

STRESS AT WORK

Work Stress

A mentally healthy adult has a need to work. This is part of human development. Everybody works, whether you are a housewife, self-employed or an employee.

Working adults spend an average of 10 hours at the workplace. Thus, the workplace has a significant impact on an individual's mental health and well being. A safe and healthy workplace ensures work efficiency and makes working pleasurable and satisfying. Poor working conditions on the other hand will create a stressful work atmosphere.

A little stress at work is good as it enhances productive work performance. However, when the stress becomes excessive and unmanageable, it can seriously affect one's health. Personal difficulties, family problems and stressful life events can make it worse.

What Causes Stress At The Workplace?

Job related	Work conditions, use of new equipments, prolonged work pressure, new ways of doing things
Role related	Frequent changes in role, dangerous or unsafe work
Career development	Frustrations, lack of incentives, lack of appreciation, retrenchment
Organizational change	Change in organizational structure, new management, frequent take-overs, uncertainties
Relationship	Conflict with colleagues, superiors, subordinates or people encountered at work

Symptoms That Indicate You Are Under Stress:

- Anxiety
- Aggressiveness
- Loss of appetite
- Alcohol abuse
- Depression
- Excessive worries
- Easily irritated
- Fatigue
- Lack of concentration and motivation
- Restlessness
- Sleep disturbances

This article was extracted from the educational brochure produced by Ministry of Health Malaysia.
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7 Steps On How To Manage Stress

1. Be realistic about your work
 - Accept your strengths and limitations
 - Develop a positive attitude toward your work
 - Enjoy what you do and do it as best as you can
2. Organize your work
 - Manage your time well
 - Prioritise your work and avoid a last minute rush
 - If possible avoid bringing unfinished work home
 - Know how to delegate your work
3. Sharpen your problem solving skills
 - Address problems rationally and plan solutions systematically
 - List down the main problem and possible solutions
 - Evaluate the feasibility of each solution
 - Take appropriate action
4. Have a proper attitude toward changes
 - Some changes are unavoidable. Be open, flexible and realistic about them
 - Plan your changes well
5. Practise effective communication at the workplace
 - Be assertive, but not aggressive
 - Express your ideas in a polite, firm and clear manner
 - Respect your colleagues' opinions
6. Foster social support within the workplace
 - Establish friendships with colleagues
 - List down all the people and organizations that may be able to help you and your colleagues
 - Share your problems with someone whom you can confide in
 - Take time to listen
 - Do not judge your colleagues
7. Practise a healthy lifestyle
 - Learn to relax
 - Have enough sleep
 - Exercise regularly
 - Have enjoyable activities/ hobbies
 - Refrain from tobacco, alcohol or drugs
 - Practise good moral and religious values

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