

Stress and lack of relaxation

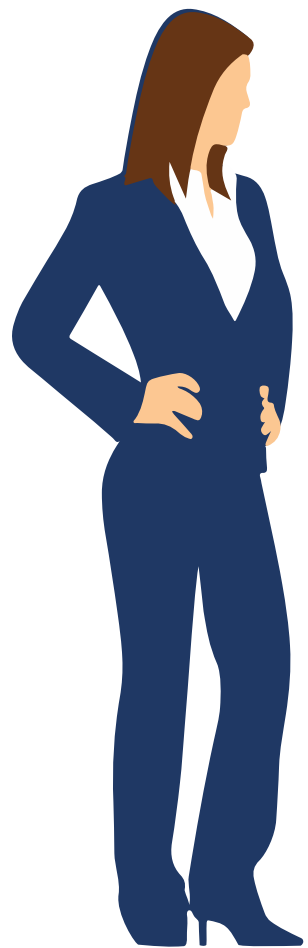


Identification and coping





OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING



UNDERSTANDING

the complexity of issues connected with work-related stress



REALIZING

the sources and signs of stress in workplace



EMPOWERING

the ability and skills to identify stress at work



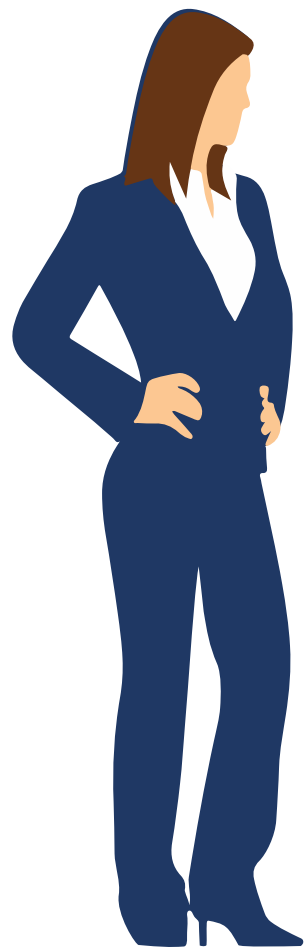
DEVELOPING

knowledge on building individual and organisational resilience





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Stress reaction



When we face a stressful event, our bodies respond by activating the nervous system and releasing hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones cause physical changes in the body which help us to react quickly and effectively to get through the stressful situation. This is sometimes called the **'fight or flight'** response.

The hormones increase our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, metabolism and muscle tension. Our pupils dilate and our perspiration rate increases. While these physical changes help us try to meet the challenges of the stressful situation, they can cause other physical or psychological symptoms if the stress is ongoing and the physical changes don't settle down.

Stress is **subjective** — not measurable with tests. Only the person experiencing it can determine whether it is present and how severe it feels.



Work-related stress

Work-related stress is defined as the **adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work**. Stress, including work-related stress, can be a significant cause of illness.

It is known to be linked with:

