



Enable Ireland

PROMOTING HEALTH & WELLBEING (STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY)

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1.0 Policy Statement

Enable Ireland is committed to promoting and maintaining positive mental health of all its staff. It recognises that the wellbeing of staff can be put at risk by exposure to situations both at work and outside work of which may have an impact on health and wellbeing. Enable Ireland encourages the early identification of stress-related problems before they may have a serious effect on mental or physical health.

Enable Ireland recognises its obligations to provide a workplace free from on-going work induced stress in accordance with relevant legislation in particular the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997, and the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004.

Whilst Enable Ireland has no control over external factors, it is committed to identifying sources of stress in the workplace and will take action to reduce or, where possible to eliminate those causes of stress within its control.

In addition, Enable Ireland will encourage and support staff to take responsibility for looking after their physical and mental health and provide support in identifying and managing stressful situations.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Enable Ireland policies:

- Dignity & Respect at Work Policy
- Grievance Policy & Procedure
- Managing Attendance Policy
- Services Division Risk Management Policy & Procedure
- Commercial Division Risk Management Policy & Procedure
- Sick Leave Policy
- Alcohol & Substance Abuse Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Carer's Leave Policy
- Career Break Policy
- Health & Safety Statement

This above is not an exhaustive list.

2.0 Aims of the Policy

- To raise awareness of organisational and personal responsibilities in maintaining health and wellbeing
- To create an understanding and recognition of the causes of stress which may impact on health.
- To raise awareness at all levels about the causes and effects of stress in the workplace and particularly on work performance and absenteeism.
- To raise awareness of organisational and personal responsibilities in maintaining health and wellbeing.
- To provide staff with the information necessary to deal effectively with pressures and conflicting demands.

- To ensure that harmful stress is identified and effectively managed by providing open, honest, effective and proactive management of stress. To manage the return to work of those who have been absent as a result of stress related illness.
- To create awareness of the Employee Assistance Programme, which includes online support, telephone information & counselling services and face-to-face counselling services.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff of Enable Ireland.

3.1 Scope for PDS Setting:

With reference to the application of the HR process in relation to staff employed by other agencies through the PDS framework, this policy is applied in accordance with the:

- **National Policy on the Lead Agency Model'** (2019:4),
- **Interagency Agreement**, together with,
- Any new policy or guideline documents (e.g. SOP) arising from PDS.

Staff Wellbeing:

Enable Ireland recognises the importance of a healthy work environment. As a responsible employer, we are committed to the integration of wellbeing in all work activities and practices, through implementing initiatives and policies that create a positive work environment. The goal of the wellbeing strategy is to ultimately improve the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff in an environment that is compatible with promoting staff engagement, performance and achievement. This encompasses the physical, mental and social health of staff and recognises that staff values, personal development and work within Enable Ireland contribute to their overall wellbeing at work.

4.0 Stress in the Workplace

Work-related stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or support needs of staff. Stress comes from the gap between the level of demand and the person's perception of his/her ability to meet the demand (Ezenwanne, 2015: 50). This will vary from individual to individual.

Sometimes there is confusion about the difference between pressure and stress. We all experience pressure regularly – it can motivate us to perform at our best. It is when we experience too much pressure and feel unable to cope that stress can occur. Stress is a reaction to pressure and may involve feelings, thoughts and behaviours as well as physical symptoms (Ezenwanne, 2015: 50).

'There is an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge, which can be stimulating and motivating, and work related stress, which is the natural but distressing reaction to demands or 'pressures' that the person perceives he/she cannot cope with at a given time (Ezenwanne, 2015: 50).'

¹ <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/progressing-disability/pds-programme/documents/national-policy-on-the-lead-agency-model.pdf>

4.1 Who is Susceptible to Stress?

Since everyone is exposed to the changing dynamics of living, everyone is susceptible to stress and to distress. In the work situation, stress may not always be confined to management or those in positions of responsibility but it also affects people who feel undervalued or 'stuck in a rut', those who experience no sense of satisfaction or challenge in their lives, or those who are pressurised beyond their capacity, or who are unable to deal with conflict at work. In some cases, stress may be caused by difficult life circumstances that then, in turn, have an adverse effect on working life.

