

CDOIF

Chemical and Downstream
Oil Industries Forum

CDOIF Guidance. **Stress in the workplace: Practical advice to help managers and supervisors identify the causes of stress and take action to address any issues**

Managing & coping with change

Few things in life remain constant, change is a fact of life. However, change can impact people in different ways. Some common areas of change are:

- Change of management structure or company ownership, merger or acquisition
- Promotion, job security, restructuring or redeployment
- Return to the workplace following long absence or a period working from home
- Personal pressures e.g. birth, marriage, divorce, childcare, death, buying/selling houses.

Training & Competency

This refers to the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge a person has, and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely and effectively. Supervision is an important element of this. Other factors such as attitude and physical ability will also affect a person's competence. Understanding competence helps identify the skills needed to understand and manage stress and stressors in the workplace.

Mental Health

Culture

Culture is the collection of the beliefs, perceptions and values that people share in relation to risks within an organization, such as a workplace or community.

In the workplace culture can be an important element in how workers perceive risks.

Leadership plays an important role and can have a significant impact on whether a culture is perceived as positive or negative.

Mental Health

Working alone or in isolation

An employee who works primarily on their own or in a separate workplace can feel isolated from their employer and the business. In these situations, even minor feelings of anxiety, depression or acute stress can build into something more significant.

Mental Health

Welfare

Welfare is often seen as physical infrastructure such as washing facilities, canteen etc. and does not consider the negative impact of poor welfare infrastructure on a person's mental health and the culture of the organisation and its employees.

Mental Health

Well-being

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organisation Constitution).

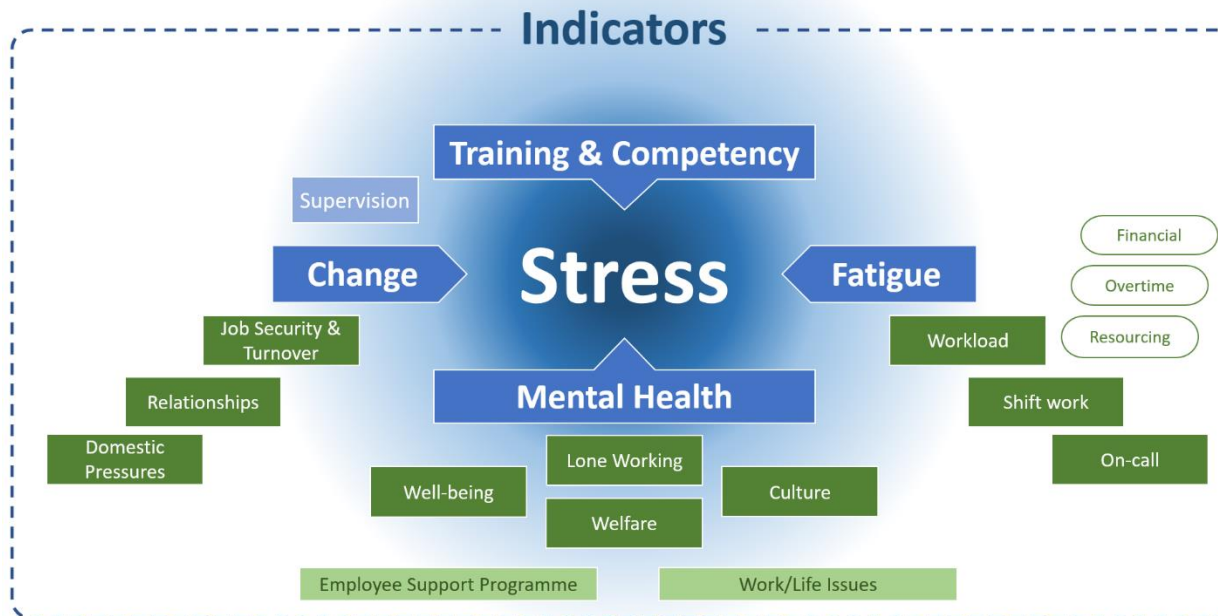
Poor mental health can lead to a variety of symptoms resulting in work related stress, anxiety and depression.

Fatigue

In safety & health terms, fatigue is taken to mean mental or physical tiredness that reduces a person's capacity to perform work safely and effectively and may lead to accidents, injuries and ill health.

Poorly designed shift working arrangements and long working hours that do not balance the demands of work with time for rest and recovery may result in fatigue.

However, the causes are not always shift-work related - workload, and such factors as being on-call or working extended hours may cause or contribute to fatigue.



This CDOIF guidance on stress, sets out some of the primary identified causes of stress, and provides simple advice for businesses on how to understand and take steps towards effectively managing stress in the workplace.

The guidance uses plain language and sets out practical approaches that reflect good practice. It is not intended as a detailed guide to your legal duties although it refers to legal and moral obligations. It aims to help you identify where stress is, or may become an issue in your workplace and suggests solutions to help you effectively manage the causes, and mitigate the effects of stress on your workers and its impact on your business.

The information set out in the seven guidance notes is based on four key contributors to human stress in the workplace as shown in the diagram. These are:

- Fatigue
- Managing & coping with change
- Training & competency (learning new skills or ways of working)
- Mental health *Culture – Working alone or in isolation – Welfare - Wellbeing*

The mental health guidance takes account of the individual worker and considers both work-related matters as well as non-work matters that you, as a business have little or no control over but which may affect how individuals react and respond within the work environment. Mental health can have a significant impact and the guidance is set out in four separate additional guidance notes to help you manage any issues should they arise.

Each concise guidance note follows the same format based on a question and answer approach. There are five key questions to ask yourself :

- What is the issue? (*Brief explanation of the topic*)
- Why should you be concerned about it?
- How do you know if there is a problem?
- What should or could you be doing?
- How you can achieve it?

The guidance also provides links to further information, guidance and legislation to support you.