

Management of Stress in the workplace –

Workshop reports from Stress Network Conference November 2009

Basing our discussions on the presentation by Emma Donaldson-Feilder regarding the HSE, CIPD and IIP sponsored Management Competencies Research; two workshops examined members' own experiences, examined a simple audit process and then discussed how issues of management handling of stress could be raised in the workplace and the pitfalls to expect. The 66 question research tool questionnaire was considered and delegates were able to exchange views on processes.

Workshop 1, Saturday Afternoon		Workshop 2, Sunday Morning	
Examples of Good and Bad Management Practice			
Good	Bad	Good	Bad
Enabling staff to make own decisions	Over direction	Control ownership of work	Bullying
Organising training	More stick than carrot	Partnership forum	Change all at once
Knows us personally	Imposition of workload	Group discussions	Target demands and reduced staffing
Very knowledgeable on policy	Fail to follow policy	Listening	Lack of recognition
Paying for training	No follow through of issues	HR Supporting Info display on web	Top HR enforce policies
Sorting out issues	Overt favouritism	Poor staffing levels	Everything!
Own managers on site	Fails to accept criticism	HR can pre-handle issues	Closure and no information on change
Improved communications	Inconsistency	2 weekly JNC	Poor Communications
Compassionate leave	Failure to consult	Policy groups	Spotlight awards are divisive
Supportive, although sometimes too late?	Working to wrong information	Sourcing your own INSET	Inappropriate promotion
	Inability to say no	Proactive JNC	Too many chiefs
	Failure to act on policy	Supportive Directors	Fragmentation and fear culture
	Always restructuring	HR work with us [TU]	Caught on both sides
	Corruption and nepotism	1-1 with managers	Cascade bullying
		Disciplinary action re bullying managers	Decisions not fed downline
		Action on stress	Bullying is rife
		Some good managers but often hidden	Rigid targets
			Total monitoring
			Promises not kept
			Excessive expectations
			Lack of integrity and trust
Discussion groups identifying local problems			
Lack of [adequate] training for managers		Communication issues	
Lack of information from managers		Non supportive and often not available	
Failures to consult, including meaningfully		Poor training for managers	
Too much doing your own thing		Management stress itself	
Lack of accountability		Their own targets = their jobs	

Insufficient filling of vacancies	Ensure compliance
Workload demands and no extra time	Shift blame and fail to acknowledge fault
Poor communications	Non responses
Lack of support	'Its part of the job'
	Unreasonable deadlines
	Lack of confidentiality
Achieving results by?	
Formal complaints	Local JNC routes are good and well used
Raising HR advice and assistance	Reps meetings, H&S Forums. Team Meetings
Staff surveys to identify hotspots and ensure follow-up	Surveys and audits
Occupational Health Support	Report stats to JNC
Common Sense Policies	Approach to manager
	Grievance
	Site committees
	Trustees and Governors
	HSE, Inspectors' visits
	Sickness absence procedures and Occ Health
	Health & Well-being projects
Making the best approach to secure examination of management competencies	
What's in it for them, for us?	Joint/shared chairing of meetings
Seek to achieve a WIN-WIN situation positives for all	Use HSE backup materials as trigger = "It is not just us!"
Are they receptive to take up issues?	Manager training and development incl TU input
Integrate the concept into ongoing processes and procedures	H&S TU Training including role-plays
We will all work together to succeed	Retention of expertise
Formal recognition and rejection of bullying and inappropriate styles	Regular agenda items
	Own members and managers involvement
	Duty of care enforcement
	What's in it for them/us?

Delegate report:-

Improving Management style – Ian Draper

The workshop revolved around activities to decide what bad management practices were, and more difficult, what were good management practices. It was stressed that a workforce audit of attitudes was an essential tool as evidence in dealing with management. There were group activities to decide on poor practices and how they could be "solved" (approaches on remediation).

There was some sympathy expressed for lower level managers who were pressurised to meet targets. (Activities 1 and 2).

Activities 3 and 4 were based on thinking about how to get management to take up issues and adopt more agreeable management styles. The best way to do this was to get management to think of the benefits they could accrue in terms of less sickness and increased productivity if stress was reduced.