4.2 Causes of Stress

The causes of stress are complex and varied and they may arise from work related and/or domestic/life issues. Where an Enable Ireland staff member reports that he/she is suffering from stress, the staff member's line manager will clarify if the stress is work-related, wherein immediate actions will be discussed to address the factors, causing such stress. Where the staff member suffers from external stress, support will be offered to assist him/her through Enable Ireland's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP¹), see section 4.2 of this policy.

A major contributor to a person's stress load is his/her own personality type and that which causes one person stress may not have the same effect on another person in the same circumstances.

**N.B*, A common factor that seems to make a situation stressful is when it is perceived as being a threat to the individual or a situation that is beyond one's control.*

Some examples of issues that may cause workplace stress are as follows: (*This is not an exhaustive list*):

- Factors intrinsic to the job, e.g. poor working conditions, hours of work, new technology, work overload or underload
- The staff role in the organisation, e.g. role ambiguity, role conflict and the degree of responsibility and autonomy in organising one's workload, poor communication within the working unit
- Career development; e.g. over-promotion, under-promotion, lack of job security
- Relationships at work, e.g. culture and management style, lack of participation and consultation, harassment from colleagues /management, feelings of being discriminated against
- Link between home and work; e.g. domestic pressures, conflicting demands of work and home, financial worries and bereavement, may affect the person's performance at work.

4.3 Effects of Stress

Stress is part of the human condition - in order to survive and be alert, everybody needs a certain amount of stress in their lives. Positive stress or pressure can stimulate and enhance performance. However, long term or excessive stress is counter-productive and has a negative effect on creativity, achievement and health. Everyone has a threshold at which point pressure becomes too much and develops into negative stress. This threshold varies between individuals and in different situations and at different times.

Some of the major effects of stress are as follows (Rao, V.S.P. (2007):

¹ <https://enableireland.sharepoint.com/corporate/hrcorporateaffairs/healthandwellbeing/Pages/default.aspx>

- **Emotional Effects** such as anxiety, aggression, apathy, frustration, moodiness, low self-esteem, irritability, bad temper, tension, nervousness.
- **Physical Effects** such as fatigue, physical aches and pains, gastrointestinal disturbances, asthma, headaches and migraine and various other minor illnesses.
- **Behavioural effects** such as accident proneness, alcohol /substance misuse, emotional outbursts, restlessness.
- **Cognitive effects** are the effects of stress on our ability to think and carry out mental tasks such as inability to make decisions and concentrate, frequent forgetfulness, hypersensitivity to criticism and mental blocks.
- **Organisational effects** The personal effects of stress spill into the wider world. In the workplace this can lead to:
 - Absenteeism
 - Poor staff relations
 - Poor productivity
 - High accident and labour turnover rates
 - Antagonism at work
 - Job dissatisfaction

In work, an increase in sickness absence can also have a ‘domino effect’ on the workload and health of other work colleagues.

4.4 Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme is a confidential counselling and information service designed to help Enable Ireland staff who are facing a problem in their life. It may be a work problem, a family problem, financial strain or perhaps a legal problem (VHI, 2018).

As an external EAP provider, the VHI are bound by strict professional standards regarding confidentiality and the disclosure of staff details who seek EAP services. Enable Ireland will only be provided with anonymous statistical data for service evaluation purposes. The organisation will never receive data which identifies individual staff.

Enable Ireland's Employee Assistance Programme provides the following services:



According to VHI (2018), benefits of having an Employee Assistance Programme for staff is as follows:

- 24/7 phone line access
- Can address problem in own time and pace
- Additional resources available online
- Professional expertise available
- Unlimited access to the information service
- Improve functioning
- Improve coping/stress skills
- Improve relationships
- Improve coping/stress skills
- Improve how to deal with changes
- To maximise individual well-being and performance

EAP service:

VHI have a wide range of benefits and services available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year including:

- Telephone & Face-to-Face Counselling
- Referrals to Specialist Counselling Services
- Manager Support Helpline
- Parent Coaching
- Career Coaching
- Critical Incident Support
- Specialist Information Services
- EAP Online Portal
- Additional resources available through the online portal are as follows:
 - Self-help programmes
 - Mindfulness tools
 - Well-being screeners
 - Smoking cessation planner
 - Health calculations

The Employee Assistance Programme can be accessed through the contact details below or by clicking on the heart icon on the INFORM¹ homepage. The EAP information is then on the left hand side of the page:

Website: www.livewell.optum.com

Email eap@vhics.ie

Telephone: 1 800 995 955

5.0 Assessment & Prevention

Enable Ireland recognises the need to promote an organisational culture that values every staff member, to recognise good performance and to ensure that management actions are consistent with organisational values. Enable Ireland also recognises the need to carry out a risk assessment for possible stressful situations and to put systems in place to minimise and reduce stress.

