



the WOW factor

Unit Three Stressed Out



the WOW factor



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the WOW factor



Aim

In this unit, pupils explore what causes stress in the workplace and its impact. Pupils explore methods of dealing with workplace stress and learn how to prepare a stress management plan.



Unit Overview

Mapped to the Statutory Statements

Pupils should be enabled to:

- consider how employees and employers can maintain an effective working environment; and
- develop a personal career plan based on relevant information and guidance.

Learning Intentions

Pupils learn that:

- pressure is a part of life and work;
- excessive pressure can lead to stress;
- workplace stress is an increasing problem;
- stress is not necessarily harmful;
- it is important to have a good work/life balance; and
- stress management plans can reduce stress levels in the workplace.

Success Criteria

At the end of this unit, pupils will:

- understand the impact of workplace stress;
- be able to give examples of what causes stress in the workplace;
- know some of the symptoms of stress;
- know about some ways employers and employees can deal with stress;
- describe how to achieve a good work/life balance; and
- be able to implement a stress management plan.

Employability Skills Focus

This unit allows pupils to develop the skills that meet the statutory requirements of the revised curriculum at Key Stage 4. The focus within this unit is outlined in the table below:

Problem-Solving

(including thinking, decision-making and being creative)

- Interpret information through comparing and classifying.
- Analyse perspectives and synthesise information to meet the needs of a variety of workplace situations.

Key Questions

Throughout this unit, encourage pupils to consider the following questions:

- *What causes stress in the workplace?*
- *What are the symptoms of stress?*
- *Can I avoid stress?*
- *Are some jobs more stressful than others?*
- *How important is a work/life balance to me now and in the future?*

Opportunity
for Assessment
for Learning!
Sharing learning
intentions and
success criteria

Opportunity
for Assessment
for Learning!
Effective key
questions



Learning and Teaching Activities within this Unit

Theme 1

Stress in the Workplace

Pupils explore what causes stress in the workplace and consider if some jobs are more stressful than others.

Theme 2

Symptoms of Stress

Pupils examine both the physical and mental symptoms of stress.

Theme 3

Stressed Out UK

Pupils examine the impact of stress on the UK's workforce.

Theme 4

Dealing with Stress

Pupils investigate how employers and employees can deal with stress.

Theme 5

Work/Life Balance

Pupils examine the importance of a work/life balance and how this can be achieved at different stages of the life cycle.

Theme 6

Stress Management Plan

Pupils explore the importance of planning to manage stress. They also prepare a stress management plan.



Theme 1

Stress in the Workplace

Pupils explore what causes stress in the workplace and consider if some jobs are more stressful than others.

Opportunity
for Assessment
for Learning!
Effective key questioning

Support Materials for Activities

- *Stressful Job Cards* (Resource 1)

Activity 1

Potential link with Personal Development

Ask the class to define the term stress. Compare their definition with the dictionary definition:

'Mental or physical tension that results from physical or emotional causes.'

Invite pupils to identify and discuss the causes of stress at home or at school. Make a list of pupils' ideas about the causes of stress on the board/flip chart.

Activity 2

Organise the class into groups of three or four individuals. Explain to the groups that stress in the workplace accounts for around 13 million lost working days every year. Ask the groups to consider the following questions:

- What does this mean for a company with 10 employees?
- How would absenteeism affect a company of 10 employees?

Invite groups to present their answers to the rest of the class. Encourage the class to evaluate the different answers.

As a class, discuss the causes of workplace stress. Make a list of workplace stressors on a board or flip chart. Encourage pupils to think specifically about how an employee can cause stress in the workplace.

As a class, briefly discuss if self-employment would be stressful.

Activity 3

Divide the class into groups of four or five individuals. Give each group a set of the *Stressful Job Cards*. Ask the groups to rank the *Stressful Jobs Cards*, with the most stressful job placed first and the least stressful job placed at the end.

