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Employee Stress Management at Work place

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Abstract: Stress in the workplace is now widely recognized as a major problem facing total Industry. Stress is a growing concern for organizations today. Stress can be defined as a lively circumstance in which people face constraints, opportunities, or loss of something they desire and for which the consequence is both unpredictable as well as crucial. In many countries, employers have a legal responsibility to recognize and deal with stress in the workplace so that employees do not become physically or mentally ill. It is important to tackle the causes of stress in the workplace and stress at work can lead to problems for the individual, working relationships and the overall working environment. These issues may include lowered self-esteem and poor concentration skills for the employee. The employer may suffer from increasing customer complaints, staff turnover and days lost sickness. A growing number of companies are offering some form of stress management intervention. However, for those seeking to introduce stress management activities, too little in the way of guidance and direction has been available. This analysis aims to help organizations better understand the sources and dynamics of stress at the worksite and examines how they can reasonably assess, implement, and evaluate their stress management options. This analysis examines the inter-relationships of role conflict, role ambiguity, work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction and propensity to leave in a sales environment.

Key Words: Stress, self-Esteem, Turnover, Stress Management Intervention, Role ambiguity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Workplace stress has become a major issue in the present scenario in all the countries. Its reflected individual perceptions of the pace and demand of the contemporary workplace. This is confirmed by surveys that repeatedly show employees at all levels believe they are under much more stress than they have been historically. In real business terms, this focus on stress has also been reflected in the growth of the organization.

Employees stress is a growing concern for organizations today. Stress can be defined as a lively circumstance in which people face constraints, opportunities, or loss of something they desire and for which the consequence is both unpredictable as well as crucial. Stress is the response of people to the unreasonable/excessive pressure or demands placed on them. Stress is not always negative. It may also bring out the best in individuals at times. It may induce an individual to discover innovative and smarter way of doing things wherever employee is and whatever they are doing. They cannot avoid stress, but employees can learn to manage it effectively. Stress is the way human beings react both physically and mentally to changes, events, and situations in their lives. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on your perception of an event or situation. If you view a situation negatively, you will likely feel distressed—overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distressis the more familiar form of stress. The other form, eustress, results from a "positive" view of an event or situation, which is why it is also called "good stress."

II.WHAT IS STRESS

STRESS IS THE MIND AND BODY'S REACTION TO CHANGE. IT ISN'T A DISEASE. BUT IF STRESS IS INTENSE AND GOES ON FOR SOME TIME, IT CAN LEAD TO MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ILL HEALTH (EG: DEPRESSION, NERVOUS BREAKDOWN, HEART DISEASE).

***Definitions of Stress*:**

"stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize."

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."

STRESSORS: Two broad categories of stressors

A stressor is anything that causes the release of the hormones. They are two broad categories of the stressors.

- Physiological Stressors
- Psychological Stressors

➢ **Physiological Stressors**: These are stressors that put strain on the body
Ex: Very cold/Hot temperature, Injury, Chronic illness, or pain

➢ **Psychological Stressors**: These are Events, Situations, Comments or anything we interpret as negative or threatening.

United Kingdom Health and Safety Executive have shown that the following are the most important potential factors that can effect stress:

- Teamwork
- Supervision
- Workload
- Challenge
- Involvement
- Change
- Compensation

III.SYMPTOMS OF WORKPLACE STRESS

Some of the symptoms of stress at workplace are as follows-

- Absenteeism, escaping from work responsibilities, arriving late, leaving early, etc.
- Deterioration in work performance, more of error prone work, memory loss, etc.
- Cribbing, over-reacting, arguing, getting irritated, anxiety, etc.
- Deteriorating health, more of accidents, etc.
- Improper eating habits (over-eating or under-eating), excessive smoking and drinking, sleeplessness, etc.

Cognitive Symptoms

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious

Emotional Symptoms

- Moodiness
- Irritability or short temper
- Agitation, inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Physical Symptoms

- Aches and pains
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat, Loss of sex drive Frequent colds

Behavioral Symptoms

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little

- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)

IV. TYPES OF STRESS

There are two types of stress:

1. Acute Stress
2. Chronic Stress

1. Acute Stress*:*

Acute stress is your body's immediate reaction to a new challenge, event, or demand -- the fight or flight response. Acute stress isn't always caused by negative stress; In fact, they might actually be healthy for you -- as these stressful situations give your body and brain practice in developing the best response to future stressful situations. Severe acute stress such as stress suffered as the victim of a crime or life-threatening situation can lead to mental health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder or acute stress disorder.

Ex: As the pressures of a near-miss automobile accident, an argument with a family member or a costly mistake at work sink in, your body turns on this biological response.

2. Chronic Stress:

If acute stress isn't resolved and begins to increase or lasts for long periods of time, it becomes chronic stress. Chronic stress can be detrimental to your health, as it can contribute to several serious diseases or health risks, such as heart disease, cancer, lung disease, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide.

