Stress Management

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Everyone who has ever held a job has, at some point, felt the pressure of work-related stress. Any job can have stressful elements, even if you love what you do. But when work stress becomes chronic, it can be overwhelming and harmful to both physical and emotional health. Chronic stress on the job can ultimately lead to burnout.
Identifying Stress

- Psychological Signs
- Emotional Signs
- Physical Signs
- Behavioral Signs
Psychological Signs

- Inability to concentrate or make simple decisions
- Memory lapses
- Becoming rather vague
- Easily distracted
- Less intuitive and creative
- Worrying
- Negative thinking
- Depression & anxiety
Emotional Signs

- Tearful
- Irritable
- Mood swings
- Extra sensitive to criticism
- Defensive
- Feeling out of control
- Lack of motivation
- Anger
- Frustrated
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of self-esteem
Physical Signs

- Aches/pains and muscle tension/grinding teeth
- Frequent colds/infections
- Allergies/rashes/skin irritations
- Constipation/diarrhea
- Weight loss or gain
- Indigestion/heartburn/ulcers
- Hyperventilating/lump in the throat
- Dizziness/palpitations
- Panic attacks/nausea
- Physical tiredness
- Menstrual changes/loss of libido/sexual problems
- Heart problems/high blood pressure
Behavioral Signs

- No time for relaxation or pleasurable activities
- Prone to accidents, forgetfulness
- Increased reliance on alcohol, smoking, caffeine, recreational or illegal drugs
- Becoming a workaholic
- Poor time management and/or poor standards of work
- Absenteeism
- Self neglect/change in appearance
- Social withdrawal
- Relationship problems
- Insomnia or waking tired
- Reckless
- Aggressive/anger outbursts
- Nervous
- Uncharacteristically lying
Steps to Managing Stress

• **Track your stressors:** Keep a journal for a couple of weeks identifying which situations create the most stress and how you respond to them. Include your thoughts, feelings and specifics about what happened. Taking notes can help you find patterns among your stressors and your reactions to them.

• **Develop healthy responses:** Exercising is a great way to reduce stress. Make time for hobbies and your favorite activities. Build healthy eating and sleeping habits.
Steps to Managing Stress

• Establish boundaries: Establish work-life boundaries (i.e. not checking work email from home in the evening, not answering the phone during dinner).

• Take time to recharge: Take time off from engaging in work-related activities and thinking about work. Instead, take time to relax and unwind, or engage in something that you enjoy doing.
Steps to Managing Stress

• **Learn how to relax:** Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises and mindfulness (a state in which you actively observe present experiences and thoughts without judging them) can help decrease stress.

• **Talk to your supervisor:** Have open conversations with your supervisor to develop an effective plan for managing your identified work-related stressors so that you can perform at your best on the job.

• **Get some support:** Accepting help from trusted family members and friends can improve your ability to manage stress. Your employer may also have stress management resources available through an employee assistance program (EAP). If you continue to feel overwhelmed by work stress, you may want to seek professional help from a counselor who can help you better manage your stress and change unhealthy behavior.
Finding a Balance