

Workplace Stress

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“Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury.” [Stress At Work, United States National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Cincinnati, 1999.]

“The emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological reactions to aversive and noxious aspects of work, work environments and work organizations. It is a state characterized by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of not coping.” [Guidance on work-related stress: Spice of Life – or kiss of death, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs].

“Stress is the reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.” [Managing stress at work: Discussion document, United Kingdom Health and Safety Commission, London, 1999.]

The definition above illustrates that stress can be defined as something that can affect the physical, emotional, health, or as a motivation that can force the inner drive of someone in their everyday activities. Getting stressed out at the workplace is a common issue for most workers nowadays. It is something viewed as a minor problem

and yet it can cause various effects without many noticing. According to the US National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, 1999, job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury.

Several issues that can cause job stress are identified and they are very common for workers throughout the world. Young or old, male or female can be caught in this problem regardless of their position. Overworking is one of the commonest factor of job stress. This includes working late, taking home unfinished work and also not taking vacation in a very long time. Apart from that, being in the wrong career can also contribute to such feeling as the interests do not match with the job. Since working is a long term commitment, it is important that the job chosen is the right one and will not cause boredom due to the repetition that will be faced day in and day out. The relationship among co-workers is vital for a stress free working environment as well. Miscommunication among co-workers will lead to tension and discomfort at the workplace. Being bullied as well as sexually harassed can also affect the workers and therefore, performance will also be affected. Other factors are uncomfortable environment such as noisy, dirty and limited space and also the culture and policy of the company.

Causes

Job Insecurity

Organized workplace are going through metamorphic changes under intense economic transformations and consequent pressures. Reorganizations, takeovers, mergers, downsizing and other changes have become major stressors for employees, as companies try to live up to the competition to survive. These reformations have put demand on everyone, from a CEO to a mere executive.

High Demand for Performance

Unrealistic expectations, especially in the time of corporate reorganizations, which, sometimes, puts unhealthy and unreasonable pressures on the employee, can be a tremendous source of stress and suffering. Increased workload, extremely long work hours and intense pressure to perform at peak levels all the time for the same pay, can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained. Excessive travelling and too much time away from the family also contribute to the increase in the stress level of an employee.