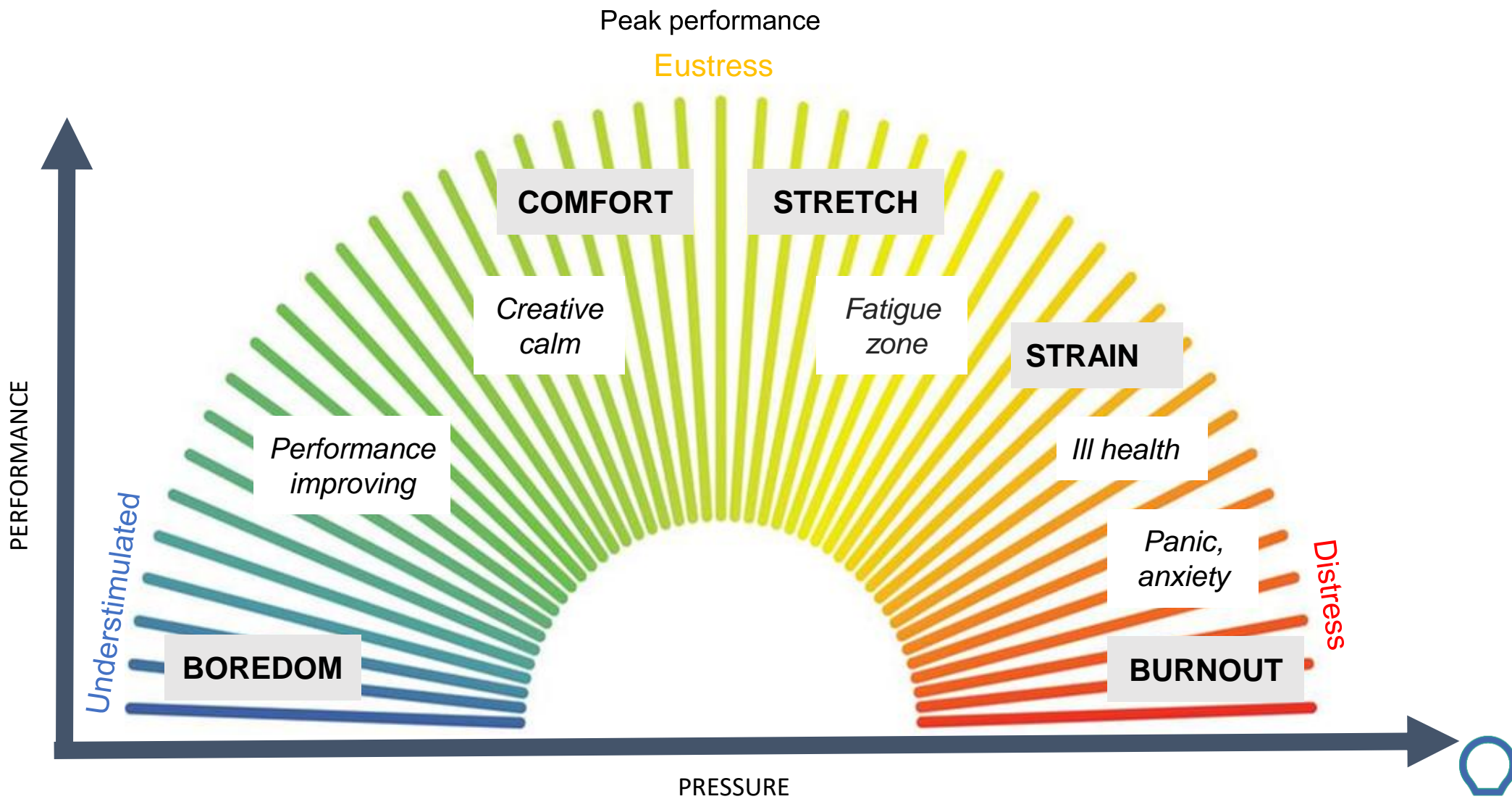
- high levels of sickness absence,
- staff turnover,
- increased capacity for error,
- many others.

Stress is not a medical diagnosis, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of **depression or anxiety**, or more severe **mental health problems**.