Invite each group to present its top three *Stressful Jobs Cards* to the rest of the class. Challenge them to justify their choices by asking questions such as:

- In what ways is your number two choice less stressful than your number one choice?
- Is that fact or opinion?
- Is that always the case?

Explain to the class that some research indicates that working in a library is the most stressful job in the UK. As a class, discuss why working in a library might be a stressful job. Invite the pupils to consider what additional information they would need to be able to evaluate whether working in a library is stressful and how they could source this information.

Inform pupils that every job has stressful features and that everyone deals with stress differently. When considering a career, it is important to investigate how stressful particular jobs are and measure this against how well you can cope with stress.

Activity 4 – Extension opportunity

Organise the class into pairs. Invite each pair to choose one *Stressful Job Card* and record what they know about the stressful features of that job. Provide time for the pupils to research their chosen jobs. Invite pupils to present their findings to the rest of the class.

Theme 2

Symptoms of Stress

Pupils examine both the physical and mental symptoms of stress and explore if stress can have a positive impact on an individual.

Support Materials for Activities

- *Workplace Stressor Cards (Resource 2)*
- *Sticky labels*

Activity 1

Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair some sticky labels. Ask the pairs to list the symptoms of stress onto sticky labels.

Ask each pair of pupils to join with another pair to form a group of four. Invite them to share and compare lists of stress symptoms. Ask the groups to consider how they might categorise their combined findings. Invite the groups to present their lists to the rest of the class. Record the symptoms of stress on the board or a flip chart.

Ask the pupils to think about a time when they suffered from one of the symptoms listed and consider if this was caused by stress. Explain to them that the symptoms of stress can be both mental and physical.

Activity 2

Explain to the pupils that stress can sometimes be useful and have positive effects. For example, stress can:

- create a sense of urgency;
- help create a sense of awareness;
- release positive adrenaline; and/or
- motivate a person to do a task.

Ask the pupils to suggest other examples of how stress can have a positive effect. Make a list of pupils' examples on the board or on flip chart paper.

Divide the class into groups of four or five individuals. Give each group a set of *Workplace Stressor Cards*. Ask the groups to think about each of the stressful workplace situations and identify how they would react to each situation in a positive manner. Invite the groups to role-play both a positive and a negative reaction to one of the stressful workplace situations.

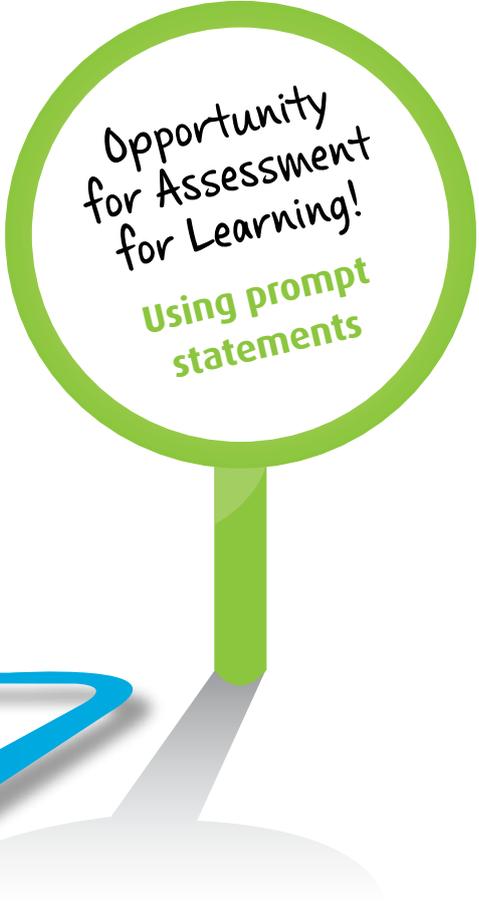
As a debrief, initiate a class discussion about the impact of positive and negative reactions to the different workplace scenarios.



Theme 3

Stressed Out UK

Pupils examine the impact of stress on the UK's workforce.



