Pressing matters Fire-fighting Deadline-driven projects	2. Activities Prevention Relationship building Planning/Preparation Professional knowledge
I M P N O R T O R T A N T	3. Activities Interruptions Some calls/ mail Some reports/meetings Unprepared meetings Popular activities	4. Activities Trivia, Busy work Time wasters Unproductive activity Everything else

Fig. 16 Covey S.R. (1990) '*The 7 habits of highly effective people*'

Asking For Time

'Asking for time' is about considering yourself and valuing your time. You need to remember your right to say 'no', as there is little point in giving yourself the space to reflect on your priorities, etc, if you are still unable to say 'no' at the end of it.

Before accepting any increase in workload, you may need to discuss any difficulties that this might entail, in order to negotiate a solution that is satisfactory to both yourself and the person or organisation making the request or demand upon you.

Essentially, the best way forward is to ask for time to evaluate the request, or new instruction, in order to come to a decision that takes account of the effects of acceptance.

Priorities should be evaluated together with the consequences of refusing – as highlighted in Fig 16 above.

Time Guidelines

1. Listen carefully to the details of the request or instruction
2. If necessary, ask for clarification to make absolutely sure of what is being asked of you
3. Acknowledge your understanding of the details of the request
4. Advise the other party that you will need time to consider and will let them have your decision as soon as possible
5. Specify the amount of time you will need, when you will notify the person concerned and by what means, i.e. verbally, by email or fax etc.

Keep a Stress Diary

How To.



It follows that it may well be both beneficial and instructive to keep a diary for 2–3 weeks, to help identify the reasons for the feelings we experience that are related to excessive pressure. Although for many people the act of keeping a diary may itself appear to be an additional chore, it can prove invaluable in helping to understand not only the primary sources of our stress, but also the frequency with which we experience the effects of them upon our daily life.

Suggested Diary Contents

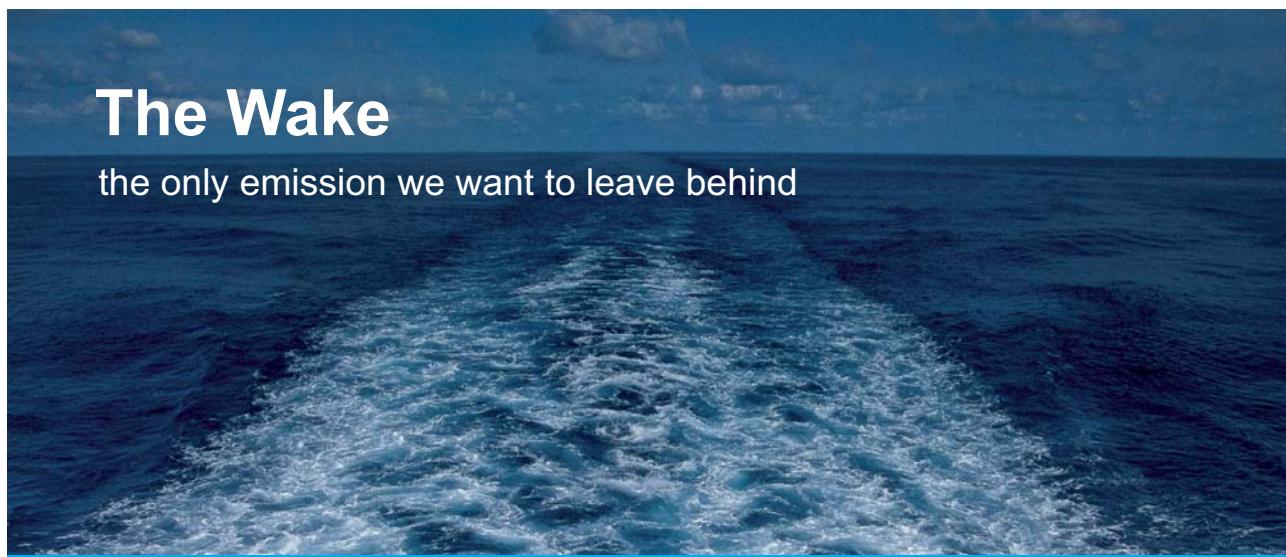
- It is better to keep the diary entries as brief as possible, provided that all relevant details of the impact of the stress experienced are included – such as any other persons involved, events, activities, time and duration etc.
- Details should include everything that puts a strain on available resources of energy or time; that triggers anger or anxiety; or which results in the physical, emotional or behavioural responses that we have discussed in previous sections.
- After a couple of weeks, the diary entries should be reviewed to identify the most important situational stressors that have affected you, in order that you can determine how best to deal with them effectively in the future. To retain a sense of proportion, you should also note the positive events in your life – those that are invigorating, pleasurable or which give you a sense of achievement.



Exercise 9

My typical day...

Day/Time	Situation	Physical Response	Emotions



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Typical 'Stress Diary' Entries

Day/Time	Situation	Physical Response	Emotions
Monday 6 September, 10.30am	Weekly meeting. Asked to comment on IT proposal.	Heart started to beat faster, hands became clammy and my voice sounded high.	Really anxious. Apprehensive that my comments would be considered inadequate.
Wednesday 8 September, midday	Took client to lunch.	Felt hot and uncomfortable. Hands shaky – spilled the water.	Nervous and embarrassed. Couldn't find the right words in order to maintain the conversation.
Thursday 9 September, 9.00am	Required to work in outer office which was freezing cold as air conditioning wasn't working properly.	Legs and feet cold after ten minutes at desk entailing my getting up every half hour to walk about.	Became extremely irritable and bad-tempered. Shouted at Mona who came in to take a letter and who misheard what I had dictated.
Wednesday 15 September, 4.15pm	Suddenly told I had to give my report in tomorrow morning instead of Friday. (Asif is now going to Abu Dhabi Thursday night!)	Tried not to show how I was feeling, but my shoulders tensed-up and, later in the afternoon, started to get a pounding headache. Found it really difficult to concentrate.	Annoyed and resentful at having to work on the report. Nervous because I didn't know if I could finish it on time.

(Mauger S., 2003)

When situations such as those described in the above have been identified as stressful, it is important to ask the following questions:

- Were these events or activities for my or someone else's benefit?
- Did I have any control over them or did they ostensibly control me?
- Was the handling of these situations really beyond the scope of my inherent or learned abilities?

Dependent on the answers to these questions, the next step is to try to alter the overall characteristics of your activities from being 'stress producing' to 'stress reducing'. Actually removing or replacing people, events or activities that are causing you stress is rarely practical or feasible. However, what you can do is to think about ways of reducing their negative impact and implementing positive interventions to bring about a better result and overall life-balance.

It has been suggested that the addition of more daily 'pleasurable events' has more positive effect on the immune system than reducing stressful or negative effects – implying that small daily improvements can help transform a negative, stressful existence into a more positive and productive one. Writing your feelings down, on paper, can also be an effective way of 'unloading' frustration and taking the heat out of difficult situations.

In the following sections we shall therefore look in detail at a wide range of proactive interventions – starting with how we can try to change our usual behaviour and responses to stress.

Manage Type-A Behaviour in Others

Wherever possible, reduce the demands made upon you by assigning tasks to others. Delegate to people whom you trust, ensuring that they are given clear, concise instructions regarding the job required. Accept that delegation is the right approach, in this instance, and then move on with your own work. Checking at designated times can give a feeling of confidence to the other person, and will ensure that they feel supported, but not hounded.

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Constructive feedback is useful, but not continual criticism. Remember that the achieved result (and time taken) will probably be absolutely acceptable notwithstanding that they are doing the job in *their* way, which may be different from your method of doing things.

- **Avoid perfectionism**

Accept the fact that you haven't failed just because you may not have completed a job perfectly. Accept that you have done your best, and try to stop being obsessive about getting everything right, 100% of the time. Human beings are fallible.

- **Slow down – why race the clock?**

Always allow an extra 15 minutes to ensure you have time for yourself and also to clarify your thoughts and actions.

- **Tackle one task at a time and enjoy it**

Take your time as opposed to rushing through everything. After completing a task, sit back and reflect on what you have achieved. Has any learning come from it? Did you have problems meeting your deadline because you left some issues to the last minute? Utilise any learned experience to draw upon the next time you meet a similar situation.

