

STAFF GUIDE

Identify your work stressors

If you feel your work is causing you to feel overwhelmed and stressed, it can be difficult to pinpoint the factors which make you feel this way. In a fast-paced work environment, it can be easy to be caught up in the momentum of the activity. Pausing to reflect can help you avoid developing behaviours which can have a negative impact in the long term.

STAFF GUIDANCE

A self-directed tool has been devised to help you, based on the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Workplace Stress. Six areas have been identified to contribute to stress at work demand, control, support, role, relationships and change. There may also be contributing factors, which are not included under these headings.

By informing yourself about the specific contributory factors, you can begin to plan a way forward and make some small changes to help you manage these demands. Additionally, you can use this tool to help you prepare for a discussion with your line manager. Think beyond your reaction to being stressed and try to understand the contributory factors. Information has been prepared to assist your line manager to understand what support you may need.

This process may result in you identifying issues which you will need support to effect change, if you consider that these are having a serious impact on how you are working, your line manager will usually be best positioned to assist. However, you may also benefit from contacting Confidential Care, a Human Resources Advisor or the Imperial College Coaching Academy for advice.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Allow yourself time and space to think. It is ok to use the tool as a guide — and make notes as you read through it, which ever approach you are most comfortable with.

Read through the form, selecting any point you think is relevant to you and in the free text area at the end of each section document how those issues are affecting you. If you are able, give an indication of how important this issue is for you. If you have ideas on how some of these issues may be resolved you should also make a note of them, this may be helpful for you to reflect on later as well as help to keep you focused if you wish to discuss them with your line manager.

When complete, you should try to categorise what you can do to help yourself and what you will need support with, then when you are ready you should request a meeting with your manager/supervisor to discuss your concerns.

DEMAND

includes such things as your workload, working patterns and your work environment

Select each statement which you consider applies to you

WORKLOAD / JOB DESIGN

- I have difficulty getting through my workload in the time available.
- I have difficulty in meeting deadlines.
- I have competing deadlines which makes it difficult to prioritise.
- I have to work long hours to get through my work.
- I report to / undertake work for more than one person.

COMMUNICATION

- There is constant communication when I am 'off-duty' by e-mail, text and phone.
- I feel that I am expected to monitor my email whilst not at work – in the evening, at weekends and when on holiday.
- I prefer to keep in contact with work on days off and when I am on holiday.

SKILLS, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- I don't feel I have the necessary skills for the work I am expected to do.

REST

- I work long hours – starting early and finishing late.
- I feel that there is no time to take breaks and holiday.
- I worry about not being able to cope with my back log when I return from holiday.
- I feel it is important to be seen to work long hours.

WORKPLACE HAZARDS AND ENVIRONMENT

- I have an unpleasant work environment.
- I am concerned about my unsafe work environment.
- I am concerned about unsafe behaviours in my work area.

INSUFFICIENT CHALLENGE

- I do not have enough work to do.
- I do not consider my work challenging.

Record your thoughts on demand, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you:

CONTROL

The amount of influence you feel you have over how you do your work. Select each statement which you consider applies to you

- I have rigid work routines or rotas.
- I have limited opportunity to organise my work in a way which suits me.

Record your thoughts on Control, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

SUPPORT

The resources, support and encouragement provided by your manager, your colleagues and by College to help you manage your job

- I have rigid work routines or rotas.
- I have limited opportunity to organise my work in a way which suits me.
- I do not feel able to talk to my manager if I have a problem with my work.
- I do not feel able to ask colleagues for help if needed.
- I do not have sufficient opportunity to attend training or take up development opportunities.

Record your thoughts on support, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

ROLE

Understanding the purpose of your job and being clear about your responsibilities

- I am not clear about the purpose of my job.
- I am not clear about what is expected of me either some or most of the time.
- I feel I have conflicting roles.

Record your thoughts on role, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

RELATIONSHIPS

How people work together, respect and behaviour

- Relationships with colleagues or my manager are strained.
- I think I am being harassed or bullied by a colleague.
- I feel I am treated unfairly or with a lack of respect.
- I feel my skills and knowledge are not appreciated.

Record your thoughts on relationship, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

CHANGE

Do you feel appropriately informed about changes at work that may affect you and how you are consulted when changes to your job are being considered

- I have not been informed of significant changes to my work until they were introduced.
- I have not been given an opportunity to comment on changes to my job.
- I feel uncertain over the effects of a change to my job.
- I am concerned about my job security.

Record your thoughts on how change to your role, or to the work of your team, may be affecting you.

OTHER ASPECTS

Are there any other aspects of your work that you have found stressful?

NEXT STEPS

You should now have a better understanding of the issues which may be contributing to your experience of workplace stress. You may now wish to prioritise the areas you wish to discuss with your manager and those which you might have some control over. It is important to note that your manager has responsibility for managing you and your work, if you choose not to inform them there is very little they can do to assist you.

Before you proceed it will also be important to consider what aspects of your life away from work could be contributing to this feeling. Family circumstances, health or financial worries may be very stressful.

If you are struggling to cope, this may affect how you respond to workplace stressors and visa- versa. It is up to you how much you share with your manager, but understanding its potential impact will be important for you to develop coping strategies, an action plan or to help you improve your resilience.

As a starting point take some small steps to improve your wellbeing — think about the three key areas: exercise, diet and sleep.

You may wish to self-refer to Occupational Health for advice.

If you are worried about discussing the points you have highlighted with your manager you can call Confidential Care for advice on preparation, if you feel unable to speak to your manager contact Human Resources for advice.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR STAFF AT IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON

Confidential Care

0800 085 4764 assist@cic-eap.co.uk well-online.co.uk

Human Resources

imperial.ac.uk/human-resources

Occupational Health

imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health

Equality and Diversity

imperial.ac.uk/equality

Self-help information

selfhelpguides.ntw.nhs.uk/imperial

Mental Health First Aiders

imperial.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/mental-health-first-aid

Staff supporters

imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/working-at-imperial/supporters

Harassment support contacts

imperial.ac.uk/equality/support-for-staff/harassment/