Opportunity
for Assessment
for Learning!
Using prompt
statements

Support Materials for Activities

- *Stressed Out UK Newspaper Article*
(Resource 3)

Activity 1

Divide the class into groups of five or six pupils. Ask the groups to allocate group roles including facilitator, recorder and reporter. Ask each group to imagine that they work for the UK Employer's Stress Forum.

Distribute a copy of the *Stressed Out UK Newspaper Article* to each group.

Ask the pupils to read the newspaper article individually. Alternatively, invite the facilitator from each group to read the article aloud to the other group members. Ask the recorders from each group to make a note of any key statistics and/or trends.

Invite the groups to consider the following questions in relation to the newspaper article:

- Why have the statistics/trends occurred?
- Could the current situation have been avoided?
- Do you foresee the situation getting worse?
- As employers, can you do anything to lower stress levels?

Ask each group to create a brochure or newspaper article to explain how their forum is going tackle the problem of stress.

Theme 4

Dealing with Stress

Pupils investigate how employers and employees can deal with stress.

Opportunity
for Assessment
for Learning!
Assessing own and
others' learning

Support Materials for Activities

- *Methods of Dealing with Stress Fact Sheet* (Resource 4)
- *Workplace Stress Case Study* (Resource 5)

Activity 1

Explain to the pupils that both employers and employees have a responsibility to deal with workplace stress. Ask pupils to suggest some ways employees might try to deal with stress. Make a list of the pupils' reasons on the board or a flip chart. Next, ask them to suggest some ways that employers might try to deal with workplace stress. Again, make a list of their answers on the board or flip chart.

Distribute a copy of the *Methods of Dealing with Stress Fact Sheet* to each pupil. As a class, read through the fact sheet and compare pupils' answers with those on the fact sheet. Invite them to ask questions about the different methods of dealing with stress, and explain anything they don't understand.

Activity 2

Next, divide the class into groups of three or four pupils. Distribute a copy of the *Workplace Stress Case Study* to each group. Ask groups to agree on:

- the four most effective ways that the employer can reduce stress in the workplace; and
- the four most effective ways the employee can reduce workplace stress.

Ask the groups to also rank their methods in order of the most effective first. Ask the groups to identify the least effective method and be able to explain why.

Invite the groups to present their findings to the rest of the class and to justify their decisions.



Theme 5

Work/Life Balance

Pupils examine the importance of a work/life balance and how this can be achieved at different stages of the life cycle.

Support Materials for Activity

- *Work/Life Balance Fact Sheet (Resource 6)*
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Magazines and newspapers

Activity 1

Ask pupils to consider the term *work/life balance*. Invite them to suggest a definition for the term. Explain to pupils that work/life balance is about employees having some control over when, where and how they work. A person with a good work/life balance is fulfilled in both their work life and private life.

As a class, discuss the benefits of achieving a good work/life balance. Make a list of these benefits on a board or flip chart. Distribute a copy of the *Work/Life Balance Fact Sheet* to each pupil. Read through the fact sheet and explain each of the methods of achieving a work/life balance. Make sure to explain any terms that the pupils are not familiar with, for example *compressed working hours*.

