

MINDFUL EMPLOYER CONFERENCE

Exeter, September 2008



Workshop Session

**Supporting line managers, supporting
staff**

When it all gets too much: whether at home or at work



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Workshop Presenters

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- Workshop outline
- Short introductory presentations
- Group discussions of how managers can work with employees to reduce and manage stress
- Group feedback
- Final conclusions

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No one should leave work
at the end of the day, less
healthy than they were
when they arrived

Work should be health-
enhancing



TUC Vision

Definition of Stress

HSE definition

"the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them"



Pressure can be enjoyable when ...

- Proportionate to need
- Action is possible
- Individual capacity is sufficient
- Duration is limited
- Reward is available
- There is no such thing as 'good stress'
- But what happens if pressures uncontrollable?

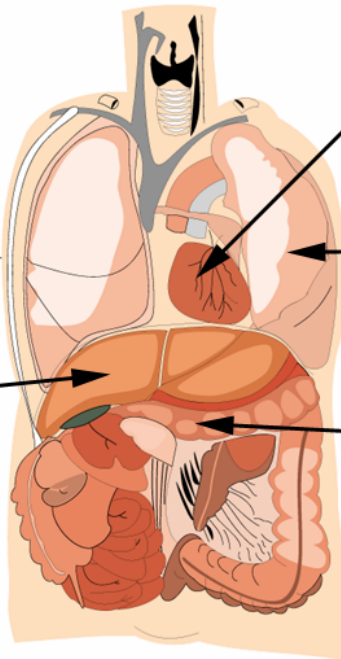


The body under stress...

The Body Under Stress

The initial stage of arousal remains the same whether you are faced with a major or minor challenge. But under extreme, prolonged, or persistent pressure the body continues to manufacture extra quantities of stress chemicals, triggering further processes to maintain energy. If arousal continues, the adrenal glands manufacture anti-inflammatory chemicals that simultaneously speed tissue repair while depressing the body's immune defence system. If all these changes continue, the body goes on trying to adapt under increasing strain and pressure. Eventually it breaks down. Exhaustion, a variety of illnesses - and even death - may be the outcome of uninterrupted, excessive stress.

Liver.
Fats and proteins stored here (and in the gut & skin) are broken down and released as a further source of energy.



Cardiovascular System.
The body retains extra sodium, encouraging fluid retention, and raising the heart rate and blood pressure. The heart becomes overworked and beats irregularly or too quickly. The blood is more likely to clot.

Lungs.
Overbreathing gets worse.

Digestive Tract.
The stomach secretes more acid but cannot resume its digestive functions. If arousal continues, the stomach lining becomes irritated.

Muscles.
Tension increases.

- No respite?
- **Adrenalin** - Heart rate, muscle tension, breathing
- **Noradrenalin, Cortisol, Thyroxin** – increase blood sugars, energy, quick reactions
- **Endorphins** – natural pain killers
- **Cholesterol** – repairs damaged cells, clotting agents
- Chronic release is harmful, auto immune system lowered
- Cardiovascular illnesses, digestive complaints, respiratory problems
- Psychological illnesses, Migraines, PMT, Cancers.....
- Premature death?

Managers In Organisations

The Research

Eric Marshall

Finance Director

PPC Worldwide

Chairman

Employee Assistance Professionals Association



Who are PPC



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Background

- 30 years specialist experience in EAP's
- World's largest global service provider, over 130 countries
- Servicing more than 2 million employees worldwide
- Proactive approach to employee wellness
- Innovator in the field of EAP's



Levels Of Help Within The Organisation



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Level One (Company)

- Comply with Health & Safety legislation
- Improve productivity and reduce absenteeism
- Effectively manage risk sensitive issues such as stress, bullying and alcohol & drug issues

Level Two (Manager)

- More effective management of employee issues
- More efficient team performance
- More effective use of HR and line management time
- Softer skills development amongst managers

Level Three (Employee)

- Greater understanding of key emotional and psychological employee issues
- Access to expert resource to ensure appropriate and effective responses and policy development
- Speedy access to specialist responses when they are most needed

An Old Saying.....



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**There are 2 things you are expected to be born with
the ability to do.....**

- 1) Be a parent**
- 2) Be a manager**

Research Shows

- Most common aspects of job that are both difficult & stressful
- While taking their role seriously they have difficulty in dealing with areas that are;
 - Sensitive
 - Confrontational
- Getting employee's to perform at their best requires excellent interpersonal skills
- Managers play a key part in providing an organisation's duty of care
- Sometimes facts that are uncomfortable need to be raised
- Employees need encouragement to seek some sort of help

Issues Raised By Staff

- 92% have to deal with issues raised by staff but <30% feel they cope well
- 56% have to deal with issues within the team;
 - clashes with colleagues
 - Problems fitting in
 - Bullying
- 40% have to deal with depression and stress within their team
- 40% deal with job related issues
 - Workload
 - Lack of career progression/Job development
- 25% have to deal with more personal issues
 - Splitting with partner/spouse
 - Sickness in the family
 - Moving home

Issues Managers Don't Feel Comfortable Managing

- Where it involves conflict
- Where there is little a manager can actually do
- Where managers may have to give negative feedback
- When the situation causes heightened emotion
- When the situation needs delicate handling

How Managers Cope

- Find it difficult balancing being professional **and** sympathetic
- Feel untrained to deal with a lot of emotional situations
- Experience can help but little available for new managers
- Over 51% hate confrontation but it frequently occurs within team
- Managers suffer lack of sleep and working long hours
- Despite long hours work suffers
- Only 50% feel able to talk to their boss
- 40% are not comfortable with their responsibilities for managing staff

Conclusion



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- Being a manager is more than just doing the job
- Requires a combination of functional knowledge & interpersonal skills
- The higher up the organisation the more you have to do through people
- What comes first;
 - Develop the skills for a job you might not do
 - Waiting for a role that needs the skills you don't have
- Master management skills early will pay dividends for career development



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And finally

In order that people may be happy in
their work, these three things are
needed ...

they must be fit for it;
they must not do too much of it;
and
they must have a sense of success in it.



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