

Measuring & Managing Your Work Related Stress

STRESS RISK AUDITS

Carrying out proper risk assessments and regularly reviewing them, will help employers build a healthy working environment.

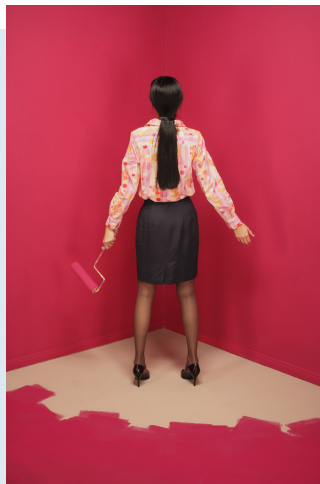
TRAINING IN STRESS RECOGNITION

Early recognition of the signs and symptoms of stress leads to a rapid help response and faster recovery.

INCIDENT COUNSELLING: A sudden unanticipated situation or circumstance (disaster, accident, sudden death, assaults or suicide) can produce a high degree of stress. Counselling 24-48 hours after the event helps to relieve fear/anxiety, and develop coping strategies to aid recovery.

Why use People-centric business psychologists?

Our psychologists come from practice-oriented research backgrounds, placing them at the forefront of their field of expertise, and offering our clients significant competitive advantage by placing them at the leading edge of innovation and change. We only champion methods shown to make a difference - important, sometimes counter intuitive and always relevant. Our approach is up-to-date and results-driven, contributing to system wide improvements in people practices.



Tools to Prevent Stress

There are many checklists, and questionnaires to enable organisations to monitor job content, working conditions, terms of employment, social relations, and health and well being. Once organisations know where the 'shoe pinches', action can be taken to adjust the fit and improve working conditions.

Improving Your Conditions

According to the European Commission, stress consists of a pattern of "stone-age" reactions, preparing the organism for flight or fight in response to stressors. This kind of response is not appropriate for today's workers, struggling to adjust to high performance objectives, long work hours and demanding clients/customers. Clarifying goals and values, rewarding good performance, promoting tolerance, security and justice and, learning how to promote success and avoid failure will go some way towards preventing work-related stress. Such interventions are positive, not only for employees in terms of stress, health and well-being, but also for the success of the organisation.

Meeting Your Obligations

Employers have a duty to develop a coherent overall prevention policy that includes "avoiding risks, combating risks at source and adapting the work to the individual".

- **Over half the EU's 160 million workers report working at very high speeds (56%), and to tight deadlines (60%).**
- **Sustained work-related stress disorders are expected to rank second in the global disease burden by 2020, behind ischemic heart disease, but ahead of all other diseases.**

Addressing Your Concerns

Action to reduce work-related stress need not be complicated or expensive. One of the most common sense approaches is known as *systematic work environment management*.

The first step is to identify the incidence prevalence, severity and trends of work-related stresses, their causes and consequences by using a survey instrument.

Whilst the survey approach is the simplest, we are aware that 'one size does not fit all'. A combination of a standardised and organisationally tailored survey items will present the most optimal approach for a specific organisational setting.

The second step is to analyse the conditions of work and to explore the outcomes of the survey.

The third step is to explore stress reactions, incidence of ill health, indicators of wellbeing, and productivity in relation to quality and quantity of services or products. Where outcomes are positive they should be expanded upon, and where they are not so good a rethink may be required.

Defining Our Approach

We combine three major approaches to stress:

STRESSOR-STRAIN

In this approach the 'stressor' is what causes the stress, (poor management, over demand/ under demand, lack of clarity with regard to expectations, poor social support and failure to modify requirements according to individual characteristics). Strain refers to the outward signs of stress, (irritability, disengagement, lack of concentration, indecisiveness).

ECOLOGICAL OR SYSTEMS

Here the emphasis is on the design of work and equipment, intensity of work load and personal factors such as ability, capacity and motivation and the way these interact to produce both good and bad effects.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A commitment to all aspects of health and safety, a better balance between work, family and leisure, access to lifelong learning and good inter-group relations and career prospects all relate to good stress management.

All three approaches are aimed at preventing work related ill health and promoting well being and productivity. People-centric can help you define your approach, design your audits, train your managers and supervisors, and proactively manage your employee support service provision.

BENEFITS

ALLOWS ORGANISATION TO:

- Identify and deal with stress 'hot spots'
- Recognise and tackle stress before it becomes a problem
- Promote a healthy future for employees
- Provide access to counselling for employees that need specialised help
- Conduct business in a socially responsible way
- Gain respect and reputation as an employer