

WORK *stress*

The UK National Work-stress Network ● workstress.net

**Hazards
Campaign**

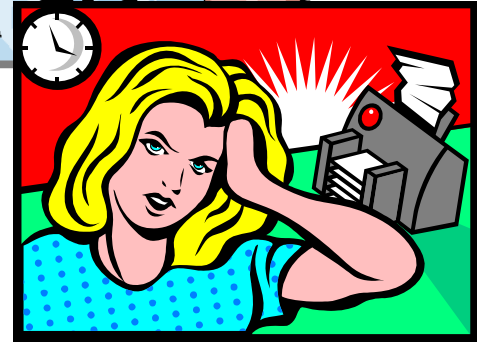
Stressed out at home and at work?

**Hazards Conference
Information Meeting,
Manchester, July 2009**

Stress in the workplace

No one should leave work
at the end of the day, less
healthy than they were
when they arrived
Work should be health-
enhancing

TUC Vision



Definition of Stress

HSE definition

“the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them”



Pressure can be enjoyable...

- Proportionate to need
- Action is possible
- Individual capacity is sufficient
- Duration is limited
- Reward is available
- There is no such thing as 'good stress'
- But



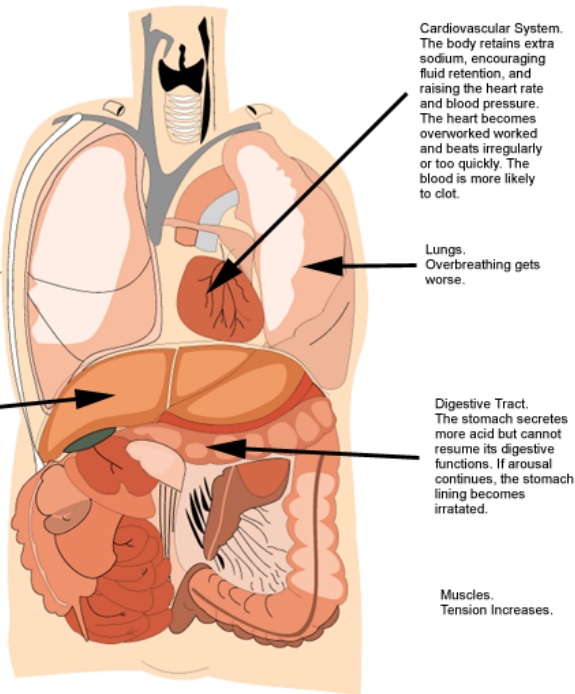
The body under stress...

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The Body Under Stress

The initial stage of arousal remains the same whether you are faced with a major or minor challenge. But under extreme, prolonged, or persistent pressure the body continues to manufacture extra quantities of stress chemicals, triggering further processes to maintain energy. If arousal continues, the adrenal glands manufacture anti-inflammatory chemicals that simultaneously speed tissue repair while depressing the body's immune defence system. If all these changes continue, the body goes on trying to adapt under increasing strain and pressure. Eventually it breaks down. Exhaustion, a variety of illnesses - and even death - may be the outcome of uninterrupted, excessive stress.

Liver.
Fats and proteins stored here (and in the gut & skin) are broken down and released as a further source of energy.



Cardiovascular System.
The body retains extra sodium, encouraging fluid retention, and raising the heart rate and blood pressure. The heart becomes overworked and beats irregularly or too quickly. The blood is more likely to clot.

Lungs.
Overbreathing gets worse.

Digestive Tract.
The stomach secretes more acid but cannot resume its digestive functions. If arousal continues, the stomach lining becomes irritated.

Muscles.
Tension Increases.

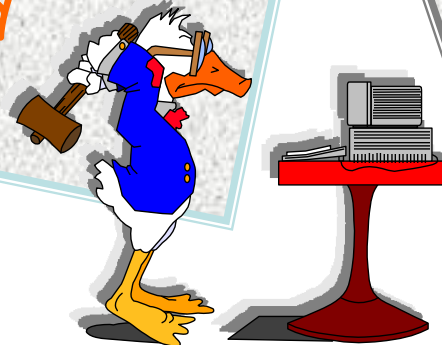
- Normal responses OK System working well
- No respite? Danger Zone!
- **Adrenalin** - Heart rate, muscle tension, breathing
- **Noradrenalin, Cortisol, Thyroxin** – increase blood sugars, energy, quick reactions
- **Endorphins** – natural pain killers
- **Cholesterol** – repairs damaged cells, clotting agents
- Chronic release is harmful, auto immune system lowered
- Cardiovascular illnesses, digestive complaints, respiratory problems
- Psychological illnesses, Migraines, PMT, Cancers.....
- Premature death? Suicides?

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What causes stress?

Moving House
Grief and bereavement
Divorce
Pregnancy & Birth
Teenage troubles
Family stress
In-laws and Parents
Etc Etc ...

Change
Lack of control
Excessive demands
Bullying managers
Insufficient information
Performance pressures
Anxiety and fear
Boredom
Environmental factors



Recognising stress

Behaviour

- Irritability
- Indecision
- Loss of sense of humour
- Feelings of anger
- 'Rushing' from one thing to another
- Withdrawn/ feeling of being victimised
- Feeling unable to cope
- Tearfulness
- Lack of interest in doing things after work
- Constant tiredness

Physical

- ☞ Loss of appetite/craving for food under pressure.
- ☞ Indigestion/heartburn
- ☞ Constipation/diarrhoea
- ☞ Insomnia
- ☞ Tendency to sweat/Nervous habits
- ☞ Headaches/Cramps muscle spasms
- ☞ Nausea, Breathlessness
- ☞ Fainting spells
- ☞ Loss of libido
- ☞ Eczema
- ☞ Cardio-vascular illness and cancers

What to do?