5.1 Risk Assessment

Under Health and Safety Legislation (Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005), employers must assess and address all risks to staff health and safety, including their mental health. Creating a safe system of work requires targeting equipment, materials, the environment and people (for example, ensuring sufficient resources for the tasks), and requires monitoring and reviewing systems to assess the extent to which control strategies are effective.

Risk assessments in relation to stress and psychological hazards must be carried out by the manager responsible for that work area. Assessment of hazards associated with work stress should identify:

- Factors at work likely to cause stress
- Whether these factors are currently causing stress

¹ <https://enableireland.sharepoint.com/Pages/Home.aspx>

- Existing preventative or precautionary measures
- Action required to eliminate or reduce the risk

The principles of risk assessment for work-related stress may differ from other forms of risk assessment. There is a need to take account of individuals' perceptions of stress as well as objectively assessing work conditions (e.g. excessive working hours) that are likely to cause stress. Any assessment should contain both these subjective and objective elements.

Any changes made to reduce or eliminate stress in the workplace for a staff member will be monitored by a line manager on a continuous basis to ensure their effectiveness. This requires ongoing engagement between line manager and the staff member on the issues identified. See Enable Ireland's Services Division Risk Management Policy & Procedure and Enable Ireland's Commercial Division Risk Management Policy & Procedure for relevant RA template.

Managers must review risk as a routine operational activity through formal supervision and active engagement. This is particularly pertinent at times of significant change in the work area.

6.0 Manager's Responsibilities

Stress Reducing Techniques – Guidelines for Managers

Managers must focus on preventing unnecessary stress through the competent application of good management techniques. They must be aware of any potential risks of stress in their area and also be alert to the signs of the effects of stress in the individual and be aware that changes in performance and ability of individuals may be as a result of stress.

The following will help reduce unnecessary stress within the workplace:

- Managers can seek advice and support through the Employee Assistance Programme for guidance in how to support staff when they become aware of signs of stress.
- Ensure all staff receive induction and any other training and resources that are needed to achieve their work objectives. Staff should have a clear picture of their work objectives and the scope of their responsibilities.
- When allocating work to staff, managers should ensure the demands of the job do not exceed the staff member's ability to carry out the work without risk to themselves or others. Line managers must review their staff' capabilities to carry out the work as necessary.
- Decision-making and problem solving must be at the lowest relevant/possible level. A culture of involving people in decisions and keeping them informed about what is happening in the organisation and their own location and consultation with staff regarding any changes that will affect them, will reduce stress.
- Staff dealing directly with the public must not have to face aggressive or violent behaviour. Managers should assess any risk of verbal abuse and physical violence and take appropriate steps to reduce or eliminate the threat to staff.

- Communication channels must be continuously improved, including all staff in decision-making through regular information-sharing and two-way dialogue, ensuring that any staff concerns are addressed. This is particularly important in times of change within the department or organisation.
- All line managers must be alert to the possibility of conflict in the workplace, as a result of discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, and its effect on the stress levels of staff. They must be familiar with Enable Ireland's policies to ensure that the staff whom they supervise are in no doubt about the official policies in these areas. It is the responsibility of line management to ensure that proper standards are maintained in the workplace, and that all complaints of this nature are treated seriously.

7.0 Staff Responsibilities

Stress Reducing Techniques – Looking After Yourself

Individual staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their own physical and mental wellbeing. Management must raise the awareness of stress prevention in the workplace to enable staff understand how workplace stress can develop and the personal actions they can take to reduce stress in their own work situation. They are also required to inform management at the earliest possible opportunity, if they believe they cannot control the situation that is causing the stress.

To prevent and alleviate stress individual staff to adhere to the following (HSE, 2012)

- **Healthy Lifestyle:** get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet and exercise regularly, all of which create a buffer against stress.
- **Awareness of the signs of stress:** Review the situation and interrupt behaviour patterns when the stress is just beginning and develop an active plan to minimise the causes of stress.
- **Communication:** Concerns should be shared with others at work – e.g. colleagues or managers. Communication involves listening as well as speaking and is a key element in the resolution of conflict that can be a major source of stress in the workplace.
- **Planning and Delegation** of workload where possible– prioritise and set limits.