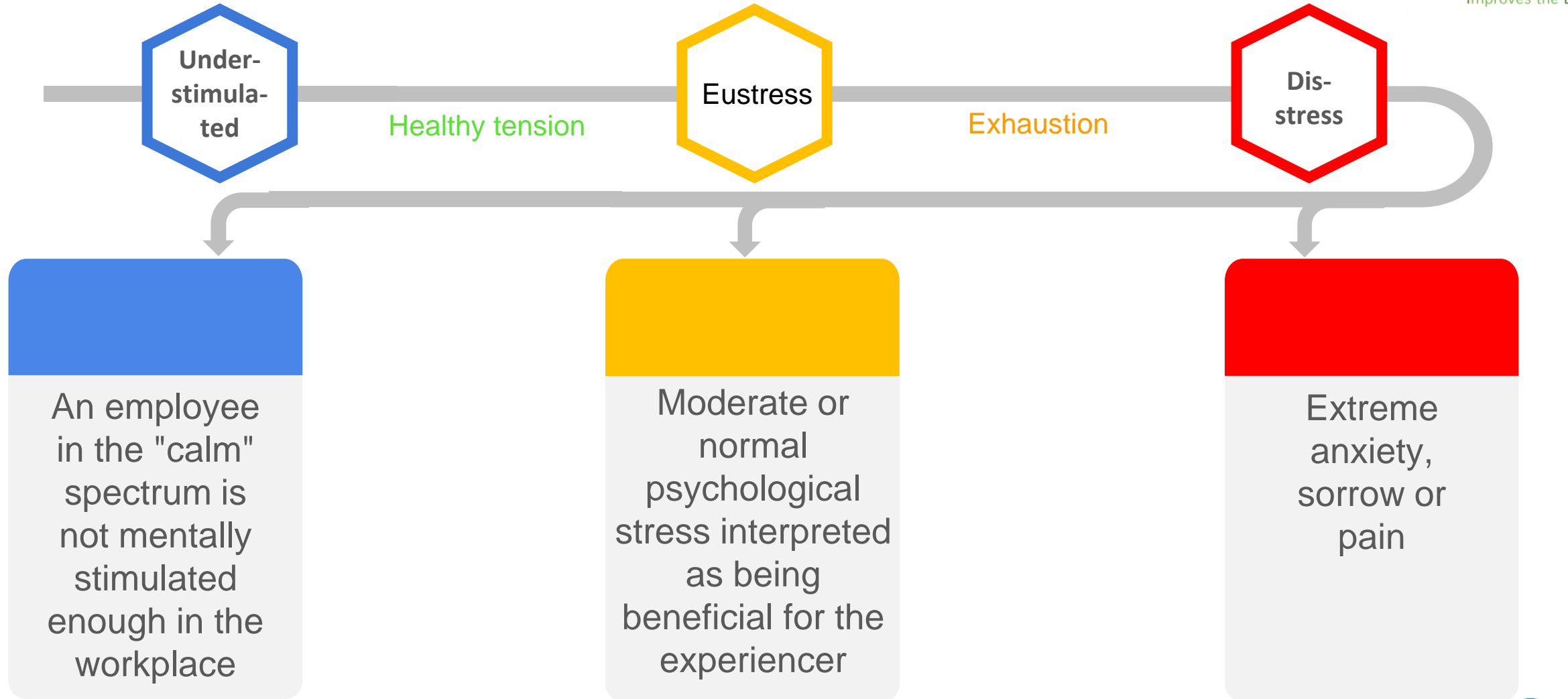




Human performance curve



Human performance curve





Good vs. bad stress



GOOD STRESS - referred by psychologists as "eustress," is the type of stress we feel when we are excited. Our pulse quickens and our hormones surge, but there is no threat or fear. We feel this type of stress when we ride a roller coaster or compete for a promotion. There are many triggers for this good stress, and it keeps us feeling alive and excited about life.

ACUTE STRESS - comes from quick surprises that need a response. It triggers the body's stress response as well, but the triggers aren't always happy and exciting. This is what we normally think of as "stress" (or "bad stress"). Acute stress in itself doesn't take heavy results if we find ways to relax quickly. Once the stressor has been dealt with, we need to return our body to homeostasis, or its pre-stress state, to be healthy and happy.

CHRONIC STRESS - is another form of bad stress. It occurs when we repeatedly face stressors that take a heavy toll and feel inescapable. A stressful job or an unhappy home life can bring chronic stress. This is what we normally think of as serious stress. Because our bodies aren't designed for chronic stress, we can face negative health effects (both physical and emotional) if we experience chronic stress for an extended period of time.





Sources of work stress

Environmental Stress

related to the physical environment in which they work, associated with workplace safety issues, the configuration of one's work area, the type of equipment used in order to perform job functions, and other variables.

Uncertainty

tied to fear of job loss, hoping for recognition or a promotion, a lack of feedback on one's performance, or other issues.



People issues

related to people problems, such as coping with difficult co-workers, dealing with a negative or uncommunicative supervisor, peer pressure, and more.

Performance pressure

Feeling pressure to produce a certain quality or quantity of work can be a workplace stressor. This can be tied to sales or production quotas, manufacturing standards, impending deadlines, and other factors.





