

# Element 1.1: Understand the relationships between work-related stress, pressure and mental health/mental illness

## ACTIVITY



An organisation announces a new project with an important client. The timelines are tight but the organisation has delivered similar projects in the past.

How well do you think each of the following people would cope with the pressure of leading this project?

- A. The new associate who has been with the organisation for two months
- B. The senior director who is going through a difficult divorce
- C. The executive who just finished working on a similar project

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## Element 1.2: Understand the prevalence and costs of stress and mental ill-health in the workplace

### THOUGHT PROVOKER



Are these figures higher or lower than you expected?

Many of the causes of stress and mental ill-health outlined are not directly linked to work. Which of the examples do you think an employer would be able to address?

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## Element 1.4: Understand the responsibilities of employers to workers relating to work-related stress

### THOUGHT PROVOKER



A line manager in a small administrative organisation is made aware of the high levels of stress being reported to HR. The most common trigger is workers working excessive hours. The line manager holds a meeting with their team to discuss healthy working patterns, and requests that they log off promptly when they are due to finish their shifts.

A week later, one of the line manager's workers phones in sick to HR. They say that they are too exhausted to work today as they worked late the previous night. The HR worker is concerned and asks why they were doing this if they have been told not to by their line manager. The worker says that as their line manager is regularly sending emails late at night, they felt guilty that they were not doing the same and wanted to put in the hours.

**If you were in a leadership position in this workplace, what would you do to positively influence the workers and help prevent overworking?**

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## Element 1.4: Understand the responsibilities of employers to workers relating to work-related stress

### ACTIVITY



How could the following leadership decisions have both a positive and negative influence on workplace stress within an organisation?

1. CEO announces an opportunity for paid overtime.
2. A line manager sends their whole team on the same stress awareness training course, which is a week long.
3. The CEO wants to upgrade the existing IT infrastructure and install a new IT system.

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## Element 1.4: Understand the responsibilities of employers to workers relating to work-related stress

### ACTIVITY



Which roles are involved in managing workplace stress in your organisation?

What other roles can you think of that might help manage workplace stress? (These might be formal roles as well as informal ones.)

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## Element 1.4: Understand the responsibilities of employers to workers relating to work-related stress

### THOUGHT PROVOKER



What policies does your organisation have for managing stress?

How often are they reviewed?

How well do they reflect your experience of the world of work?

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# Element 1.4: Understand the responsibilities of employers to workers relating to work-related stress

## ACTIVITY



Is each person in the examples below behaving appropriately when managing a worker's personal issues?

- A line manager tells their team about a worker's confidential family life issues that are causing them to feel stressed.
- With the permission of the worker, a HR manager refers a worker to counselling for a recent bereavement.
- The health and safety professional in a large organisation includes high-workload as a general concern within their stress risk assessment, based on a conversation they have had with two other workers.

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## Element 1.4: Understand the responsibilities of employers to workers relating to work-related stress

### ACTIVITY



Take a look at the competencies listed in the indicator tool (reproduced in Appendix 1).

- Which competencies do you think are your strongest?
- Are there any you are not confident about?
- What could you do to ensure you do not unknowingly contribute to or create stress for your team?

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## Element 2.1: Understand the causes of workplace stress

### ACTIVITY



Note down some examples of how much your organisation meets or does not meet the Management Standards in each of the six aspects of workplace design.

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## Element 2.1: Understand the causes of workplace stress

### ACTIVITY



You lead a sales team of five Account Executives, who speak to clients, advise on sales and arrange orders.

One Friday morning, an all-staff memo is sent advising that some departments and job titles will be changing, including your team. The memo advises that a meeting about the changes will take place the following week, and that the changes should not be discussed with individual team members until then.

Later the same day you receive an email confirming changes: three of your team's job titles will change to 'Account Manager' and they will be required to travel regularly to visit clients and work from home the rest of the time. The other two team members have been assigned the role of 'Sales Coordinator' and will be based in the office and take over all administrative aspects of the contracts.

Which of the six key stressors might this affect for your team?

Are there any other aspects of this situation that you think might cause stress?

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## Element 2.2: Applying the HSE's Management Standards

### THOUGHT PROVOKER



What communication routes do you currently have in your organisation? Who do they reach?

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## Element 3.1: Develop practical options to address and reduce workplace stressors

### ACTIVITY



For the example interventions given, identify the level of intervention being applied (primary, secondary or tertiary).

1. Delivery of stress management training to all line managers.
2. Provision of counselling to a worker who is recovering from a traumatic life event.
3. Producing a new company policy which restricts the number of hours that can be worked.
4. Offering conflict management training to customer service workers.

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## Element 3.1: Develop practical options to address and reduce workplace stressors

### ACTIVITY



An organisation is developing a training initiative to develop time management skills among workers. The project will take around 6 months to fully implement.

How would you keep momentum going and ensure workers stay engaged throughout the implementation of this intervention?

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## Element 3.1: Develop practical options to address and reduce workplace stressors

### THOUGHT PROVOKER



Select one of the six workplace stressors.

Focusing on the intervention examples, think about how you could apply some of these interventions in your own workplace. Are there any other interventions you can think of which would help to reduce this stressor within your workplace?

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## Element 3.2: Develop practical options to manage effects of stress and its impact in the workplace

### ACTIVITY



Your team has been asked to attend an all-day conference at an external location, a hotel in a nearby city.

What aspects of the conference are likely to be triggering for someone with anxiety?

- Using public transport at rush hour
- Visiting a conference with crowds of people
- Travelling to a large city
- Finding the venue
- Being unfamiliar with the hotel layout
- Networking with people from other organisations
- All of these aspects

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## Element 3.2: Develop practical options to manage effects of stress and its impact in the workplace

### ACTIVITY



Your team has moved to hybrid working and now operates a hot desk policy so desk space has to be booked the day before on a first come, first served basis.

What aspects of the new policy are likely to be triggering for someone with anxiety?

- Not being able to plan in advance
- Difficulty arranging appropriate child care
- Finding an available workstation to use
- Having to set up IT at an unfamiliar desk
- Working with different colleagues each time
- All of these aspects

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## Element 3.3: Develop ways to continually improve the workplace

### THOUGHT PROVOKER



What tools and support systems are you aware of in your own workplace in regards to mental health and stress management?

Based on the core standards, what else would you recommend your employer does to improve how they manage workplace stress and mental health conditions?

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