

Section 2: Proactive Stress Management (Prevention)

Flipchart Exercise: "Create the right climate"

1. Idea Generation (brainstorming)
2. Evaluate ideas and pick top 5 (the most effective and practicable)
3. Feedback discussion

The CUSP™ framework

This is a very simple framework that works equally as well in terms of prevention of stress as it does in helping someone who is not coping. In other words you can use CUSP™ proactively and reactively. For this workbook we are providing a summary to help you use CUSP™ proactively to prevent stress. CUSP™ is described in detail on your information resources CD

Summary of CUSP™

Research and experience tells us that if you can:

- ❑ Enable increased perception of **control**;
 - ❑ Reduce **uncertainty**, and the associated anxiety and insecurity;
 - ❑ Provide **support**, especially in highly pressurised or stressful situations;
 - ❑ Tackle sources of **pressure** (stressors) in your work area...
- then you will minimize the risk of stress-related illness and increase well-being and performance at work.

Simple, quick, practical ideas for **C**, **U**, **S** and **P** can be found below...

(C) Control Enablers

1. Delegate, and encourage people to take responsibility. Trust them.
2. Enable control over the physical environment.
3. Offer as much flexibility as you can over working arrangements.
4. Encourage people to be assertive.
5. Involve people in decision making, especially those that affect them.
6. Consult and involve people on decisions about workload.
7. Encourage staff to develop their own 'microroutines'.
8. Where possible, consult and involve on change management issues
9. Don't take people for granted.
10. Avoid negative behaviours (e.g. bullying) as they take away control.

(U) Uncertainty Reducers

1. Communicate clearly, frequently and effectively.
2. Be open, approachable and welcoming with your staff.
3. Avoid being secretive.
4. Be clear about roles, tasks and priorities.
5. Don't assume people will know why.
6. Be careful about behaviours that may be ambiguous.
7. Give as much clear information as possible.
8. Use emails sparingly and with great care.
9. Give people regular and constructive feedback.
10. Try not to give people mixed messages.
11. Be aware of the uncertainties and insecurities that change can cause and take action to minimise these.

(S) Support providers

1. Encourage staff to come to you if they need to talk anything through.
2. Meet with your staff regularly on a one-to-one basis.
3. Listen.
4. Give practical support and advice where appropriate.
5. Hold regular team meetings.
6. Encourage your staff to support one another.
7. Give staff the opportunity to ask questions.
8. Avoid blame.
9. Ensure that staff get the training and development they need to do their job well.
10. Provide opportunities for personal development.
11. Make sure staff know about all available support structures.
12. Positively communicate with your staff. Value them, say please and thank you.
13. Treat your staff with respect.
14. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
15. Address any bullying / conflict issues swiftly and fairly, as per agreed policies and procedures.

(P) Pressure reducers and regulators

1. Set achievable objectives.
2. Distribute tasks fairly between team members.
3. Set realistic timescales.
4. Make priorities clear.
5. Plan ahead.
6. Hand over tasks as soon as you can.
7. Avoid giving staff conflicting tasks or roles.
8. Match tasks to skills.
9. Avoid giving staff repetitive and boring work where possible.
10. Minimize environmental pressures.

Exercise: How could you use CUSP™ to prevent stress?