



for more information call
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Stress Contacts Programme

An Innovative Approach to Address Stress

Most organisations recognise that their workers experience levels of stress within the workplace.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as "the reaction people have to excessive pressure or types of demands placed upon them". This makes an important distinction between stress and pressure which can be a positive state if managed correctly.

Positive pressure is associated with aspects of work which motivate and challenge staff to perform at their optimum level. When workers do not have enough positive pressure the effect is reversed and can result in boredom and a lack of motivation.

Stress can be detrimental to health and is associated with anxiety, panic and mental anguish. It is debilitating and prevents workers from performing effectively.

Identifying the causes of stress, and implementing strategies to reduce and manage stress are important to the wellbeing of the workforce and the continued success of a business.

Many organisations have invested in the management of stress within the workforce and introduced policies that implement the Management Standards proposed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

However, very few organisations have an approach that supports workers that may be suffering from or be susceptible to stress. While the HSE Management Standards focus on work related stress, it cannot be separated from other causes of stress outside the workplace.

The Stress Contacts Programme helps an organisation to identify and train a group of people, within the business, who will be available for staff to meet for a confidential discussion about their situation if they feel stressed. These people are called Stress Contacts and they will provide a confidential service to work colleagues in their area or building.

The Stress Contacts will be trained to look for signs of stress and to help the individuals to decide a course of action. They will not provide counselling but may provide contacts or references where an individual may find additional help.

The programme focuses on the skills needed to observe and assess the level of stress that an individual is experiencing.

The Stress Risk Assessment Model™

The Stress Contacts will be shown how to use questioning to assess the risk that stress poses to each individual that seeks their service. The Stress Risk Assessment Model™ will be used to help the Stress Contacts to identify an individual's risk.

The model uses two dimensions for assessing the risk stress poses to an individual. These are **Likelihood** that the individual is under stress and **Severity** or how is stress affecting the individual.

During times of uncertainty, an approach that provides support to individuals will contribute to the wellbeing and success of an organisation.

The Stress Contacts will provide an opportunity for individuals to discuss their stress and, if applicable, will provide information about where to seek further advice and assistance.

As a result of this programme participants will:

- Be able to differentiate between positive pressure and stress
- Develop an understanding ear when interacting with colleagues who are stressed
- Learn and practice techniques to question in a structured way to understand what is causing the individual's stress and assess the risk that stress poses to that person
- Acquire a set of responses that can be used according to the level of risk
- Understand what support is available and where to find it – sign posting

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