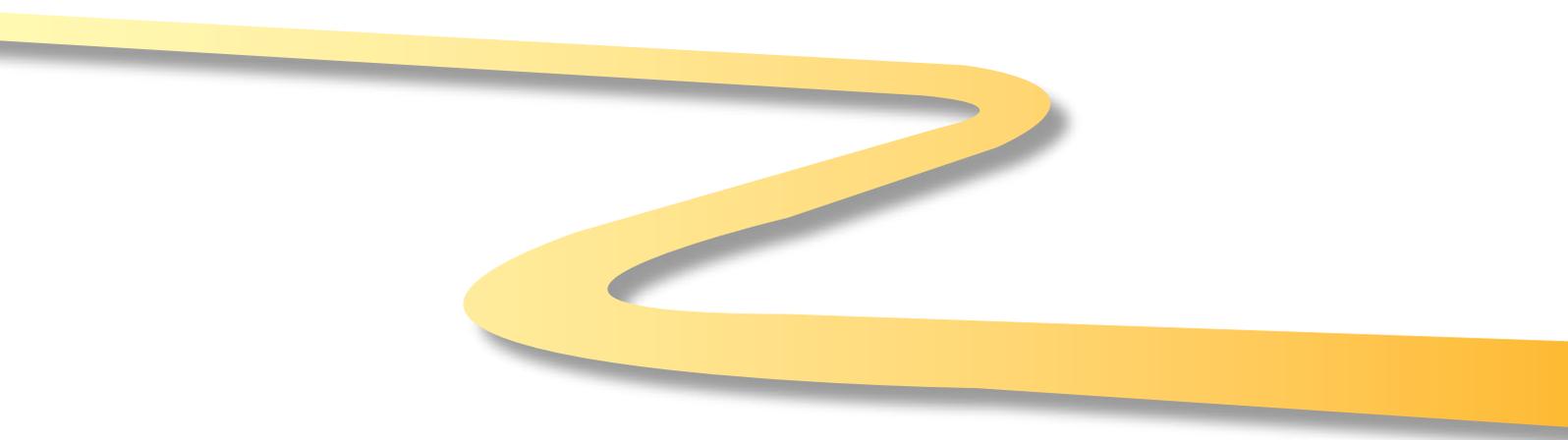
Activity 2

Remind pupils about the different stages of the life cycle listed below:

- Birth
- School
- College
- Job
- Marriage
- Family
- Retirement
- Death.

Divide the class into groups of four or five individuals. Ask the groups to illustrate the life cycle on a large sheet of paper. Next, ask groups to identify how a good work/life balance could be achieved at appropriate stages of the life cycle. Encourage the groups to use words and images from magazines and newspapers to illustrate good work/life balances at key stages of the life cycle. Remind pupils to use the *Work/Life Balance Fact Sheet* to help them complete this task.

Invite each group to present their work/life balance collage to the rest of the class.



Theme 6

Stress Management Plan

Pupils explore the importance of planning to manage stress. They also prepare a stress management plan.



Support Materials for Activities

- *Sample Stress Management Plan* (Resource 7)
- *Pupil Reflection Record* (Resource 8)

Activity 1

Explain to the pupils that more and more employers are encouraging their staff to prepare a stress management plan. Distribute a copy of the *Sample Stress Management Plan* to each pupil. Explain the *Sample Stress Management Plan*, recapping issues such as symptoms of stress and how to deal with stress.

As a class, discuss the benefits of stress management plans, for example:

- reduces stress levels; and/or
- helps individuals recognise their stressors and symptoms.

Organise the class into pairs. Ask them to identify a job or career they are considering for the future. Ask each pair to prepare a stress management plan for that job. When they have completed the task, ask the pupils to pair with another pupil and to share their stress management plan.

Extension opportunity – Activity 2 *Potential links with Personal Development*

Initiate a class discussion. Encourage the pupils to talk about the main causes of stress at exam time. Ask them to prepare their own stress management plan to help them cope with exams.

Organise the class into groups. Ask the groups to create a poster to raise awareness of how to avoid/cope with stress during exam time.

Activity 3

Distribute a copy of the *Pupil Reflection Record* to each pupil. Encourage them to read this and think about their learning to date. Ask the pupils to complete the *Pupil Reflection Record*. Invite them to take part in a group discussion to share their learning with each other.

It might be useful to record feedback from individual pupils in their Progress File.

Stressful Job Cards

Nurse

Doctor

Librarian

Teacher

Business Consultant

Bank Manager

Police Officer

Bar Manager

Fire Officer

Social Worker

Prison Officer

Ambulance Worker

Chef

Self-Employed Person

Actor/Actress

Manager

Workplace Stressor Cards

Your boss is giving you unrealistic deadlines for jobs.

You have problems with time keeping and your boss is not happy.

Your company is in trouble financially. You have heard a rumour that you will be facing redundancy.

You are unemployed and finding it hard to get a job.

