

## Actions that can be taken to address the Six Sources of Stress at Work

### DEMANDS

#### Workload

- Ensure there are sufficient resources to do the work allocated
- Support staff by helping them prioritise/ renegotiate deadlines
- Cover workloads during staff absence
- Strike a balance between ensuring that staff are interested and busy but not under loaded, overloaded or confused about the job

#### Training

- Make sure that staff are trained to do their job
- Ensure all staff have regular appraisals

#### Communication

- Encourage staff to talk to you at an early stage if they feel that they cannot cope
- Lead by example and make yourself accessible to staff

#### Work environment

- Do a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to control physical hazards
- Assess the risk of violence at work
- Provide training to help staff deal with difficult situations such as aggression from patients or relatives

## CONTROL

### Enabling staff to have their say

- Give more control to staff by enabling them to plan their own work
- Enable staff to make decisions about how their work should be done
- Where possible, allow staff to have a say over when breaks are taken
- Try to provide some scope for varying working conditions and flexible working hours

### Making full use of staff's skills and abilities

- Encourage staff to use their skills and initiative to do their work
- Encourage staff where possible, to develop new skills to undertake new and challenging pieces of work
- Make sure individuals are matched to jobs
- Set realistic deadlines for tasks

## SUPPORT

### Supporting staff

- Support and encourage staff, even when things go wrong
- Encourage staff to share their concerns about work-related stress at an early stage and hold regular team meetings to discuss pressures
- Encourage colleagues in the team to support each other

### Managing your teams time

- Encourage a healthy work-life balance

- Encourage staff to take their annual leave entitlement and their meal breaks
- Introduce flexibility into work schedules where possible

### **Listening to staff**

- Listen to staff and help them to feel that their contribution is valued
- Involve staff in identifying problems and finding solutions
- Discuss sources of support available to staff who are experiencing problems both in and outside of work

### **Meeting the needs of the team**

- Provide suitable and sufficient training for staff to do their jobs
- Ensure staff know how to prioritise or how to seek help if they have conflicting priorities
- Provide training in time-management, assertiveness, communication skills etc

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Deal with unacceptable behaviour**

- Work in partnership with staff to ensure that bullying and harassment never emerge as an issue
- Agree and implement procedures to prevent or quickly resolve, conflict at work
- Communicate policies relating to 'dignity at work'

### **Team building**

- Create a culture where team members can trust each other and recognise the individual contributions of each other
- Encourage good communication

- Discuss how individuals work together and how they can build positive relationships
- Select or build teams that have the right blend of experience and expertise for new projects
- Identify ways to celebrate success

**ROLE**

### **Clarity of roles**

- Make sure your staff have a clearly defined role
- Talk to staff regularly to make sure they are clear about their role and responsibilities and what is expected of them and what they can expect from you
- Hold team meetings to enable team members to clarify their roles and discuss and potential role conflict
- Ensure the team are aware of their targets and objectives to help clarify the role of the unit/department/team

### **Managing new members of the team**

- Make sure new recruits receive a comprehensive induction into the organisation
- Make sure all members of the team understand the roles and responsibilities of the new recruit and vice versa

### **Staff understanding of what you expect from them**

- Agree specific standards of performance for jobs and individual tasks and review periodically
- Conduct regular appraisal

**CHANGE**

### **Helping staff understand the reasons for change**

- Ensure all staff are aware of why the change is happening
- Explain the timetable for action and provide timely information
- Communicate new developments quickly to avoid the spread of rumours
- Face to face communication is generally best to allow staff an opportunity to ask questions and say how they feel
- Have an open-door policy so staff can talk to you about their concerns

### **Involving staff in the changes**

- Involve staff in discussions about how jobs might be developed and changed
- Provide effective support throughout the process
- Provide a confidential system to enable staff to ask questions and comment before, during and after the change

### **Helping staff adversely affected by change**

- Ensure that staff are made aware of the impact of change on their jobs
- Ensure effective two-way communication throughout the process
- Allow adequate time for the process
- Allocate adequate resources and consider training needs
- Discuss support available within the organisation for those adversely effected by change (e.g. Occupational health, Staff Psychology and Counselling Service, [Workforce](#), Staff Side Representatives)