

Stress toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Stress.



[Download a Stress toolbox talk pdf](#)

There is **challenge** and there is **stress**.

“**Challenge**” is motivating while “**Stress**” drives poor decision making that, at best, results in loss of productivity and, at worst, results in injury or death. Everyone at a workplace has a duty to identify and manage stress to keep everyone safe.

Why run a Stress Toolbox Talk?

- Prevent workplace accidents
- Improve productivity
- Increase awareness of mental health issues
- Support your mates

What causes stress at work?

There are all sorts of causes of stress. Some of them include:

- too much work
- not enough work
- bullying and other types of harassment
- lack of recognition or support
- uncertainty about the future
- hazardous environment
- issues in personal life

How can you recognise stress?

Different people react differently to stress. Many people internalise stress, which can make it difficult to identify or detect. However, the tell-tale signs that you or your co-worker are stressed include:

- impatient or easily irritated
- restless, tense or panicked
- feeling anxious, depressed, or fatigued
- thoughts racing around your head

Implications of stress at work

Untreated stress can be costly for both employer and employees. In the short-term, stress leads to distraction, which reduces productivity and increases the chance of accident or injury. Long-term impacts of stress include impaired immune systems, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, and psychological disorders.

Both short-term and long-term stress exposure affects employee retention and may cause absenteeism. According to NIOSH, workers who had to take leave for stress-related issues needed on an average, 20 days off - before returning to work.

What are some strategies to manage stress?

- De-stigmatise talking about stress in the workplace
- Foster good relationships amongst co-workers
- Reward good work performance
- Create opportunities for career development
- Ensure regular breaks are taken throughout the day
- Get regular exercise
- Utilise annual leave
- Practise mindfulness
- Talk to a doctor or other professionals

Key takeaways:

- *Stress is a serious risk. It directly affects productivity and increases the chance of accident or injury*
- *There are numerous causes of stress. Identifying the causes in your workplace is the first step to managing the risk*
- *Everyone feels stress at some stage. It is important to talk about it*
- *Everyone at a worksite has a duty to manage stress*

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