

THE BUSINESS MENTALITY

5 MINUTE
STRESS CHECK
FOR SMALL
ORGANISATIONS



introduction

Small business and stress

Most people go to work wanting to do their job as well as possible and this is likely to involve a certain amount of pressure; pressure which may be just part and parcel of producing positive results. Many people find this desirable and say it helps them to feel motivated.

But too much pressure often creates prolonged stress and this can lead to a cycle of poor performance, declining confidence, inefficiency, ill health and decreasing company productivity.

When it all becomes too much and the individual is unable to cope, stress begins to be bad for business.

The challenge for every company is to maintain a sense of purpose and motivation without causing stress; getting the balance right is crucial.



Take 5 minutes out

- read through the 10 key issues relating to workplace stress
- consider the question under each point
- plot your answers on the stress check map

Answering the questions will provide a quick overview and help highlight areas which may require attention.

Benefits

A proactive approach to stress brings all round benefits to staff and organisations; helping to improve performance and achieve a healthier bottom line.

What next?

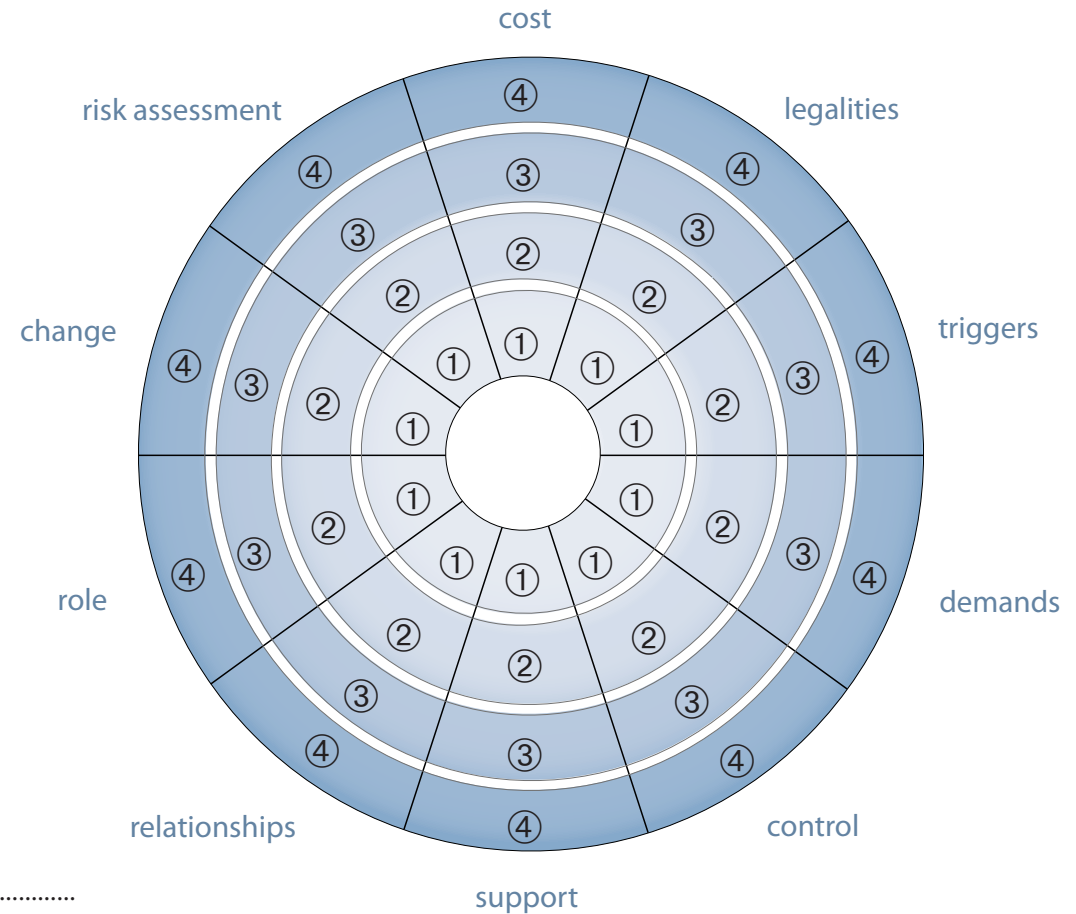
Fortunately, there is plenty that employers can do to guard against the negative effects of stress. The stress check map can form the first step in developing an action plan – and in most cases, this means making small changes that do not require a lot of money.

Business Mentality Stress Map

Take 5 minutes out

Print a copy of this page and use the map in conjunction with the Business Mentality Stress Check to record your answers to 10 key issues on workplace stress.

- recorded scores will give an instant snapshot of how stress is being managed across the range of issues
- responses towards the outer, darker sections indicate areas which might need attention; lighter sections indicate better performance



**For information or support, please call
Business Mentality on**

020 8444 7910

www.businessmentality.org.uk
info@businessmentality.org.uk

name

org/dept

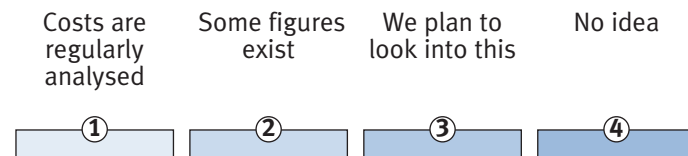
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Each year stress costs UK business an estimated £673 million and the loss of around 13.5 million working days

Added to the bill for sick pay, stress brings high levels of costs in terms of reduced productivity, low morale, covering for absent staff, refilling vacant posts and damaged reputations.



Management has a clear understanding of the potential costs associated with stress within the organisation



Employers are responsible for the general well-being of employees while at work

There are key areas of legislation which relate to mental well-being in the workplace and every employer, irrespective of business size or legal status has a duty of care to its staff.

