

Stress and its Effects on the Workplace

Facts

Work-related stress causes workers in United States to lose many working days each year. An employee's mental and physical health can be adversely affected by aspects of their working environment, producing feelings of anxiety and distress. Factors such as long hours, workload, uncertain expectations, and lack of control over work tasks can lead to intense feelings of being unable to cope with such pressures. If prolonged this can lead to short and/or longer-term damage to an employee's physical and mental health. Like many kinds of common health and safety issues, the causes of stress in individuals are not completely occupational in origin but are the result of what is happening to them outside work (marriage, bereavement, financial worries for example). No matter what the cause, the effects will be present in the workplace, adversely affecting concentration and consistency of decision making on the job.

Signs and Symptoms

The EHS Office does monitor for signs of stress, by reviewing accident and "near miss" trends here at UL. Signs of stress as a contributing cause are looked at during the investigation process, where risk assessments are conducted to determine if additional measures are necessary to prevent safety performance impairments due to stress. Some of the symptoms of stress include **Physical**: clenched muscles, grinding teeth, jaw pain, elevated blood pressure, fatigue, speaking & eating fast, constant competition, over scheduling. **Behavioral**: quick to anger, rage, frequent tickets and auto accidents, excessive alcohol & drug use, sarcasm of others, over/under eating, insomnia, and isolation. **Emotional**: low self-esteem, paranoia, anxiety, panic attacks and depression.

Prevention

There are many things we can do to prevent stress in our daily lives. Initiate and maintain an exercise program, eat a balanced diet, take periodic breaks, develop and follow a sleep routine of 7-8 hours per night, and rest eyes, relax mind and body. Modify behavior by controlling who and what is surrounding you, scheduling more leisure time, and change your routine and NOT over committing yourself. Implement emotional changes by identifying your stress signals - headaches, nausea, racing heartbeat, and insomnia. Prioritize needs and goals, set and ID acceptable standards and deadlines, and remember to be positive to yourself. Develop a support network and focus on the here and now - if you made a mistake stop blaming yourself and others. Seek professional help if these strategies still cause you stress. The Counseling and Testing Center provides personal counseling, crisis intervention, and short-term psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families, and groups. The Center offers an unlimited number of sessions, FREE-of-charge to University students, faculty, and staff. For info: (337) 482-6480

Training

We now offer many training programs in our Cornerstone training platform specifically on how to manage our stress, to keep employees safe. Examples include Managing Stress, Managing Stress for Positive Change and How to beat Burnout, Exhaustion and Stress. Supervisors should also take these courses and develop attitudes and skills to recognize signs of stress and how to sympathetically deal with those who are affected.

Support

[Counseling and Testing Center](#)

Saucier Wellness Center, OK Allen Hall