- Relax
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Prioritise
- Be assertive
- Take time out
- *Have a laugh!!*



But, coping strategies alone are not the solution

Sticking plasters
only help to
make you feel
better – *they*
don't remove the
cause of the
pain



What are the costs of workplace mental health?

- **Costs of Stress in the Workplace:**
 - Stress, anxiety and depression is now the **single biggest cause** of sickness absence in the UK
 - 46% of employers have reported an **increase in stress-related absence** within the workplace
 - The estimated **cost of sickness absence** to the British Economy is around 12 billion pounds per year
 - This equates to **approximately £1,600 per employee**
- **Employers Awareness & Understanding:**
 - 80% of employers **have no formal policy** on stress and mental health in the workplace
 - Of those that do, **just 14% say it is effective**
 - 70% of employers say they know insufficient about **laws on mental health** in the workplace
 - **Line managers are the weakest link** and are ill-equipped to deal with stress related problems

TUC Safety Representative Survey 2000-08

Stress Listed	66%	56%	58%	61%	60%
Stress Factors	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
Workload	74%	80%	79%	76%	73%
Staffing Cuts	53%	50%	49%	57%	58%
Change	44%	52%	47%	53%	50%
Long Hours	39%	41%	37%	34%	35%
Bullying	30%	28%	27%	33%	40%

HSE Stress Management Standards Project

- 1990s consultation and research
- 2001 Tackling Work-Related Stress, Managers' Guide
- 2004 Standards Launched followed by Willing 100 Project because of little take up
- 2006 Series of National awareness raising workshops and seminars with follow-up HSE Inspection visits to specific sectors
- 2007/8 Expanded advice and support for Employers
- 2007/9 Research Project, Management Competencies

HSE Stress Management Standards Project

- Set of six standards covering the basic causes of work-stress
- Forms the basis of a risk assessment approach after using the online assessment tool to establish stressors in the workplace.
- Each has its own description and an outline of achievable targets to deal with it as a cause of stress.

HSE Stress Management Standards

- **Demand** – including workload, work patterns and environment
 - *“employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs”*
- **Control** – how much say a person has in the way they do their work
 - *“employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work”*
- **Support** – includes sponsorship, encouragement and resources provided by the organisation and colleagues
 - *“employees indicate they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors”*
- **Relationships** – including with all levels of co-employees, managers etc
 - *Employees indicate that they are not subject to unacceptable behaviours*
- **Role** – relating to all aspects of job requirements
 - *Employees confirm they have full understanding of role and duties*
- **Organisational Change** – structural and organisational changes
 - *Employees confirm that the organisation engages with them when undergoing organisational change*

HSE Stress Management Standards

- Voluntary Code
- HSE expects employers to implement and act upon them
- Take them up at your H&S Committee or your Shop Stewards Committee
- Discuss them at Branch meetings?
- Network can provide guest speaker by arrangement

Stress Policy and its implementation

- What should an ideal policy contain?
 - Statement of intent; commitment to employer duty of care; acknowledgement of all managerial responsibilities
 - Risk Assessment; regular open consultation and revision
 - Caring Supportive Culture; Dignity at Work; HSE Management Standards
- How should it emerge?
 - Identification of known problems; stress audits; positive sickness review; worker consultation and involvement
- How should it be used?
 - Agreed procedure; transparent application; acknowledging that everyone has a view to be respected
 - Regular dialogue, review and monitoring

Have I got a case?

- What has happened to you? Has it happened to others?
- Has it been well documented?
- Have you challenged what has happened?
- Have you talked about your problem?
- Have you taken a grievance if appropriate?
- Have you sought union support?
- Have you got a clinically defined medical condition?
- Have you had a lot of time off work?
- Is the cause of your problem work-related?
- Can it be proven? And was it foreseeable?

Carol Black Report and *'Work is good for you'*

- ❑ Wide ranging review, focussed on getting sick people back in work
- ❑ Targets the large numbers on Incapacity Benefit
- ❑ Promotes the concept that any work is better than no work
- ❑ Fails to recognise the needs of the individual worker
- ❑ Does not really look at Employer Duty of Care and responsibilities
- ❑ Has created an emphasis on Mental Health problems and Work, which is acknowledged to cost £40bn

UK National Workstress Network

- Across the board, all work sectors
- Informal organisation working to secure the eradication of the causes of workplace stress and the commitment of employers to their duty of care
- Campaigning – European & UK legislation, HSE, TUC, long working-hours culture, Occupational Health improvements etc.
- Links with other organisations including campaigns against Bullying at Work seeking Dignity at Work for all
- Member Network of Hazards Campaign and regularly involved with UK and European Hazards Conferences
- Ian Draper, Network Convenor, background in teaching and national Trade Union levels within NASUWT
- www.workstress.net 20,000+ hits a month

UK National Workstress Network

- Campaigning for the recognition of stress as an industrial injury
- Published web-based advice and email responses to individual enquirers
- Regular E-newsletters
- Workshops, Seminars and Branch Meeting speakers
- Exhibiting at major Union Conferences
- Media information
- Annual Conference

Information

Annual Conference held at Hillscourt Centre, Rednal, Nr Birmingham

- **Stress the 21st Century Epidemic**
Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd November 2009
- Details on website www.workstress.net and in your Delegate Pack
- Visit the exhibition stand

Sources of advice and guidance

- www.workstress.net
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress>
- www.tuc.org.uk
- www.acas.org.uk/
- www.hazardscampaign.org.uk
- www.worklivesupport.com
- www.bullyonline.org
- www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk
- **individual union websites**

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.**



WORKstress

The UK National Work-stress Network ● workstress.net

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Campaign**