The organisation is up to speed regarding legal obligations relating to staff well-being

Totally

Partially

Vague understanding

No knowledge

①

②

③

④



“Only when you are relaxed can you see what’s going on.”

- Jane Campion, Film Director

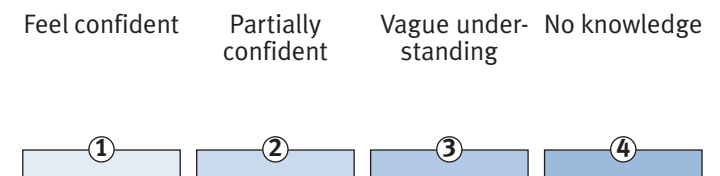


Anticipating stressful situations

We never know what’s round the next corner, but there are signs and symptoms which indicate that stress may be present or becoming an issue. These might include such things as poor time keeping, irritability or mistakes.

Being aware of this provides a good chance of avoiding any possible negative consequences.

Managers are aware of the issues and feel able to guard against potential causes of stress



*“I never ran 1000 miles.
I could never have done
that. I ran one mile 1000
times.”*

- Stu Mittleman,
World Record Holder for
Ultra-Distance running



Getting the balance right. It's about workload, work patterns and the work environment

Most staff thrive on a certain amount of challenge and pressure in their work and enjoy the 'buzz' as a positive and motivating factor. However, when does this pressure become stressful rather than stimulating?

Managers regularly review job design and personal abilities against tasks and workloads

Agree

Mainly agree
but could
improve

Some things
in place

Disagree

①

②

③

④



How much say do staff have in the way in which they do their work?

If staff are to perform well it is desirable for them to have a degree of control over their work, which often results in improved performance.

A lack of control over their working lives is one of the most common causes of stress for people and can lead to them feeling uninvolved and undervalued.

Employees are involved in decision making and given a say in the way their work is carried out

Always Have a large say Have some input Have little say



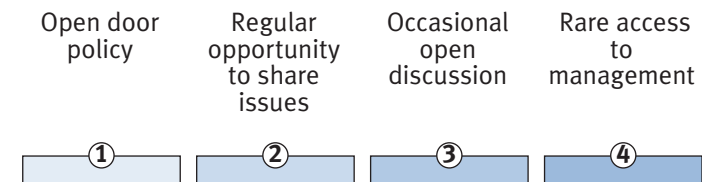


Encouraging staff and providing them with the right tools to do the job

A business that is open with information and has systems for providing regular and consistent levels of support will have staff who are more effective and less likely to suffer from the negative effects of stress.

Once stressful situations start to develop or staff report cases of stress, managers can take a number of small, low cost steps to guard against potentially damaging results. In many cases these are simple adjustments to existing working practices, e.g. weekly review meetings or giving a pat on the back.

The organisation provides a safe environment for staff to raise issues of personal concern



relationships 7

*“Humour is a rubber sword
- it allows you to make
a point without drawing
blood.”*

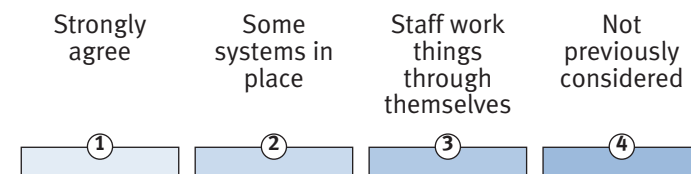
- Mary Hirsch



Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Relationships are central to the experience of being at work. How well staff get on with bosses, colleagues or the people they manage can have a huge impact on physical and mental wellbeing.

The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness



“In order that people may be happy in their work, 3 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.”

- John Ruskin



People understand their role within the organisation

Stress often grows when people do not fully understand their role in a team or section, or when they are unclear about their job description, or the overall goals of the business.

Staff need to understand their role and responsibilities to do their jobs effectively.

The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon its people are clear

Agreed

We aim to be clear

We're usually clear

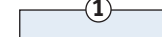
There are no defined roles

①

②

③

④



“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

- Charles Darwin



Change is well managed and communicated to all staff in a way that is clear and easy to understand

In today's competitive environment, businesses have to constantly change just to survive. However, change alters routines and can make people feel uncertain, but it also offers an opportunity to review the way managers consult and communicate with staff.

Uncertainty can unsettle people, leading to poor performance and unhappy teams.

The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals

Agree Mostly Sometimes Rarely



risk assessment 10

“Stress is an ignorant state. It believes that everything is an emergency.”

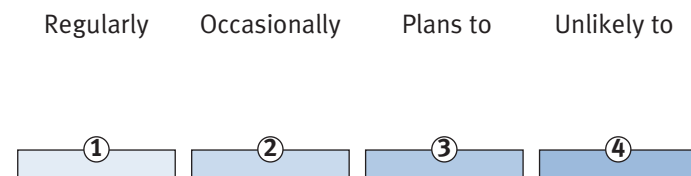
- Natalie Goldberg - Wild Mind



Stress should be dealt with like any other hazard in the workplace

A regular risk assessment is the best way to minimise the negative effects of stress. It will identify the triggers and problem areas, prioritise actions, develop solutions and monitor effectiveness. As well as saving the company money, a regular risk assessment (formal or informal) can also improve overall efficiency.

The organisation implements stress risk assessments



About this booklet

A starting point to managing stress is to be aware of what stress is, why it matters, and its causes and symptoms.

Developed specifically for managers of smaller organisations, this booklet aims to raise awareness of 10 key issues related to workplace stress.

Business Mentality

Business Mentality works with small organisations to identify and manage issues associated with work related stress; it is able to offer practical interventions through stress audits, workshops and consultancy.

Contact Business Mentality at:

www.businessmentality.org.uk

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