See **Appendix 1** for further guidelines. **However, if an staff member believes that he/she cannot control the situation that is causing the stress, he/she should inform his/her line manager, Employee Assistance Programme (details provided in section 4.4 of this policy), or his/her GP directly.**

8.0 Organisational Response

(a) Medical Assessment and Support

In some situations, regardless of measures taken to minimise pressure at work, a staff member can develop a stress-related illness. This should be referred to the Occupational Health Practitioner service within the organisation.

Should the Occupational Health Practitioner determine that the staff member requires help or advice, he/she will provide the appropriate programme on the understanding that:

- Staff who are requested to be absent from duty will be subject, if necessary, to the sick pay scheme appropriate to their employment. This includes staff requiring to be absent for short intermittent periods and provides for paid leave of absence where a short time away from work is required e.g. 1-2 hours.
- Should a staff member be deemed fit for duty during the treatment for a stress related problem, they should be permitted to continue in employment following Work Related Stress Risk Assessment being completed, unless such an arrangement would adversely affect the service.

The manager must support a staff member by:

- Keeping in regular contact if the staff member is absent from work.
- Taking professional advice on how to prevent the recurrence of the illness or what is needed to accommodate the staff member when he/she returns to work.

(b) Return to Work after Absence

When a staff member is returning to work following stress-related illness, he/she has a right to return to his/her original post, if it is deemed by Occupational Health Practitioner that the staff member is fit to do so. If the staff member is no longer suitable for that position, then he/she may be offered more suitable employment with similar terms and conditions, if such exists.

Other options might also be considered, in liaison with the Occupational Health Practitioner. This might include initial part-time work, reassignment for an agreed period, working in a different team or a different work area, if such work is available.

(c) Critical Incident /Stress Debriefing

Traumatic events can generate stress and staff within Enable Ireland may occasionally have to face traumatic situations. A Critical Incident/Stress Debriefing Service can be made available via the Employee Assistance Programme.

A critical incident is any incident in which the circumstances are so unusual and distressing they may lead to a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction that surpasses normal coping mechanisms. A debrief will ideally take place 48 – 72 hours following a traumatic incident, but it is never too late to debrief.

Staff who believe they would benefit from the service should discuss this with their line manager.

9.0 Confidentiality

Staff who develop stress related problems or who seek advice from their manager or who are referred for assessment to Occupational Health are assured that confidentiality will be observed at all times.

10. Staff Wellbeing Promotion

To further promote Health & Wellbeing in Enable Ireland, additional online resources are available via [INFORM](#)¹. This information can be accessed by clicking on the heart icon on the INFORM homepage and is maintained by the Enable Ireland Health & Wellbeing committee.

The contents of the website is frequently updated to ensure information is timely, relevant and appropriate to the changing needs of staff considering internal and external factors.

As part of Ireland's annual National Wellbeing Day, staff in centres, shops and offices are asked to mark the day in a way that is meaningful to them. All staff are encouraged to consider having an information session on the key topics of diet, stress, exercise or sleep through our internal or external expertise. Alternatively, staff might simply take time to have coffee or a healthy lunch together and reflect on health and wellbeing at work.

Staff are invited to come up with initiatives, actions or behaviour responsible in the workplace which have a significant, sustained and positive effect on colleagues, demonstrating the effect, impact and benefits gained by colleagues as a result.

The HR Department is a source of guidance for managers to assist them in supporting staff wellbeing in Enable Ireland.

¹ <https://enableireland.sharepoint.com/Pages/Home.aspx>



Appendix 1

Stress Awareness and Management Guidelines (Segal et al, 2018)

Things that influence your stress tolerance level

- **Your support network** – A strong network of supportive friends and family members is an enormous buffer against life’s stressors. On the flip side, the more lonely and isolated you are, the greater your vulnerability to stress.
- **Your sense of control** – If you have confidence in yourself and your ability to influence events and persevere through challenges, it’s easier to take stress in stride. People who are vulnerable to stress tend to feel like things are out of their control.
- **Your attitude and outlook** – Stress-hardy people have an optimistic attitude. They tend to embrace challenges, have a strong sense of humour, accept that change is a part of life, and believe in a higher power or purpose.
- **Your ability to deal with your emotions**. You’re extremely vulnerable to stress if you don’t know how to calm and soothe yourself when you’re feeling sad, angry, or afraid. The ability to bring your emotions into balance helps you bounce back from adversity.
- **Your knowledge and preparation** – The more you know about a stressful situation, including how long it will last and what to expect, the easier it is to cope. For example, if you go into surgery with a realistic picture of what to expect post-op, a painful recovery will be less traumatic than if you were expecting to bounce back immediately.

