STRESS

Stress is our body's response to pressures from a situation or life event. What contributes to stress can vary hugely from person to person. When we encounter stress, our body produces stress hormones that trigger a 'flight or fight' response and activate our immune system. This response helps us to respond quickly to dangerous situations.

Sometimes, this stress response can be an appropriate, or even beneficial reaction. However, there can be times when stress becomes excessive and too much to deal with. If our stress response is activated repeatedly, or it persists over time, the effects can result in wear and tear on the body and can cause us to feel permanently in a state of 'fight or flight' . Rather than helping us push through, this pressure can make us feel overwhelmed or unable to cope. This can have an effect on both physical and mental health.

Causes of Stress:

There are many causes of stress related to both home and work life:



Home

- Moving House
- Getting married or relationship breakdowns
- Having children
- Financial worries
- Losing loved ones



Work

- 24/7 Technology (emails / smartphones can result in us working longer and work spilling into our home lives.
- Heavy **workload**.
- Changes within the organisation.
- Tight **deadlines**.
- Changes to duties.
- **Job insecurity.**
- Lack of **autonomy**.
- Boring work.

TOOLBOX TALK

STRESS

Recognising Stress at Work:

Persons suffering from the effects of stress may exhibit the following behaviours:

- Increased absenteeism or presenteeism (attending work whilst sick)
- Arguments and disputes with colleagues
- Tendency to work late and not take breaks
- Decrease in work standards
- Indecisiveness and poor judgement
- Loss of sense of humour, replaced by irritability
- Problems with drinking or drug taking
- A tendency to suffer from headaches, nausea, aches and pains, tiredness and poor sleeping patterns



- **Get enough sleep**

Try and adopt a routine to ensure you get to sleep and are fully rested for the following day

- **Listen to Music or read a book to help you switch off from the working day.**
- **Learn to say "No"**

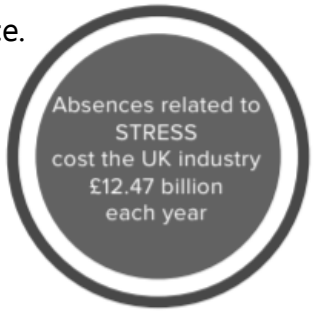
"No" doesn't have to be a decline but can be a negotiation opportunity, for example " I cant do that now, but can fit it in next week".

- **If you're Ill – REST.**

You have limits. Not resting can prolong your illness or recovery time.

- **Manage Your Time:**

Plan your Diary. Make a list and prioritise it. Don't try to juggle all the balls at once.



- **Create time buffers to deal with unexpected events**
- **Exercise**

Exercise increases feel-good hormones and helps ease feelings of tension.

- **Breathe**

Take a few deep breaths to help you calm and refocus.

- **Have some "YOU" time, where you do something you enjoy in your spare time, switching off from the working environment.**
- **Avoid stimulants such as alcohol, coffee and nicotine.**
- **Talk to Someone.**

Don't suppress how you are feeling, talk to someone: A friend or family; your GP; your line manager; your site Mental Health First Aider. "a problem shared is a problem halved." If you want to speak to someone anonymously, contact the Samaritans for some help and guidance.

STRESS IS NORMAL.

It's what you do to beat it that matters.

01342 836314
www.simplesafetyadvice.co.uk

SAMARITANS
EMAIL US
jo@samaritans.org (UK)
jo@samaritans.ie (ROI)
VISIT US
Find your local Samaritans branch.
WRITE TO US
Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK,
PO Box 9090, STIRLING,
CALL US
116 123 (UK)
116 123 (ROI)