Managing Acute and Chronic Stress:

The goal isn't to get rid of stress completely -- which would be entirely impossible, and not completely healthy. The goal of stress management is to identify the stressors -- things that cause you the most problems, or demand the most energy -- and find ways to overcome the negative stress those things normally induce.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

In the workplace, stress can cause all kinds of business issues and concerns. These issues and concerns left unaddressed will ultimately hurt morale and profits. One simple solution to managing stress is to understand what stress management is and how to handle workplace stress. But before we get into solutions explore more reasons why stress management I the workplace is important.

- Improves your ability to motivate employees
- Lessen opportunity for decreases in productivity
- Improves your ability to lead
- Allows the meeting of deadlines
- Decreases chances of unethical issues
- Reduces possibilities of workplace conflicts
- Strengthens communication process
- Smooth running projects
- Improves your ability to develop teamwork and team building
- Helps in the writing performance appraisal

V. ROOT CAUSES OF WORKPLACE STRESS

I. Work-related stressors

- **Overload:** This is the extent to which individuals feel that the demands of their workload and the associated time pressures are a source of pressure:
    - technology overload
    - unmanageable workloads
    - under recruitment of staff for work

- **Control**: The experience of pressure is strongly linked to perceptions of control. Lack of influence and consultation in the way in which work is Organized and performed can be a potential source of pressure, for example:
  - lack of control over aspects of the job
  - lack of involvement in decision making
  - lack of influence over performance targets
  - lack of time
- **Work relationships:** Many jobs demand regular contact with other people at work. Poor or unsupportive relationships with colleagues and/or supervisors can be a potential source of pressure. In addition, pressure can occur if individuals feel isolated or unfairly treated.

- **Job security:** This is the extent to which lack of job security and job changes are a source of pressure, for example:

- **Work-life balance:** The demands of work have the potential to spill over and affect personal and home life and so put a strain on relationships outside work,
Ex: long hours: being expected to or having to work additional hours at home to the detriment of personal, partner and family relationships

- **Resources and communication:** To perform a job effectively, individuals need to feel that they have appropriate training, equipment and resources. They also need to feel that they are adequately informed and that they are valued. Stress may result from lack of:

- **Pays and benefits**: The financial rewards associated with a job are important in terms of lifestyle. They are also often perceived to be an indication of an individual's worth and value to the organisation.

- **Aspects of the job**: These are potential sources of stress that relate to the fundamental nature of the job itself. Factors such as the physical working conditions, type of tasks and the amount of satisfaction derived from the job.

II. Individual stressors:

- Family problems
- Economic problems
- Personality charactersticks
- Lack of social support
- Physical disorders
- Inability to communicate
- Lack of recognition
- Inability to cope with the demand
- Conflict among the employees

VI.COPING STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS

The most effective method for workers to manage stress seems to lie in solutions that combine stress management at both the organizational and individual level. Of the two, organizational strategies are more effective in reducing long term stress and risk of illness; however, it is just as important that individuals have personal coping strategies at their disposal for when stress inevitably occurs

Individual Level: It is extremely important that individuals are taught to recognize when they are feeling "stressed out" and to develop personal coping strategies to utilize when they are feeling overwhelmed by stress. Lists a number of methods for individuals to use in coping with stress.

- **Relaxation techniques.**
- Deep breathing

- Progressive relaxation
- Massage therapy

➢ **Ways to focus your mind**
- Meditation
- Hobby
- Friends
- Laughing

➢ **Daily habits.**
- Maintain a balanced diet
- Adequate sleep
- Exercise

Organization Level: Organizations may have different reasons for wanting to implement stress management initiatives. One reason may be the need to reduce the costs to the organization of stress related illness, absenteeism and staff turnover. It may be a humanitarian desire to improve working conditions.

i. Relaxation training
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Meditation
- Biofeedback training

ii. Cognitive behavioural skills training
- Crisis Intervention
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iii. Stress management interventions
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Stress Management Training

VII.Stressor Reduction Interventions At Work Place

The ideas listed in the above sections are broad in nature, and are meant to give an overall glance at the current methods of stress interventions in the workplace. Some practical, workable steps that an organization can take to reduce stress in their employees are listed in Cahill et al
(1995) and are explained as follows:

- To offer an occupational stress workshop
- Organize an occupational stress committee
- Increase employees' sense of control and participation in the workplace.
- Increase the skill levels of employees.
- Increase levels of social support.
- Changes that improve physical working conditions
- Healthy use of technology
- Maintain job demands at healthy levels
- Changes that provide for job security and career development
- Changes that provide healthy work schedulesStrategies to improve personal coping mechanisms
- Develop strategies that do not harm

VII. CONCLUSION

Stress can have consequences far beyond temporary feelings of pressure. Stress management is crucial in modern organizational settings. It requires input from both the individual and the management of the organizations. Creating a stress free environment requires diagnosis and analysis of the stressors. It aims at changing the attitude of the employees and increases the overall productivity of the organization. An

organization might wish to be seen as caring and as looking after their employees in order to raise morale or improve the company Goodwill.

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