- **Learn to occupy your time whilst waiting**

For example, the time spent whilst waiting in a queue can be used as time to think through tasks. But how many of us in reality ever stand still long enough to just think properly about the task ahead?

- **Avoid getting angry over things that you cannot influence**

Accept that there are issues over which you have some control and those that you do not. When you have tried every possible way to achieve what you want, but without success, it may well be time to move on. It is pointless and damaging to become frustrated and angry about matters over which you have no control. Rational thinking must prevail over emotional reaction to retain good health of body and mind.

- Accept (sometimes) the errors both of yourself and others**

Everyone makes mistakes, but they do not necessarily have to be punished for them. Ask yourself, 'Has anyone actually suffered loss as a result of this error?' Learn to see, where possible, the amusing side when something goes wrong, and endeavour to learn from that lesson. It can often be instructive to listen to the details of someone else's mistake, and to think about what you would have done in similar circumstances.

- Avoid immediate responses to incoming email**

Never respond immediately to an email that has had the effect of provoking an emotional response, such as anger in you. It is better to take time to reflect rather than to reply immediately with the inevitable emotional response. It should always be remembered that once the 'send' key has been hit, no amount of wishful thinking will retrieve your message written in haste.

- Enjoy playing without necessarily winning**

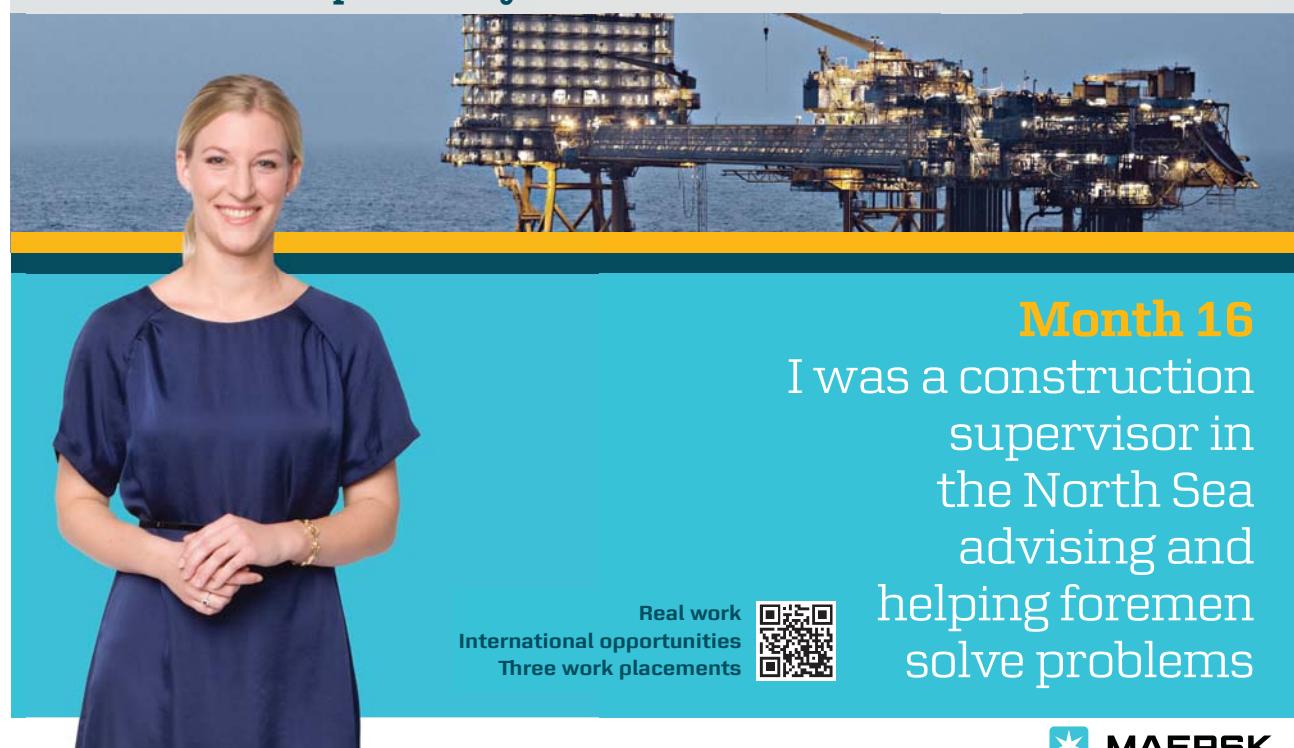
Being competitive is fine, but not at the expense of enjoying yourself. The technique is to do your best, and by so doing, you will maximise both the enjoyment and the activity.

- Smile and give affection**

Many managers walk into the office and rarely take the time to smile or say 'Good morning'. An appropriate gesture or greeting costs nothing, and can make both colleagues and subordinates feel valued.

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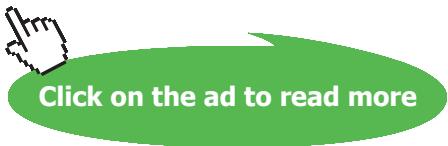
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- **Praise**

Being able to give praise and positive feedback, and not only criticism, will enhance any relationship.

- **Practice being a good listener**

Learn not to finish sentences for others, as apart from being discourteous you cannot necessarily know what they are going to say. One who always interrupts and never waits for a response will simply be regarded as a poor listener. Consequently, others will be loath to share their thoughts with you, as there would be little point. Learn to pose basic, open questions – ‘what, why, when, who, how, where’, in order to elicit a meaningful and interesting reply. Listen to what is being said and follow the subject through. Keep an open mind and you will gain far more from the conversation!

- **Learn to relax**

It is essential to schedule relaxation time for yourself. Set yourself realistic relaxation goals and keep to them.

- **Learn to turn stressful life events into challenges for personal growth**

Stand back and reflect. Commit to paper the learning gained from the experience so that the knowledge obtained can be turned to future advantage.

Indulge in Humour and Laughter

Humour gives us a different perspective on our problems. If we can make light of a situation then it becomes less threatening. Humour is a wonderful stress-reducer and antidote to bad temper and tension. It is known that laughing relaxes tense muscles, speeds more oxygen into your system and lowers blood pressure.



It is also believed that laughter reduces the levels of certain stress hormones that tend to weaken the immune system. Laughter potentiates the ability of defensive cells to destroy tumours and viruses, as does gamma-interferon (a disease-fighting protein), T-cells (which are a major part of the immune response) and B-cells (which make disease-destroying antibodies).

Take 'Time Out'

Being physically active – walking, stretching or even working in the garden can be effective 'stress-busters'. This is why it is so important to take regular breaks away from situations or tasks that are sources of stress and frustration. Although this will not solve the root cause of your stress, it gives you an opportunity to think about the situation more objectively and may even help you to resolve it by looking at it from a different perspective.



Travel With Less Stress

Travel and commuting can be major stressors in modern living. The following techniques may help to ameliorate their effects:

- Always leave an extra 30 minutes for main roads being blocked as you will probably need the extra time in hand. Alternatively, if everything goes smoothly and you arrive early, you will have more time for thinking or for relaxation before your appointment.
- Do not make back-to-back appointments, as meetings will frequently run over time. Also remember the need for 'you' time between meetings.
- Check your route before you leave, especially if you are travelling to an unfamiliar area, and if possible talk to others who make the journey on a regular basis.
- Make sure your car has sufficient fuel the day before your journey, and if necessary check tyres, oil, etc, rather than leaving this until just before you leave.
- Never drive immediately after an emotional upset such as receiving notice of a bereavement (death) or being involved in an argument, as your mindset and feelings might increase your risk of an accident.
- Have small change available in the car for parking meters, etc., and carry a copy of your insurance certificate in the glove compartment, in case you are involved in an accident or stopped by the Police.
- Before starting out, adopt a comfortable seating position and adjust your seat and driving mirrors.
- On long journeys, remember to take short breaks to help avoid becoming over-tired. Keep your arms slightly bent and in a '10 to 2' position on the steering wheel for optimum control and to avoid fatigue.

