



# HEALTH BITES

Healthy Workers  
Healthy Futures  
Initiative



*Healthy Group Training Organisations, Healthy Host Businesses, Healthy Apprentices*

## Said this lately - I'm so stressed out!

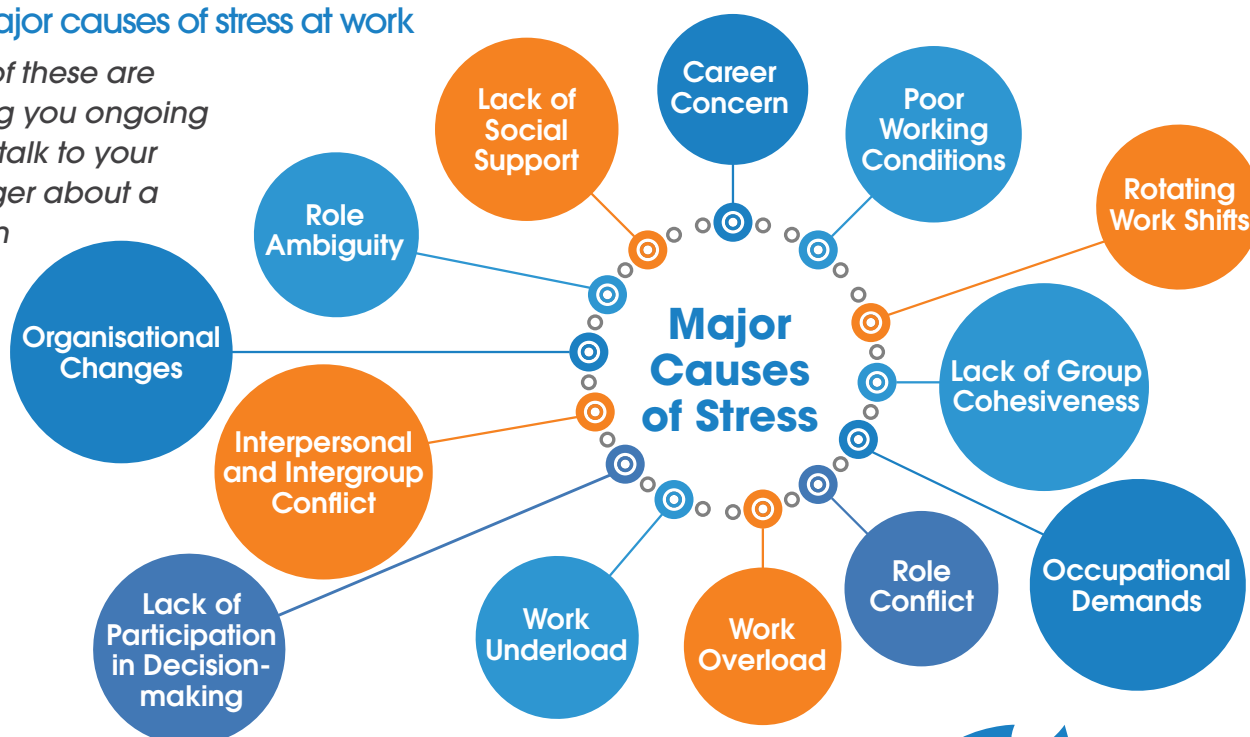
### What is stress?

Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, wound up, tight, tense and worried.

We all experience stress at times, it is a normal part of life; it occurs when you perceive that demands placed on you - such as work, study or relationships - exceed your ability to cope. Some stress can be beneficial at times, producing a boost that provides the drive and energy to help people get through situations like exams or work deadlines. However, an extreme amount of stress can have health consequences and interfere with our ability to get on with our normal life.

### The major causes of stress at work

*If any of these are causing you ongoing stress - talk to your manager about a solution*



The information in this newsletter should not be used as an alternative to professional care. If you have a particular problem, see a doctor or other health professional.

## Stress Management

You may feel there's nothing you can do about stress. The bills won't stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day, and your work and family responsibilities will always be demanding. But you have a lot more control than you might think.

**Stress management is all about taking charge: of your lifestyle, thoughts, emotions, and the way you deal with problems. No matter how stressful your life seems, there are steps you can take to relieve the pressure and regain control.**

### Tip 1 - Keep a stress diary.

It will help you understand what triggers your stress and identify your coping methods. Note down the date, time and place of each stressful episode, and note what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt both physically and emotionally, how you acted in response and what you did to make yourself feel better.

### Tip 2 - Manage your time.

At times we all feel overburdened by there being too much to do and not enough hours in the day. Make a list of all the things that you need to do and list them in order of genuine priority. Note what tasks you need to do personally and what can be delegated to others to do. Record which tasks need to be done immediately, in the next week, in the next month, or when time allows.

### Tip 3 - Take control.

Learning how to find solutions to your problems will help you feel more in control thereby lowering your level of stress. One problem-solving technique involves writing down the problem and coming up with as many possible solutions as you can. Decide on the good and bad points of each one and select the best solution. Write down each step that you need to take as part of the solution: what will be done, how will it be done, when will it be done, who is involved and where will it take place.

### Tip 4 - Learning to say no.

A common cause of stress is having too much to do and too little time in which to do it. And yet in this situation, many people will still agree to take on additional responsibility. Learning to say "No" to additional or unimportant requests will help to reduce your level of stress, and may also help you develop more self-confidence. Practice saying phrases such as: "I am sorry but I can't commit to this as I have other priorities at the moment."

"Now is not a good time as I'm in the middle of something. Why don't you ask me again at...?"

"I'd love to do this, but ..."

### Tip 5 - Change how you think about the stressor.

You can do this in four ways, reframe the problem to a positive perspective (this traffic jam is giving me the opportunity to listen to my favourite music), look at the big picture (how important will this be in a month, a year - is it really worth getting upset about), adjust your standards (stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection and learn to be okay with 'good enough')

### Tip 6 - Connect to others.

Talking with someone is the quickest, most efficient way to rein in stress and can either work by distracting you from your stressful thoughts or relieving some of the built up tension by discussing it.

### Tip 7 - Make a healthier 'stress relief toolbox'.

If your methods of coping with stress aren't contributing to your great emotional and physical health it's time to find healthier ones.

## Develop a "stress relief toolbox"

Come up with a list of healthy ways to relax and recharge. Try to implement one or more of these ideas each day, even if you're feeling good.

- » Go for a walk
- » Spend time in nature
- » Call a good friend
- » Sweat put tension with a workout
- » Take a long bath
- » Light scented candles
- » Make a warm cup of coffee or tea
- » Play with a pet
- » Work in your garden
- » Get a massage
- » Curl up with a good book
- » Listen to music
- » Watch a comedy