# Stress management competency indicator tool

## How effective are you at preventing and reducing stress in your staff?

**Use the following questionnaire to assess your behaviour**

The 'Stress management competency indicator tool' in this document is designed to allow you to assess whether the behaviours identified as effective for preventing and reducing stress at work are part of your management repertoire or not. The aim is to help you to reflect upon your own behaviour and management style.

The next four pages look in turn at four behavioural areas identified as being important for managers to prevent and reduce stress in their staff. You are asked to consider a range of specific manager behaviours and put a tick in the column that most closely represents your level of agreement with each statement. You can then use the instructions at the end of each table to calculate your score on the behavioural area covered by that table. (NB the term 'team members' is used to refer to people who report directly to you/who you manage.)

The overall assessment process on page 6 allows you to use the scores from the questionnaire to assess your effectiveness in preventing and reducing stress in your staff. It allows you to identify whether any of the areas are Development Needs for you, or whether you are Reasonable or Effective in each area.

Some tips and ideas on how you can use your assessment to improve your effectiveness in preventing and reducing stress at work, through your management behaviour, are provided on page 7. Finally, page 8 provides a summary of the competencies required to prevent and reduce stress at work.

For more information on the framework of 'Management competencies for preventing and reducing stress at work' and the key messages for managers, please refer to the guidance leaflet available for download at: **www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/health/stress/_strwklnmgr.htm**.

To read more about how the 'Management competencies for preventing and reducing stress at work' were identified, and how the stress management competency indicator tool was developed, please refer to the full research report available for download at: **www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr633.htm**.

| Behaviour/Competency | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Integrity** | | | | | |
| I am a good role model | | | | | |
| I treat my team members with respect | | | | | |
| I am honest | | | | | |
| I do what I say I will do | | | | | |
| I never speak about team members behind their backs | | | | | |
| **Managing Emotions** | | | | | |
| I act calmly in pressured situations | | | | | |
| I take a consistent approach to managing | | | | | |
| My moods are predictable | | | | | |
| I don't pass on my stress to my team | | | | | |
| I approach deadlines calmly | | | | | |
| I welcome suggestions for improvements from my team | | | | | |
| **Considerate Approach** | | | | | |
| I allow my team to plan their workloads | | | | | |
| The deadlines I create are realistic | | | | | |
| I give more positive than negative feedback | | | | | |
| I deal with problems myself rather than relying on others | | | | | |
| I allow my team to approach their work in their own way | | | | | |
| I show a consideration for my team's worklife balance | | | | | |
| **Note down the total number of ticks in each column** | | | | | |
| **Now multiply each column total by the number indicated to calculate your column score** | x 1 = | x 2 = | x 3 = | x 4 = | x 5 = |
| **Add the column scores together and note the total score (maximum score is 85)** | | | | | |
| **Now divide your total score by 85 and multiply by 100** | (........../85) x 100 = | | | | |

| Behaviour/Competency | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proactive Work Management** | | | | | |
| I clearly communicate job objectives to my team | | | | | |
| I develop action plans | | | | | |
| I monitor my team's workload on an ongoing basis | | | | | |
| I encourage my team to review how they organise their work | | | | | |
| When necessary, I stop additional work being taken on by my team | | | | | |
| I work proactively | | | | | |
| I see projects/tasks through to delivery | | | | | |
| I review processes to see if work can be improved | | | | | |
| I prioritise future workloads | | | | | |
| **Problem Solving** | | | | | |
| I deal rationally with problems | | | | | |
| I follow up problems on behalf of my team | | | | | |
| I deal with problems as soon as they arise | | | | | |
| I am decisive when decision making | | | | | |
| **Participative/Empowering** | | | | | |
| I give employees the right level of job responsibility | | | | | |
| I correctly judge when to consult the team and when to make a decision | | | | | |
| I keep my team informed of what is happening in the organisation | | | | | |
| I act as a mentor to my team | | | | | |
| I delegate work equally | | | | | |
| I help team members to develop in their role | | | | | |
| I encourage participation from the whole team | | | | | |
| I provide regular team meetings | | | | | |
| I give the right level of direction to my team members | | | | | |
| **Note down the total number of ticks in each column** | | | | | |
| **Now multiply each column total by the number indicated to calculate your column score** | x 1 = | x 2 = | x 3 = | x 4 = | x 5 = |
| **Add the column scores together and note the total score (maximum score is 110)** | | | | | |
| **Now divide your total score by 110 and multiply by 100** | (........../110) x 100 = | | | | |