Factors of work stress

- working long hours or overtime, working through breaks or taking work home doing shift work
- time pressure, working too hard or too fast, or unrealistic targets
- having limited control over how you do your work
- limited input into broader decisions by the business
- not receiving enough support from supervisors, managers and/or co-workers
- job insecurity
- high mental task demands, work that requires high-level decision making
- a lack of role clarity
- poor communication
- conflict with colleagues or managers
- low levels of recognition and reward
- work that is emotionally disturbing or requires high emotional involvement
- poorly managed change, lack of organizational justice
- discrimination – whether based on gender, ethnicity, race or sexuality
- bullying





Stress at work - the signs



PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

- chest pain or a pounding heart
- fatigue
- reduced interest in sex
- nausea, diarrhoea or constipation
- getting colds more often
- muscle tension, pains and headaches
- episodes of fast, shallow breathing and excessive sweating
- loss or change of appetite
- sleeping problems

NON-PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

- feeling overwhelmed or frustrated
- feeling guilty or unhappy
- being irritable
- losing confidence and being indecisive
- thinking negatively
- having racing thoughts
- memory problems
- excessive worrying



Practice: Identify stress

List the things that give real meaning to what you do

- Write down what attracted you to your current job or profession in the first place.
- List the things about it that you find fulfilling now.
- Include the values of the profession to humanity and what excites you about it.
- Think about what you want to achieve within it and what you think is important to doing the job well.
- This will give you a long list of things that are good about what you do.

From this list, identify 5 things that give the greatest meaning to your work.

- These should be the things about the job that most inspire you.
- Write these down in importance order with the most important item at the top of the list.
- This list shows you the things that you should protect as much as you can.



Practice: Identify stress

Next, write down the things that frustrate you most about your work

- This may involve things like inadequacy of resources, lack of recognition or bureaucracy, etc.
- List the factors that are causing you difficulty and which are likely to cause stress in the future.
- Now work through the list of things that give you meaning item-by-item.
- For each item, look at the list of frustrations.
- Where these threaten the things that are most important to you, note these down.
- These are **particular pressure points** that you need to monitor.

Think these through carefully and plan in advance how you will handle stress

- Who can help you with this?
- What resources do you have and what do you need?
- To what level do stressors threaten your comfort at work and mental health? Etc.





Add good stress to life



- Choose activities and set goals that make you feel good, happy, and excited doing your job. To gauge whether or not an activity is worth your time, pay attention to how the thought of it makes you feel. Do you feel excited? Is it a "want to," or a "have to"?
- Be sure your "want to" activities are all things you really do want to do, and your "have to" activities are all absolutely necessary.
- Avoid the most taxing forms of stress at work, you'll have more resilience against other types of stress that are unavoidable.
- You may not be able to eliminate all stress, but there are often ways that you can minimize or avoid some of the stress in your life, and this can make it easier to handle the rest.

Watch out: good stress can become bad stress

Good stress can become bad for you if you experience too much adrenaline. This is because your stress response is triggered either way, and if you're adding that to chronic stress, or several other stressors, there is a cumulative effect. Be in tune with yourself and acknowledge when you've had too much excitement.



Subjectivity of stress

The amount of stress you feel in different professional situations may depend on many factors such as:



Self-help for the individual

If you suffer from work-related stress can help yourselves in a number of ways, including:

- Think about the changes you need to make at work in order to reduce your stress levels and then take action. Some changes you can manage yourself, while others will need the cooperation of others.
- Talk over your concerns with your employer or human resources manager.
- Make sure you are well organised. List your tasks in order of priority. Schedule the most difficult tasks of each day for times when you are fresh, such as first thing in the morning.
- Make sure you have enough free time to yourself every week.
- Don't take out your stress on loved ones. Instead, tell them about your work problems and ask for their support and suggestions.
- Drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco, won't alleviate stress and can cause additional health problems. Avoid excessive drinking and smoking.
- Seek professional counselling from a psychologist.
- If work-related stress continues to be a problem, despite your efforts, you may need to consider another job or a career change. Seek advice from a career counsellor or psychologist.



