

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

IV

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11TH MARCH 2025

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



The background is a deep navy blue. On the left side, several golden-yellow lanterns and star-shaped ornaments are hanging from thin lines. A large, bright yellow crescent moon is positioned in the lower-left quadrant. In the top-right and bottom-left corners, there are intricate, light blue geometric patterns resembling interlocking diamonds or stars.

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Work related stress

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Stress-related hazards at work



❑ Stress related hazards at work can be divided into:

A. Work content.

B. Work context.

A. **Work content includes:**

1. Job content:

- ✓ monotony
- ✓ under-stimulation
- ✓ meaningless of tasks
- ✓ lack of variety, etc.

2. Work load and work pace طريقة السير

- ✓ too much or too little to do,
- ✓ work under time pressure, etc

3. Working hours:

- strict or inflexible,
- long and unsocial,
- unpredictable,
- badly designed shift systems.

4. Participation and control:

- lack of participation in decision-making,
- lack of control over work processes, pace, hours, methods, and the work environment

B- Work context includes:

1. Career development, status and pay:

- ✓ job insecurity
- ✓ lack of promotion opportunities
- ✓ under- or over-promotion
- ✓ work of 'low social value
- ✓ piece rate payment schemes
- ✓ unclear or unfair performance evaluation systems
- ✓ being over- or under-skilled for a job



3. Role in the organization:

**unclear role,
conflicting roles.**

2. Interpersonal relationships:

- inadequate, inconsiderate or **unsupportive** supervision
- **poor relationships** with colleagues
- **harassment and violence,**
- **isolate or solitary work,** etc

4. Organizational culture:

- poor communication,
- poor leadership,
- lack of behavioral rule,
- lack of clarity about organizational objectives, structures and strategies.



5. Work-life balance:

- **Conflicting** demands of **work & home**,
- **lack of support** for **domestic problems at work**,
- **lack of support** for work problems at home,
- **lack of organizational rules** and **policies to support work-life balance**

Consequences of work-related stress

1. Physiological reactions
2. Emotional reactions
3. Cognitive reactions
4. Behavioural Reactions
5. Long-term risks
6. Mental and physical disorders



1. Physiological reactions to stress:

- increasing heart rate
- increasing blood pressure
- increasing muscle tension
- sweating
- increased adrenaline production and secretion,



2. Emotional reactions may include:

- fear
- irritation
- depressive mood
- anxiety
- anger
- diminished motivation

3. Cognitive reactions may include

- Decreased attention
- Narrowing of perception
- Forgetfulness
- less effective thinking
- less problem solving,
- Reduced learning ability

4. Behavioural Reactions may include:

- Decreasing Productivity
- Increasing Smoking
- Increasing drug use and / Or Alcohol consumption
- Making Errors,
- Reporting Sick





5. Long-term risks of reduced health and Disease for the worker expressed in :

- high blood pressure
- angina complaints
- burnout and affective disorders الإرهاق والاضطرابات العاطفية
- depression
- disturbed metabolism (risk of Type II diabetes)
- alcohol dependence,
- musculoskeletal disorders

6. When exposure to stress does not decrease and continues over prolonged periods, workers do not have enough time to recover.

- ❖ Stress may eventually cause mental and physical disorders
- ❖ and impair the immune system, resulting in
- ❖ sickness and absence from work and work disability

Managing Work-related Stress

Employees are less likely to experience work-related stress when

- A. Demands** and pressures of work are **matched to** their knowledge and abilities.
- B. Control** can be exercised **over their work** and the way they do it.
- C. Support** is received from **supervisors** and **colleagues**.
- D. Participation** in decisions that concern their jobs is provided.