| Behaviour/Competency | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personally Accessible** | | | | | |
| I prefer to speak to my team personally than use email | | | | | |
| I provide regular opportunities for my team to speak one to one | | | | | |
| I return my team's calls/emails promptly | | | | | |
| I am available to talk to when needed | | | | | |
| **Sociable** | | | | | |
| I bring in treats for my team | | | | | |
| I socialise with the team | | | | | |
| I am willing to have a laugh at work | | | | | |
| **Empathetic Engagement** | | | | | |
| I encourage individuals' input in discussions | | | | | |
| I listen when a team member asks for help | | | | | |
| I make an effort to find out what motivates my team members at work | | | | | |
| I try to see things from my team members' point of view | | | | | |
| I take an interest in my team's life outside work | | | | | |
| I regularly ask team members 'How are you?' | | | | | |
| I treat all team members with equal importance | | | | | |
| I check everyone is OK rather than just assuming | | | | | |
| **Note down the total number of ticks in each column** | | | | | |
| **Now multiply each column total by the number indicated to calculate your column score** | x 1 = | x 2 = | x 3 = | x 4 = | x 5 = |
| **Add the column scores together and note the total score (maximum score is 75)** | | | | | |
| **Now divide your total score by 75 and multiply by 100** | (........../75) x 100 = | | | | |

The final set of behaviours/competencies refer to how you manage difficult situations in your team such as bullying or employee conflicts. If you haven't experienced situations such as these, it may not be useful for you to complete this section. However, please do remember to refer back to this section and to the 'Management competencies for preventing and reducing stress' framework (see **www.hse.gov.uk/stress/linemanagers.pdf**) if the need to manage a difficult situation arises.

| Behaviour/Competency | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Managing Conflict** | | | | | |
| I act as a mediator in conflict situations | | | | | |
| I deal with squabbles in the team before they become arguments | | | | | |
| I deal objectively with employee conflicts | | | | | |
| I deal with conflicts head on | | | | | |
| I try and resolve issues rather than act to keep the peace | | | | | |
| **Use of Organisational Resources** | | | | | |
| I seek advice from other managers when necessary | | | | | |
| I use HR as a resource to help deal with problems | | | | | |
| I seek help from occupational health when necessary | | | | | |
| **Taking responsibility for resolving issues** | | | | | |
| I follow up team conflicts after resolution | | | | | |
| I support employees through incidents of abuse | | | | | |
| I make it clear I will take ultimate responsibility if things go wrong | | | | | |
| I address bullying | | | | | |
| **Note down the total number of ticks in each column** | | | | | |
| **Now multiply each column total by the number indicated to calculate your column score** | x 1 = | x 2 = | x 3 = | x 4 = | x 5 = |
| **Add the column scores together and note the total score (maximum score is 60)** | | | | | |
| **Now divide your total score by 60 and multiply by 100** | (............/60) x 100 = | | | | |

You have now calculated a percentage score for each of the four behavioural areas (or three behavioural areas if you are not measuring your ability to manage difficult situations) that have been identified as important for preventing and reducing stress at work. In order to interpret what these scores mean, use the following guidelines:

**75% or below = Development Need:** This is an area in which you would benefit from some development. Please refer to back to the questionnaire to explore which of the behaviours you could consider using more often in the future in order to be more effective at preventing and reducing stress in your team.

