



ERASMUS+ KA220- YOU – Cooperation partnerships in youth.
“CURIE – Changes for youth education in relationship management with Emotional Intelligence” - 2023-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000160281

SKILL 1: STRESS MANAGEMENT:

Stress management has been identified as the first lowest rated basic skill of emotional intelligence among the young people surveyed. The theoretical framework for its practical application through learning nuggets is presented below.

1. Theoretical concept:

Stress is a concept that originated in Mechanical Physics and was introduced by Selye, Lazarus, Deese and Osler in 1946 in an article in the Psychological Bulletin of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Stress is considered the epidemic of the 21st century. Adapting to permanent social, economic, scientific and technological changes requires a great deal of human effort and resilience. Over time, stressful situations can lead to tension, fatigue, physical and mental exhaustion, as well as trigger psychosomatic responses or pathological disorders, which are often severe.

The OMS (2004) defines stress as a group of physical and emotional actions that prepares the individual to face a possible aggression; it is a procession that puts the body in a state of alert; it has been necessary as a survival system since the origins of mankind.

Everyday circumstances that activate this mechanism are job changes, public presentations, job interviews, moving house, all these situations, among others, can provoke stress.

Work-related stress, according to the European Commission on Safety and Health at Work, is defined as "the harmful physical and emotional reactions that occur when the demands of the job do not match the worker's abilities, resources or needs". The ILO (2016) has defined it as both the physical and cognitive response to a instability between the demands of the job, the tools the individual possesses and his or her ability to solve problems in the work environment.



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The work environment can cause stressful situations such as pressure to be efficient, the need to complete tasks quickly, frequent changes in job responsibilities and management styles that may contribute to employee stress. In fact, work-related stress is now considered a public health problem due to its negative impacts.

It is also conditioned by peer relationships, the work environment, the employee's family dynamics and his or her perception of his or her value within the work environment.

In this context, a new concept of action has arisen: occupational health, which seeks, in the organisational sphere, to promote knowledge that allows for the analysis of new ways of understanding the company's workers. This involves identifying possible risk factors, understanding how to deal with them and providing strategies and tools to help them manage events that could directly affect their health.

It is the co-responsibility of organisations to undertake a process of reorganisation of work tasks that promotes occupational health and thereby ensures the success of the enterprise. This includes adjusting work demands, ensuring that employees have or can acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively, and improving the quality of support employees receive.

1.1. Types of stress

In relation to the types of stress, following Carranco and Pando (2019), there are two:

- Eustress or positive stress is a state of mind in which thoughts, emotions and sensations are organised in a way that generates an overall feeling of joy, satisfaction and vitality. This type of stress stimulates people to deal with challenges in a positive way. It enables them to be creative, take initiatives and respond effectively to situations that require it. Eustress motivates people and gives them the energy to complete tasks without becoming over-stressed or detrimental. By managing stress in a way that constructive, it does not experience the tension



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associated with being overwhelmed by negative stress, which greatly benefits health.

PRACTICAL CASE:

- Imagine the feeling of excitement before you ride a roller coaster, spark of energy before you get on stage. Pride after a marathon or handing in a complicated job.
- A caffeine shot for the soul.

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- Distress or negative stress is defined as unwanted or unpleasant stress. This type of stress occurs when the perceived burden exceeds the resources available to cope with it.

PRACTICAL CASE:

- Imagine being in a car with the handbrake on, no matter how much you want to move forward, something is holding you back, a constant resistance.
- It is felt in situations such as: unpaid bills, approaching deadlines, accumulated family and couple conflicts.
- Causes sleep headaches, such as hypertension or heart disease
- RECOGNISING IT IS THE FIRST STEP TO MANAGING IT

It is always associated with a physiological imbalance, resulting in an increase in bodily functions that move away from the point of equilibrium. This can manifest as hyperactivity, muscle tension and somatisation.

