

# Stress management



Stress is a perceptual phenomenon resulting from a comparison between the demand on a person and his ability to cope. An imbalance in this mechanism, when coping is important, gives rise to the experience of stress, and to the stress response (Cox, 1978: 25). This transactional view highlights the importance of perception and the relationship of the individual to the environment (i. e. , work setting). If there is an improper fit between the individual and the environment, the individual experience stress.

There are different causes of stress as Greenberg (2003) concluded that workplace stress comes in many forms. Stress may be caused by occupational demands, role ambiguity, role conflict or role judging. Moreover, illness is another major cause of stress. Catching a cold, breaking an arm, and a sore back all cause stress (Burns, 1990). Smith (1989) asserted that environmental factors also can cause stress. Things such as very high altitude and very cold climates can be stressful.

Stress affects in numerous ways and can result in poor attendance, excessive use of alcohol or other drugs, poor job performance, or even overall poor health (Mondy, Noe & preneaux, 2002). High level of stress results in high levels of employee dissatisfaction, illness, absenteeism, and turnover, low levels of productivity and as a consequence difficulty in providing high quality service to customers (Organ & Bateman, 1989; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987). Turner (2002) indicated that stress chemicals that stay in the body can obstruct the digestive and immune systems and also deplete human energy.

Different strategies can be followed to overcome stress. Peterson (2003) found the visualisation, progressive muscle relaxation, spiritual growth and managing the worry time as techniques for dealing with stress. Cryer, Mc Crathy and Chidre (2003) suggested four steps that they argue should reduce employee's stress, first is to recognise and disengage, secondly to involve an internal positive feeling, third is to ask if there is better alternative and lastly to recognise when we feel better and to sustain it.

Hayman (2003) suggested four parts of strategies to deal with stress; the first part is to maintain connections with a social network, the second part consists of being attentive to other people's problems, the third part consists of physical action and the fourth part consists of controlling destiny and maintaining meaning of life. Also listening to music can help relax and quiet down stressful nerves (Cunningham, 1997). To keep the mind calm, to be without hatred, anger and revenge, and to eliminate all bad emotions that cause fear, worry and anxiety are all important ways for reducing stress (Dalai Lama, 2001). As we enter a new millennium, people are generally impressed and satisfied with technological developments.

However there is a realisation among many people that technological sophistication is in itself not the main factor that improves their ability to live satisfying, self sufficient, healthy, peaceful, happy lives at work and elsewhere. It seems that there might be something missing - that is the happiness and peace of our inner world (Mills & Spittle, 2003). In order for employees to deal with stress, its sources should be first identified as knowing the sources can be helpful in choosing a method for dealing with stress when it occurs.