

STRESS MANAGEMENT AT WORKPLACE

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Abstract : Stress is a fact of everyday life. Sometimes it acts as a positive force and sometimes as a negative force. If you experience stress over a prolonged period of time, it could become chronic, till you take some action. About 500 million people worldwide are believed to be suffering from stress problems. This article highlights the causes, effects and management of stress and therefore could be helpful for people who want to learn how to react to stress in a more constructive, proactive way.

Keywords : Stress, Stress Management, Stress Relievers

I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an important component of the total positive health and is interwoven closely with the physical and physiological dynamics of the human body. Worldwide, about 500 million people are believed to be suffering from neurotic, stress related and psychological problems. Although stress is unavoidable but it should not be over looked as even short-lived, minor stress can have an impact. Stress becomes dangerous when it starts interfering with your ability to live a normal life. The longer the stress lasts, the worse it is for both your mind and body.

Definition of Stress:

Stress is defined as “a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and motivation to meet those needs.”

Stress can be positive or negative:

[1] Stress is good when the situation offers an opportunity to a person to gain something. It acts as a motivator for peak performance.

[2] Stress is negative when a person faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems.

Factors that are responsible for causing stress are called stressors

Why is studying stress important:

Reducing stress in your everyday life is vital for maintaining your overall health, as it can improve your mood, boost immune function, promote longevity and allow you to be more productive. Stress has such a powerful impact on your well being because it is a natural response that is activated in the brain.

Causes of Stress:

- **Role Ambiguity:** It occurs when the person doesn't know what he is supposed to do on the job, his tasks and responsibilities are not clear. It creates confusion in the minds and results in stress.
- **Rotating Work Shifts:** Stress may occur in those individuals who work on different work shifts. It creates problems in adjusting to the shift timings, and it can affect not only personal life but also family life of the employee.
- **Role Conflict:** It takes place when people have different expectations from the person performing a particular role. It can also occur if the job is not as per expectation, or when a job demands a certain type of behaviour that is against the person's moral values.
- **Occupational Demands:** Some jobs are more demanding than others. Jobs that involve risk, and danger are more stressful. Job that cause stress needs constant monitoring of unpleasant physical conditions, making decisions.
- **Lack of Participation in Decision-making:** Many experienced employees feel that management should consult them on matters affecting their jobs. In reality, the superiors hardly ask the concerned employees before taking a decision. That develops a feeling of being neglected, which may lead to stress.
- **Work Overload:** Excessive workload leads to stress as it puts a person under tremendous pressure. Work overload may take two different forms:
 - Qualitative work overload implies performing a job that is complicated or beyond the employee's capacity.
 - Quantitative work overload is a result of many activities performed in a prescribed time.
- **Work Underload:** Doing less work or jobs of routine and simple nature would lead to monotony and boredom, which can lead to stress.
- **Poor Working Conditions:** Employees may be subject to poor working conditions. It would include bad lighting and ventilation, unhygienic sanitation facilities, excessive noise, and dust, presence of toxic gasses and fumes, inadequate safety measures, etc. Unpleasant conditions create physiological and psychological imbalance in humans thereby causing stress.
- **Lack of Group Cohesiveness:** Individuals experience stress when there is no unity among work group members. There are mistrust, jealousy, frequent quarrels, etc., in groups and this lead to stress to employees.

- **Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflict:** These conflicts take place due to differences in perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs between two or more individuals and groups. Such conflicts can be a source of stress for group members.
- **Organizational Changes:** When changes occur, people have to adapt to those changes, and this may cause stress. Stress is higher when changes are significant or unusual like transfer or adoption of new technology.
- **Lack of Social Support:** When individuals believe that they have the friendship and support of others at work, their ability to cope with the effects of stress increases.
- **Life Changes:** Life changes can bring stress to a person. Gradual life changes include getting older, and abrupt life changes include death or accident of a loved one. Sudden life changes are highly stressful and very difficult to cope.
- **Frustration:** It is another cause of stress. It arises when goal-directed behaviour gets blocked. Management should attempt to remove barriers and help the employees to reach their goals.
- **Racial, Caste, and Religious Conflicts:** Employees living in areas, which are often prone to conflicts among people based on differences seen in their race, caste and religion do suffer more from stress.
- **Career Concern :** If an Employee seems that there are no opportunities for self-growth, he may experience stress. Hence, unfulfilled career expectations are the significant source of stress.

Stress relievers:

- Regular meditation,
- Physical exercise,
- Balanced diet,
- Focused thinking,
- Control of anger,
- Managing Depression,
- Maintaining calmness in stressful situations,
- Having a positive attitude towards life,
- Harmony towards self and others, etc.

Objectives:-

- To investigate the stress levels of employees at work place
- To assess coping strategies adopted by Organisations to manage stress of employees
- To suggest strategies to manage stress levels of employees

Why is stress management important:-

A certain level of stress is always present in any workplace. As soon as the level of stress escalates to a point that it becomes dangerous for the well-being of the organization as well as employees, stress management becomes important. It has the following benefits:

- **Enables you to motivate employees better.** Stressful situation can have a devastating effect on the morale of employees, causing increased absenteeism and employee turnover. However, good stress management skills help the morale of employees to stay intact so that they are more motivated and better focused on their jobs and performance.
- **Reduced chances of workplace conflicts.** Among many other factors contributing to workplace conflicts such as differences in opinions, backgrounds and personalities, the increased level of stress also plays a major role.
- **Improves productivity even in stressful situations.** Since the employee morale and workplace relationships remain intact, stress management skills are considered to be one of the major contributors to the improved productivity

How to improve stress management skills:-

Bearing in mind how too much stress can be detrimental to employees' morale and organization's profits level, following measures can be taken to improve stress management skills:

Fig. 1. Identify the sources of stress and prioritize.

Fig. 2. Motivate yourself to find solutions.

Fig. 3. Manage stress through exercise.

Conclusion:-

Stress is a normal part of life and therefore unavoidable. But, every effort should be done to reduce it. Reducing your stress levels can, not only make you feel better right now, but may also protect your health long-term. The World Health Organization has highlighted stress as one of the major health challenges of the twenty first century. By understanding ourselves and our reaction to stress-provoking situations, we can learn to handle stress more effectively.

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