Am I in control of stress or is stress controlling me?

- When I feel agitated, do I know how to quickly calm and soothe myself?
- Can I easily let go of my anger?
- Can I turn to others at work to help me calm down and feel better?
- When I come home at night, do I walk in the door feeling alert and relaxed?
- Am I seldom distracted or moody?
- Am I able to recognise upsets that others seem to be experiencing?
- Do I easily turn to friends or family members for a calming influence?
- When my energy is low, do I know how to boost it?

What's Stressful for You?

What's stressful for you may be quite different from what's stressful to your best friend, your spouse, or the person next door. For example:

- Some people enjoy speaking in public; others are terrified.
- Some people are more productive under deadline pressure; others are miserably tense.
- Some people are eager to help family and friends through difficult times; others find it very stressful.
- Some people may feel that changes at work represent a welcome opportunity; others worry about whether they'll be able to cope.

Signs and symptoms of stress overload

It's important to learn how to recognize when your stress levels are out of control.

The following table lists some of the common warning signs and symptoms of stress. The more signs and symptoms you notice in yourself, the closer you may be to stress overload.

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms:

Cognitive Symptoms

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

Emotional Symptoms

- Moodiness
- Irritability or short temper
- Agitation, inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Physical Symptoms

- Aches and pains
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds

Behavioural Symptoms

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)

Keep in mind that the signs and symptoms of stress can also be caused by other psychological and medical problems. If you're experiencing any of the warning signs of stress, it's important to see a doctor for a full evaluation. Your doctor can help you determine whether or not your symptoms are stress-related.

Stress Management

There are a variety of steps you can take to reduce both your overall stress levels and the stress you find on the job and in the workplace. These include:

- **Taking responsibility** for improving your physical and emotional well-being.
- **Avoiding pitfalls** by identifying knee jerk habits and negative attitudes that add to the stress you experience at work.
- **Learning better communication skills** to ease and improve your relationships with management and co-workers.

Prioritisation and Organisation

When job and workplace stress surrounds you, there are simple steps you can take to regain control over yourself and the situation. A growth in self-control will also be perceived by others as the strength it is, leading to better relationships at work. Reducing job stress by prioritising and organising your responsibilities is essential.

Time management tips for reducing job stress

- **Create a balanced schedule.** Analyse your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. Find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.
- **Don't over-commit yourself.** Avoid scheduling events back-to-back or trying to fit too much into one day. Do not underestimate how long things will take. Distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.
- **Try to leave earlier in the morning.** Even 10-15 minutes can make the difference between frantically rushing to your desk and having time to ease into your day. Don't add to your stress levels by running late.
- **Rest arrangements:** See below
- **Prioritize tasks.** Make a list of tasks you have to do, and tackle them in order of importance. Do the high-priority items first. If you have something particularly unpleasant to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result.
- **Break projects into small steps.** If a large project seems overwhelming, make a step-by-step plan. Focus on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on everything at once.

Rest Arrangements

You will receive a lunch break of 30 minutes - 1 hour during the working day and/ or alternatively your rest arrangements will be given in line with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997, (ISB, 2018) which is as follows:

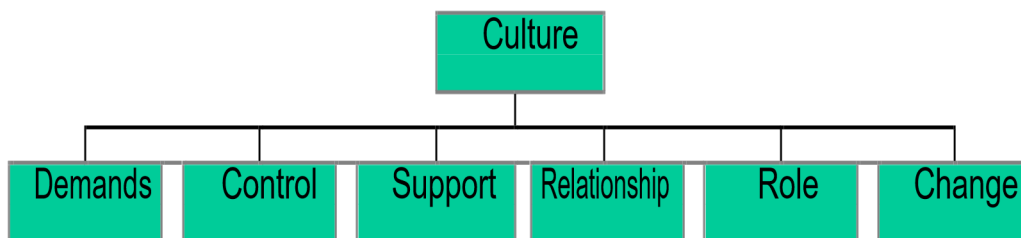
- Under the legislation you are entitled to 11 hours consecutive rest in each 24 hour period. This effectively means that having completed a day's work you cannot be required to report back to work until 11 consecutive hours have elapsed.
- You are not required to work more than 4.5 hours without a break of 15 minutes. If your hours of work are greater than 6 hours your total rest break entitlement is 30 minutes, which can include the 15 minute break already referred to. Rest breaks must not be given at the end of the day. There is no requirement for paid rest breaks and such breaks are not considered as working time.
- You are entitled to a period of 24 hours consecutive rest in each seven day period. This period can be averaged over 14 days.
- The legislation limits the maximum average working week to 48 hours. Working time is defined as net working time i.e. exclusive of breaks, on call or stand by time.

