

Rx for Stressed Employees

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When you deal with angry customers, resolve difficult technical issues or handle rejection from disinterested customers on a daily basis, it takes a toll. In fact, if you are feeling stressed, you are not alone. One out of every three working Americans feels highly stressed, and the number one stressor seems to be our jobs.

Stress has surpassed the common cold as the most prevalent health issue in the United States. Moreover, seventy percent of all job absenteeism is the result of stress. It is estimated that work-related stress costs U.S. businesses more than 200 billion dollars a year in absenteeism, compensation claims, increased health costs and lowered productivity. Since stress exacts such a high toll on you, your customers and your organization, it is important for you to learn to manage it.

In anyone's life, there are things about your job or personal life that you can control or influence, but there are also things that are beyond your control. A good starting point for controlling stress is to identify those things in your life that you can control or influence and let go of the things you cannot. Trying to control the uncontrollable is exhausting, as well as fruitless. If you put your energy into changing the things you can control, you will feel less helpless and more in-charge of your life.

People who are highly stressed cope better if they manage their time efficiently. They prioritize tasks not only in their professional lives, but also in their personal lives. They know what tasks have to be done first, and they do not let papers mount up. They also do not over-extend themselves. They restrict their amount of committee work and think twice before volunteering for anything extra, whether it is on the home front or at work, especially at busy times. They run their home lives and work lives like a finely tuned instrument. If you are one

of those people who easily becomes over-extended or is unorganized, it is important to re-examine your priorities and make the appropriate changes.

People need to refresh themselves with fun activities, and you are no exception. It is easy to spend your free time mowing the lawn or doing homework with the kids. However, you need to do something just for you. If you like to cook, consider involving the entire family. If you like to read, be sure to end your day by reading something other than business-related materials. On the job, there are also some things that you can do. Perhaps, you can walk to the cafeteria mid-morning for a coffee, attend a professional meeting or have lunch at a local restaurant with your favorite colleagues.

Exercise is a wonderful panacea for stress. Working out in the company gym over lunch or after work can do wonders. If you don't have access to a gym, take a walk at lunch time. Instead of a bus, walk from the train station or bus stop. Whatever exercise you choose should be cardiovascular, as well as strength training. Competitive sports, when you are highly stressed, will do little to alleviate tension. Yoga, Tai Chi and Meditation have proven to elicit the body's relaxation response and reduce the production of adrenaline. When people do some form of meditation or yoga for even 15 minutes a day, positive changes occur in the body.

It is also important to laugh at yourself. Often, we are so serious and very hard on ourselves. We rarely laugh. Pre-school children laugh endlessly, many times each day, but the average adult laughs only about seven times a month. To try to unwind, look for movies or television shows that will alter your mood, rather than intensify it. In the work place, look for people who are fun, uplifting people. No one needs to be brought down by a depressing office mate.

Lastly, everyone needs a friend, a confidante. When we are stressed or concerned about how to handle a difficult situation, it is very consoling to be able to talk it out with someone we trust.

On-the-job stress is inevitable, but it is controllable. Be aware of your level of stress and actively work

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at managing it. When you are stressed, it affects how you treat your customers and the people in your organization. In addition, it can be deadly to your health.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.