

# Coping with Stress at Work

We have all experienced work-related stress. Stressful elements can exist at any job, even if our position is temporary, or even if we love our jobs. We may experience the weight of meeting a deadline or completing appointed tasks. Workplace stress can become chronic and overwhelming; it can become counterproductive and cause harm to our mental, physical and emotion health. Long-term stress is all too common, and work-related stress can take its toll on our health and wellbeing.

In the short-term, a stressful work environment can contribute to problems such as headache, stomachache, sleep disturbances, short temper and difficulty concentrating. Chronic stress can result in anxiety, insomnia, high blood pressure and a weakened immune system. It can also contribute to health conditions such as depression, obesity and heart disease. Compounding the problem, when we experience excessive stress, we often deal with it in unhealthy ways such as overeating, eating unhealthy foods, smoking cigarettes or abusing drugs and alcohol.

Taking back control of our lives from workplace stress is quite possible as lowering levels of stress can help us stay focused and energetic in the workplace. Managing our stress can provide great insight on how we function in our daily lives and can motivate us in many ways.

## Taking Steps to Manage Our Stress

Here are some steps we can take into consideration:

- ✓ **Tracking our Stressors** – Keep a record for a week or two in order to identify which situations create the most stress and how we can appropriately respond to them.
- ✓ **Developing Healthy Responses** – Instead of fighting stress with junk food and alcohol, making a healthier choice when tension arises have proven to be beneficial. Exercise and hobbies can assist in regulating stress levels in a healthy manner.
- ✓ **Establish Boundaries** – Creating some work-life boundaries for ourselves can also be useful. Not checking emails while at home, or not answering the phone during dinner are some examples. Creating boundaries can reduce the potential for work-life conflict and stress.
- ✓ **Take Time to Recharge** – We need time to replenish in order to avoid negative effects of chronic stress and burnout. Have periods of time where we can engage in activities that are **not** work related.
- ✓ **Learn How to Relax** – Stress reduction techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises and mindfulness can assist in alleviating stress.
- ✓ **Talk to our Supervisor** – Healthy employees are typically more productive, so start having conversations with our supervisors or managers on how we create a work environment that promotes employee well-being.
- ✓ **Get some Support** – Accepting help from trusted friends, family members and even our EAP can improve our ability to manage stress.



*If you are interested in receiving more information about coping with stress at work, remember that My EAP is here to help. Contact us at [eap@familiesinaction.net](mailto:eap@familiesinaction.net) or log on to My EAP at [myeap.familiesinaction.net](http://myeap.familiesinaction.net) with your username and password*