

## **Stress Awareness Facilitators Guide**

**Introduction-** This lesson is an Awareness lesson on Stress for leaders.

**Objectives-** The objective of this lesson is to assist leaders in identifying causes and effects of stress placed on the organization and its members.

**NOTE:** Presenters should review the objectives of this lesson and conduct additional research to gain a full understanding and awareness of this topic. Presenters may want to remind participants that, although the content may be a review for some, it may be completely new to others. The goal is to create a common understanding among all participants. Participants who need additional support should conduct additional research and consult with others to gain an awareness of the benefits and effects of this topic.

### **Slide 1: Title Slide**

- This awareness lesson is provided to leaders who understand a team's success or failure is a direct result of their leadership. The effects of stress (at home or work) can create a ripple effect, affecting everyone and ultimately the mission.
- A leader who takes time to educate themselves and their subordinates is a leader who is committed to the organization, its members and their future.

**Intro:** In 2012, 65 percent of Americans cited work as a top source of stress, according to the American Psychological Association's (APA) annual Stress in America Survey. Only 37 percent of Americans surveyed said they were doing an excellent or very good job managing stress.

It is important to stress during this lesson that stress is not always a bad thing. Some individuals strive for and perform better under stressful situations.

A 2013 survey by [APA's Center for Organizational Excellence](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/organizational-excellence) found that job-related stress is a serious issue. More than one-third of working Americans reported experiencing chronic work stress and just 36 percent said their organizations provide sufficient resources to help them manage that stress.

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress.aspx>

### **Slide 2: Agenda**

- Define Stress
- Discuss Causes of Stress
- Identify Indicators of Stress
- Identify the Effects of Stress
- Identify Strategies to Reduce Stress
- Recall Resources for Stress Reduction
- Summary

### **Slide 3: Stress (defined)**

- A state of mental tension and worry caused by problems in your life, work, etc.
- Something that causes strong feelings of worry or anxiety
- Physical force or pressure

### **Slide 4: Causes of Stress (examples)**

- Being unhappy in your personal life (finances, family, where you live, etc.)
- Having too little or too much responsibility (being over/under worked, etc.)
- Facing discrimination or harassment
- Working under dangerous conditions (combat, high risk occupations, etc.)
- Poor management (supervisor not trained, micro-managed, under supervised, etc.)
- Lack of pay/advancement opportunities (dead end job, glass ceiling, etc.)
- Working long hours (always working, deployed, never home and when home still working, etc.)
- Risk of termination (possibility of job not being there in the future, issues with co-workers, etc.)

### **Slide 5 Indicators of Stress (Individuals)**

- Disbelief, shock, and numbness
- Feeling sad, crying, frustrated, helpless
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Feeling guilty
- Anger, tension, and irritability
- Difficulty concentrating, decision making
- Reduced interest in usual activities

### **Slide 6: Indicators of Stress (Individuals) (cont.)**

- Wanting to be alone
- Loss of appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Nightmares or bad memories
- Reoccurring thoughts of the event
- Headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- Smoking or use of alcohol or drugs

**Another term frequently used is Burnout:** Burnout is not simply excessive stress. Rather, it is a complex physical, mental, and emotional reaction to constant levels of high stress, and it relates to feeling that your inner resources are inadequate for managing the tasks and situations presented to you.

### **Slide 7: Indicators of Stress (Team)**

- Physical- observing a team will show if they appear energized or exhausted

- Emotional- Is the team responsive or have they “checked out”?
- Operational tempo- Has the team been on numerous non-stop missions or an extended mission without a break?
- Sleep deprivation- When was the last time the team had “down time” (or time to relax)?
- Difficulty working as a team- Do you observe multiple team members arguing, fighting? Do members of the team eat lunch/hang out together or do they exclude members?
- Lack of training/support/manpower

#### **Slide 8: Effects of Stress (Individuals)**

- **Musculoskeletal System**- Chronic pain
- **Respiratory System**- Constriction of the airway
- **Cardiovascular**- increase or elevated blood rate
- **Endocrine**- extra blood sugar (can lead to diabetes)
- **Gastrointestinal**- Over or under eating, ulcers or severe stomach pain, diarrhea or constipation
- **Reproductive System**- diminished sexual desire, reproductive system functioning, testosterone production, menstruation

#### **Slide 9: Effects of Stress (TEAM)**

- Morale
- Change in productivity/ quality of work
- Increased accidents, compensation claims
- Absenteeism/ high employee turnover
- Job satisfaction
- Lack of cohesion
- Loss of trust and confidence

#### **Slide 10: Strategies to Reduce Stress (Individual)**

- Take care of yourself:
  - Eat healthy
  - Exercise- meditate, bike riding
  - Hobbies- sports, draw, play with a pet, volunteer, watch a comedy/funny movie, etc.
  - Talk to others- share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a parent, friend, coworker, counselor, doctor, or pastor.
  - Think positive- being optimistic can promote health recovery, stressful situations, and social anxiety. Appreciate the things you have; not what you don't have.
  - Avoid drugs and alcohol- drugs and alcohol may seem to help with the stress. In the long run, they create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.

