



Canada Life[™]
Group Insurance

An Employee's Guide to Dealing with Stress

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WHAT IS STRESS?

Put simply, stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure. Stress arises when you feel you find it difficult to or are unable to cope with a situation. Different people have different ways of reacting to stress. Some may react in a negative way, causing severe anxiety or depression, while others may use this stress as motivation to spur them on.

For those who are affected negatively, stress can have an impact on how you feel, think, behave and how your body works. Sleeping difficulties, sweating, loss of appetite and problems concentrating are common side effects to stress.

Stress causes a surge in hormones in your body. These stress hormones are released to enable you to deal with the pressures or threats you are managing. After these pressures or threats have gone, your body will usually return to normal, however if you are under constant stress they will remain with you.

This guide will help determine if you are suffering from stress and ways to help overcome this.



Stress accounts for 35% of all work related ill-health cases *i*



1 in 3 are effected by workplace stress *ii*

Public service industries cause highest stress levels *i*

PUBLIC

PRIVATE



Sources:

i www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress/index.htm

ii www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/work-is-biggest-cause-of-stress-in-peoples-lives/#.VqY14tLA7cs

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/understanding-stress.aspx

SELF ASSESSMENT

These questions have been designed to establish if you are suffering from stress, and if professional help may be required:

- ▶ Do you have difficulty sleeping due to negative thoughts going round and round in your head?
- ▶ Are you feeling more emotional than usual?
- ▶ Are you feeling overwhelmed by the demands made upon you?
- ▶ Do you perceive that you are unwell?
- ▶ Do you feel unable to discuss your day to day worries with friends, family or work colleagues?
- ▶ Are you in financial difficulty?
- ▶ Are you drinking or smoking more than usual?
- ▶ Are you unable to partake in a hobby that gives you pleasure?
- ▶ Are your family and personal relationships unrewarding or unstable at the moment?
- ▶ Do you experience frequent headaches, muscular tension, tiredness and irritability?

What if my answers are mostly yes?

We all get 'off days', but if you have answered yes to the majority of the above questions and these are regular feelings, it is important to identify the source of the problem. Once you have recognised what the issues are, you can start taking the positive steps forward.

Common causes of stress

There are countless sources where stress can originate from but some of the most common are:



Health

This could be anything ranging from a recently diagnosed illness, an upcoming operation or personal opinions on your physical appearance.



Relationships

This can be either a personal relationship with a partner deteriorating, going through a divorce or problems relating to family and friends.



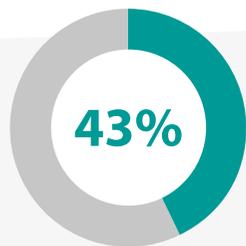
Work

Work-related stress is common among people who have demanding jobs and/or work long hours. You might be having problems with a colleague, or the work load you are given may seem overwhelming. It is the biggest cause of sickness in the UK.



Finances

You may feel overwhelmed by debt, either through credit cards or keeping up with mortgage or rent payments.



43% of all working days lost due to ill-health are attributed to stress – which means...



9.9 MILLION DAYS

LOST EACH YEAR DUE TO STRESS



Source: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress/index.htm

TOP 10 STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

Here are a few stress reduction techniques that can help both short and long term:

1 GET ACTIVE

Physical activity can help clear your head of any distractions, and get you in the right frame of mind to identify the causes of your stress. This will not completely remove any stress, however it will reduce some of the emotional intensity you may be feeling.

2 TAKE CONTROL

Every problem has a solution. Take control of the situation. The feeling of empowerment is a huge stress reliever in itself and can help you find a solution.

3 CONNECT WITH OTHERS

If you have work colleagues, friends or family you feel you can trust, share your problems or fears with them. You can let off any steam you have, and they may be able to help to identify possible solutions.

4 DEDICATE SOME TIME TO YOURSELF

If possible, try and earmark two or three nights a week where you relieve yourself of any normal responsibilities. This means you won't be tempted to do overtime at work, and have some time to simply focus on yourself.

5 CHALLENGE YOURSELF

This can be at work or perhaps more importantly in your personal life. For example, try learning a new sport or taking up a different language. It can give you a real sense of achievement and build up confidence.

6 STAY AWAY FROM UNHEALTHY HABITS

Smoking, alcohol and even caffeine are common pitfalls here. They may seem like they will get rid of your problems, but will do the exact opposite.

7 HELP OTHERS

Examples of this can be volunteering, or even just helping a friend when in need. Working with others who are in a worse situation than you can help put things in perspective. Favours cost nothing and can make you feel much better about yourself.

8 MANAGE YOUR TIME

Time management will not only increase your productivity, but will also teach you to manage your work load at a practical level and not overwhelm yourself. Feeling like you're on top of the situation can also give a real confidence boost.

9 STAY POSITIVE

This may seem obvious and even tough at times, but try to appreciate all the good things you do have in life. Try making a list of everything you are grateful for, or at the end of each day write down 3 things that went well that day.

10 ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE

Sometimes it is not always possible to change a certain event or situation and it is important to recognise this. Changing for the better is important but acceptance can also play a large part overcoming stress. Focus on the positive steps you have already made.



www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/reduce-stress.aspx





EmployeeCare

As part of your benefits programme, Canada Life Group Insurance provides free access to EmployeeCare, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

EmployeeCare is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that gives support and advice to help with a wide range of personal and work related problems, such as stress, bereavement, marital and relationship difficulties, legal and financial issues, alcohol and drug abuse, loss of confidence, workplace issues and debt.

The ultimate goal is to ensure you live and maintain a healthy lifestyle, both physically and mentally.

The counselling services offered are:

- ▶ 24/7 access to telephone counselling
- ▶ Up to four face-to-face or structured telephone counselling sessions per issue, per year
- ▶ Confidential advice from experienced professional counsellors
- ▶ Online support and information

These services are free, confidential and easily accessible to all Canada Life Group Income Protection members and are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

To access the EmployeeCare service at any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, please call:



0800 917 9330

To access the Health and Wellbeing portal, employees can visit



www.employeecare.com

Use the code 72221 to gain access.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN HELP

There is a vast array of charities and organisations that are able to help if you feel you are unable to cope with any stress or anxiety problems. A few have been listed below:

Rethink Mental Illness

Rethink Mental Illness is charity who help millions of people affected by mental illness. By challenging attitudes they are changing lives.

“We believe a better life is possible for millions of people affected by mental illness.”



 **0300 5000 927**

10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday



The Samaritans

Samaritans provide round the clock advice, support or just someone to speak to when in need.

“People talk to us anytime they like, in their own way, and off the record - about whatever’s getting to them. You don’t have to be suicidal.”



 **116 123** (free number)

24 hours a day, 365 days a year



Mind

Mind offer professional advice relating to any mental illness. They are also able to provide legal support.

“We won’t give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.”



 **0300 123 3393** (free number)

9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday



It is worth noting, that face to face support can at times be dependent on location.

Our forms are available to download from our website: www.canadalife.co.uk/group
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