Chapter 4

WORKPLACE EMOTIONS, ATTITUDES AND STRESS
Work-Related Stress and Stress Management
High Stress in Electronic Games

Josh Holmes has fond memories of working at electronic games giant Electronic Arts, but admits that the long hours were stressful. “From the minute I joined the company (EA), I put every waking hour of my day into my work…It definitely took its toll,” says Holmes, who now runs an electronic games company that emphasizes work-life balance.
What is Stress?

An adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person’s well-being.

Types of stress;

a) Distress – negative experience
- degree of physiological, psychological, behavioral deviation from healthy functioning.

a) Eustress – stress that motivates people to achieve goals and succeed in life’s challenges.
General Adaptation Syndrome

- Stage 1: Alarm Reaction
- Stage 2: Resistance
- Stage 3: Exhaustion

Normal Level of Resistance
A model of the stress experience consists of 3 stages:

a) Alarm reaction – occur when challenge activates the physiological stress responses.

b) Resistance – activates psychological and behavioral mechanisms to overcome or remove the source of stress. Immune system shuts down at this stage.

c) Exhaustion – increased risk of long-term physiological and psychological effects.
Stressors and Stress Outcomes

**Stressors and Stress Outcomes**

- Work Stressors
  - Interpersonal
  - Role-related
  - Task control
  - Organizational/Physical Environment

- Nonwork Stressors

- Individual Differences

- Consequences of Stress
  - Physiological
  - Behavioral
  - Psychological
What are Stressors?

Stressors are the causes of stress -- any environmental condition that places a physical or emotional demand on the person.
Interpersonal Stressors

- Considered the most common group of workplace stressors
- Include:
  - Team dynamics
  - Organizational politics
  - Bad bosses
  - Workplace violence
  - Psychological and sexual harassment
Psychological Harassment

Repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affect an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that result in a harmful work environment for the employee.
Sexual Harassment

- Unwelcome conduct -- detrimental effect on work environment or job performance

- Quid pro quo
  - employment or job performance is conditional on unwanted sexual relations

- Hostile work environment
  - an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment
Minimizing Harassment

1. Develop policies and culture of a more respectful workplace
2. Screen job applicants for past incidents where they have harassed others
3. Use multi-source (360-degree) feedback to identify harassing behavior
4. Develop a trustworthy conflict resolution process
Role-Related Stressors

• Role conflict
  – Incongruity or incompatibility of expectations associated with the person’s role
  – Occurs when two roles conflict with each other
  – Occurs when personal values conflict with work roles

• Role ambiguity
  – uncertain task and social expectations

• Work overload
  – increased hours and intensity
Task Control Stressors

• Stress increases when employees lack control over:
  – How and when tasks are performed
  – Pace of work activity

• Low task control is a higher stressor when job also has high responsibility
Org & Physical Environment Stressors

• Organizational
  – Most prevalent is downsizing, which affects layoff survivors
    • reduced job security
    • chaos of change
    • additional workloads
    • guilt of having a job as others lose theirs

• Physical Environment
  – Due to excessive noise, poor lighting and hazards
Blackberry Divorce

Nick Salaysay (shown in photo) admits that his work routinely gets mixed in with his personal time. “I have a BlackBerry, so I check my e-mail a lot when I'm supposed to be on vacation,” says the corporate lawyer. Research indicates that when electronic devices spill work into home life, they increase the risk of strain-based stress.

Calgary Herald/Mikael Kjellstrom
Work-Nonwork Stressors

- **Time-based conflict**
  - due to business travel, inflexible and/or rotating work schedules
  - for women -- still do most household chores
- **Strain-based conflict**
  - work stress affects home, and vice versa
- **Role behavior conflict**
  - incompatible work and family roles
Stress and Occupations

- **Low-Stress Occupations**
  - Accountant
  - Artist
  - Car Mechanic
  - Forest Ranger

- **Medium-Stress Occupations**
  - Hospital manager
  - Doctor (GP)
  - Psychologist
  - School principal

- **High-Stress Occupations**
  - President
  - Prison officer
  - Teacher
  - Nurse
Individual Differences in Stress

1. Different threshold levels of resistance to stressor

2. Use different stress coping strategies

3. Perceive the situation differently
   – Knowledge and skill
   – Natural optimism and confidence (resilience)
Individual Differences: Resilience

• Capability of individuals to cope successfully in the face of significant change, adversity, or risk

• Personality traits
  – extroversion, low neuroticism, internal locus of control, high tolerance of change, and high self-esteem

• Adaptability to stressors
  – high emotional intelligence
  – good problem-solving skills
  – productive coping strategies

• Inner strength/sense of purpose
  – Workplace spirituality
Workaholism

• Work addicts (classic workaholics)
  – Highly involved in work
  – High drive to succeed
  – Low enjoyment of work
  – Have “Type A” behavior pattern -- impatient, competitive, temper, interrupts others

• Enthusiastic workaholics
  – Highly involved in work, high drive to succeed, and high enjoyment of work

• Work enthusiasts
  – High work involvement and work enjoyment, but LOW drive to succeed
## Consequences of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Effects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physiological</strong></td>
<td>Cardiovascular disease, hypertension, headaches</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioral</strong></td>
<td>Work performance, accidents, absenteeism, aggression, poor decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological</strong></td>
<td>Dissatisfaction, moodiness, depression, emotional fatigue</td>
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Job Burnout Process

Interpersonal and Role-Related Stressors

Emotional Exhaustion

Cynicism

Reduced Efficacy

Physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences
Stress Management Strategies

- Remove the Stressor
- Withdraw from the Stressor
- Receive Social Support
- Control Stress Consequences
- Change Stress Perceptions
Remove the Stressor

- Stress audits -- investigate sources of stress
- Change corporate culture and reward system
- Provide environment that supports empowerment
- Person-job matching
- Work-life balance initiatives
Work-Life Balance

- Flexible work time
- Job sharing
- Teleworking
- Personal leave
- Childcare support
Stress Mgt. At Liggett-Stashower

When employees at Liggett-Stashower, Inc. in Cleveland need a short break from the daily stresses of work, they retreat to one of three theme rooms, including this karaoke room. “The higher the stress level, the more singing there is going on,” says Liggett’s art director.

Courtesy of Liggett Stashower, Inc.
Withdraw from the Stressor

- **Permanent withdrawal**
  - Remove employees from jobs not aligned with their competencies

- **Temporary withdrawal**
  - Coffee/lunch breaks
  - Karaoke breaks (photo)
  - Sabbaticals

Courtesy of Liggett Stashower, Inc.
Other Stress Mgt Strategies

• Change stress perceptions
  – Employees improve self concept that job challenges is not threatened,
  – Humor improve optimism & create positive emotions.

• Control stress consequences
  – Relaxation and meditation
  – Fitness and wellness programs

• Social support
  – Emotional and informational