- Whilst stationary or sitting in heavy traffic, try to perform simple relaxation techniques to help reduce tension in the body – especially vulnerable areas such as the neck, shoulders and arms.
- Have tapes or CDs in the car which you enjoy listening to so that you can use your time effectively. View your car as a personal time and space capsule away from everyone else – an environment which provides your own selection of music and radio channels.



Quick Commuting Tips:

- Travelling, by its very nature, takes place in a spatial context that is outside your control.
- It can be advantageous, following a near accident, to re-examine the incident in your mind to ascertain what action could have been taken to avoid or pre-empt its occurrence.
- Be tolerant of others – shouting at other drivers following what has clearly been their mistake will not change anything, but your anger will affect your judgement for some time afterwards. Remember that the other driver does not know you – bad driving by other road users is not a personal attack. The personalities of some people change when they get behind a wheel, and a calm Type B personality can become a supercharged Type A rally driver as soon as they sit in their car.

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- Continual clock watching will not help you get to your destination any quicker, but will increase your stress levels and you will arrive more stressed than when you set out – and certainly not in a fit state to conduct yourself effectively at a business meeting.
- Accept that drivers (including you) make honest mistakes and have occasional lapses in concentration.
- Be courteous and thank others for their courtesy. (How many times do we become aggrieved because we let another driver out into a stream of traffic and did not even get a ‘thank you’ wave from them?)



Utilising External Help

There are occasions when external help can be beneficial for many individuals exhibiting signs of stress. The following are just some of the many sources of external help available.

Coaching/Counselling

As the proverb says, ‘a problem shared is a problem halved’. However, there are occasions when friends or family, however supportive, may not be the people who an individual feels he or she can turn to. People are often embarrassed about discussing their worries – particularly if these are intimate. They may also be worried about confidentiality – not wanting the entire world to know about their problems.

In the workplace, individuals may also have a need for someone with whom to discuss problems, but they can be wary about talking to just anyone, in case they are perceived to be weak or unable to cope. They therefore may turn to a professional coach/counsellor for confidential help.

Strengthening or Establishing a Support Network

It is recognised that a majority of those individuals who appear to remain happy, healthy and are able to withstand multiple life stresses, have the advantage of possessing a good network of social support – usually comprised of family and close friends. In addition, professional support from outside sources such as The Samaritans (UK based charity that operates a 24 hour telephone help line for people in crisis needing to talk) can also be extremely helpful, as there are times when individuals might rather speak to a stranger than a friend. Confiding in a stranger who knows absolutely nothing about you and has no expectations of you enables feelings to be expressed within a safe framework. When the person with the problem wants to move on and not discuss it any further, they may not wish to be reminded of the time when they were experiencing difficulties.

Whichever means are chosen, it is important to be able to express feelings with someone in whom there is trust. However, this does not necessarily have to involve an actual person. Venting feelings by writing a diary, or perhaps a letter that may never be posted, may have the desired effect of releasing and/or expanding thoughts and feelings.

However much time and effort you put into changing your behaviour, however, you are unlikely to enjoy the maximum benefit unless you also ensure that you look after your body (and mind) through the development of a more healthy lifestyle.



Development of a Healthy Lifestyle

As we will see in this section, there are many different elements involved in the development of a more healthy lifestyle. Many people who embark on this process are often shocked to find out how unhealthy they really are. So, to introduce you to just some of the elements that are typically associated with living a “healthy” life, you should answer the questions in the following lifestyle checklist as truthfully as possible.

It is a sad fact that given the pressures of modern living, many people will answer “yes” to maybe just one or two of these questions. If this applies to you, you should at least console yourself that you have already taken the first positive step in addressing the situation, and use this as a motivator towards becoming a better, healthier you.

Exercise 10

Your Healthy Lifestyle Checklist		
	YES	NO
1. Do you eat healthily? e.g. 5 pieces of fruit per day?		
2. Drink less than 2 cups of coffee per day?		
3. Drink at least 2 litres of water per day?		
4. Walk at least 20 minutes per day?		
5. Know how to switch off and relax?		
6. Sleep well at night?		
7. Make time for hobbies?		
8. Make time for family and friends?		
9. Enjoy your environment?		
10. Make time for 'you'?		
11. Include fun and laughter in your life?		
12. Have regular breaks during your day?		
13. Put some 'me time' in your diary each day?		
14. Ask for help when you need it?		
TOTAL		



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Become More Healthy

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Mastering the capacity to rebalance your life by developing a healthy lifestyle is essential to help maintain the health of mind and body.

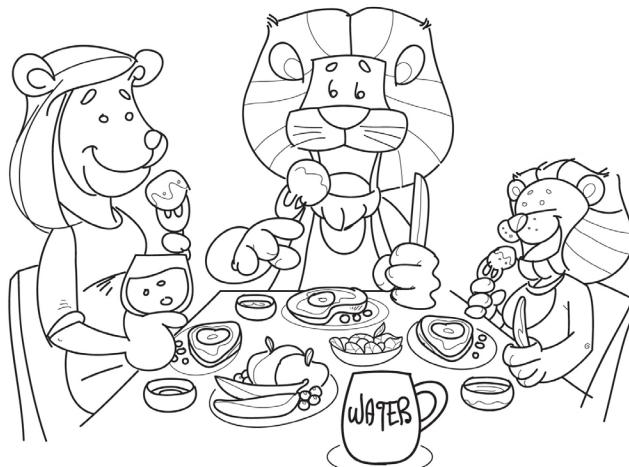


An effective work life balance includes:

- 2.1 A healthy diet**
- 2.2 Regular exercise**
- 2.3 Relaxation**
- 2.4 Uninterrupted and sufficient sleep**
- 2.5 Increasing leisure time and taking up hobbies**

A Healthy Diet

Our bodies are remarkably efficient at extracting the nutrients we need, but at times of stress these needs increase and a well balanced diet is, therefore, essential in preserving health.



Caffeine: Limit caffeine intake, as this can 'kick start' the stress reaction. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate, cola drinks and some headache remedies. When taken in moderation, caffeine can increase alertness. However, consuming an excess of caffeine – whether in coffee or cola – can be addictive and lead to irritability, sleeplessness and impatience. Caffeine also acts as a diuretic, an excess of which can lead to dehydration. It is recommended to reduce coffee and caffeine consumption slowly over a period of time, as stopping abruptly can result in withdrawal symptoms.

Water: Water is essential to maintain life and for our bodies to operate efficiently, especially in very hot environments. This includes temperature regulation, nerve impulse conduction, circulation, metabolism, the immune system, eliminative processes, sensory awareness and perceptive thinking.

Many people drink insufficient water. One glassful a day is **not** enough, as the many chemical processes inside the body require more than this for optimal completion of reactions.

It only takes a 1% fluid loss for the body to become dehydrated, and an insufficiency of water can seriously disrupt the body's biochemistry. This generally happens without any conscious sensation of being thirsty. Stress and caffeine can both influence the amount of water available to the body's systems and the speed with which the body loses it. Any of these factors, alone or in combination, may cause small but critical changes in the brain that can impair neuromuscular coordination, decrease concentration and slow down the thought processes.



The average amount of water loss per day is equivalent to two cups through breathing, two cups through invisible perspiration, and six cups through urination and bowel movements. This equates to a total of ten lost cups per day that need replacing – without taking into account perspiration from exercise or hard work, air conditioning or caffeine consumption.

Furthermore, travelling by air can entail a loss of as much as one litre of water during a three to four hour flight! It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the daily recommended intake of water is 1.5 to 2 litres. When working in an air conditioned office or in very hot weather, your intake should be even more.



Regular Exercise

Exercise not only improves general fitness and increases overall strength, stamina and suppleness, but also has many other additional benefits. Self-esteem can be raised and sleep patterns can improve – meaning that exercise is usually good for both the body and the mind.

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Exercise improves cardiovascular function by strengthening the heart, causing greater elasticity of the blood vessels, increasing oxygen throughout the body, and lowering the blood levels of harmful fats such as cholesterol and triglycerides.

Exercise provides a physical outlet for negative emotions such as frustration, anger and irritability, thereby promoting a more positive mood and outlook. Exercise improves mood by producing positive biochemical changes in the body and brain, as well as reducing the amount of 'fight or flight' hormones the body releases in response to stress. The body also releases greater amounts of endorphins during exercise – the powerful, pain-relieving, mood-elevating chemicals in the brain, which are often lacking in people who are depressed.

