



STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Why should I pay attention to Stress Management?

- Managers and supervisors can make a big difference in the lives of their employees. You may help get a person back on track after a crisis or help someone live a happier and well-balanced life. There can be tremendous satisfaction in the *people* side of management.
- Stress can cause severe performance problems at work, ultimately impacting the productivity of an organization. Learning about stress management may help you, your employees, and the company at the same time.
- *Remember that by practicing good stress management and keeping a balanced life style, you are setting a good example for your work group.*

What do I need to know about Stress Management?

- Stress affects everyone differently. Some people handle change better and are more resilient than others. Try to listen to and understand each employee and avoid judgment.
- Most people want to do a good job and expect some work pressure. But too much pressure can lead to a vicious cycle of stress: poor performance...declining confidence...worse performance.
- When a stress-related problem develops, ask yourself what type of employee you have. Is this someone who is generally a good performer or someone who is always difficult? This may determine how you support this employee and how long you can expect their performance to be affected.
- Keep in mind that change is traumatic for some employees. Previous change or trauma may cause an extreme reaction to a current work situation. Poor performance may be a temporary situation while they adjust to this new change.
- Employees often become unreasonable during times of change. You can help them by sharing information and listening to their concerns. Ask yourself if there is any way to make your work place more enjoyable during a difficult time of prolonged stress.
- Extreme stress such as divorce, death of a loved one, illness, or war may cause extreme stress symptoms. It is okay to make temporary adjustments for someone who has extreme stress but expect some improvement in 6-8 weeks. You can end up doing someone more harm than good if you let them “slack off” for too long.

What should I tell employees about stress management?

- Show that you take stress management seriously. Left ignored, stress can have debilitating effects on the health, welfare, and productivity of employees.
- Provide stress management education for all your employees. Make sure that you know all of what they are learning. This will give everyone a common language. Use this as a springboard for implementing specific techniques at the work site. Ask employees for suggestions.

- Remind employees to practice good stress management including physical exercise and good nutrition. *Remember...what you do to manage your own stress sends a strong message to employees.*

How can a manager or supervisor make a difference?

- Good time management may be one of the best ways to alleviate stress in your work group. Demonstrating your skills in this area is the first step. Help employees get organized, prioritize goals and tasks, and keep a daily to-do list.
- Nurture a workplace environment that demonstrates to employees that you care about their wellbeing.
- During stressful times, make sure people understand the changes that are taking place and the requirements of their job. “Big picture” knowledge may help them see where the changes fit in.
- Fears of job insecurity cause a lot of stress for employees. Whenever possible, try to communicate well and often about the future.
- The leading causes of stress at work result from poor communication, lack of feedback, and comments that make one feel undervalued. If you are unsure whether you are causing unneeded stress, find ways to solicit feedback from your employees either directly or indirectly.
- Establish effective communication within your work group, through formal and informal methods, to ensure that you and your employees have a clear understanding of workplace issues and processes.
- Clearly define priorities, for yourself and your employees.
- Clearly define roles so that people know who is responsible for various workplace activities and understand decision-making latitude.
- Establish ways for employees with legitimate concerns about safety or productivity to be heard.
- Become a partner with, and promote, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is a free confidential resource for all employees, providing counseling services and help for numerous work/life matters.

Reminder: The EAP is here to help you with Stress Management whether counseling or training is needed. Call today at 800-648-9557.