



Tips to Teach Stress Reduction for a Safer Workplace for Workers



Workplace Stress can result from a number of situations

Cold Stress occurs when the body can no longer maintain a normal temperature

Heat Stress occurs when one's body becomes fatigued and distressed

Stress from working in high hazard industries is often very personal and private. Workers present a tough exterior to the world, but in private suffer from lack of sleep, depression, and often feelings of anxiety. This workplace stress is defined as physically and emotionally damaging. Creating a safe and healthy work environment begins with understanding what levels of stress your workers are experiencing.

Begin with determining what the actual cause of stress is and the level your workers are experiencing will give you a starting point on teaching them how to reduce their levels. Often a person will experience severe stress as a reaction to their inability to cope. Facing a threatening situation or exposure to an occupational health risk can increase one's stress. These are coping tips to teach stress reduction.

1. WORKPLACE STRESS

Experiencing stress at the workplace can be a result of a number of situations: excessive workload, unclear expectations, low salary, not having a say in job decisions, and boring or menial work. There are ways for workers to minimize the amount of stress they allow their job environment to create. Keeping track of what happens during stressful times is helpful so they can look back and better learn how to manage situations. Making healthy choices and create good sleep habits will help to reduce stress. Another good solution is to create boundaries and not let work consume your life.

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The mining industry also creates intense stress related to the temperatures experienced in the workplace. These stress conditions require their own specific methods of finding relief from stress.





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2. COLD STRESS

Cold stress will occur when the worker's body can no longer maintain a normal temperature. It is caused by low temperatures, high wind speeds, humidity, and contact with cold water or surfaces. This type of stress can be controlled by wearing proper clothing. The type of fabric is going to make the biggest difference. Wearing layers, at least three, will improve the chances of preventing cold stress. Other important items are a hat, gloves, and socks that are changed regularly. Reducing cold stress also requires adequate fluid intake and working with a buddy to keep an eye on each other to watch for signs of stress. Radiant heaters should be placed where your workers can seek relief from the cold, and insulate handles on as much equipment as you can.

3. HEAT STRESS

Heat stress will cause your worker's bodies to become fatigued and distressed. This will result in a decrease in productivity. When workers become affected by high core temperature, it will decrease their motivation for muscular activity. The body's response to heat stress is known as heat strain. Clothing is again a big factor in reducing heat stress. Loose-fitting clothing will allow for the movement of air and should always be worn in hot, humid environments. Garments filled with air or water will reduce skin temperatures.

The proper clothing should be mixed with work/rest cycles and mandatory water breaks. Water is essential to replace the loss of salt through sweat. To keep the core body temperature regulated, it is vital to keep miners on a scheduled break routine and rotate jobs between shifts when it becomes hot.

No matter what type of stress your employees are suffering from, they should always seek help. Advise them to reach out to family, friends, and management resources. Dealing with it alone will only leave them feeling overwhelmed. They need to work with someone to create a plan of action to help resolve issues.



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