

Well-being Activities: Assess Stress

ASSESS AND ADDRESS PRIMARY CAUSES OF JOB STRESS AT YOUR WORKSITE

Working at an organization that places value on fostering a lower stress environment can increase employee well-being. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 40% of U.S. workers report their job as stressful or very stressful. The American Psychiatric Association says that excessive workplace stress causes 120,000 deaths and nearly \$190 billion in health care costs each year. When employees experience workload ambiguity, and their skills do not align with their duties, it can cause a great deal of stress. Productivity can increase, and absenteeism and turnover decrease when leadership puts the time and resources into adequately matching employees with their strengths.

Ideas (Choose one or more)

- Explore the American Institute of Stress website and discuss implications and steps to address stress: <https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress>
- Assess primary causes of job stress at your workplace by doing one or both of the following: hold discussion groups that include employees, managers, supervisors, and leadership (i.e., supervisor relationships, job expectations, decision-making, and control) and/or, conduct an anonymous survey to garner employee feedback on your organization's environment.
- Discover a framework for creating healthy organizations in the book *Preventive Stress Management in Organizations* (<https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4317292>), the second edition by James Campbell Quick.
- Determine opportunities and prioritize causes of stress at work. Which are most harmful? Which can be feasibly addressed: job safety, work-life balance, work overload, job autonomy, social relationships, lack of supervisor support, or others?
- Evidence shows us healthy behaviors help employees better deal with stressful situations. Is your workplace committed to offering employees an environment where physical activity is encouraged and supported? Are healthy foods and a place to prepare them available?
- Does your organization offer employees a private, quiet room – a place to decompress, meditate, pray, or practice mindfulness? Does the culture support employees using the space?
- If managers feel appreciated, supported, and calm, they will pass that on to their employees. Read and share [Resources for Managers to Support Their Teams](https://www.ssc.coop/cms/lib/MN06000837/Centricity/Domain/1/Resources%20for%20Managers%20to%20Support%20Their%20Teams.pdf) (<https://www.ssc.coop/cms/lib/MN06000837/Centricity/Domain/1/Resources%20for%20Managers%20to%20Support%20Their%20Teams.pdf>) from WELCOA.
- Promote your organization's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Make sure employees are aware of all its benefits and its confidentiality.

- Revisit your organization’s policies, (including allowing flexible work time and the ability to work off-site) to ensure they are family-friendly and allow employees to achieve a healthy work/life balance.
- Examine your organization’s on-boarding processes. Are your culture, values, and policies around wellness benefits, healthy eating, and active living clearly explained and re-visited on a recurring schedule?
- Set goals, identify solutions; create an action plan to address at least one stress concern.

Resources

- Supporting Employees in Managing Stress (<https://www.ssc.coop/cms/lib/MN06000837/Centricity/Domain/1/Supporting%20Employees%20in%20Managing%20Stress.pdf>), WELCOA
- Workplace Stress Survey (<https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress>), The American Institute of Stress
- Workplace Stress (<http://workplacementalhealth.org/Mental-Health-Topics/Workplace-Stress>), Center for Workplace Mental Health, American Psychiatric Association

Video Resource

- Working With Stress (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/video/stress1.html>), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

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Updated November 2022*

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