

## Upcoming Online Seminars

6/1/22 – Compassion Fatigue

7/1/22 – Cultural Diversity and Mental Health

8/1/22 – Preparing Kids for School

To watch these online seminars, log in to your program's web or mobile platform and click on the 'Monthly Feature' tile or use the 'What's on Your Mind?' search tool.

Today's world is one in which constant busyness and the stress associated with it is often synonymous with productivity. Working overtime to finish a project is seen as a sign of a dedicated employee. However, too much stress can backfire and can cause higher rates of employee absenteeism, more workplace conflicts and poor performance.

Did you know that supervisor support is one of the biggest factors in reducing employee stress levels? Understanding why your employees might be experiencing stress and helping them manage can foster a more positive work environment as well as make your job, and theirs, a little bit easier.

**Recognize the signs.** Early identification of the signs and symptoms of stress is the first step towards managing workplace stress levels and preventing stress's more serious cousin: burnout. Signs that your employees might be struggling include missing work, deterioration in work performance, increased irritability and poor physical health. Be aware of how employees react to new projects or changes in workload, and remember

that a simple check-in with your team can help them feel more comfortable reaching out for help.

**Set clear and realistic expectations.**

When employees have too many responsibilities, not enough time and a lot of pressure to get the job done quickly, this can be a recipe for stress. Having a clear project plan that prioritizes which tasks are most important and sets reasonable deadlines can help your team accomplish more. Have one-on-one discussions with employees about what obstacles they might have completing tasks and where you can practice flexibility to mitigate challenges. For example, if employees are always working overtime, it might be time to consider removing or re-prioritizing tasks.

**Encourage autonomy.** Fostering a sense of autonomy, or self-government, amongst employees will not only reduce stress levels, but also improve their work performance. Empowered employees are more engaged, productive and loyal. Supervisors can create a sense of control for their employees by granting them a meaningful role in decision-making,

taking their input seriously and allowing them to exercise creativity and independent judgment.

**Foster an environment of support and trust.** The best supervisors are also coaches, leaders and role models for their team. Stress levels are often higher when a team doesn't trust and get along with one another. Make sure you have time during the workday for your team to relax, recharge and refocus. Celebrating individual and team successes, confronting harassment, encouraging work-life balance and directing employees to helpful resources like their employee assistance program are all ways in which supervisors can create an atmosphere of openness and positivity. By creating a positive work environment and offering support, you're more likely to have happy, healthy and productive employees.

While some job stress is inevitable, using some of these stress management techniques can keep stress from turning into burnout while improving the overall performance and wellbeing of your team.

## Self-Care for Effective Leaders

As a manager, it may seem like the most successful leaders work 24/7. However, everyone needs downtime to recharge and approach everyday pressures and responsibilities more successfully. Even if your time away from work is minimal, making the most of it can boost your energy levels and reduce stress. Try to incorporate some of the following self-care techniques into your day to improve your mental health and wellbeing.

- **Leave work at work.** For busy leaders, it can be difficult to find a healthy work-life balance, but your hobbies, family and friends are important for your overall happiness. Having clear boundaries between work and home can help you be better off in both.
- **Schedule relaxation time.** It may feel like you don't have time to relax, but taking even a few minutes each day to unwind can help you be more productive when you return to your responsibilities. Try adding breathing exercises or taking a walk in between tasks to clear your mind.
- **Surround yourself with good people.** Having a strong support network is the foundation of self-care. Spend time with those who lift you up and avoid those who drain your energy.
- **Practice self-compassion.** Effective leaders are also compassionate ones, and this also means being compassionate to yourself. It can be tempting to criticize yourself for mistakes, but showing yourself kindness can help negative feelings fade and bring you a greater sense of self-worth.
- **Take care of your health.** When you feel drained by demanding workloads and stressful projects, it can be difficult to care for basic needs such as sleep, diet and exercise. However, you need a healthy foundation in order to do your best work. Caring for your physical health can help reduce stress as well as improve your resiliency and focus.

Your mental health is integral to having a successful career. When you take care of yourself, you can better help others and set a good example for your team. Ask yourself if you're doing enough self-care and how you can schedule time, even if it's a few minutes.