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Wellness Monthly

Healthy matters to keep in mind.

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Coping with Work Stress: Do You Know What's Really Stressing You Out?

Managing Stress Before it Becomes a Problem

There are no easy answers for coping with job stress. The key is managing your reaction to it.

These three factors can help reduce the effects of stress:

Strive for a healthy balance between work life and personal life.

If you're a "workaholic," work issues may tend to get blown out of proportion. If you build a healthy personal life with

family and friends, you'll be better able to put work situations in the proper perspective, and enjoy the love and support of those around you.

If you're spending too many hours at work, talk to your supervisor about how you can get work accomplished in a more reasonable amount of time, bringing better balance to your life. The more satisfying your personal life, the more productive you'll be at work.

Develop a positive, relaxed attitude.

Yes, this is easier said than done. But most things of value require hard work. If you're an intense, serious person, it may help to take a short course in stress management. Most techniques concentrate on your mental attitude and offer physical exercises that can help you relax and adopt a positive outlook.

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Upcoming Articles

November 2008

Grief: Surviving the Feelings and Healing the Heart

December 2008

Forget New Year's Resolutions! Make Life-Changing Decisions



Tips for Getting Through the "Daily Grind"

- **Take regular breaks.** Even a ten-minute walk around the block can help clear your head and provide new perspective.
- **Eat well.** Healthy meals and snacks are critical. When you eat poorly, you're more likely to be impatient, tired, and have difficulty concentrating, which will only increase your stress level.
- **Breathe.** A typical response to stress is shallow, rapid breathing. Use deep-breathing techniques to calm both mind and body. Focus on each inhale and exhale.
- **Stretch.** Learn some simple desk exercises — they can combat stress and sluggishness, helping you get through the day (see Resources).

Rely on a support network of co-workers, family and friends.

Even if your work environment is not particularly conducive to making friends, go out of your way to build a support system of co-workers you feel comfortable with. Try to avoid complaining and gossiping. Instead, focus on working together to build a more supportive workplace.

Whenever possible, make friendships with people in your own industry, and use them as “sounding boards” for problems and challenges. Finding a business mentor can also help you solve work problems that cause stress. And don’t forget to rely on your family and friends to provide support during difficult times.

If stress from work is overwhelming, reach



out for support. Asking for help is never a sign of weakness or failure, especially in situations too

difficult to handle alone. UBH is here to help. Call or log on anytime for help with any of life’s challenges.

What Causes Your Stress?

Since most everyone will encounter job stress, it’s important to identify situations that create excessive stress and learn skills for coping with them. Take stock of your own work life.

Stress often arises from the following areas:

Job tasks

Do you have an excessive workload? Lack of challenging work? Too little variety?

Company culture

Have you noticed an overly aggressive management style? Poor communication of company policies? Lack of positive reinforcement?

Personal relationships

Do you experience bullying or harassment? Lack of support from co-workers? Little team spirit?

Career concerns

Is lack of opportunity for advancement getting you down? Is the future of your job uncertain?

Once you’ve identified the areas that may be causing you stress, you can begin to problem-solve. Spend some time thinking about your ideal work situation. Perhaps write about the kind of job you want to have. Then, with this new insight, consider ways you

may be able to make your reality look and feel more like your ideals.

You may be able to change some work conditions; others you’ll probably have to cope with. Learning to manage your reaction to stressful situations can dramatically improve the overall quality of your life.

You may benefit from speaking with a professional counselor, who can help you to identify areas that need changing, cope with stress, and find a satisfying life/work balance.

Resources

United Behavioral Health

Ask your HR representative for your access code and toll-free number.

www.liveandworkwell.com

Use the search phrase “desk exercises” for tips on how to combat stress with simple exercises you can do at work.

Use the search phrase “difficult co-workers” for ideas on handling interpersonal challenges.

Visit the “Stress & Anxiety Resource Center” for help with understanding more about stress and anxiety and the different options for controlling them.

The information and therapeutic approaches in this article are provided for educational purposes only and are not meant to be used in place of professional clinical consultations for individual health needs. Certain treatments may not be covered in some benefit plans. Check your health plan regarding your coverage of services.