**Owner: Health, Wellbeing and Safety (HR)**

**Last Review: 15 July 2019**

Source: Professor Tom Cox - Stress research and stress management: putting theory to work (HSE Contract Research Report 61)

A high proportion of employees' stress in the workplace arises from outside work. However, non-work and work-based stressors can act together and may sometimes lead to health problems such as mental illness.

The stressors listed below are not in any order of priority. This checklist will help you as a manager, to identify what may be an individual's stressors. Bear in mind that experiencing one or more stressors does not necessarily lead to the experience of stress. When specific workplace circumstances are examined, it may become apparent that there is a range of individual responses to the same stressor.

| **Issues** | **Negatives (1/2)** | **Positives 4/5** | **Balance**  **Score 1-5** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scale = 1 to 5: 1 = high stress, 2 = stress 3 = neutral 4 = supportive 5 = very supportive** | | | |
| **Home** |  |  |  |
| * personal stress events at home | e.g. divorce, bereavement | None |  |
| * change in living conditions (such as) | e.g. moving house, renovations | None |  |
| * social network | isolated such as lack of friends | Good personal network (e.g. club membership etc) |  |
| * level of support at home | low | high |  |
| * long distance commuting | e.g. more than 1 hour | None |  |
| * prolonged personal or family ill health | e.g. more than 1 month | None |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Home and work issues** |  |  |  |
| * demands of work and home | In conflict | Working, balanced |  |
| * family and schooling pressures | Ongoing time issues | Well managed |  |
| * careers | problems caused by both partners following their | No problems |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Management and style of organisation** |  |  |  |
| * organisational objectives and values | Lack of clarity | Clear and understood |  |
| * communication and information | Poor communication or lack of information | Good communication |  |
| * consultation and involvement in change | Little or token consultation | Good, prompt consultation |  |
| * management support | Little involvement by managers | Supportive management |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Role in the organisation** |  |  |  |
| * role in organisation | Unclear | Clear |  |
| * lines of management | Conflicting | Clear |  |
| * objectives and priorities | Conflicting or unclear | Clear |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Career** |  |  |  |
| * career | Uncertain or poor prospects | Opportunity to advance and develop |  |
| * career ambitions | Frustrated or unfulfilled | Realistic and achievable |  |
| * recognition and status | Poor status or lack of recognition | Recognised and valued |  |
| * competency | Over-promoted, underskilled, insufficient training | Appropriate to job |  |
| * job security | Under threat (real or perceived) | Secure but realistic |  |
| * role | Changing in a random or uncontrolled way | Clear and developing with new manageable challenges |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Decision making or control** |  |  |  |
| * participation in decision making | Low | High |  |
| * control over work | Little | High |  |
| **Relationships at work** |  |  |  |
| * team relationships | Isolated either socially or physically | Good supportive team |  |
| * relationships with superiors | Poor | Good |  |
| * conflict | Ongoing interpersonal conflict  Ongoing grudges or complaints | Conflict occurs but is resolved |  |
| * harassment (for example, sexual, racial or bullying behaviour) | Persistent issues within the workgroup | Occasional issues that are dealt with and resolved |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Job and workplace design** |  |  |  |
| * predictability of work | High uncertainty in work | Reasonably predictable most of the time |  |
| * nature of the work (1) | Boring or repetitive work mostly | Balanced work: mixture of the routine and challenging |  |
| * nature of the work (1) | Constant dealing with conflict and complaints, rather than the root of the problem | Balanced work: staff member feels that there is progress and they are making a difference |  |
| * health or safety | Significant hazards involved and they are not well controlled | If there are hazards, they are well controlled |  |
| * responsibility | Fearful of responsibility or open to ongoing criticism from clients/other staff | Responsibilities are managed and under control |  |
| * competence | Lacks competence or confidence in own / team’s competence | Comfortable and confident based on realistic feedback |  |
| * technology | Fearful of technology | Comfortable and willing to learn new systems |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Work load or pace of work** |  |  |  |
| * pace of work | Lack of control over | Exercises some control over |  |
| * work load | Sustained work overload or under-load | Manageable work load with peaks and troughs |  |
| * prioritisation | Inability through own skills or circumstances to prioritise | Able to prioritise and negotiate work priorities |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Work schedule** |  |  |  |
| * peak loads | Unpredictable or random with little or no support | Managed and able to balance |  |
| * work schedule | Inflexible or oppressive | Some flexibility and discretion |  |
| * work hours (1) | Unpredictable | Predictable |  |
| * work hours (2) | Unsocial or difficult work hours | Unsocial hours balanced with normal shifts |  |
| * shift work | Unplanned, breaks too short | Planned and seen as fair |  |
| * overtime | Excessive or unfairly allocated | Occasional and fairly allocated |  |