

### Today's Topic/Issue

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.'

#### Stress can be caused by:

- Demands
- Control
- Support
- Relationships
- Role
- Change

#### How to spot the signs of stress

There are four areas which are affected by stress:

1. Emotional
2. Mental
3. Physical
4. Behavioural

### QUICK QUIZ

**What signs should you look for in each of these areas to recognise in yourself or your colleagues?**

We can't always avoid stress, but how we respond to it can make a big difference to our overall health and wellbeing. Avoiding problems rather than tackling them head on can often make things worse, so utilise the support of your line manager and colleagues to find a solution to help relieve your stress.

If you've tried self-help techniques and they aren't working, see your GP. There are lots of other options open to you, such as guided self-help or stress management courses.



## QUICK QUIZ

What strategies do you utilise to manage stress?



## REMEMBER

Stress is a normal response—but it needs managing. Everyone experiences it at times. It becomes a problem when it's prolonged or overwhelming.



## Work-Related Stress

### What causes stress?

- **Demands** – including issues such as amount of work, work patterns and your work environment
- **Control** – how much say you have in the way you do your work
- **Support** – including the encouragement, attitude and resources provided to you either from the company, your line management and your colleagues
- **Relationships** – including promoting positive working to avoid conflict and deal with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role** – whether you understand your role within the company and whether the company ensures that you do not have conflicting roles
- **Change** – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated to you.

### QUICK QUIZ

**“What signs should you look for in each of these areas to recognise in yourself or your colleagues?”**

#### How you may feel **emotionally**:

- Overwhelmed
- Irritable or “wound up”
- Anxious or fearful
- Lacking in self-esteem

#### How you may feel **mentally**:

- Racing thoughts
- Constant worrying
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions

#### How you may feel **physically**:

- Heachaches
- Muscle tension or pain
- Dizziness
- Feeling tired all the time
- Eating too much or too little

#### How you may **behave**:

- Drinking or smoking more
- Snapping at people
- Avoiding things or people you have problems with



## QUICK QUIZ

### “What strategies do you utilise to manage stress?”

#### **Be active**

Exercise won't make your stress disappear, but it will reduce some of the emotional intensity that you're feeling, clearing your thoughts and letting you to deal with your problems more calmly.

#### **Plan Ahead**

Not only will this help you to take control of your work which is empowering in itself, it will also help you to schedule in that much needed 'me time' you need to recharge and refocus. Remember – work smarter, not harder. If you need any support with time management or how to work in a more efficient way, speak to your colleagues or line manager for solutions they use.

#### **Avoid unhealthy habits**

Don't rely on alcohol, smoking, caffeine or high sugar snacks as your ways of coping. Over the long term, these crutches won't solve your problems. They'll just create new ones. You need to tackle the cause of your stress.

#### **Help other people**

People who help others either directly through activities such as volunteering, or through small, regular instances become more resilient. If you aren't currently suffering from stress, look out for your colleagues and give them a helping hand too.

#### **Take time to recharge**

To avoid the negative effects of chronic stress and burnout, we need time to replenish and return to our pre-stress level of functioning. When possible, take time off to relax and unwind, so you come back to work feeling reinvigorated and ready to perform at your best. When you're not able to take time off, get a quick boost by turning off your smartphone and focusing your attention on non-work activities for a while. We all recharge in different ways so work to find the best way for you.



## QUICK QUIZ

### “What strategies do you utilise to manage stress?”

#### Speak to your line manager

Your Line Manager is your main route for support so ask for an open conversation. The purpose of this isn't to lay out a list of complaints, but rather to produce an effective plan for managing the stressors you've identified, so you can perform at your best on the job. While some parts of the plan may be designed to help you improve your skills in areas such as time management; other elements might include identifying employer-sponsored wellness resources you can tap into, clarifying what's expected of you, getting necessary resources or support from colleagues, enriching your job to include more challenging or meaningful tasks, or making changes to your physical workspace to make it more comfortable and reduce strain.

#### REMEMBER

Supervisors and other line managers are responsible for providing consistent and appropriate support to their staff by being approachable, listening to concerns without judgement, and taking issues seriously. They should take practical steps to address concerns where possible, including adjusting workloads, clarifying expectations, and removing barriers to safe and effective working. Supervisors must follow up on concerns, maintain confidentiality where appropriate, and ensure fair and respectful treatment of all team members. They should also recognise the limits of their role and signpost or involve additional support services when needed, while leading by example to promote a positive and supportive working environment.



# Toolbox Talk - Attendance Sheet

Site/Department Name: .....

Trainer Name: .....

Signature: .....

Toolbox Talk Topic: .....

Date: .....

Name	Signature

Any further feedback or questions from attendees regarding this toolbox talk topic?