A new boss is starting at the company next week. You don't know what to expect.

The job you do is very repetitive.

You have just been promoted.

You are facing retirement next year.

The company you work for has been taken over.

You have a poor relationship with your colleagues.

Your boss is unsupportive.

There is a lack of communication in your workplace.

You work really hard but don't think anyone notices your efforts.

You have to get permission for everything and you have a lack of control in your work.

You feel that you have too much to do.

You feel that you have too little to do.

Stressed Out UK Newspaper Article

Research on workplace stress reveals that the negative effects of stress are fast becoming one of the most critical factors affecting the UK workforce.

Some of the key findings of that research are listed below:

- As many as 13 million working days are lost in the UK as a result of stress.
- Approximately half a million people in the UK experience work-related stress at a level they believe is making them ill.
- Up to 5 million people in the UK feel very or extremely stressed by their work.
- Work-related stress costs society about £3.8 billion every year.
- Work-related stress is a leading cause of absence in the workplace.

Employers cannot afford to ignore workplace stress. The impact of stress can result in lower levels of productivity, increased management

pressures, lost profits and absenteeism. Many also believe that stress is the biggest threat to the future health of the UK workforce.

Managing workplace stress is a growing challenge. Whilst some employers are addressing workplace stress, many employers still do not take it seriously. According to reports, stress amongst UK employees is still on the rise and is not being addressed effectively.

A recent work study report found that approximately a third of UK employees believe their managers lack good people management skills and one in five employees believe the cause of their stress is down to lack of support. Almost a third of stressed employees blame the demands of their jobs.

It is clear that there are financial, health and ethical reasons for organisations to reduce and manage stress at work. The future of our economy and our workforce depends on it.

Methods of Dealing With Stress Fact Sheet

Dealing with stress – Employees

- Use health therapies such as homeopathy, aromatherapy, reflexology and/or acupuncture.
- Use relaxing breathing techniques.
- Join a yoga class.
- Practise relaxing meditation.
- Accept offers of practical help.
- Prioritise your workload.
- Prepare a to-do list.
- Practise good time management.
- Don't expect too much of yourself.
- Talk to someone.
- Exercise and keep fit.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Take all the breaks and holidays you're entitled to.
- Use flexible working hours, if available.
- Talk to someone you trust about the things that are upsetting you.
- Talk to your doctor.
- Develop good working relationships with work colleagues and employer(s).
- Have a stress management plan.
- Take regular breaks at work.
- Get enough sleep.

Dealing with stress – Employer

- Provide appropriate breaks or rest periods.
- Give employees adequate and achievable work tasks/load.
- Encourage good teamwork.
- Encourage positive employee relations.
- Make the work environment comfortable and suited to the needs of employees.
- Introduce company policies on harassment, bullying and racism to protect workers.
- Adhere to all health and safety laws.
- If appropriate, provide flexible working conditions/hours.
- Ensure employees avail of the leave they are entitled to, for example paternity leave.
- Provide appropriate pay levels.
- If possible, provide health therapy sessions such as reflexology.
- Develop a stress management plan for employees.
- Encourage employees to develop new skills.
- Give employees regular and helpful appraisals/feedback.
- Hold staff meetings.
- Encourage good communication at all levels in the organisation.

Workplace Stress Case Study

Stress in the workplace

I have been working as a machine operator for a small window manufacturing company for the past 10 years. Recently, I have begun to feel quite stressed at work and at home. I feel this is as a result of changes at work and being a dad for the first time.

When I first joined the company, it was family owned. Last year it was sold to its new owners, Paul Owens and Jim Brady. In the last year, the new owners increased my workload by 20 percent. In the past, I was quite happy to work at my own pace. Now I have to reach set targets and the bosses are constantly supervising my work.

A new quality system means that my work is checked and rechecked. It feels like the new owners do not trust my work. In all the years I have worked for the company, not one window manufactured by me was returned with a fault.

