



Introduction

The coronavirus has affected nearly every person, either directly through illness or by the precautions put in place to prevent the spread of the illness. These circumstances and changes can lead to increased stress in your workplace. Awareness of the effects of stress and how to cope in a healthy manner is important.

This week we will discuss what stress is, common signs of distress, how to help each other, and what steps you can take to care for yourself. Lastly, we will have an open discussion about your thoughts and feelings regarding current circumstances and how to get through this as a team.

Monday- What is Stress?

There are two different types of stress and each can have a very different impact on an individual. There is eustress which is beneficial to the experiencer. It's often brought on when a person is challenged but in a positive way such as playing a sport or engaging in a fun activity. Distress has a potentially negative impact and is often experienced when someone is in physical or emotional pain. Understanding the difference and how to cope with distress could minimize or eliminate long-term negative effects.

Tuesday – Common Signs of Distress

In order to take the appropriate steps to cope with distress, you must first recognize the signs in yourself and others. Let's take a look at the common signs of distress:

- Feelings of shock, numbness, or disbelief
- Change in energy or activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in appetite
- Sleeping problems or nightmares
- Feeling anxious, fearful, or angry
- Headaches, body pain, or skin rashes
- Chronic health problems get worse
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Wednesday – How to Help Your Employees

Now that we know how to recognize the common signs of distress, let's look at what steps we can take to help our colleagues.

- Talk with them
- Reassure them
- Address rumors
- Answer questions
- Set a good example by taking care of yourself



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 18 – April 27 - May 1, 2020

Stress in the Workplace

Thursday – Steps to Care for Yourself

The last suggested way to help your colleagues is to first help yourself. When you are in a good state of mind and body, you are better equipped to help those around you. Let's take a look at some suggestion to properly care for yourself.

- **Take Care of Your Body:** Eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid drugs and excessive alcohol consumption.
- **Connect:** Share your feelings with a friend or family member. Maintain relationships and rely on your support system when you need them.
- **Take Breaks:** Allow yourself time to unwind so you can partake in activities you enjoy and give your mind a break.
- **Stay Informed:** Watch for news updates from reliable officials.
- **Avoid Excessive Exposure** to media coverage of the event.
- **Ask for Help:** Talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor. You can even reach out to support helplines like SAMHSA (1-800-985-5990).

Friday – Open Discussion

This week we have discussed what stress is, how to recognize signs of distress, ways to help your employees, and how to properly care for yourself. Now let us discuss thoughts and feeling around the current circumstances.

- How have you been affected by the coronavirus outbreak?
- Are you able to stay focused at work? Why or why not?
- Are you experiencing any of the symptoms of distress?
- Are you doing anything to cope with stress? If yes, how? If not, do you need help?