**76% to 89% = Reasonable:** You show a good awareness of the behaviours needed for effectively preventing and reducing stress in others. It may be helpful to refer back to the questionnaire to see if there are any behaviours you could add to your repertoire in this area to increase your effectiveness in managing stress in others.

**90% and above = Effective:** You demonstrate the behaviours that have been shown to be effective in preventing and reducing stress in your team.

**Your 'Stress management competence' profile:**
Fill in each of the right hand columns. In the effectiveness column, add 'Development Need', 'Reasonable' or 'Effective' using the guidance above.

| Competency | Percentage | Effectiveness |
|---|---|---|
| Respectful and responsible: Managing emotions and having integrity | | |
| Managing and communicating existing and future work | | |
| Managing the individual within the team | | |
| Reasoning/Managing difficult situations | | |

In order to improve your effectiveness at preventing and reducing stress at work, we suggest the following steps:

1   Look for the behavioural area in which you received the lowest score and focus on this as top priority. If you have identified several Development Needs or areas that you would like to move into the 'Effective' zone, take them one at a time – you don't have to change everything at once!

2   Look back at the questionnaire to explore what behaviours are relevant to this area. On the following page is also a summary of the four behavioural areas, and outlines of the key behaviours in each. Identify the ones that you indicated you do least and consider what you need to do in order to show these behaviours more often. It may simply be a matter of being more aware of how you are behaving at the moment and making small shifts to add the relevant additional (or alternative) behaviours to your repertoire.

3   You may find it helpful to check out with your team whether they would find it helpful for you to show more of these particular behaviours and how that would be different from what you do at the moment. You could ask them   to give you feedback on how you are doing.

4   If you feel that it will be difficult for you to make these behavioural changes on your own, consider seeking support. For example, informal coaching or support from your own manager and/or from the HR department might be helpful; you might find it helpful to get some formal coaching or mentoring; and/or you might want to attend a training course to develop the relevant skills.

5   Finally, in addition to the information provided on the Health and Safety Executive website, you may find the following useful for gaining more information about managing stress and mental health at work:

■   SHIFT Line Manager's Resource: for practical guidance on managing and supporting people with mental health problems in the workplace: www.shift.org.uk
■   Mental Health Foundation and Mind websites: for information about mental health issues: www.mentalhealth.org.uk and www.mind.org.uk
■   Information and resources may also be available through your employer, for example from: Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme/Welfare Service and Human Resources.

# SUMMARY OF THE 'MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES FOR PREVENTING AND REDUCING STRESS AT WORK' FRAMEWORK

| Competency | Sub-Competency |
|---|---|
| **Respectful and responsible: Managing emotions and having integrity** | **Integrity** <br> *Being respectful and honest to employees* |
| | **Managing emotions** <br> *Behaving consistently and calmly around the team* |
| | **Considerate approach** <br> *Being thoughtful in managing others and delegating* |
| **Managing and communicating existing and future work** | **Proactive work management** <br> *Monitoring and reviewing existing work, allowing future prioritisation and planning* |
| | **Problem solving** <br> *Dealing with problems promptly, rationally and responsibly* |
| | **Participative/empowering** <br> *Listening to, meeting and consulting with the team, providing direction, autonomy and development opportunities to individuals* |
| **Managing the individual within the team** | **Personally accessible** <br> *Available to talk to personally* |
| | **Sociable** <br> *Relaxed approach, such as socialising and using humour* |
| | **Empathetic engagement** <br> *Seeking to understand each individual in the team in terms of their health and satisfaction, motivation, point of view and life outside work* |
| **Reasoning/Managing difficult situations** | **Managing conflict** <br> *Dealing with conflicts decisively, promptly and objectively* |
| | **Use of organisational resources** <br> *Seeking advice when necessary from managers, HR and Occupational Health* |
| | **Taking responsibility for resolving issues** <br> *Having a supportive and responsible approach to issues and incidents in the team* |