

## FACT SHEET - WORKPLACE STRESS

Workplace stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the employee. Essentially it boils down to workplace conditions and the individual characteristics of the employee. In other words, what is stressful for one person, may not be a problem for another person.

Other factors to consider in workplace stress include the design of tasks, autocratic management style, work roles, job insecurity or such difficult environmental conditions as noisy or dangerous working conditions.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INDICATORS OF JOB STRESS?

- Headache
- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Short temper
- Upset stomach
- Job dissatisfaction
- Low morale

### WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT WORKPLACE STRESS

Dealing with workplace stress should encompass the staff member and the job. The person should have the opportunity to participate in wellness programs such as stress reduction and relaxation, exercise, healthy eating and weight maintenance.

### IS THE INDIVIDUAL WORKLOAD FEASIBLE?

By ensuring that the workload is in line with each staff member's capabilities and resources, the level of frustration that a person feels could be reduced. Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation, and opportunities for employees to use their skills and create opportunities for employees to be part of the decision making process where their job is concerned. Clearly define staff members' roles and responsibilities. Try to establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.

### ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND JOB DESIGN

Job design is also an important factor. Good job design accommodates a person's mental and physical abilities. Job design guidelines can help minimize or control workplace stress. Where stress in the workplace is caused, for example, by a physical agent, it is best to control it at its source. If the workplace is too loud, implement control measures to deal with the noise wherever possible. If a person is experiencing pain from repetitive strain, the workstation can be redesigned to reduce repetitive and strenuous movements.

### RELAXATION BREAKS

Teach employees to relax by taking several deep breaths throughout the day, or taking regular stretch breaks. Stretching is simple enough to do anywhere and takes only a few seconds. Help individuals take charge of their situations by setting aside 10 minutes at the beginning of each day to prioritize and organize their day's tasks and responsibilities.