

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR EMPLOYERS IN MANAGING WORKPLACE STRESS

DO'S

1. Treat all employees in a fair and respectful manner
2. Take stress seriously and be understanding to staff under too much pressure
3. Be aware of the signs and symptoms that a person may be having trouble coping with stress.
4. Involve employees in decision making and allow for their input

DONTS

1. Tolerate bullying or harassment in any form.
2. Ignore signs that employees are under pressure or feeling stressed.
3. Forget elements of the workplace itself can be a cause of stress.
4. Stress management training and counseling services can be helpful to the individuals.
5. Forget to look for the root cause of the stress and to address them as quickly as possible.



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WORKPLACE STRESS MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONAL APPROACH

Workplace Stress

The \$300 Billion
Profit Killer

“A Worldwide Epidemic”
1996 World Health Organization Survey

“The 20th Century Epidemic”
1992 United Nations Report

PREVENTING AND MANAGING WORKPLACE STRESS

Stress Management refers to the wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's level of stress, especially chronic usually for the purpose of improving every day functioning.

Since the causes for workplace stress vary greatly so do the strategies to reduce, prevent and or manage it. Actions and strategies are often targeted at either the individual worker or the workplace. More commonly, interventions to prevent, reduce and/or to manage stress are often categorized into one of these three levels of intervention, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.



Primary Level Interventions, commonly referred to as organizational level intervention or as “stress prevention” are concerned with taking actions to modify or eliminate sources of Stress. Some of the strategies to reduce workplace stressors include:

1. Redesigning the tasks.
2. Redesigning the work environment
3. Establishing flexible work schedules
4. Encouraging participative management
5. Including employee in career development.
6. Analyzing work roles and establishing goals.
7. Providing social support and feedback.
8. Building cohesive teams.

9. Establish fair employment policies
10. Share reward.

Secondary-level interventions, are concerned with the detection and management of experienced stress, and the enhancement of workers' ability to more effectively manage stressful conditions by increasing their awareness, knowledge, skills and coping resources. The role of secondary prevention is essentially one of *damage limitations*, often addressing the *consequences* rather than the *sources* of stress. Secondary interventions include: stress education with the aim to help employees recognise symptoms and reduce stigma, or stress management.

Tertiary-level interventions have been described as *reactive* strategies. They are seen as a curative approach to stress management for those individuals suffering from ill-health as a result of stress. This approach is concerned with minimizing the effects of stress-related problems once they have occurred through the management and treatment of symptoms of occupational disease or illness.

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS PREVENT, REDUCE AND/OR MANAGE WORKPLACE STRESS?

The following methods and strategies can be used by Employers to prevent, reduce and or manage work related stress.

1. Ensure that the workload is in line with workers capabilities and resources.
2. Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation and opportunities for workers to use their skills.
3. Clearly defined workers roles and responsibilities.
4. To reduce workplace Stress, managers may monitor the workload given out to the employees. Also while they are being trained they should let employees understand and be notified of stress awareness.

5. Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.
6. Improve communications-reduce uncertainty about career development and future employment prospects.
7. Provide opportunities for social interactions among workers.
8. Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.
9. Combat workplace discrimination (based on race, gender, national origin, religion or language).
10. Introducing a participative leadership style to involve as many subordinates as possible to resolve stress producing problems.
11. Encourage Work-Life Balance through family benefits and policies.
12. Employee and management education on Workplace Stress
13. Change Organisation's policies and procedures to reduce organizational sources of stress
14. The establishment of employee assistance Programme
15. Provide workplace health and wellness programme that target the true source of stress. The source of stress at work can come from any number of causes, safety, job demands etc., survey the employees and ask them for help in identifying the actual causes.