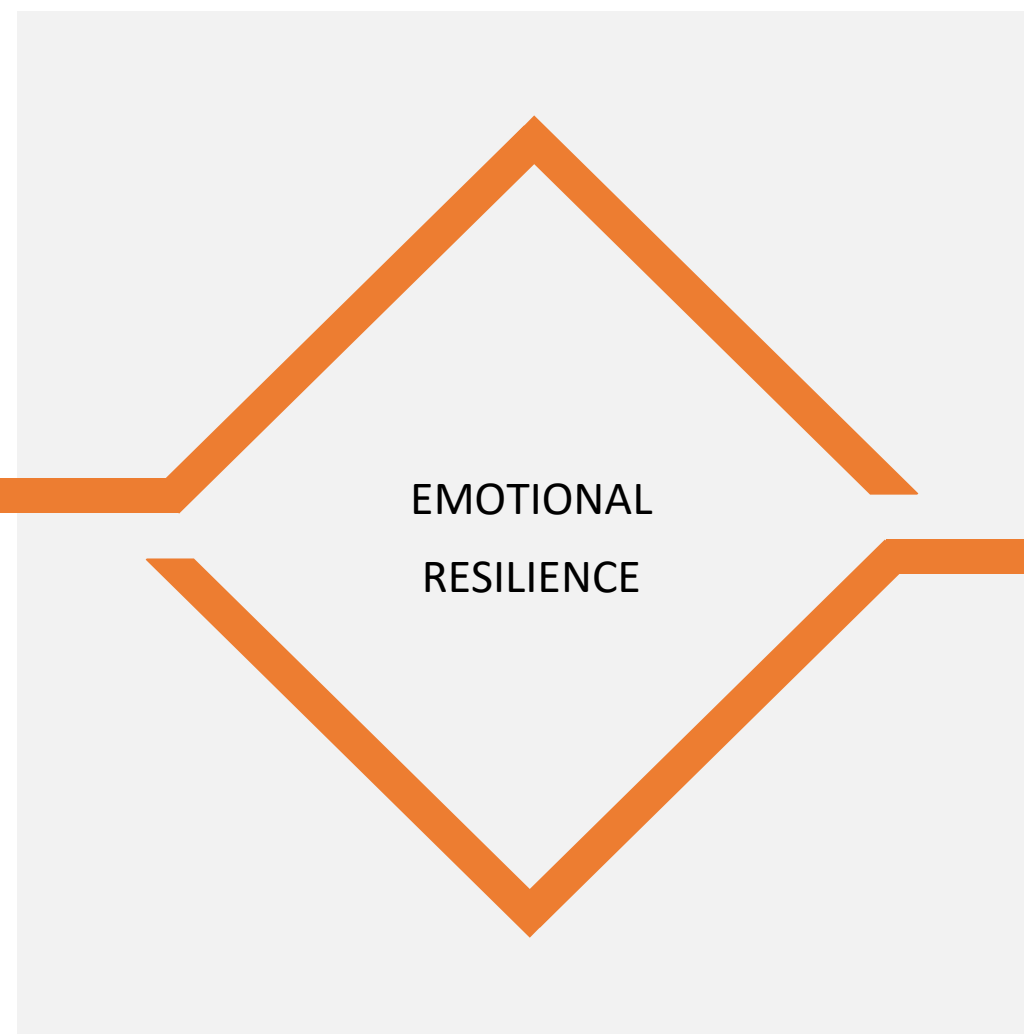


Mental resilience

Psychologists define resilience as the **process of adapting well** in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.

As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve **profound personal growth**.

Mental resilience is not only the employee competences set but also the issue of **resistant leadership and resistant organizations**.



Emotional resilience at work

01

Preparing

developing competences
and peer to peer support,
creating procedures

Responsibility

03

Responding

first psychological aid,
having a good supportive
conversation

Empathy

05

Support after crisis

catalyzing the self-
reflection and
discovering resources

Development

02

Monitoring

using knowledge
for recognizing a
psychological crisis

Vigilance

04

Long-term support

creating conditions of safe
getting back to balance,
without fear

Protection



Sources of reference



<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-kind-of-stress-is-good-for-you-3145055>



https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/mental-health-at-work-1_tcm18-10567.pdf



<https://www.headsup.org.au/healthy-workplaces/workplace-stressors>

Own sources: Mental Health Center, <https://www.diversityhub.pl>



<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wbk01.pdf>



[https://www.headsup.org.au/docs/default-source/resources/stresstipsheet\(aps\).pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.headsup.org.au/docs/default-source/resources/stresstipsheet(aps).pdf?sfvrsn=2)

https://stress.lovetoknow.com/Definition_of_Work_Stress



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