Management Standards (HSE, 2018: 18-27)

'Management standards' Approach to Risk Assessment

The Health and Safety Executive in the UK and the Health and Safety Authority in Ireland have identified six key areas for assessing potential sources of stress in the workplace. These are known as the '**management standards**'. They cover the primary sources of stress at work and can be used to measure performance in these areas. The six key areas are outlined below.

Management Standards:



1. Demands of the Job

In a healthy organisation, staff are neither overloaded nor under loaded with work and all staff are capable of doing what is expected of them. We should also observe this balance in matching effort and reward. Effort needs to be recognised and acknowledged, if not financially rewarded

The standard is that:

- Staff indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening?

- The demands on staff within the agreed hours of work are adequate and achievable;
- Staff' skills and abilities are matched to their job demands;
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of staff; and
- Staff' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

Discuss these issues: workload, work patterns and the work environment

Questions to consider:

- Is the staff member able to cope with the demands of their job?
- Are the demands of the job excessive?
- Are systems in place locally to respond to any individual concerns?

Triggers which could cause stress;

- Work overload
- Boring / repetitive duties
- Inadequate resources
- Physical environment i.e. lighting, space, temperature, disruptions etc.
- Psychological working environment e.g. verbal abuse / inappropriate behaviours
- Working long hours – not taking lunch breaks / annual leave
- People management issues
- Inadequate allocation of work

The table below outlines some of the positive and negative management behaviours related to “demands”

Positive Management Behaviours	Negative Management Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying if additional resources can be brought in• Awareness of team members abilities and provide training where appropriate• Monitoring workload and refusing additional work when the team are under pressure / setting realistic deadlines• Following through problems on behalf of staff/foster a problem solving approach. Developing action plans and plan/forecast workloads• Review processes to identify improvements• Promote task rotation/job enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delegating work unequally• Creating unrealistic deadlines• Listening but not taking action• Lack of consistency in approach / being indecisive• Panicking and not forward planning workflow and deadlines• Not being aware of team pressures

In Summary

Demands: This includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment

2 Control

In a healthy organisation, staff can take part in decision making and are able to effectively use their range of skills.

The standard is that

- Staff indicate that they are able to have some input as to the way they do their work; and
- There are systems in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening?

- Where possible, staff have some control over some aspects of their work;
- Staff are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work;
- Where possible, staff are encouraged to develop new skills to undertake new and challenging pieces of work;
- Staff have some say over when they take their breaks, where possible; and
- Staff are consulted over their work patterns/rosters/shifts.

Discuss these issues: Work activities and environment and each person's control over how work is carried out; consulting with staff.

Questions to consider:

- Does the staff member have any influence in the way they carry out their work activities, such as when they take their breaks?
- Are staff able to use their own initiative and skills?
- Are they encouraged to develop new skills?
- Are systems in place locally to respond to any individual /group concerns?

Triggers which could cause stress:

- Not being able to manage the demands of the job and life outside work
- Rigid working patterns and deadlines imposed with no autonomy or control allowed
- Conflicting work demands – from different managers or aspects of the job
- Two way conversation and discussion – not actively encouraged to discuss issues

The table below outlines some of the positive and negative management behaviours related to “control”

Positive Management Behaviours	Negative Management Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trusting staff to do their work /empowerment• Steering staff in a direction rather than imposing• Knows when to consult staff and when to make a decision• Provides opportunity for staff to air views and holds regular meetings• Encourages staff to develop and reviews development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Micro management• Imposing ‘it’s my way or no way’• Not listening to staff and making decisions without consultation• Not allowing time off for staff development and to attend training courses• Not listening to new ideas or allowing staff to suggest and try improved ways of working

In summary

Control: How much say staff have in the way they do their work.

3 Support

In a healthy organisation, all staff have support and training and are able to balance work and life outside work.