In terms of the type of work-related stress, following Posada (2011) there are two:



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- **Episodic stress** is stress that arises momentarily and does not persist for long. It is a situation that is resolved once it is faced or solved, and all symptoms disappear once it is overcome. An example of this type of stress is when a person is fired from his or her job.
- **Chronic stress** is stress that occurs continuously and recurrently when a person is constantly confronted with a stressful situation. The symptoms of stress appear each time the stressful situation arises, and as long as the person does not deal with the problem effectively, the stress will persist.

1.2. Phases of stress. General Adaptation Syndrome

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XADIs-A1iIM>

ALARM REACTION

The stressor exceeds the threshold of acceptable tolerance, activating defence processes and alerting the body to possible harm. Physiological reactions such as increased heart rate may occur.

RESISTANCE

It is the body's defensive response that seeks to stabilise itself due to conflict with stressors. It increases alertness and improves physical response.

EXHAUSTION

When the stressful situation persists and stabilisation is not achieved, the adaptive or resilient capacity of the organism decreases, rendering the resistance attempt ineffective.

Source: own elaboration based on Hans Selye (1950).



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1.3. Causes of stress:

- Stressors that come from external circumstances such as the environment, family, work, study, among others.
- Stress produced by the person him/herself, i.e. by his/her own personality characteristics and by his/her particular way of coping with and solving problems.

2. Stress management strategies:

Relaxation techniques are the most common resources for stress management. These skills can be acquired through formal and informal practice techniques:

Formal techniques	Progressive muscle relaxation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7QoBABZu8k https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihO02wUzgkc	It is a technique that involves tensing and then relaxing different muscle groups in a systematic way. The process helps to reduce physical and mental tension, thus improving the overall relaxation of the body
	Breathing exercises https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vkYJf8DOsc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF_1ZiFta-E	These exercises focus on breathing conscious and controlled to reduce stress and promote relaxation. They include techniques such as abdominal breathing, diaphragmatic breathing and breathing deep.
	Visualisation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30VMIEmA114	It is a technique that involves imagining pleasant and relaxing mental images to calm the mind and reduce anxiety. It may include



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	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rxaesu11B4	visualising peaceful scenes, calm places or positive situations. to induce a state of relaxation.
	Mindfulness: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inpok4MKVLM How to meditate: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JslvBcIVtDg Yoga poses: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt1bsoOukjI	
	Relaxation through language https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDG0UeoiRmI	Technique that uses words, phrases or narratives to induce a state from relaxation and calmness in the individual.
Informal relaxing activities	Practising sports, listening to music, reading, dancing, encounters with nature, healthy eating, etc.	

Source: own elaboration

Here we suggest short videos with breathing techniques or other mindfulness techniques with before links. There may be the possibility of a camera to be used at the same time (as in tiktok where videos are recorded at the same time).

Deviggiano (2017) recommends other practices such as:

1. Recognise and accept things that cannot be changed.
2. Change perspective with a positive attitude towards challenges.
3. Learn ways to relax (deep breathing, meditation, yoga).
4. Connect with loved ones, let nothing get in the way of your social life, spend time with family and friends.
5. Learning to say no. Be assertive. Setting limits is fundamental to balance.

Hernández (2014) to intervene in the prevention and (or) reduction of professional burnout:

1. Individual coping: considering cognitive-behavioural strategies to mitigate its sources, avoid the associated experiences or neutralise its negative effects.



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2. Interpersonal: enhancing social skills training and strategies related to the social support of teams of professionals.
3. Organisational: eliminating or reducing stressors in the institutional environment.

Other tools:

Practical book: "Stress management and the vital hexagon" by Raul Puliti (2004) invites to regulate stress through six aspects: good nutrition, Hatha Yoga, positive thinking, meditation, friendships and recreation.

Hervat de Ortíz's (2016) Neuroeducational Hervat Programme, from a neuroscientific approach to stress management, indicates:

- Perform neuroplasticity activities through repetitive, regular and precise training to improve communication between neurons.
- Ensure adequate hydration and oxygenation of the brain through deep breathing.
- Performing short and engaging exercises to maintain concentration and focus.
- Spend one minute moving the eyes and another minute doing passive tactile discrimination exercises.

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