Managing Work-related Stress:

- A.** Actions and solutions should primarily focus **on changes in the organizational culture** and the **organization of work**
- B.** Improving workers' individual **abilities**, **skills** and coping capacity through training and education



A. Actions and solutions should **primarily** focus on change in the organizational culture and the organization of work, such as:

1. **Redistributing work** among colleagues,
2. Introducing **job rotation** (moving to a number of different tasks usually according to a rotation plan),
3. Introducing **job enlargement** (adding more tasks of the same difficulty),
4. Introducing **job enrichment** (adding more difficult tasks),
5. Improving **managerial ability** (e.g by management skills training)
6. **Ergonomic improvements** in the work place
7. Improving **working schedules** and **working** and **resting times** (for example **forward or backward rotation of shifts**)

Actions focus on organization culture and work, Cont. ..

- 8. Implementing **direct worker consultation** at work,
- 9. Improving **communication** between **groups** of **workers**, or between the **client** and the workers, and between workers and **supervisors**,
- 10. Providing **clear job descriptions** or tasks,
- 11. Providing **clear job promotion rules** and **paths**.



Note : The **advantage** of this approach is that:

- ☐ it deals directly with the **causes of stress** in the work environment,
- ☐ may have a **positive effect** on the **total workforce** of a company.



B. Improving workers' individual abilities, skills and coping capacity through training and education, such as courses in:

1. Time management,
2. **Dealing** with aggressive customers,
3. Lifting heavy goods,
4. **Using appropriate** machines or equipment,
5. stress management, and training,
6. **seeking support** from family, community, and religion and spirituality.



Note:

This individual-focused approach has **two disadvantages** when there are major problems in the work place:

1. The beneficial effects on stress symptoms are often **short lived;**



1. The **beneficial effects** on **stress symptoms** are often **short lived**;
2. Important **causes of stress** in the work environment are **ignored** and will **continue** to cause work stress.

As a general rule, organizational strategies to prevent work-related stress **should be given top priority.**

However, even the **most** Reliable **efforts to improve working conditions** are **unlikely to eliminate stress completely** for all workers.

For this reason, a combination of the **organizational and **individual approach is** often the **most useful** way to **prevent** work-related stress while staying focused on organizational and work-organizational measures.**

MANAGING WORK-RELATED STRESS:

The occupational health service, professional psychologists or professionals with a related expertise, If they are available, can advise the employer about prevention measures or interventions which are best indicated for the identified risk situations.

MANAGING WORK-RELATED STRESS: Examples:

Box 7: Examples of actions to prevent work-related stress

Problems:	Possible actions:
High workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redistribution of work among colleagues• Prioritize work/tasks• Offer a training course (e.g. on stress or time management)
Monotonous and routine work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure that where possible workers have some control over work pace• Make sure there are enough breaks• Job rotation (moving to a number of different tasks usually according to a rotation plan)• Job enlargement (add more tasks of same difficulty)• Job enrichment (add more difficult tasks)• Where necessary, offer additional training or education

Box 7: Examples of actions to prevent work-related stress

Problems:	Possible actions:
Physical risks at the work place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replace the risk producing machines or devices by others that produce less risk• Shield the source of risk (noise or other)• Inform workers about the negative effects of exposure to these risks• Offer workers personal protection devices (ear plugs, hand cuffs to protect them from hot surfaces etc.)
Conflicting or unclear tasks or roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a clear job description with clear and appropriate demands
Insufficient work experience for the job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide suitable training where necessary• Appoint a personal mentor at work• Offer help and encourage help from colleagues• Leave more difficult tasks to other more experienced colleagues

Box 7: Examples of actions to prevent work-related stress

Problems:	Possible actions:
Lack of social support from manager and/or colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer managers training to learn how to treat their workers• Arrange regular team building activities (dinner after work, team excursions, or other social activities)• Have lunch and coffee breaks together• Stimulate and reward team work• Arrange regular meetings in which work problems can be discussed and solved (together)
Work-home interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support or provide child care facilities• Flexible working times, such as temporary and/or part-time work• Teleworking/working from home• Address the needs of the family, children in addition to care for the worker• Provide worker transportation when needed





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