The standard is that:

- Staff indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- There are systems in place locally to respond to any individual concern e.g. Staff Association agreements (Information and Consultation Agreements 2006), Grievance procedures

What should be happening?

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support staff;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage staff to support their colleagues;
- Staff know what support is available and how and when to access it; • Staff know how to access the resources they need to do their job; and
- Staff receive regular and constructive feedback.

Discuss these issues:

- What encouragement, sponsorship and resources are provided by the organisation, line management and by colleagues?

Questions to consider:

- Do staff receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and managers?
- Do staff know what support is available and how and when to access it?
- Do staff know how to access the resources they need to do their job?
- Do staff receive regular and constructive feedback?

Triggers which could cause stress:

- Lack of support and encouragement from managers and colleagues
- Lack of development /career progression opportunities
- Lack of information sharing /withholding information
- A working culture of encouraging long or unsociable hours i.e. seeing colleagues as weak if they don't consistently work long hours.

The table below outlines some of the positive and negative management behaviours related to "support"

Positive Management Behaviours	Negative Management Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all health and safety requirements are met. E.g. working time directive. Praising work/acknowledging staff efforts • Providing supportive/constructive criticism • Operating a no blame culture and problem solving approach • Flexibility to support staff if needing time off • Having an awareness of the staff' pressures outside work • Encouraging development and training, having regular 1-1 meetings • Leading from the front and taking responsibility 'buck stops with me' • Seeks help and advice from Occupational Health/HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not taking H&S issues seriously and questioning the ability of a staff member who raises a H&S issue • Not giving credit when jobs done well/deadlines met • Views feedback as 'one way' or giving feedback that staff' are wrong just because their way of working is different. Assuming everyone is ok • Not having knowledge and understanding of your teams tasks/workloads. No consideration of work life balance. Badgering a staff member as to what is wrong

In summary

Support: this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources you receive from the organisation, line management and colleagues

4. Relationships

In a healthy organisation, there are good working relationships and bullying and harassment at work is clearly dealt with.

The standard is that:

- Staff state that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviour; and
- There are systems in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening?

- We promote positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;
- Staff share information relevant to their work;
- We have agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour e.g. 'Dignity at Work' Policy for the Health Services;
- We have systems in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour; and
- We have systems in place to enable and encourage staff to report unacceptable behaviour.

Discuss these issues:

- Whether positive working relationships are promoted and present in the workplace, to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviours.

Questions to consider:

- Have staff been subjected to unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying?
- Do we manage unacceptable behaviour effectively?
- Are there mechanisms for staff to report unacceptable behaviours?

Triggers which could cause stress:

- Poor working relationships with managers / teams
- Combative or confrontational communication styles
- Poor communication and information sharing
- Not dealing with disputes / complaints at an early stage

The table below outlines some of the positive and negative management behaviours related to “relationships”

Positive Management Behaviours	Negative Management Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening objectively to both sides of conflict. • Supporting and investigating complaints. • Dealing with conflict at an early stage and following up on actions. • Having a positive approach and staying calm when under pressure. • Keeps staff issues private and confidential. • Admits when wrong. • Treats all staff equally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not dealing with complaints/issues and hoping it will resolve itself • Taking sides • Passing on their pressures to staff/being unpredictable and losing temper • Talks about staff member’s issues with other staff members/making personal issues public • Makes promises and does not deliver

In summary

Relationships: this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour

5. Role

In a healthy organisation, all staff are aware of what is expected of them in their role and how it will contribute to the organisation’s strategy.

The standard is that:

- Staff state that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- There are systems in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening?

- We ensure that, as far as possible, the different requirements we place on staff are compatible;
- We provide information to enable staff to understand their role and responsibilities;
- We ensure that, as far as possible, the requirements we place on staff are clear; and
- We have systems in place to enable staff to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

Discuss these issues:

Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

Questions to consider:

- Do staff say that they understand their role and responsibilities?
- In case of re-deployment, either short-term or long-term, has the staff member adequate information on their role and responsibility in the new location?
- As far as possible, are the different requirements we place on staff compatible and clearly understood?

