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Previously known as Management & Supervisory Notes

Coping With Stress at Work

If you feel yourself getting stressed about your job, try these tips to decrease your stress level and improve your performance:

- **Identify your stressors.** By recognizing the reasons behind your stress, you can learn to feel more in control and work to change the stress. Determine whether the stress you experience at work is due to worries or conflict at home.
- **Avoid setting too many lofty goals.** Set realistic expectations and attempt challenges that are doable.
- **Anticipate boss and co-worker stress.** Prepare a few responses to stressful situations that may be presented to you by a supervisor or co-worker. For example, instead of reacting hastily to a request by a co-worker, ask whether you can get back to the person at a later time.
- **Learn to delegate responsibilities.** If you are a manager, empower your subordinates to take on more responsibilities and make more decisions.
- **Be more assertive in your responses to requests.** Be honest, but tactful. Learn to seek alternatives or to say no when necessary.
- **Examine your schedule.** Is your work schedule compatible with your home/personal life? Perhaps you can vary your work hours or work days.
- **Redefine your role.** Work with your supervisor on revising your job description to include more creative, empowering and satisfying duties.

Here are some suggestions for getting organized to eliminate clutter and reduce stress:

- **Organize your workspace.** Rearrange it for maximum efficiency. Create lists and schedules to help you meet deadlines.
- **Tackle one task at a time if possible.** List your duties in order of priority, and complete one at a time. This can make you feel more organized and in control, leading to a sense of greater accomplishment.

- **Learn time-management techniques.** Take a class or read books on how to better manage your time.
- **Don't procrastinate.** Tackle your most difficult projects first. Putting them off may lead to increased anxiety and stress.

Relaxation and exercise are effective ways to reduce stress. Follow these ideas:

- **Take occasional breaks.** Listen to your body. If you feel tired, nervous, tense or have achy muscles, take a break. Step away from your work for a few minutes, or practice relaxation techniques to recharge your mind and body. Don't work through lunch; take a real break.
- **Practice yoga and stretching exercises.** These can relieve tension, make your body more limber and flexible, and produce an overall calming effect.
- **Create an exercise routine.** Use your lunch break to work out or go for a brisk walk, or exercise before or after work.
- **Practice breathing exercises.** Drawing slow, deep breaths from the diaphragm promotes a more efficient exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide than chest or shoulder breathing. Exhale slowly and evenly. If you are highly stressed, try this while lying on your back.
- **Take advantage of paid days off.** Consider spreading your days off over several weeks instead of taking them all at once.
- **Learn to laugh more at life.** Try to find humor in negative outcomes. Relieve tension by laughing at your mistakes and faults and working to improve them.
- **Consider counseling.** Talk therapy with a professional can prove to be an effective outlet for discharging unhealthy stress.

Source: ComPsych GuidanceResources
www.guidanceresources.com