the stressors hexagon

WILD MONDAY

what **hinders** productivity?

What are the causes of stress at work and why do they matter?

Would your team say they:

- regularly have to work beyond their agreed hours just to get the job done?
- feel they have little control over the pace and volume of their workload?
- have a difficult relationship with a colleague?

If so, they might be experiencing work-related stress.

Here are SIX of the biggest causes

CONTROL
No participation in decisions, lack of consultation

SUPPORT
Good line management, adequate resourcing

ROLE
Ambiguity, conflict, responsibility for people

DEMANDS
Work overload, working conditions, time pressure

RELATIONSHIPS
Relationships with boss, colleagues, subordinates

CAREER
Job security, over promotion, thwarted ambition

THE SURPRISING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK STRESSORS AND BACK PAIN

Workplace stress is a huge cause of illness and absence from work in the UK.

In a large study of people who were off work with back pain, the three things which predicted how severe their back pain would be were:

- Lack of control over decisions at work
- Lack of empowerment
- Unfair leadership.

Makes you think doesn't it.

SOURCE: Work and back pain: a prospective study of psychological, social and mechanical predictors of back pain severity. Eur J Pain. 2012 Jul;16(6):921-33)

"There cannot be a stressful crisis next week. My schedule is already full."

HENRY KISSENGER

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WILD MONDAY

What can we do about **stress?**

RECOGNISE signs of stress in yourself and others	SUPPORT employees experiencing stress	SIGNPOST resources and information	PROTECT yourself and your staff	CONTROL what you can
Make sure you are alert to the signs. Perhaps ask your staff where they would place themselves on the stress/performance curve. Find it here https://hbr.org/2016/04/are-you-too-stressed-to-be-productive-or-not-stressed-enough	Meet with them regularly, adapt their job as necessary - remember, they may not be firing on all cylinders at the moment.	Encourage your team to access wellbeing services, skills workshops and employee counselling, where they already exist. Tap into charities such as MIND, your local GP surgery and occupational health services.	The Health and Safety Executive resource on Stress at Work is a good place to start. It lists six management standards that organisations should aim to meet to help prevent stress. SOURCE: http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/	Consider team skills training, hold regular 1:1s, take notice of minor complaints, be visible and check in regularly. Distribute control as much as possible and encourage the team to raise concerns. Don't try to deal with this all alone,

IN REAL LIFE...

"A patient came to see me and asked if she could have some time off work. When I asked her what the problem was, she said 'I don't like the person I am sitting next to'. My initial (unenlightened) reaction was that this wasn't a problem for a doctor; but soon I realised that this difficult relationship was causing her emotional distress leading to physical signs of stress. Her managers were doing nothing to address this and she felt powerless. I wrote 'stress and anxiety' on her sick note and she took a couple of weeks off work.

It has been suggested that we should be able to write 'bad workplace' as a cause of sickness on sick certificates. Perhaps it would encourage managers to engage more quickly with these. difficult situations for employees at work?"

A WORD ABOUT MOTIVATION

So what is the antedote to stress at work? In his book 'Drive' which looks at what motivates us, Daniel Pink suggests that autonomy (the ability to have **control** over our own fate and make our own decisions), mastery (the development of **expertise** in something) and purpose (an inspiring reason **why** we are doing things) are the three factors which cause intrinsic motivation and help us get the most out of life.

Work on increasing these three things for people in your workplace.

"Forget praise. Forget punishment. Forget cash. Make their jobs more interesting."

FREDERICK HERZBERG

NEED MORE? See Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene Theory in HBR Jan '68 issue or read Daniel Pink's book 'Drive'