Exercise is also an excellent distraction from stressful events and circumstances, and it is thought that stress itself poses significantly less danger to the overall health of people who are physically fit. This is because their heart and circulation are able to work harder for longer periods, and being physically stronger, they are less susceptible to musculoskeletal injury.

Exercise will therefore keep the body functioning properly; helps feelings to be relaxed and refreshed; promotes deep, restful sleep; and is a good stress management technique, because it:

- Reduces muscle tension, and uses up the adrenaline and energy released by the 'fight or flight' response
- Makes the body stronger and better able to cope with the debilitating effects of stress
- Increases energy and stamina
- Maintains self-image, appearance, and tends to control weight
- Helps to clear the mind of worrying thoughts



Feeling fit increases the overall feeling of wellbeing, and a commitment to exercise will increase feelings of control and self-respect. If you are considering regular exercise, the following points are important to consider:

- ♦ Physical exercise is an excellent way of getting the necessary relief and increasing your coping resources – but you will need to make time for it.
- ♦ The choice of exercise is yours. Do something that suits you and fits in easily with your daily life.
- ♦ Begin with an exercise that you enjoy. Find a regime that is interesting, challenging and satisfying, and one that preferably also brings you into contact with other people.
- ♦ 20 games of squash or 15 aerobic workouts are unnecessary and can be dangerous!

It takes as little as three 20-minute sessions per week to increase your physical fitness, and it will also stimulate mental acuity and help to combat the adverse effects of stress. It is, however, recommended that if you are not used to exercising and are over 35, you should visit your doctor prior to embarking on any exercise programme, in order to check that it is suitable for you.



The value of exercise cannot be over-emphasised. Problems appear less important when walking, swimming, running, cycling, or being involved in any other physical pursuit. This is because the mind is better able to maintain a proper perspective over events and situations when tension is released. Any activity that concentrates the attention on an interesting and enjoyable subject that is divorced from life's inherent problems, will be beneficial in renewing inner strengths, natural resistance and coping resources.

Stretch and Do Useful Exercises at Work

How To.



The following are useful exercises to perform at work – they are easy to follow and can easily be done at the desk. They help to stretch the muscles, which can shorten due to overuse and repetitive strain, boost circulation, and help ease tension and stress by building-up overused muscle groups.

Hand warm-up routine: This is an excellent routine for keyboard users or those who do a lot of writing.

- Shake your hands and wrists vigorously to increase mobility and circulation. Press the fingers back from the palms to the fullest limits, with your fingers held together.
- Gently, press each finger back separately.
- Clench and relax your fists.
- Rotate your hands from the wrists with your fists clenched, and your elbows at the sides of your body.
- Always use a wrist protector band to alleviate pressure from keyboard edges. Some people like to use a long heated wheat bag to provide heat to sore and tired forearm muscles whilst typing.

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Stretches to be Done During a Break Away From Your Desk

Neck and Head

- Gently let your head come down onto your chest and bring it back to the centre. Slowly rotate to the left so your chin rests on your left shoulder. Bring back to the centre and then rotate to the right and repeat the same procedure.

Shoulders

- Clasp your hands behind your back and raise your arms towards your shoulders. You should feel a stretch at the front of your chest and shoulder area. This is a good exercise for opening up the chest and defusing tension.
- Raise your right arm so that it is against your right ear. Bend your arm so that your right hand is placed in the centre of your back between your shoulder blades. With your left hand, gently pull the arm further down so that your hand travels downwards. The stretch should be felt in your right arm and shoulders. Repeat on your left side.
- Clasp your hands in front of you and imagine that you are hugging a tree! Push outwards from the shoulders and you will feel a stretch across the back of your shoulders
- Bring both arms out in front of you and then bring the left arm round to the left side and the right arm round to the right. Push behind with both arms and squeeze the shoulder blades together. The stretch should be felt on the front of your chest.

Lower Back

- Lie on the floor and bring your knees into your chest. Hold for a few seconds and then relax.
- Bring the right knee over to the left shoulder and repeat on the other side. This stretches the sides, back and stomach muscles, and is very good for lumber pain and sciatica.

Legs

The best exercise for the legs is to take regular breaks away from your desk. Walk around the office, take a trip to a colleague's office instead of phoning, and take the stairs instead of the lift. The calf muscle is vital in pumping and returning the blood back up from the feet to the trunk of the body, so any exercise which flexes the calf muscle is beneficial.



Foot rotation

Rotate and flex both feet. This will help flex the calf muscle and help with return of blood back to the heart via the veins.

Don't forget the eyes!

Rub your hands together to warm them, and then cup the eyes without pressing your hands to your eyes. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and slowly, visualising that you are looking into darkness. This helps to relax the internal and external muscles of the eye. Also remember to take regular breaks away from your computer screen.



Relaxation

Regular periods of relaxation, in between or away from work schedules, are extremely important as they help to:

- Switch off the stress response
- Improve sleep patterns
- Reduce fatigue
- Increase self esteem
- Assist the body to heal and repair

Relaxation gives you a chance to 'recharge your batteries'. In medical terms, during periods of relaxation, sympathetic nervous system activity is at its lowest – allowing the parasympathetic nervous system to increase its influence over body functions. Accordingly, levels of noradrenaline, adrenaline and cortisol are low, and physical functions such as heart rate and breathing also decrease.

When stressed, the muscles in our bodies tense and this muscular tension can cause headache, neck and shoulder discomfort, backache, etc. These aches and pains can in turn increase tension, leading to a vicious circle of stress/tension and worry.

Tension and relaxation, being two sides of the same coin, mean that we cannot experience both at the same time. We therefore need to learn to relax in order to switch off the effects of tension.



Relaxation techniques

Some people relax by doing something they have already discovered to be enjoyable, for example:

- Listening to music
- Reading
- Having a bath – perhaps with the addition of essential oils
- Watching a favourite film



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There are also a range of more specific relaxation techniques that individuals can learn and use, some of the most popular of which include the following:

Progressive and deep muscular relaxation: This aims to reduce anxiety by emphasising physical relaxation. It consists of first tensing and then releasing all 16 major skeletal muscle groups in sequence. At each stage, the mind concentrates initially on the feeling of tension and then on relaxation. It should be noted that these techniques are not recommended for sufferers of hypertension (high blood pressure) since tensing of the muscles can elevate blood pressure. Instructional CDs are available, and although the technique requires practice to become proficient, it enables the body to relax in stressful situations.

Meditation: Meditation is based on the belief that we all have the capacity to interact with our inner self, and that meditation can be the key to gaining access to this centre of stillness. In the context of stress management, meditation therefore concentrates on relaxing the mind. There are a variety of methods, but the simplest one involves focusing for 20 minutes or more on a single word or sound, that is repeated over and over again in the mind, as a mantra.



Imagery: We may be able to imagine sitting on a beach, listening to the crashing waves and watching the sunset. We can sit there and forget all our problems, and in effect take ourselves off to another world – a perfect way of relieving stress from our bodies. This is, in effect, a type of auto-suggestion that allows us to indulge our senses and let the pleasure bring relief from our problems. This is a scene that we can bring to the forefront of our minds at any time – even sitting behind a desk.

'You' time: It is important for all of us to ensure that we make at least a modicum of time for ourselves each day. With 16 waking hours in a day, it should be possible to reserve 20 minutes solely for ourselves! When you look in your diary, it is unlikely you will find your own name appearing in it because it will be full of everyone else's – so allocate time to yourself and make sure you keep your appointment!

Having a warm bath: Water seems to have special powers in minimising stress and rejuvenating our bodies. It has a beneficial effect on relaxing the skin and muscles, and calms the lungs, heart, stomach and endocrine system by stimulating nerve reflexes. Heat generally quiets and soothes the body, slowing down the activity of internal organs. Cold stimulates and invigorates, increasing internal activity. If you are experiencing tense muscles and anxiety from stress, a hot shower or bath will very often help.



Alternatively, if feeling tired and stressed out, try a warm shower or bath followed by a short, invigorating cold shower to help stimulate your body and mind. Experiment with different water temperatures and times, to determine that which is best for you and your body.

