

STRESS MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

In today's capricious and ambitious work environment, stress level is rising both in managers and the workers. Due to work, stress more and more managers are showing symptoms of chronic fatigue and burnout. Research shows that stressed out managers and workers are not good for their companies or for shareholders. Stress leads to decrease in efficiency in even the best of individuals, which in turn leads to less productivity. It is a issue in most of the countries of the world, irrespective of whether the economy is developed , developing or underdeveloped. Therefore, it becomes essential to include " stress " in studying human behaviour to know what is actually stress and causes and its consequences and remedies to reduce them. Stress in work place is also costly to employers, as reflected in lower productivity, reduced motivation and increased errors and accidents. High stress is related to increases in turnover intentions and counterproductive behaviour.

Therefore discussion on the various causes of stress along with how they can be managed should be given prime attention in different organizations. By only managing the work place stress the problem cannot be solved fully. The employee carries the anxiety and stress caused at home to the work place. So, this has to be also taken care of stress should be managed and controlled properly as it strengthens one for the next failure and next frustration .

MEANING AND DEFINITION

The Stress is a dynamic condition where a person is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what she or he wish and for which the result is perceived to be both important and uncertain.

According to Robbins, stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important.

According to WHO, stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree.

According to S. Palmer, " stress is the psychological ,physiological and behavioural response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which over a period of time leads to ill health.

CAUSES OF STRESS

Stress can be by internal factors, such as feelings of failure or uncertainty about the future or external factors, such as financial or relationship problems.

What factors influence to stress? Unfortunately, the list is a long one. A range of conditions and events seem capable of generating such feelings. Some of the most vital of these are major stressful life events, such as the death, painful divorce, frequent minor hassles of everyday life, conditions and events relating to one job or career and certain aspects of the physical environment. Stress is the interaction between demands and the individual and burdens presented by the external environment.

Job stress results from interaction with the employees and the conditions of work. Views differ on the importance of employees characteristics versus working conditions as the primary cause of job stress.

The American Psychological Association's (APA) 2021 defines Stress in America Survey., 74% of Americans showed many stress-related conditions within the last month. About 34% reported headaches, 32% were fatigued, 34% were overwhelmed, and 32% experienced changes in sleeping habits .But what were the main stressors?

Family

The biggest cause of stress happens with those we love the most. Family problems are a vital source of stress for many people.

In 2021 Stress in America survey, 75% of Americans told that family responsibilities are an important source of stress.

Family stress can stem from old age parents, an overbooked schedule, health problems, or children having trouble in their institutions— to name a few. A 2021 study found that children's stress, in particular, affects their parents more than vice versa. It's like the old saying, "A parent is only as happy as their unhappiest child." Since the pandemic corona started in 2020, family problems have become more stressful for many people. Many parents have had to dodge work and homeschooling during strict lockdowns.

Relationships

While good relationships can significantly improve one's life, it can also lead to high levels of stress when things are not in your hands. About 70% of Americans say that relationships are an important source of stress.

Relationship stress can arise from many things: poor communication, lack of effort, or the poor health of a partner. And when any relationship ends, it may lead to poor mental health.

A Danish 2020 study found that recently divorced adults' mental health and physical were seriously worse than those who hadn't been recently divorced. Poor mental health was connected to how much fight occurred in the divorce.

Financial

Trying to make ends meet can be a big confront for many people. Whether it's a low-paying job, debt, lack of savings, high bills, inflation, or an unexpected major expense, financial problems are cited as one of source of stress for about 64% of Americans.

Work

Whether you're in the , a corporate environment, service industry or contract work, we spend more time in working. Most of us have had at least a few bad experiences

in the office. These experiences can cause more levels of stress, especially if they're going on.

The common sources of stress in the workplace include:

- Inefficient working conditions
- ineffective managers
- job instability
- low pay
- slacking or mean coworkers
- rude clients or customers
- too many hours
- unreasonable expectations

Health

Health is at the baseline of all we do. It's not possible to go for work, be a parent or reach your goals when your mental or physical health is not stable.

Various health stressors include the following:

- Addiction. substance, alcohol, pornography, or food addictions.
- Chronic illness. conditions such as autoimmune disease, diabetes, heart disease, or chronic fatigue syndrome.
- Mental health disorders. Conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), phobias, or bipolar disorder can cause extreme levels of stress.
- Acute illness. These may include illnesses such as COVID-19, pneumonia, or a broken bone.

Internal stressors

Internal stressors that come from within.

The internal stressors can be :

- feelings of failure
- feeling unworthy
- feeling hopeless
- uncertainty
- feeling overwhelmed
- feeling unlovable

Internal stressors can sometimes begin when you respond poorly to any external event. For example, imagine you may get a bad grade in a college and take that to mean you're a total failure. Internal stress can also begin from not knowing what's going to happen next. For instance, the recent outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic might have made you feel deeply uncertain about the future. In fact, more than 3 in 5 adults showed that uncertainty about the near future causes them stress.

World problems

World problems can cause very high levels of personal stress, especially to those who are most vulnerable.

