

# Avoiding and Managing Stress

## *A one-day training course for staff*

### About the course

Many people experience an unhealthy level of stress at work. Around 10 million working days are lost each year in Great Britain due to stress, and 35% of all cases of ill health at work are stress-related<sup>1</sup>. Stress is particularly prevalent in public service industries. As austerity bites, there is growing pressure on staff to do more with less time and resources, for customers who are themselves facing increased financial and other pressures.



In this climate, it is particularly important that staff are equipped to recognise, avoid and if necessary manage stress. There is much that we can all do to look after ourselves and our colleagues, even in a challenging environment. And if we understand stress, we can flag up improvements that may be needed in workplace practices and cultures. Often small changes can make a big difference.

This course helps participants understand what stress is and what really causes it, how to recognise symptoms of stress in themselves and others, and practical ways of tackling it. Besides learning about the psychological and physiological causes and effects of stress, participants will have opportunities to explore the implications for their own area of work.

The course will be useful for any staff who would like to get better at managing their own well-being, and for managers or human resources professionals who want to create a healthy and stimulating working environment for staff.

### What participants will gain from the course:

- ✓ A clear understanding of what stress is and its real causes
- ✓ The essential difference between being stretched and being stressed
- ✓ How the brain and body respond to pressure
- ✓ The key differences between a healthy working environment and a stressful one
- ✓ How to identify important stress warning signals

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<sup>1</sup> Health and Safety Executive Labour Force Survey 2014/15

- ✓ The relationship between stress and ongoing, chronic problems such as anxiety disorders, depression and other mental and physical problems
- ✓ How to tap into individuals' key motivators
- ✓ The innate resources that we all possess for dealing with pressures and challenges - and how to use and misuse them
- ✓ Identifying aspects of their own jobs that make them vulnerable to stress
- ✓ How to deal with unwanted and damaging emotions
- ✓ Practical steps that individuals can take to make themselves more resilient, including appropriate diet and exercise
- ✓ Gender differences in responses to stress
- ✓ A range of tools and techniques that individuals can use to avoid and disarm stress
- ✓ How to deal with authoritarian and bullying behaviour from others
- ✓ How a healthy workplace environment and practices can nurture staff well-being and encourage optimum performance
- ✓ A personal action plan for avoiding and managing stress in the workplace.

### Course Programme: Outline

Session 1	<p>What is stress? <i>The difference between being stretched and being stressed</i></p> <p>What are the real causes of stress? <i>Getting our needs met and using our innate resources well</i></p> <p>Understanding the stress mechanism <i>How stress affects our bodies, brains and behaviour</i> <i>The pathway from stress to chronic anxiety, depression and / or physical illness</i></p>
Session 2	<p>What kinds of things are causing us stress and how can we deal with them? <i>Exploring the human function curve</i></p> <p>What's needed to create a healthy working environment? <i>Tapping into our key motivators</i></p>
Session 3	<p>Strategies for avoiding and managing stress <i>Practical things we can do as individuals and with colleagues to avoid becoming stressed and to deal with workplace stressors</i></p>
Session 4	<p>Relaxation techniques <i>Looking after ourselves physically and mentally</i></p> <p>Putting it into practice <i>Taking these ideas into the workplace</i></p>