Paced breathing: The following are simple instructions for a technique that is especially beneficial for dealing with long-term stress and stressful situations; and can also help with panic attacks, hyperventilation, breathlessness, dizziness, headaches and tension.

As the first step in learning the technique, you will need to set aside at least ten minutes twice a day to practice 'paced breathing'.

Basic Paced Breathing:

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position away from the distractions of everyday life.
- Support your head with soft cushions so that the weight of your head is taken off your neck.
- Start to breathe regularly and slowly as if you were going to sleep, moving your stomach in and out (only your stomach should be moving, not your shoulders).
- It may be helpful to place a hand on your stomach to feel it moving as you breathe. Sometimes it can also be useful to practise in front of a mirror first.
- Place both hands on your diaphragm with your fingertips just touching. As you breathe, you should be able to see your fingertips parting slightly as your diaphragm expands.
- In order to pace your breathing, it is advisable to practice this by breathing in to the count of 3 and then breathe out to the count of 3 (this should take 6 seconds).

- Continue this paced breathing for 2 minutes. Some people may find that initially this pattern of breathing may make them dizzy. If so, continue with the previous steps for a bit longer before introducing paced breathing.
- Gradually, you will be able to keep this paced breathing up for longer than 2 minutes. When you can keep this breathing rhythm for longer than 5 minutes you can begin to introduce some Progressive Muscle Relaxation techniques.




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Relax Quickly – Everyday!

How To.



Even if you do not have time for the techniques described above, there are a number of techniques you can use to help your body to stay relaxed.

- When you feel the urge to **stretch**, doing so will help to release tension. Trust your urge to stretch and give yourself some quick relaxation.
- Try not to suppress the desire to **yawn**. A good yawn will stretch and relax your face, neck and shoulder muscles. It is also nature's way of telling you your body is tired, and will help to give you more oxygen with which to re-energise your body.
- When your legs and feet feel tired after a long day, you naturally want to rub your feet. Follow this urge and **massage your feet**. Rotate your feet and ankles slowly, as this will help to relax your feet naturally if a massage is not available. Or, place your feet under warm running water, or in a bowl of warm water with smooth pebbles to massage the reflex points on your soles.
- If you feel anger rising in your chest or tears beginning, **breathe** in to the count of four and then breathe out to the count of four or even more. Be sure to breathe from the diaphragm (as previously mentioned). Many people take a bit longer to breathe out than to breathe in, and this is even more relaxing. Repeat this six times or more and you will be more in control of your emotions, more relaxed and better able to deal with the situation.
- Anywhere, and at any time of the day, stop and take one **deep breath**. This will help to revitalise your body and strengthen a good habit of breathing properly.
- An excellent de-tenser and refresher is a 15–30 minute **brisk walk** in the open air. As your breathing deepens so more oxygen can be supplied, increasing your body's ability to work properly for you.
- Any **change** of activity is helpful when you are feeling stressed or emotional. Get up and get a glass of water, cup of tea, coffee or a soft drink (remembering to keep your caffeine levels down), or go and talk to someone.



Get Uninterrupted and Sufficient Sleep

How To.



It is well known that sleep has a major role to play in helping the body to repair itself both physically and mentally, so not surprisingly it is also widely acknowledged that sleep deprivation can be a major cause of stress.

The following will help you obtain benefit from the ‘good sleep’ that you need to function at maximum levels:

- Try not to just lie in bed fretting when you cannot sleep. Get out of bed and perhaps make a warm drink, or do something you enjoy and that relaxes you.
- If you have a tendency to wake up with your ‘to do’ list in your mind, try getting up and writing about what may be bothering you. If your ‘to do’ list continues to go round and round in your head, try writing lists **before** you leave work or start getting ready to go to bed.
- If you wake in the night, don’t keep looking at the clock. Watching the time go by will only increase your anxiety and postpone sleep for even longer.
- Ensure caffeine consumption is kept to a minimum. More than five cups of coffee a day, or ten cups of tea, can increase the pulse rate and disturb sleep patterns.
- Prior to going to bed, try to take your mind off the problems of the day. Read a book, listen to some soothing music, watch an amusing film, etc.



- Poor eating habits can cause poor sleep patterns. Eating heavy meals late at night or going to bed hungry are not to be encouraged. There should be at least a two-hour space between finishing a meal and going to sleep.

Increasing Leisure Time and Taking Up Hobbies

A very important way to relax is to take time out to enjoy hobbies or increase leisure time. It does not matter what is done – it is the making time away from work or family stresses that is important.

Some hobbies can give a wonderful sense of achievement that is not available in other areas of life – for example learning to play an instrument or even climbing or flying an aeroplane (although not at the same time!). These activities allow the mind to focus on achieving an enjoyable goal and ceasing to dwell on everyday stress.

It is common nowadays, however, to hear someone say, 'I really enjoy singing/dancing/sand dune safaris etc, but I do not seem to have the time to do it anymore.' To have a well-balanced work and home life though, it is important to make time for activities that you enjoy. Some people feel incredibly guilty in making time for their hobby or themselves. This is particularly true in working parents, who feel that every spare moment should be spent with their children. So why not get the whole family involved in a hobby or leisure activity? By focusing on something completely different, it is entirely possible to feel more energised. Many people have even turned their hobbies into successful careers – proving the saying that if you enjoy something you are probably very good at it!



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Alteration of Mindset

The way in which we **perceive** situations is as important as how we **respond** to them. How we think is therefore the third major area in which we can make proactive interventions, including:

- ♦ Modifying our perspectives
- ♦ Positive thinking
- ♦ Self-talk



Modifying Our Perspective

It is very helpful to be able to reflect and modify our thinking so that we can improve the way we perceive events and relate to others. There are many ways of interpreting a situation – one of the best known of which is ‘is the glass half empty or half full?’. Some people will always see the negative aspect and others the positive. It can therefore be useful to ask, ‘is there another way of seeing this situation?’. As always it is important to learn from each event – what was helpful and unhelpful about the situation and how we viewed it?

Positive Thinking & Self Talk

The power of positive thinking can help us resist feelings of hopelessness, desperation and failure. That is why it is important to focus on our strengths and to look for, and seize, opportunities that could result from a particular situation or set of circumstances.

It is natural to think about what the future may hold, but it is important to retain a proper perspective. It is pointless to worry excessively about future events – ‘what might happen’. The future has not taken place yet and there will inevitably be large parts of it over which we have no control. In addition, worrying about a possible negative outcome will simply increase anxiety and tension, whereas focusing on a positive outcome will reduce this tension and so help us to achieve our goals. A practical way of doing this is as follows:

- Write down the worst scenario possible
- Consider (truthfully!) the likelihood of it occurring
- Imagine the best scenario possible
- Put together a plan that maximises the likelihood of the best scenario and minimises the likelihood of the worst
- Try to remember similar situations in the past which at first seemed just as threatening, but ultimately turned out well

The learning curve is to try to recognise and accept when a situation is beyond our control, focus on what we can do positively and keep on practicing.

Self-talk

Much of the distress that individuals experience is caused by negative thoughts, their expectations of themselves and other people, and what they think others are expecting of them.



Many individuals cause themselves undue stress by inappropriate ‘self talk’. It is often very constructive, therefore, for people to think about what they tell themselves – and the internal language they use. Even simple phrases such as, ‘I shouldn’t be saying this, but...’ or ‘I know I haven’t got the right to say this, but...’ reveal a lot about how people perceive themselves in relation to those around them, their self-esteem and aspects of their lives that may therefore be causing them stress.

'ALL WORK AND NO PLAY IS NOT A GOOD THING!'

Quick Fixes

Ensure you do get **breaks**, morning and afternoon and a lunch break.

Include **laughter** in your life. It is a natural stress buster!

Learn to **balance** your time between family, leisure, work and sleep.

Set yourself **realistic goals** and work out your priorities.

Consider improving your time management skills. Balance and use your time effectively.

