

Life in the Stress Lane




Life in the STRESS Lane

Mike Harnett
Director of Operations
WorkSMART Ergonomics
www.worksmart.ca

Work-Life Conflict

1. Work to Family Interference
 - ★ Missing children's activities, family meals, etc.
2. Family to Work Interference
 - ★ Child's illness; conflict with spouse affecting concentration
3. Role Overload
 - ★ Too much to do in too little time

2003 Work-Life Conflict Survey



- 31,000 workers
- 33% felt burned out or depressed
- 25% thought of quitting their jobs at least once / week
- Alberta is the most "stressed out" province


Balance is the key!

- Pressures > abilities (healthy, challenging)
- Pressures = abilities (bored)
- Pressures >> abilities (stressed)



Fight or Flight Response


- ↑ respiration and heart rate
- ↑ blood pressure
- ↑ muscle tension
- ↑ fuels into bloodstream
- ↑ shunting of blood to large muscles
- ↑ clotting factor (to control bleeding)



Worth Quoting...

"It's not stress that kills us, it's our reaction to it."

Hans Selye



Life in the Stress Lane

Deadlines are Deadly

- Short term, intense pressure to meet deadlines has greater impact on CV health
- 6X higher risk for heart attack within 24 hrs of having to meet an immediate deadline
- Competitive workplace environments doubled the risk of heart attack



Top Employee Concerns

Health Canada Survey – 50,000

- Degree of job demands (52%)
- Job-related changes (33%)
- Management practices (28%)
- Lack of job control (25%)
- Interpersonal relations (18%)



Work Values

- Good leaders will recognize money isn't everything
- It's a privilege to be a leader, and the greatest privilege is to elevate lives!

Types of Conflict

- Substantive Conflict
 - ★ Win-win objective
- Emotional Conflict
 - ★ Win-lose objective



Positive Outcomes of Conflict

Forces an examination of a problem with (hopefully) the following results,

- Agreement
 - ★ Striving for equitable and fair agreements that last
- Stronger relationships
 - ★ Building bridges of goodwill and trust for the future
- Learning
 - ★ Greater self-awareness and creative problem solving

Anger Chemicals



- ↑ heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension
- ↑ LDL's (bad cholesterol) and triglycerides into the bloodstream
- increase testosterone, reducing HDL's (good cholesterol)
- increase risk of stroke and heart attack
- 2001 Study
 - ★ 11% will blow their top to relieve stress
 - ★ 14% have *felt* like striking a co-worker

Life in the Stress Lane

Coping with Your Anger

- Figure out why you are angry
- Talk yourself down; pause
- Breathe deeply, normalize your rhythm
- Drink a glass of water (avoid caffeine, alcohol)
- Learn to express verbally



Four Levels of Assertion

- Passive – does nothing
- Aggressive – verbally attacks
- Passive-Aggressive – doesn't deal with issues directly, but prefers to make comments behind other's backs, or looks to others to take control
- Assertive

Be Assertive, Not Emotional

Stand up for your personal rights by expressing your thoughts, feelings and beliefs directly, honestly and spontaneously in ways that don't infringe the rights of others



Know Your Rights...

...But don't forget to respect others!

A Word of Advice for Workers



- Maintain a sense of humour!
 - ★ Laughing at ourselves releases tension, helps to regain perspective and accept what we cannot change, in addition to recharging our batteries

No Laughing Matter

- Laughing 200 times burns off the same amount of calories as 10 minutes on a rowing machine
- After laughing, blood pressure drops to a lower, healthier level than before the laughter began
- Laughter oxygenates blood, increasing energy levels
- Laughter relaxes your muscles and works out the cardiovascular and respiratory systems
- Laughter improves the immune system

Life in the Stress Lane

Laughter Research

- Strangers put into humorous situations displayed, higher levels of intimacy, bonding, and were able to accomplish goals better
- Humour is desirable in dating



When to Incorporate Humour

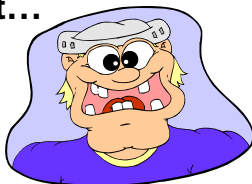
- No - win situations
 - ★ overly demanding boss, unpopular rules or regulations, not having the power to do the job right
 - ★ overtime, covering for absent co-worker, rushing to meet deadlines



At the very least...

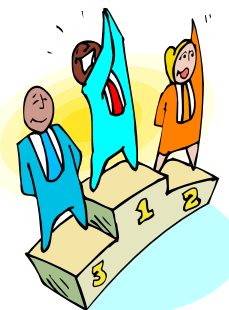
Smile...

- causes endorphins to release which helps reduce pain and increase feelings of pleasure



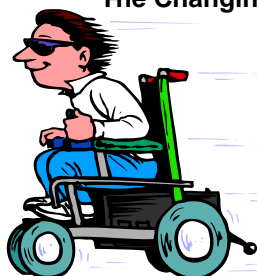
FORCES FOR CHANGE

1. People
2. Technology
3. Competition



1. People

The Changing Face of the Workforce



- More Women
- More Aboriginals
- More Immigrants
- More Disabled

Our Diversified Workforce

- Different Cultures
- Different Values
- Different Equipment Requirements
- Different Expected Behaviours

The Effect of One Person

Life in the Stress Lane

2. Technology is our Friend?

- Makes it possible to work anywhere
- Average 2 hrs per day responding to email
 - ★ Expectations are of quick response
- Study of 50 people issued Blackberries
- Pfizer's response to work-life balance

3. Competition

- Departments must figure out a way to,
 - ★ Meet increasing stakeholder expectations
 - ★ Work with volatile budgets
 - ★ Manage their increased accountability
 - ★ Do more with less
 - ★ Still play nice with each other



The Net Effect...

Adjusting to "New" +
Leaving the "Old" =
Workplace Grief!

Understanding Loss



- Based on attachments and childhood bonding
 - ★ Don't raise your voice!
 - ★ Don't be a baby!
 - ★ Boys don't cry!
 - ★ Keep it up and I'll *really* give you something to cry about!

How do YOU Grieve?

People grieve differently,
there is no right or wrong way

Factors that influence how we grieve:

1. Personality and past lost history
2. Nature of the current loss
3. Support during the grief process

Where's the Value?

People will change when they want to, or when they see the value in doing so (or see the punishments of not doing so)



Life in the Stress Lane

Managing Resistance to Change

- Prepare and involve the people
 - ★ identify new skill requirements and training needs
 - ★ involve employees in decision making
 - ★ negotiate important decisions with them
- Rewards and support
 - ★ reward new behavior
 - ★ provide top management support (act as role models)



Personal Transition Strategies

Evaluate Your Self Talk

- Level 1 – Negative talk
“I can’t...I’m not able to...I don’t think...”
- Level 2 – Recognition of need to change
“I should...I must stop...I wish...”
- Level 3 – A Decision to change
“I plan to... Tomorrow I will start to...”
- Level 4 – Power self-talk
“I am...I can...I do...”

Self-Talk



- Keep it Positive
 - ★ “I don’t think I’m going to do well at this”
vs.
“I’ve mastered things harder than this”
 - ★ Pessimists are more accurate, but optimists live longer!

The Art of Relaxation

- Practice deep breathing
- Try meditation/Yoga
- Get a massage
- Stretch
- Art therapy
- Visualization
- Progressive muscle relaxation



Remember The Rules!

Rule #1: Don’t sweat the small stuff

Rule #2: It’s all small stuff

- Accept what you can’t control
- Prioritise what’s really important



Thank you!



WorkSMART®
Toll Free: 1-866-414-6436
www.worksmart.ca
info@worksmart.ca

workSMART
Injury Management Systems