Triggers which could cause stress:

- Lack of clarity of job role – no job descriptions /objective setting
- Staff unaware of policies and procedures in place to support them • Lack of one to one communication (meetings / feedback)

The table below outlines some of the positive and negative management behaviours related to “role”

Positive Management Behaviours	Negative Management Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeps teams informed of what is happening with the department and the organisation• Communicates clear goals and objectives. Clearly defines roles, expectations and lines of communication• Regular meetings and two way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeps people in the dark• Often makes decisions and holds meeting behind closed doors with no consultation in situations where consultation would have been appropriate• Does not update and have regular meetings to communicate changes• Talks to others about actions not completed without approaching the staff member concerned

In summary

Role: whether you understand your role within the organisation and we ensure that you do not have conflicting roles

6. Change

In a healthy organisation, the strategy for change is clear and all staff are aware of change and how it will affect them.

The standard is that:

- Staff state that we engage them often when undergoing an organisational change; and
- There are systems in place locally to respond to any individual/group concerns - e.g. Staff Association agreements, Grievance procedures.

What should be happening?

- We provide staff with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;
- We consult adequately with staff on changes and give them opportunities to influence proposals via agreed frameworks, including those with Trade Union/ Staff Associations.
- Staff are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If needed, we give staff training to support any changes in their jobs;
- Staff are aware of timetables for changes; and • Staff have access to relevant support during changes.

Discuss these issues:

- How we manage organisation change (large or small) and communicate it in the organisation

Questions to consider:

- Do managers engage with staff frequently when undergoing any organisational change?
- Do we consult staff enough?
- Do we give timely information about the reasons for proposed changes?
- Are staff aware of likely timescales for change?
- Do staff have access to relevant support during changes?

Triggers which could cause stress:

- Poor communication – uncertainty about what is happening
- Fears about job security
- Ineffective time planning of change
- Insufficient training or knowledge transfer on new systems / processes • No consultation / engagement

The table below outlines some of the positive and negative management behaviours related to “change”

Positive Management Behaviours	Negative Management Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep team informed with regular meeting and communication updates – 2 way communication.• Communicates clear goals and objectives and expectations• Provides timely information and consult• Provides adequate support e.g. training.• Considers group dynamics and physical working environment/positioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leave team members in the dark about changes. Communicating at the last minute.• Allowing people to hear message through the grape vine.• Not allowing 2 way communications on matters of change.

In Summary

Change: How we manage organisational change (large or small) and communicate it in the organisation.

Indicators

The standard is that:

- Staff indicate that pressure at work does not affect their health;
- Systems are in place to monitor and review common indicators of high pressure at work.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation monitors accidents and identifies their causes;
- The organisation has a Health and Safety Policy in place;
- The organisation monitors sickness absence and identifies reasons for absence;
- The organisation monitors turnover of staff and identifies reasons for resignation;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to identify and manage low morale among staff;
- The organisation monitors the performance/productivity of its staff; and
- Systems are in place for staff to raise concerns about their health and safety at work

The management standards are designed to aid discussion about the impact of these potential sources of workplace stress. Managers can use these as a framework for identifying risk with one staff member or with a group.



Appendix 3

Additional Online HSELand Resources

Ireland's Health Service Executive (HSE) provide an online learning and development portal titled HSELand.

HSELand contains over 170 eLearning programmes, resources, assessment and planning tools to support you in your current job role and with your personal and professional development.

With respect, to Promoting Health & Wellbeing in Enable Ireland, staff might find the following online resources useful:

1) Managing Pressure and Stress to Optimize Your Performance

Duration: 0.4 hours

Who Should Take This: Individuals who want to develop or refine their skills for performing under pressure

Objectives:

- identify the triggers of pressure in the workplace
- categorise the symptoms of stress
- match activities to the steps for managing reactions to stress
- sequence the steps for changing your perception of a situation in order to reduce stress
- recognize the steps for taking action in high-pressure situations
- recognize actions for avoiding over analysis and over confidence
- match work-style types to the reactions they exhibit when under pressure
- recognize guidelines for dealing with stress in colleagues

2) Make Time You Need: Get Organised

Who Should Take This: Anyone at any level in a company who wants to get some practical guidance for how to manage their time.

Objectives:

- Recognise strategies for increasing productivity for social and analytical time management personalities.
- Recognise productivity strategies suitable for driving or inspirational personality types.
- Recognise techniques for dealing with time stealers.
- Recognise techniques you can use to deal with people who are time stealers.
- Sort key job tasks into macro and micro to-do lists.
- Determine what action to take with your scheduled tasks after reassessing them as part of your regular check-ins.

Both available by searching <https://www.hseland.ie/dash/Account/Login>, logging in and searching for the resource.

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