

Work Related Stress Info Meeting



STRESS

**Stress-related illnesses in the workplace
continue to rise, irrespective of the job-sector**

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Work pressures and demand are continually expanding, and in many cases with reduced staffing

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What is Stress?

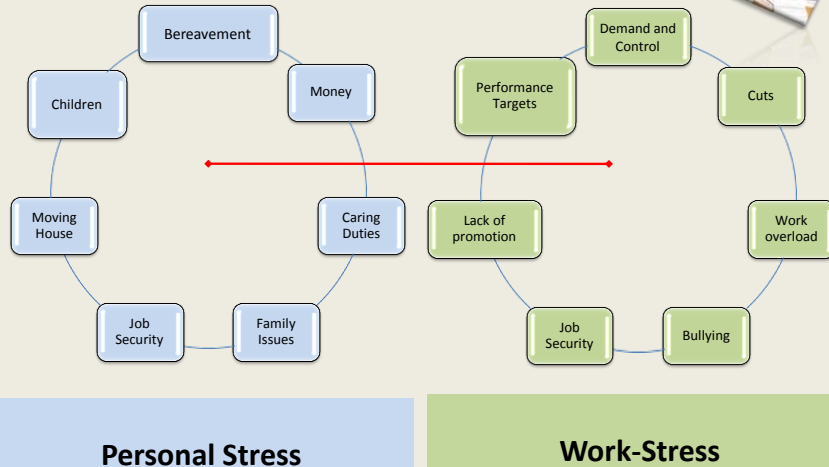
- It is NOT a clinical illness
- Extreme and Excessive Pressures
- Never ending demands
- Unreasonable deadlines
- Unrealistic targets
- Poor management
- It is what it does to you that causes the problem
- Over work, lack of work life balance
- Interface between home stressors and work stressors
- Constant change and downward pressures

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What causes stress?

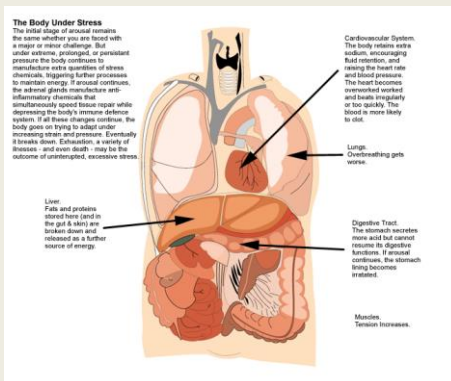


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The body under stress...



- No respite? = **Excessive hormone output**
- **Adrenalin** - Heart rate, muscle tension, breathing
- **Noradrenalin, Cortisol, Thyroxin** – increase blood sugars, energy, quick reactions
- **Endorphins** – natural pain killers
- Chronic release and over production is harmful, **auto immune system** is lowered
- Cardiovascular illnesses, digestive complaints, respiratory problems; Psychological illnesses, Migraines, PMT, Cancers.....
- **Premature death? Even Suicide**

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Recognising stress - here are some symptoms

| Behaviours | Physical |
|---|--|
| Irritability | Loss of appetite, craving for food under pressures |
| Indecision | Indigestion, Heartburn |
| Loss of Sense of humour | Constipation, diarrhoea/IBS |
| Feelings of anger and frustration | Insomnia, Migraines, Tinnitus |
| Rushing from one thing to another | Sweating, Nervous habits |
| Withdrawn, feelings of victimisation | Headaches, cramps, muscle spasms |
| Feeling unable to cope | Nausea, breathlessness |
| Tearfulness, Panic Attacks | Fainting Spells |
| Lack of interest in doing things outside work | Loss of libido |
| Constant tiredness | Eczema |
| Forgetfulness | Cancers, Cardio Vascular illnesses |

Do you recognise any of this in yourself or others?

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Stress and Mental Health: the scale of the problem

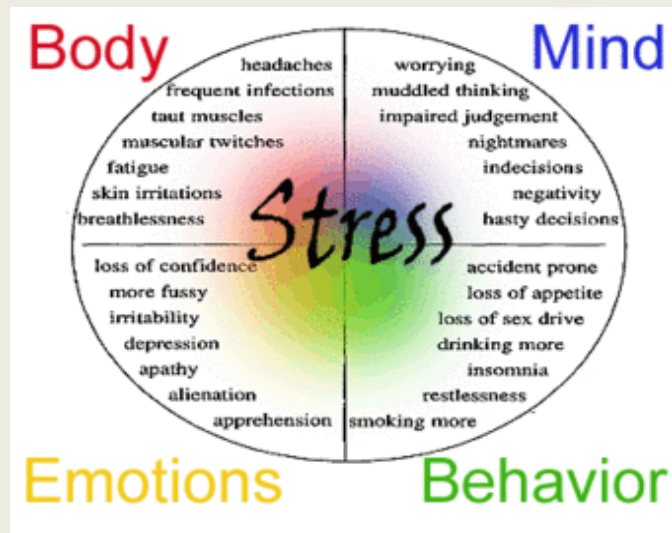
- 11 million working age people are affected by mental health problems
 - The cost GB economy > £40 billion year
 - In England, these cost:
 - **£15.1 billion due to presenteeism**
 - **£8.4 billion due to absenteeism**
 - Compared with other disorders, mental health problems account for more:
 - claimants of incapacity benefit (41% of the total - up from 26% 10 years ago)
 - new claimants of DLA (23% of the then total)
- (Royal Coll of Psych 2009)



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Effects of excessive pressures