Get proper sleep. Stress can, in some cases, cause insomnia. If this is true in your case consider the following possible courses of action:

- ◆ Try to avoid eating a large amount of food within three hours of going to bed.
- ◆ Do you skip food at these times? You might not be sleeping because you are hungry!
- ◆ Avoid drinking tea and coffee in the evenings.
- ◆ Consider relaxation techniques – e.g. progressive muscular relaxation, visualisation, etc.
- ◆ If you have had a very 'mental' day (this includes a day of constant worry!) take some physical exercise. Even just go for a walk for a few minutes around the block. Balance is very important in all areas of our lives.
- ◆ If thoughts about work are keeping you awake, try writing everything down on a 'to do list' and telling yourself firmly, "I don't have to think about any of that till tomorrow!". If the thoughts return in the night, tell them to go away and distract yourself with other thoughts, e.g. build up a clear visual picture of the design of your ideal garden or house. Mentally visualise a pleasant holiday or social occasion.

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Exercise 11

Coping With Stressful Situations

Spend some time thinking about situations which you find personally stressful. These can be either at work or at home.

When you have identified these, consider ways in which you could make these situations less stressful.

For instance, would being better prepared or more assertive reduce the level of stress you experience?

Would practising some relaxation techniques such as deep breathing help you cope more effectively?

Being clear now will really help when you are faced with this situation again.

Now complete the following grid, as honestly and as creatively as you can.

STRESSFUL SITUATION	COPING STRATEGY

Carole Spiers' Personal Top 12 Tips For Busy Executives To Bounce Back From Pressure

1. Walk away from situations that you have no control over. Write down what was causing you stress and physically draw a line under it!
2. Park your email. Turn off your email alerts as they interrupt what you do. Set time aside daily to do your correspondence. Interruptions break your concentration and make you less effective for what you were doing and what has just come in!
3. Compartmentalise activity. Draw up a quadrant and put your activities into a box. From there you will see what overspills into each activity.
4. When things go wrong, take the positive learning that comes out of the situation and move on. Don't dwell on the past...what could have been. Don't go into victim mode.
5. Do your 'to do' list at the end of each day ready for the next. Make sure you start each week with a revised list.
6. Prioritise your tasks and put deadline dates next to each one.
7. Put some 'me time' into your diary each day – how many times does your name appear in your diary!
8. Choose an exercise activity that you enjoy or you won't stick to it!
9. Share your goals with a colleague or friend so that you are accountable to someone else (that way you will ensure it happens!).
10. Know how many hours sleep you need per night and ensure you get it. If you have to get up early in the morning then get an early night!
11. Use your 'dead' time effectively. As I travel on trains and planes a good deal, I have to manage delays effectively. I always have my computer and personal development CD with me so when there are delays, I don't get stressed out.
12. Communicate and ask for help when you need it! People aren't mind readers – you have to ask for support!



Exercise 12

Home Stress Management Contract

Complete this contract and maintain your goals

- 1. I Could Avoid Or Ease The Impact Of Stress In My Life If I Were To Start:**

- 2. I Could Avoid Or Ease The Impact Of Stress In My Life If I Were To Stop:**

- 3. I Will Know That I Am Managing My Stress Better When I Find Myself:**

Exercise 13

Work Stress Management Contract

Complete this contract and maintain your goals

- 1. I Could Avoid Or Ease The Impact Of Stress In My Team If I Were To Start:**

- 2. I Could Avoid Or Ease The Impact Of Stress In My Team If I Were To Stop:**

- 3. I Will Know That I Am Managing Stress Better When I Find My Team:**

Carole's Executive Summary

Stress has many causes, and affects people in a variety of ways. In the workplace, stress can have devastating effects, not just on the individual but on the organisation as a whole. Where an employee is suffering any combination of the emotional, physical and behavioural symptoms which stress induces, performance will clearly suffer, and this in turn may well affect others within the organisation.

Although stressful situations are sometimes unavoidable, it is very often possible both for management to foresee and pre-empt their occurrence, and also for employees to learn to effectively cope with the consequent pressure. A proactive management culture can avoid the worst effects of stress by means of risk assessment, improved communication, ongoing performance reviews, education and training.

- Stress is the reaction to an inappropriate amount of pressure or responsibility when the individual being subjected to these feels inadequate and unable to cope.
- Pressure provides the stimulation and challenge that we use to achieve job satisfaction and self-esteem. An optimum amount of pressure assists performance but if it develops into stress, then performance will be affected.
- Excessive pressure is not 'good for us'.
- To suffer from stress is not 'a sign of weakness'.
- The ability to control circumstance, i.e. to have some input over events, is generally accepted to be an important contributor to a sense of wellbeing in the individual. This understanding has led to the development of management interventions which assist individuals to cope with pressure when it turns into stress.
- Stress manifests itself in cognitive, psychological, physiological and behavioural changes.
- Every individual responds to stress to a different degree and in their own way.
- It is possible to learn to manage stress successfully, rather than allowing it to overwhelm us to an extent where our physical and mental health is damaged.
- Avoiding the effects of excessive stress requires us to identify those stressors which affect us personally and to learn how to control them, either by ourselves or with professional help.
- What is accepted as a motivating pressure for one person, may manifest itself as stress to another, and what may appear to us as stressful one day may actually be seen as a positive pressure the next.
- Stress is like a light switch. Our mind turns it on automatically but we need to learn how to turn it off.

In order to get the most from life, it is important for all of us to try to maintain a balance between stimulation and relaxation; exercise and rest; responsibility and freedom; work and play; laughter and tears. This is not easy, but as we have seen, there are an extraordinarily wide range of proactive interventions that we can make in order to improve the balance in our lives.



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- A 'stress diary' can be invaluable in helping to understand not only the major sources of stress – but also the frequency with which they are being experienced.
- It is important to try to alter the balance in our activities from being 'stress producing' to 'stress reducing'.
- For people who find it difficult to say 'no', assertiveness and time management training can both be extremely valuable.
- How we manage our time is a key factor in determining how stressful our lives can be.
- Humour gives us a different perspective on our problems. If we can make light of a situation, then it can become less threatening.
- It is important to take regular breaks away from situations or tasks that are the source of stress and frustration.
- The proactive interventions we can make to help develop a healthier lifestyle include changes related to diet, exercise, relaxation, sleep and leisure.
- A well balanced diet is crucial in preserving health and helping to reduce stress, but there are certain foods and drinks that act as powerful stimulants to the body and can contribute to stress.
- It is important to limit our caffeine intake, as this 'kick starts' the stress reaction.
- We should aim to keep the consumption of 'convenience' foods to the minimum, as many contain large amounts of sugar, salt, fat and preservatives.
- It is essential that we drink at least three litres of water per day
- Exercise can be good for both the body and the mind, and it is thought that stress poses significantly less danger to the overall health of people who are physically fit.
- It is extremely important that all of us include a daily period of relaxation in our lives.
- Tension and relaxation are two sides of the same coin – you cannot experience both at the same time. We therefore need to learn to turn **on** the bodily effects of relaxation so that we can turn **off** the symptoms of tension.
- Proactive interventions in terms of how we think about things include changing our perspective, positive thinking and self-talk.
- Exercise provides an outlet for negative emotions (such as frustration and anger) to be dispersed. It is important to choose an activity that you enjoy so that you increase your chances of maintaining it.
- In recent years, a wide range of 'alternative' therapies have been offered for the treatment of stress. Depending on method, mode and the individual, some will be more effective than others.



Personal Action Plan

Key Learning Points from the programme

AFTERNOON SESSION	ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Recommended Reading

Stress in Organisations

Tolley's Managing Stress in the Workplace

By Carole Spiers (published by LexisNexis). An essential manager's guide to work-related stress.

ISBN 0-7545-1269-X (2003) www.carolespiersgroup.com or www.amazon.co.uk

Real Solutions, Real People: Tackling work-related stress

The latest publication from the HSE including case study prompt cards to be used in discussion groups.

