

What Are the Types of Stress We Face?

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will determine triggers and indicators of work-related stress. Specifically, it will cover:

1. Task-Based Stress
2. Role-Based Stress
3. Institutional-Based Stress
4. Person-Based Stress
5. Reflect

1. Task-Based Stress

There are four well-known types of stress and ways to manage that stress. This covers how you, as a leader, can assist not just yourself, but also your staff in both identifying the types of stress they are experiencing as well as navigating a path to successful stress management.

The first type of stress is task-based stress. This may occur when a leader or staff member is faced with an unrealistic amount of work to accomplish, lack of preparation or experience to complete the work, a lack of organizational skills and/or insufficient information about the assignment.

When faced with task-based stress, there are strategies that can be used either by the leader or passed to the employee that helps mitigate task-based stress. Strategies include:

- Education and training
- Time management classes
- Reassignment of work
- Step by step communication and support from a supervisor to a leader or from a leader to the staff member to complete a task

2. Role-Based Stress

Another type of stress that occurs in the workplace is role-based stress. This type of stress occurs when there is role ambiguity, overload or conflict. Often one suffers this type of stress when one enters into a new

leadership role or gets promoted without an effective training program. This also occurs in nurses new to the profession, returning to the profession or new to a position gained from transfer or promotion.

The following strategies can be applied to role-based stress:

1. Review job expectations and job description
2. Set clear goals for the role
3. Promote resilience
4. Encourage mindfulness
5. Identify specific training or education required to support the employee

3. Institutional-Based Stress

Institutional-based stress occurs when the norms and expectations of the organization cause conflict with the leader's needs and/or beliefs. This can occur when assignments such as staffing or projects conflict with the employee's core beliefs and values.

The strategies that can be applied:

1. Keeping an open line of communication
2. Giving leadership and staff a voice
3. Actively listening to concerns of employees and their proposed changes
4. Allow flexible scheduling

4. Person-Based Stress

This type of stress can occur when an employee's performance and actual perception of their performance do not match. Certainly in cases of role changing this type of stress can emerge as one acclimates to new, often unclear, expectations.

The following strategies can be applied to person-based stress:

- Create realistic expectations
- Assign a mentor
- Encourage mindfulness
- Perform standardized evaluations such as the 360
- Set up frequent follow-ups with the employees setting short- and long-term goals



THINK ABOUT IT

What other types of stressors exist in your workplace?

Video Transcription

Bethany is a nurse manager at a community hospital. One of the recently-hired nurses, Kostas, has been assigned to tend to an Ebola patient but is unwilling to do so. In other words, he isn't doing what he needs to do to ensure the patient receives quality care. Now, Bethany's goal is to communicate with Kostas without making the situation more stressful for either of them and especially the patient.

Stress is inherent in the role of a nurse and can severely reduce motivation and productivity. Therefore, nurse leaders are responsible for recognizing employee stress levels and intervening to reduce stress to the lowest possible level. To do that, it's important to identify the cause of stress and navigate the path to successful stress management.

Now Bethany is dealing with a case of person-based stress. This type of stress can occur when an employee's performance and actual perception of their performance do not match. It can emerge in cases of role change as one adapts to new and often unclear expectations.

There are several strategies that can be applied to mitigate this type of stress among employees. First of all, it's important to make sure that the expectations created are crystal clear, time bound, and realistic. This means specifying the desired outcome, whether it is indeed realistic, how and why it should be accomplished, and what is the timeframe. The goal is to minimize confusion and discouragement and increase the chances of employees meeting these expectations.

It's also recommended to set up frequent follow-ups and perform standardized evaluations such as the 360-degree feedback. This is a feedback process where employees receive anonymous feedback not just from their superior but also peers and direct reports. In this way, managers can assess employees' performance and competencies while employees can recognize their own strengths and weaknesses and become more effective.

Next, workplace mentoring has been proven as an effective way to reduce the stress level and the risk of burnout for both the mentor and mentee. This is because it provides the opportunity to connect and discuss the stressful situations with one another, offer tangible advice, share various coping mechanisms, and encourage healthier choices.

Finally, encouraging mindfulness can be helpful. Some practical ways to do that would be to urge the staff to use short mindful exercises, take regular breaks, and to introduce a calm, quiet place where they can recharge without the distractions of emails or office chatter.

So Bethany planned a meeting with Kostas where she made sure to communicate clear and attainable expectations, let him express his concerns or stressors, offered to assign him a mentor, and encouraged him to take regular mindful breaks. In return, Kostas was much more productive and satisfied with his job.

5 Reflect

You are the new nurse manager of a very busy cardiac telemetry unit and one of your staff is found crying in the medication room by your charge nurse. Your charge nurse comforts the nurse and asks her why she is crying. The nurse states, "I can't manage all of these patients and I am late with some medications and feel

very overwhelmed.” Later that day, your charge nurse reports this incident to you, the nurse manager.

Knowing the different types of stress you learned about, answer the following questions.

REFLECT

- What type of stress could this be?
- What type of interventions would you describe to your charge nurse to offer the staff nurse in order to help her through the current shift?
- What long term goals could you set for the nurse and how would you go about this?

Authored by Elsie Crowninshield, RNP, DNP, CCRN, NE-BC and Adele Webb, Ph.D., RN, FNAP, FAAN

Support

If you are struggling with a concept or terminology in the course, you may contact **NurseLeaderSupport@capella.edu** for assistance.

If you are having technical issues, please contact **learningcoach@sophia.org**.