- Take a break
  - Organize yourself (use a planner/calendar) to manage your activities and plan ahead
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Listen to music
  - Get a massage
  - Turn off your phone (its ok to take care of yourself first)
  - Take a vacation or time off
  - Light a candle (aroma therapy)
- Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out:
  - If your stress is caused by a national or local event, take breaks from listening to the news stories, which can increase your stress.
  - If your stress is caused by additional work, deployments, etc. inform your supervisor. There may be ways to adjust your schedule or get assistance.

### **Slide 11: Strategies to Reduce Stress (TEAM)**

**Behavior= Triggers + Energy + Ability + Motivation**

- *Triggers (T)*. What prompts us to take action? Do members have specific triggers that prompt them to perform and achieve what is asked of them?
- *Energy (E)*. People with more energy are more productive and creative. Are members being shown leaders sincerely care about our team's well-being?
- *Ability (A)*. Do teammates feel confident that they can achieve what is asked of them?
- *Motivation (M)*. Are teammates being encouraged to perform as a team and inspired to learn and grow professionally and personally?

### **Slide 12: Strategies to Reduce Stress (Team)**

- Take care of your team:
  - Set realistic goals- establish realistic goals that are manageable and achievable.
  - Communicate- share your vision or strategic goal, address rumors ASAP.
  - Listen- take time to listen to your team members, showing a true concern for their welfare goes a long way. Also listen for awareness from the team members.
  - Conduct surveys/sensing sessions- Identify exactly what is occurring within your team. Discuss the results and provide a plan of action to address issues.
  - Train your team-
    - ensure your team is proficient with their equipment
    - ensure your team is proficient with minimal supervision
    - rehearse when possible for upcoming tasks/missions
  - Create a balanced schedule- It is important to balance daily activities when possible.
  - Manage resources- ensure your team has the required resources to perform their duties (this includes food, facilities, supplies, personnel, etc.).
  - Have fun- its ok to work and have fun at the same time. Members work better and harder when they are in a positive work environment.

- Recognize achievements/life events (birthday, anniversary, graduation, etc.)
- Awards recognition events
- Hosting team building events (BBQ, pot luck, sports day, etc.)

**Note:** The following 3 slides are *optional* to use. They show military organizations have resources and instructions/guidelines for stress reduction.

**Slide 13: Resources for Stress Reduction**

- US Air Force (AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 44-153)
  - Force Support Squadron
  - *Air Force* Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT)
  - Peer Support/Leadership support
  - Military One Source/Family Advocacy Program
  - Family Readiness Group
  - Medical/BH Support
  - Chaplain/Spiritual Services
  - Financial Assistance Programs

**Slide 14: Resources for Stress Reduction (cont.)**

- US Navy- Marine Corps
  - (Navy, USMC) Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society
  - *Navy* Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Program (SARP)
  - *Marine* Corps Substance Abuse Program (SAP)
  - Peer support/leadership support
  - Military One Source/Family Advocacy Program
  - Family Readiness Group
  - Medical/BH Support
  - Chaplain/Spiritual Services
  - Financial Assistance Programs

**Slide 15: Resources for Stress Reduction (cont.) US Navy- Marine Corps**

Green Zone	Not stress-free, mastering stress with good coping skills. Ready to go!
Yellow Zone	Reacting to life’s normal stressors. Mild and reversible!
Orange Zone	Stress injuries damaging the mind, body or spirit. Temporarily non-mission ready!
Red Zone	Stress injuries that become stress illnesses. Only diagnosed by health professionals!

GREEN is READY, YELLOW is REACTING, ORANGE is INJURED, RED is ILL –  
This USN chart and additional information can be found at:

[www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsc/nccosc/serviceMembersV2/stressmanagement/thestresscontinum/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsc/nccosc/serviceMembersV2/stressmanagement/thestresscontinum/Pages/default.aspx)

**Slide 16: Resources for Stress Reduction (cont.)**

- US Army
  - (ACS) Army Community Services
  - Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)(Army)
  - Peer Support/Leadership support
  - Military One Source/Family Advocacy Program
  - Family Readiness Group
  - Medical/BH Support
  - Chaplain/Spiritual Services
  - Financial Assistance Programs

**Slide 17: Resources for Stress Reduction (cont.)**

- US Coast Guard
  - Coast Guard Solutions Understanding Prevention Resilience Trust (CG SUPRT)
  - USCG Substance Abuse-Free Environment (SAFE)
  - Peer Support/Leadership support
  - Military One Source/Family Advocacy Program
  - Family Readiness Group
  - Medical/BH Support
  - Chaplain/Spiritual Services
  - Financial assistance programs

**Slide 18 Summary**

- Define Stress
- Discuss Causes of Stress
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