HSE Books (2003) Tel: 01787 881165 ISBN 0 71762767 5 Web: www.hsebooks.co.uk

Intervention in Occupational Stress

(A handbook of counselling for stress at work)

By Randall R Ross and Elizabeth M Altmaier

Sage Publications (1994) ISBN 0-8039-8673-4

Managing Workplace Stress

By Cary L Cooper and Susan Cartwright

Sage Publications (1997) ISBN 0-7619-0193-0

Managing Employee Stress in the Workplace

By Lesley Towner

Kogan Page (1997) ISBN 0-7494-2526-1

The Stress Workbook: How Individuals Teams and Organisations can balance Pressure and Performance

By Eve Warren & Caroline Toll

Nicholas Brealey (1996) ISBN 1-85788-171-0

Stress – A Management Guide

By John Clark

Published by Spiro Business Guides (2002) ISBN 1-904298-29-X

Meeting the Stress Challenge: A Training and Staff Development Manual

By Neil Thompson, Michael Murphy and Steve Stradling

Russell House Publishing (1998) ISBN 1-898924-47-3

**Emotional and Physiological Processes and Positive Intervention Strategies
(Research in Occupational Stress and Well Being)**

By Daniel C. Ganster, Pamela L. Perrewe

JAI Press (2003) ISBN 0-76231057-X

Counselling for Occupational Stress: A Handbook of Counselling for Stress at Work

By Randall R Ross and Elizabeth M Altmaier

Sage Publications (1994) ISBN 0-8039-8673-4

Coping With Stress at Work

By Jacqueline M. Atkinson

HarperCollins (1994) ISBN 0-7225-3095-1

Managing Workplace Stress: A Best Practice Blueprint (CBI Fast Track S.)

By Stephen Williams and Lesley Cooper

John Wiley and Sons Ltd (2002) ISBN 0-47084-287-3

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Individual Stress Awareness

Being Happy by Andrew Matthews ISBN 0-84431-2868-2

A light hearted look at stress, helping you to understand yourself, forgive yourself and understand life in general.

Follow Your Heart – Finding Purpose in your Life and Work ISBN 0-646 31066-6

Another good book from Andrew Matthews, a book to help you through your life and to learn how to do the things you love and deal with the occasional disaster.

Think Your Way to Happiness by Dr Windy Dryden & Jack Gordon

ISBN 0-85969-603-0

Learn to understand your feelings and see that you don't have to feel bad about things.

Build Your Own Rainbow by Barrie Hopson and Mike Scally

ISBN 1-85252-074-4

Does what it says in the title, helps the reader through a series of exercises to plan their personal and career objectives.

The Don't Sweat the Small Stuff Work Book by Richard Carlson

ISBN 0-340-73833-2

The practical work book companion to Carlson's best selling book "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff" full of practical tips and advice.

I'm not crazy I'm just not you by Roger Pearlman & Sara C Albritton

ISBN 0-89106-096-0

An explanation of the 16 Myers Briggs personality types which helps us to understand and work alongside our colleagues.

You Can't Afford the Luxury of a Negative Thought John-Roger & Peter McWilliams

ISBN 0-7225-2383-1

An inspiring book for those suffering from life threatening illness, but there are also lessons for us all to learn.

Dear Job Stressed Mary Dempsey & Rene Tihista ISBN0-89106-089-8

Helpful advice on recognising and dealing with job-related stress

What You Think of Me is None of My Business Terry Cole Wittaker

ISBN 0-71831-00550-2

A helpful book that increases the reader's self awareness and builds self esteem.

Conquer Your Stress (Management Shapers) Creating a Balance

By Cary L. Cooper, Stephen Palmer

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2000) ISBN: 0-85292-8

Happiness Now!

By Robert Holden

Hodder Mobius(1999) ISBN 0-3407-1309-7

Positive Under Pressure

By Gael Lindenfield, Malcom Vandenburg

HarperCollins (2000) ISBN 0722538170



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Business & Economics | Computer Science/IT | Design | Mathematics

Master programmes in
Business & Economics | Behavioural Sciences | Computer Science/IT | Cultural Studies & Social Sciences | Design | Mathematics | Natural Sciences | Technology & Engineering
Summer Academy courses

The Author

Carole Spiers MIHPE MISMA

World Authority on Corporate Stress. Motivational Speaker.

BBC Guest-Broadcaster. Best-selling Author

'Achieving sustainable success by adopting a healthy corporate culture' has been Carole Spiers' mission for the past 20 years. She provides the cutting-edge of expertise in this vital field and brings together **individual empowerment and executive management** to improve performance and increase profit.

This gives her unique credibility as an authority on personal empowerment and as a **BBC Broadcaster** and **best-selling author** on stress-related subjects. Carole is frequently contacted by the **international media** for professional comment and is a sought-after **Keynote Motivational Speaker** for international conferences and seminar platforms. She is also an **Expert Witness before the UK Courts**.

TESTIMONIAL: 'Your innovative keynote presentation on Organisational Change for our Top Team was really an eye-opener, and an ignition to what I call a 'mindset change process. We all felt thoroughly engaged and involved in this important issue. In particular, we now focus carefully on the needs of those who may be challenged by new systems and methods. Truly we understand your main message that no-change is no option and have the strategies to take us forward.'

Hayyan Al Habib, Director, Al Habib Group (Oman)



Experience in UAE

Carole doesn't just talk success – she lives it!

Over the past 10 years, **Carole has been working in the UAE** – primarily to fulfill public speaking engagements, stage in-house training and deliver High Performance Coaching assignments to Senior Board Executives.

As a **weekly columnist for Gulf News**, Carole writes on topical business issues facing Middle East managers, their staff and employees, in the most critical areas affecting growth, development and success <http://www.carolespiersgroup.co.uk/gulf.html>

Corporate Expertise

She works with Senior Boards and Management to forge dynamic leadership teams to think and act strategically in a world that moves faster every day.

Author of **Show Stress Who's Boss!** and **Tolley's Managing Stress in the Workplace**, Carole is also a **successful entrepreneur and founder of the Carole Spiers Group (CSG)**, an international Stress Management and Employee Wellbeing consultancy which, for over 20 years, has advised, coached and trained clients to achieve sustained success through a healthy workplace culture.

Passionate, International Motivational Speaker

Carole is a high energy, charismatic, motivational speaker with a unique ability for **empowering people to change attitudes and mindsets** that hold them back from unlocking their untapped potential.

Let her Audience Speak for Her!

'Carole Spiers' energy, experience and knowledge was greatly appreciated...the value she added was immeasurable. Her presentation was intelligent, interactive and energetic – just what we needed as the closing keynote to our Family Business Forum in Abu Dhabi'. Purva Hassomal, Director, Leaders of Abu Dhabi, Family Business Forum

'No visiting speaker could have been better positioned to address the Women in Leadership Forum at the Atlantis in Dubai. Carole Spiers is a supreme example of achievement through self-development, and I know that this registered vividly with the audience in that packed hall. Many of them realized that they had learned practical Stress Management tools and strategies that they could implement immediately after leaving her presentation. We certainly hope we may see her addressing one of platforms at Naseba again'. Sophie Le Ray, CEO, Naseba

Proven Results from a Proven Expert

In her role as a High Performance, Executive Coach, Carole Spiers **helps bring out the best in business leaders**, enabling them to deliver sustainable performance both individually and in their teams.

Carole the Person. Going Beyond Expectations

As **Past Chair of the International Stress Management Association^{UK}**, and **Former President of the London Chapter of the Professional Speaking Association**, Carole's philosophy is wide acknowledged '*Your corporate edge will increasingly depend on a healthy workplace culture – an environment of mutual respect where well-rewarded employees can feel a sense of mission in optimising performance and productivity!*'

In 1999, on behalf of the International Stress Management Association^{UK}, **Carole created and established the UK's highly successful media campaign – National Stress Awareness Day.**

TESTIMONIAL: Carole Spiers' industry's bible 'Managing Stress in the Workplace' will be compulsory reading for all HR Managers and Directors, as well as secretaries and business Managers with responsibilities for people (Personnel Today)

Her client list reads as a roll-call of leading international organisations including –

- ↗ Unilever, Accenture, Etisalat, Tecom (Dubai), AXA Insurance
- ↗ Walt Disney, Panasonic, Bank of England, Al Habib (Oman)
- ↗ Nat West Bank, Abu Dhabi Marine, MBC Media, Law Society (London)
- ↗ British Transport Police, Zawya (Dubai), WH Smiths, Dun & Bradstreet
- ↗ London Underground, Kanoo Group and many others.

Brain power

By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.

Up to 25 % of the generating costs relate to maintenance. These can be reduced dramatically thanks to our systems for on-line condition monitoring and automatic lubrication. We help make it more economical to create cleaner, cheaper energy out of thin air.