Last month a new clocking-in system was introduced. I now have to punch my work card when I arrive and when I go home. I have to leave baby Alice to the child minders every morning. It is really difficult to get to work on time due to traffic. If I am 10 minutes late I work an extra 10 minutes in the evening. However, last week I was reprimanded for my time keeping.

The new bosses have put new policies in place, for example a harassment and bullying policy. They say it is to keep them in line with the law. There has never been a problem with bullying in our workplace. Everyone gets on well as a team and helps each other. The only problem we seem to have at the moment is workers taking breaks to have a cigarette. John left the workshop 10 times yesterday to have a cigarette. I counted up that I worked for approximately 40 minutes more than John because I don't smoke. This does not seem to bother the owners as they are both smokers.

I think I am beginning to feel the effects of stress. I am finding it difficult to get to sleep. I worry constantly about the quality of my work and my job security. I find myself becoming more irritable at work, and I leave work most days with a headache. I find it hard to cope with the demands of being a new dad and being stressed at work, but I don't see that there is much I can do to change the situation.

Work/Life Balance Fact Sheet

What is a work/life balance?

Work/life balance is the amount of time spent working versus the time spent at home or taking part in hobbies.

Methods of achieving a good work/life balance

Annualised hours:	Working hours are expressed as the total number of hours to be worked per year – allowing flexible working patterns throughout the year
Career break:	A break from employment, with the individual returning to work after an agreed period of time
Sabbatical:	A period of unpaid leave for rest, study or travel
Compressed/consolidated working hours/week:	Contracted full-time hours are worked over four days instead of five days
Complementary therapies:	The employer offers therapies such as reflexology at a reduced cost to employees
Flexible leave provisions:	Jobs that offer career breaks, domestic leave and study leave
Telecommuting/teleworking:	Using technology to work from home
Flexible working hours:	Flexible starting and finishing times
Emergency leave:	Leave from work to deal with family emergencies
Job-sharing:	Two or more employees share a job
Part-time working:	Working fewer hours than the normal number of full-time hours

Work/Life Balance Fact Sheet (continued)

Phased retirement:	Reducing work hours/responsibilities in later life
Temping:	Working as a temporary worker
Casual work:	Taking on casual work when it suits your circumstances
Term-time working:	Working during the school term only
Unpaid leave:	Absence from work for an agreed period of time
Time in lieu:	Time off from work to compensate for hours worked in addition to contracted hours
Shift working:	The working day is split into shifts
Self-managed working:	Employees manage their own working pattern and hours to deliver agreed targets
Home working:	The employee works from home either all or part of the working week
On-site childcare facilities:	The employer has a nursery or crèche at the place of employment for the children of staff
Employee assistance programmes:	Organisations that offer counselling, concierge services and information on everything from finding schools to help with bereavement
Maternity and parental leave:	Leave that parents or adoptive parents can take by law
Holiday purchase scheme	A scheme that enables employees to buy additional holidays on top of their annual leave
Private healthcare benefits:	An employer buys in healthcare services from a private healthcare firm to enable employees to receive free or reduced cost healthcare
Company fitness programme:	An employer provides staff with access to a gym or health club

Sample Stress Management Plan

STRESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Name _____ Date _____

Role/job _____ Employer _____

Current stressors in school and/or at home

My stress symptoms

Stress action plan

Action	How	When	Cost

Pupil Reflection Record

Stress is a feature of life and not necessarily a bad thing. Most of us are motivated by a challenge. However, when the pressure becomes too much, we risk becoming stressed and we cannot work as well we might be able to.

In what ways do you feel you may be at risk from stress?

How have you planned to do the best you can but avoid becoming stressed?

Describe the career planning activities you have taken part in during this unit.
(Examples might include reading, watching videos, carrying out research, giving presentations and/or learning from others.)

List one or two areas of work you want to learn more about or gain exposure to.

Signed: _____

Teacher: _____

Parent: _____

Useful Websites

To access the most up-to-date support materials for Education for Employability, log on to **www.ccea.org.uk/employability**

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