Some of world problems includes:

- poor economy
- pandemics
- violence
- climate change
- discrimination
- polarizing politics

STRESSORS IN THE WORK PLACE

Work - overload and underload

According to Psychologists the word work overload to the common condition of overwork. They describe the usual condition of overwork. They have found out as quantitative overload and qualitative overload.

Quantitative overload is the situation of having more work to be performed in the given time. It is an obvious source of stress and has been linked to stress related ailments such as coronary heart disease. In general, the less control employees have over their work environment, the greater the stress.

Qualitative overload includes work that is very difficult. Having insufficient employees with considerable ability can find themselves in situations in which they cannot cope with the jobs demands.

The work underload having work that is too easy or is not enough to fill a workers time or challenge a workers capabilities is also stressful to them.

Organizational change

Employees who see change as exciting and challenging are less at risk to stress than those who view change as a threat. The way we recognise or respond to change, rather than the change itself, that is one source of stress. Most of the people resist change, preferring the familiar so that they will know than to expect.

A stressful change for many older employees is the presence of younger workers, women workers, and workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds who bring to the workplace unfamiliar attitudes, habits and cultural values. Employee participating in decision making and other changes in the company culture can be stressful for top level managers.

Role ambiguity and role conflict

Stressors from job ambiguity arise when an employee does not know what is expected from him or her or how to go about starting the job. When the scope and responsibilities of the employee job are disorganised or poorly defined. This is particular for new employees, whose job guidelines may be not clear. orientation and socialization programs for new employees can reduce role ambiguity.

Role conflict starts when two or more persons have different and sometimes opposing expectations of a given individual. Thus there are two or more sets of pressures on the individual so that its not possible to satisfy all of them.

Bad bosses, technology and other stressors

Supervisors and managers can be important sources of stress to their subordinated. Poor leadership behaviours can lead to stress. Problem on career development like

failing to get an anticipated promotion many also lead to stress. The fear of failure on the job can induce stress. To many workers performance appraisal is also a source of stress.

Taking responsibility for subordinated can be a stressor for supervisors and managers. Evaluating employees for salary, promotion, or termination decisions providing incentives and rewards and managing work output on daily basis can lead to stress.

Computers can be also source of stress. In a study, the employees said that computer access generally improved the quality of life but that computers also caused stress, information overload, and a lack of personal connection to other people. They also believed that computers demanded that they always be available to respond quickly to email and to information on the internet.

working conditions especially physical working conditions are most common sources of job stress. Temperature extremes, poor lighting, shift work, and indoor pollution contribute to stress. Assembly lone work is connected with stress due to its repetitious, monotonous, noisy and lacks challenge and control.

CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

Stress has serious consequences on health as well as job performance. Stress results in a variety physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences.

Physiological Consequences

Stress takes its toll on the human body. The recent study has found that students who have worries regarding their exams are more susceptible to various illnesses. As you know, more people experience tension or headache due to stress or muscle pain and related back problems. These physiological ailments are linked to muscle contractions that occur when people are exposed to stressors.

Psychological Consequences

Stress results in many psychological consequences like moodiness, job dissatisfaction and depression. The psychological consequence of stress which is called job burnout is Emotional fatigue.

Job Burnout

Burnout is the process of emotional derealization, exhaustion, and reduced personal achievement resulting from long exposure to stress. The term "job burnout" was not known 50 years ago; but now a days it's a much talked about phenomenon. Job burnout is a difficult process that includes the coping strategies, dynamics of stress and stress consequences. Burnout is triggered by more demands made on people who serve or regularly interact with others. Role-related stressors and Interpersonal will cause burnout.

The job burnout comprises of three components. The first one is emotional exhaustion, which plays an important role in the burnout process. It is characterized by lack of energy and a feeling that your emotional resources are exhausted. Emotional exhaustion is also known as compassion fatigue because the employee no longer or will not able to give as much support to their clients.

The second one is derealization, which is identified by the treatment of others as objects rather than people. Employees who undergo burnout become emotionally away from clients and cynical about the organization. This detachment reaches the point of callousness far beyond the level of detachment normally required in execution of tasks, more particularly in service sector. Derealization can be seen when employees strictly adhere rules and regulations rather than try to know the client's needs and search for a mutually acceptable solution.

The third component of job burnout is reduced personal accomplishment. The slowdown in one's competence and success. In short, , the person's self-efficacy come down. In these senerio, employees develop a sense of learned helplessness, as they no longer believe that they make a difference.

Behavioral Consequences

When stress becomes distress, job performance reduces and workplace accidents increase. High stress levels impair your ability to remember information, make effective decisions, and take appropriate decisions. You probably experience this kind of distress in examination.. chances of forgetting important information and commit mistakes during examination

Overstressed workers will be absent from work very frequently because stress makes people sick. Many a times absenteeism is used as a stress coping mechanism. Generally, we often react to stress through flight or fight. Absenteeism is a form of flight-temporarily withdrawing from the stressful situation that we get time to re-energize ourselves.