By sharing our experience, expertise, and creativity, industries can boost performance beyond expectations.

Therefore we need the best employees who can meet this challenge!

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SKF



Stress Management Training, Workplace Counselling and Consultancy Delivering Quality Service to Industry and Commerce

'Our mission is to empower organisations to achieve sustainable success through a healthy corporate culture' *Carole Spiers*

Established in 1987, the Carole Spiers Group (**CSG**) is a leading provider of stress management and employee counselling services working with equal success of the UK and the Gulf.

Through its cutting-edge stress management programmes, CSG has delivered benefits to both commercial and public sector clients around the world including names such as Abu Dhabi Marine Operating company, Accenture, Al Habib [Oman], Allied Bakeries, AXA, Debenhams, Dubai Cables, Emirates Airlines, Etisalat, Givaudan, House of Fraser, Kanoo Group [ME], Phoenix Pharmahandel [Germany], Somerfield, WH Smith and many others.

CSG consultants have introduced personal anti-stress strategies into organisations that have been shown to decisively improve productivity and competitive advantage through satisfied employees working in a healthy corporate culture

CSG Will Show You Show to Manage Workplace Stress Effectively, through:

- Executive Stress Management Boardroom Briefings
- Stress Management Training for Managers
- Stress Awareness Programmes for all employees
- Professional Counselling and Post Trauma Debriefing
- One to one Executive Coaching and Mentoring for Managers
- Motivational Keynote Presentations for Seminars

With a UK network of employee counsellors, professional consultants, trainers and coaches, **CSG** is uniquely equipped to advise professionally on both the human and the corporate aspects of workplace stress, including bullying, intimidation, violence, post-trauma, absenteeism and organisational change,.

Consulted as Stress Expert by all Media

CSG is regularly called upon for professional comment by the BBC, Sky, CNN, Gulf Region TV/radio and other media, as well as being a regular contributor to professional journals.

TESTIMONIAL: 'Into our 14th year of Employee Counselling with the Carole Spiers Group, I want to commend this excellent team for their support in all manner of stress-related situations, including a number of serious traumatic incidents. They have demonstrated a deep understanding of workplace pressures, as well as a special insight into domestic stress impacting on work'.

Matthew Thomas – Service Delivery Manager – Cerdian on behalf of Somerfield Stores Ltd.

Trust and responsibility

NNE and Pharmaplan have joined forces to create NNE Pharmaplan, the world's leading engineering and consultancy company focused entirely on the pharma and biotech industries.

Inés Arézaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old
Education: Chemical Engineer

– You have to be proactive and open-minded as a newcomer and make it clear to your colleagues what you are able to cope. The pharmaceutical field is new to me. But busy as they are, most of my colleagues find the time to teach me, and they also trust me. Even though it was a bit hard at first, I can feel over time that I am beginning to be taken seriously and that my contribution is appreciated.



NNE Pharmaplan is the world's leading engineering and consultancy company focused entirely on the pharma and biotech industries. We employ more than 1500 people worldwide and offer global reach and local knowledge along with our all-encompassing list of services.

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95p each

Books

POSITIVE ACTION AGAINST STRESS Instant Stress Relief tips £5.00

Get to know the basics of stress control with this introductory pocket manual. Ideal for distributing to your management team or to be included in delegate packs. Customised branding available, if required.

TOLLEY'S MANAGING STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE £62.50 by Carole Spiers.

Comprehensive Bible for Managers, Health & Safety, Personnel and Occupational Health Advisors. Right now, this is all you need for in-depth specialist knowledge of stress.

TURN PASSION INTO PROFIT! - Inspirational Book of Self-Marketing £15.00

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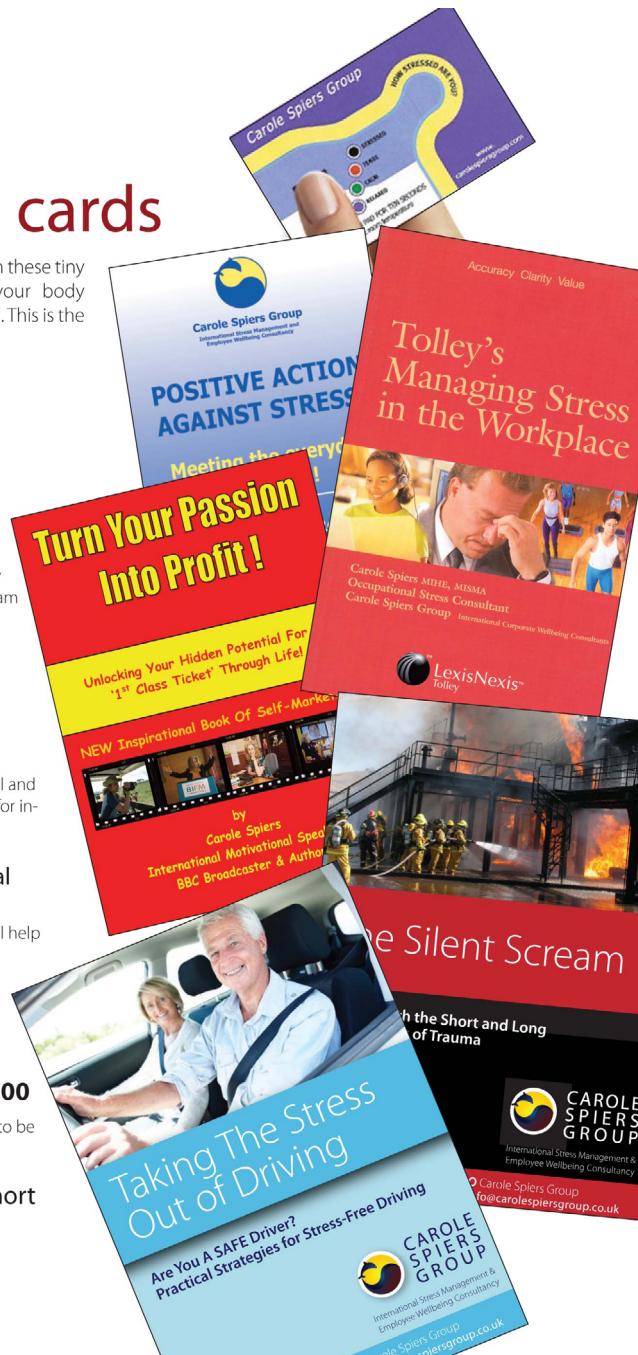
E-books

TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF DRIVING £5.00

Advice for both drivers and their passengers that is intended to be a tool to help make journeys less stressful.

THE SILENT SCREAM - Coping with the short and long-term effects of trauma £5.00

Defining and understanding Trauma and diagnosing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.



Established in 1987, the Carole Spiers Group (CSG) is a leading provider of Stress Management and Employee Counselling services, working with equal success in the UK and the Gulf to bring proven benefits to both multi-nationals and SMEs. CSG is called upon for comment by the media as well as being a regular contributor to professional journals.

Call Us Today on + 44 (0) 20 8954 1593
or email: info@carolespiersgroup.co.uk
for a **FREE**, confidential, stress strategy consultation.
www.carolespiersgroup.co.uk



CAROLE SPIERS GROUP
International Stress Management &
Employee Wellbeing Consultancy

International Stress Management &
Employee Wellbeing Consultancy

Continue Where This Toolkit Leaves Off!



Get deeper into stress reduction – with **CSG**'s selective catalogue of Special Reports, Trainer packs, Manuals and CDs by World Authority on Corporate Stress, Carole Spiers.

For more information on **CSG services including:**

- ◆ Boardroom Briefings and Conference Keynotes presented by Carole Spiers
- ◆ Train-the-trainer programmes in Time Management, Organisational Change and Workplace Bullying
- ◆ Stress awareness programmes tailored for the boardroom to the shop floor
- ◆ Employee Counselling support services and post traumatic stress debriefing
- ◆ High Performance Executive Coaching
- ◆ Mentoring and conflict resolution

Please contact us for a FREE, confidential Stress Consultation:

Carole Spiers Group

International Stress Management & Employee Wellbeing Consultancy

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Motivational Speaker website: www.carolespiers.co.uk

Counselling website: www.loveandrelationshipexpert.co.uk