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Workload Audit

| Workload Factor | Your score | Group total | Overall Workshop total |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Work Demand</i> | 3 | 12 | 60 |
| <i>Targets & Deadlines</i> | 2 | 5 | 35 |
| <i>Colleague Absence</i> | 2 | 8 | |
| etc | | | |

Complete the table in the first column without discussion, then pool your scores and briefly consider the outcomes



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Legal Requirements - Summary



- Employers' duties to provide safe and healthy working environment and practices
- Statutory requirement to risk assess and apply control measures
- HSE Stress Management Standards – voluntary but expected to be applied
- Equality Act 2010 [DDA etc] requires reasonable adjustments to work
- Stress and Bullying Policies should be in place and regularly reviewed
- Common law duty of care – moral and legal duties not to cause harm
- More difficult to prove, but where damaging harassment has taken place then it needs to be shown to have had a detrimental effect

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The Legal Precedents

- ▶ **1995 – Walker vs. Northumberland CC** — the 1st really successful case where the 2nd breakdown was deemed to be employer responsibility
- ▶ **2002 – Hatton and other cases** — 4 cases taken together where judgments were overturned on Appeal leading to closer focus on **foreseeability and causation and setting out the “Hale16 principles”**
- ▶ **2004 – Barber vs. Somerset CC** — one of the group of Hatton cases further appealed, established need for employer to look at employee's condition and to make appropriate adjustments
- ▶ **2005-Hartman vs. S Essex MH Trust** — further reinforced the Hale 16 principles
- ▶ **2007 – Hiles vs. S Gloucs PCT and Daw vs. Intel Corp UK** — both claimants had broken down emotionally at work and employers were found wanting in respect of failure to investigate causes
- ▶ **2008 – Dickens vs. O2** — reinforced that employers have a duty to investigate once they become aware of employee health problems

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Foreseeability and the Legal Challenge

- Hatton judgment, Lady Justice Hale – 16 points
 - What the **employer knows, or ought reasonably to know**
 - Mental disorders more difficult to foresee than physical injuries
 - Employer can **reasonably expect to assume that employee(s) can withstand normal pressures**
 - The nature and extent of the work and if the workload is much more than normal for the particular job – **are the demands on the employee unreasonable?**

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Understanding the HSE Stress Management Standards

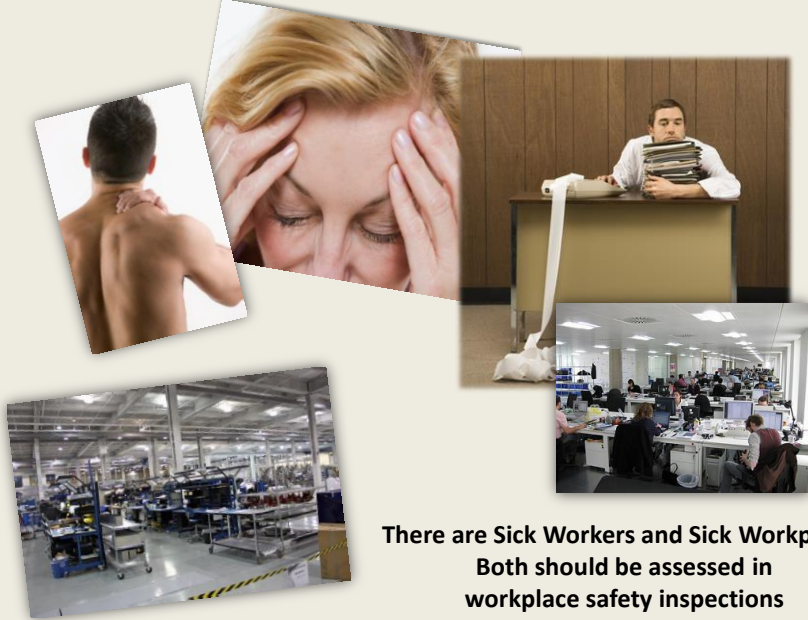
The six areas are:

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns, and the work environment
- **Control:** How much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships:** promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

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**There are Sick Workers and Sick Workplaces
Both should be assessed in
workplace safety inspections**

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What needs to happen?

- Listening to members
- Encouraging members to share thoughts
- Internal Audit
- Checking on absence trends and data
- HSE Management Standards measurement tool
- Staff induction sessions
- Exit interviews
- Confirming whether management is taking the subject seriously
- H&S Inspections – include at least one annual Stress Report
- Risk Assessments?
- Agenda Stress item at every H&S meeting
- Reviewing Policy and procedures
- Creating a *caring, supportive culture* with *dignity in the workplace for all*

How is it for you?

Stewards' Stress

- How stressful is it being a Steward or Safety Rep?
- Where do the pressures come from?
- Managers? Members? Union Officials? Family? Friends?
- How do you protect and support yourselves?
- Who supports you?

Some basic safeguards

- Use dedicated technology – don't mix personal and work with TU business
- Set clear boundaries, especially about your availability
- Be realistic, do not promise what you cannot deliver
- Try to be detached; look for support for yourself – learn and remember when to say NO!

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And finally

In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed ...

they must be fit for it;
they must not do too much of it;
and
they must have a sense of success in it.

**Hazards
Campaign**

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DANGER!
RISK OF WORKLOAD AVALANCHE

WARNING!
DUE TO THE CURRENT WORKLOAD, THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL HAS BEEN SWITCHED OFF

Thank you for listening

"Getting here on time every morning, and never have a day off sick, just isn't good enough Moulding! How are you ever going to get through all the stuff I keep piling on top of you if you don't work through your lunch-break as well?"

Stress Reduction Kit
Bang Head Here

Directions:
1. Press kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

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Rotterdam 26 - 29 May 2016
European Work Hazards Network