Occasionally workplace aggression can be the reason of stress. Aggression represents the fight reaction to stress. In its mildest form, employees engage in verbal conflict. They are not likely to empathize with co-workers. Occasionally, it may lead to more dangerous levels of workplace hostility.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

The tools, strategies or techniques that reduce stress and reduce the negative impacts stress has on your mental or physical well-being is stress management. A variety of techniques is used to manage stress. It includes mental, emotional, and behavioral strategies. When stress management is used regularly and in response to stressful life events, we can optimize our well-being (take this well-being quiz to see how you're doing).

Why Managing Stress Is Important

Stress can be acute (e.g., in response to a lion) or chronic (e.g., in response to a stressful job we've had for years). Stress can come from work, finances, relationships, and a variety of other places, but stress can also come from inside the body, from illnesses or inflammation. These stressful events initiate activation of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis. And the greater the stress we have, the greater the activation of the HPA axis.

When we get stressed, we may at first feel energized. That's because cortisol gives us the energy we need to escape predators or fight disease and inflammation [1]. But when we are stressed too much, we can start to feel wired from too much of too little cortisol (test your cortisol levels with this at-home test). Then after time, we start to feel exhausted. That's because we were designed to get bursts of energy to chase after our next meal or run away from a lion. But now in our modern world, we have this

kind of ongoing chronic stress that wears us down over time. This can be devastating for our mental and physical health. And we may even need a stress detox to remove the built up stress hormones and get our bodies working properly again.

Stress management techniques

1. Cognitive Behavioural Techniques

Cognitive behaviour techniques consists of the above stages such as training, education and practice

Training: Training provided to the participants enable to learn time management, social skills, use of relaxation techniques, setting realistic goals.

Education : The participants are made known of the nature and effects of stress recognizing their own stresses by knowing the symptoms of stress.

Practice: The participants relearn and rehearse the skills known through real life situations and training.

2. Relaxation Techniques

Reduction of stress can be by relaxation. By reducing muscle tension the feelings of anxiety and stress can be reduced. In relaxation techniques it begins from the lower part of the body and then up to the facial muscles and due to this whole body is relaxed and the person's stress is reduced. He can do his normal work without pressure and anxiety.

The various relaxation techniques includes exercise like swimming, brisk walking, aerobic, performing various asanas, pranayam, cycling skipping, dancing, going up and down the stairs, engaging mind in various type of work without sitting lazy , laughter, dhyana all these help in reducing stress.

CONCLUSIONS

Besides the various techniques of stress management discussed, some additional ways of managing with stress which can be extremely helpful for the common man. It is proceed that though the negative impact of stress is slow, it never the less makes progressive damage to one's cardiovascular system as well as day to day life. In tolerance and anger are the best enemies of a person. By being intolerant and controlling one's anger once can cope positively with any stressful situation. Stress is just like an explosive which should be diffused in time .

Frequent colds and infection, tension headaches, restlessness, tiredness , lack of sleep high BP, are symptoms of stress.so, one should take care of their stress seriously instead of taking it lightly.Everyone should do their things which brings them pleasure and they should also develop the habit of laugh, smile and enjoy without repending their past and anticipating future unforeseen contingencies in life. The attitude towards their life should be positive and optimistic.

We should be thankful to god for what we have and don't have a longing for what you don't have or what you cannot achieve.

NEWSBREAK

Balancing work and family: the stress never ends

Susan R manager at AT & T is basking Ridgem New Jersey, experiences stress daily caused by work overload, both on and off the job. Leaving her office at 5 pm, the work day is far from over. For many women like susan, the most difficult part of the day is just beginning.she must leave precisely at 5 pm not a minute later, if she is in the middle of meeting. It's a frantic rush to get out of the office, she said. Its so stressful what's her hurry? She had to pick up her 4 years old son from his daycare centre, then drive across town at the height of rush hour traffic to collect her 7 years old daughter from her after school program , if not coming on time , she will be met by fretting child and a hurried teacher(whose possibly late picking up her own children) and docked for a late fees.

Next, a quick stop at the grocery store to buy food for dinner and a dash home to let the dog out. Then, prepare the meal , referee fights between the children,pay attention to her husband(who doesn't do much to help), supervise the children's homework,do the laundry and so it goes.

By the time she's gotten the kids to bed, Susan has put in more than a 12-hour work day. No wonder she is exhausted and stressed out. And she's not alone. Even for wives whose husbands share more of the child care and household duties, the primary responsibility rests with the women. And suppose she is a single working mother, the situation can be worse.

How do they do it all? Where do they find time and energy? "They steal it from themselves", said a sociologist who studied the lifestyle of 300 mothers who had jobs outside the home. In order to give time with their children, these women cut down on sleep and on their own free time. Today, working mothers sleep nearly 6 hours less per week and have 12 fewer hours for their own activities than do mothers who do not have outside jobs. "There is no time for hobbies or socializing", one woman said. "I can't tell you the last time I went out". Having it all - a family and a job - can lead to a lot of stress along the way.

Source: Kelly, A.L., (1999, June 13.), For employed moms, the pinnacle of stress comes after work ends. *New York Times: Working moms don't shrink time with kids* (2000, March 28). St. Petersburg (FL) Times.

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