

## EAP Column

# Coping with workplace stress

*Work is obviously a very significant part of our lives. When individuals are introduced for the first time, they often ask each other what they do for a living. It is easy to understand why, since one third of our lives are spent at work. That does not include the time spent commuting, working overtime and thinking about work after we go home.*



### Need help?

The EAP has several resources available. Contact an EAP representative in your area today.

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Occupational stress generally occurs when demands relating to work exceed the employee's resources and ability to cope. As a result various reactions may occur, such as:

**Physical:** Headaches, grinding teeth, clenched jaws, chest pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, insomnia, muscle aches, indigestion, high blood pressure, frequent illness

**Psychosocial** Anxiety, irritability, sadness, defensiveness, anger, frustration, boredom, hypersensitivity, apathy, depression, slowed thinking or racing thoughts, hopelessness.

**Behavioral:** Impatience, quickness to argue, procrastination, increased smoking, use of alcohol or drugs, isolation from others, neglect responsibility, poor job performance.

Remember, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) offer confidential, short-term counseling services for employees with problems that affect their work performance.

### SOURCES OF STRESS

- 1 Work Overload
- 2 Lack of recognition by peers
- 3 Poor relationship with one's supervisor
- 4 Lack of participation in decision making
- 5 Lack of information

### Some tips for coping with stress

Learn to identify the signs your body is giving you, as this will help you do what is necessary to reduce stress.

Learn to identify what increases your stress: by acting on the causes of stress, you can better control it.

Laughing is one of the easiest and best ways to reduce stress.

Learn to relax, take several deep breaths throughout the day, or have stretch breaks.

Learn to delegate- don't shoulder all responsibilities on your own.

Take charge of your situation by taking 10 minutes at the beginning of each day to prioritize and organize your day.

Suggest changes at work, talk about irritating situations with your colleagues and supervisor, and try to find solutions that are mutually acceptable.

Develop a good support network and recognize that help is sometimes necessary to get through hard times.

Participate in leisure activities. Apart from helping you relax, such activities will help "recharge your batteries".

Exercise. In addition to the obvious health benefits, exercise will help you sleep better.

Reduce your consumption of stimulating foods and beverages such as coffee, tea, chocolate soft drinks or alcohol.