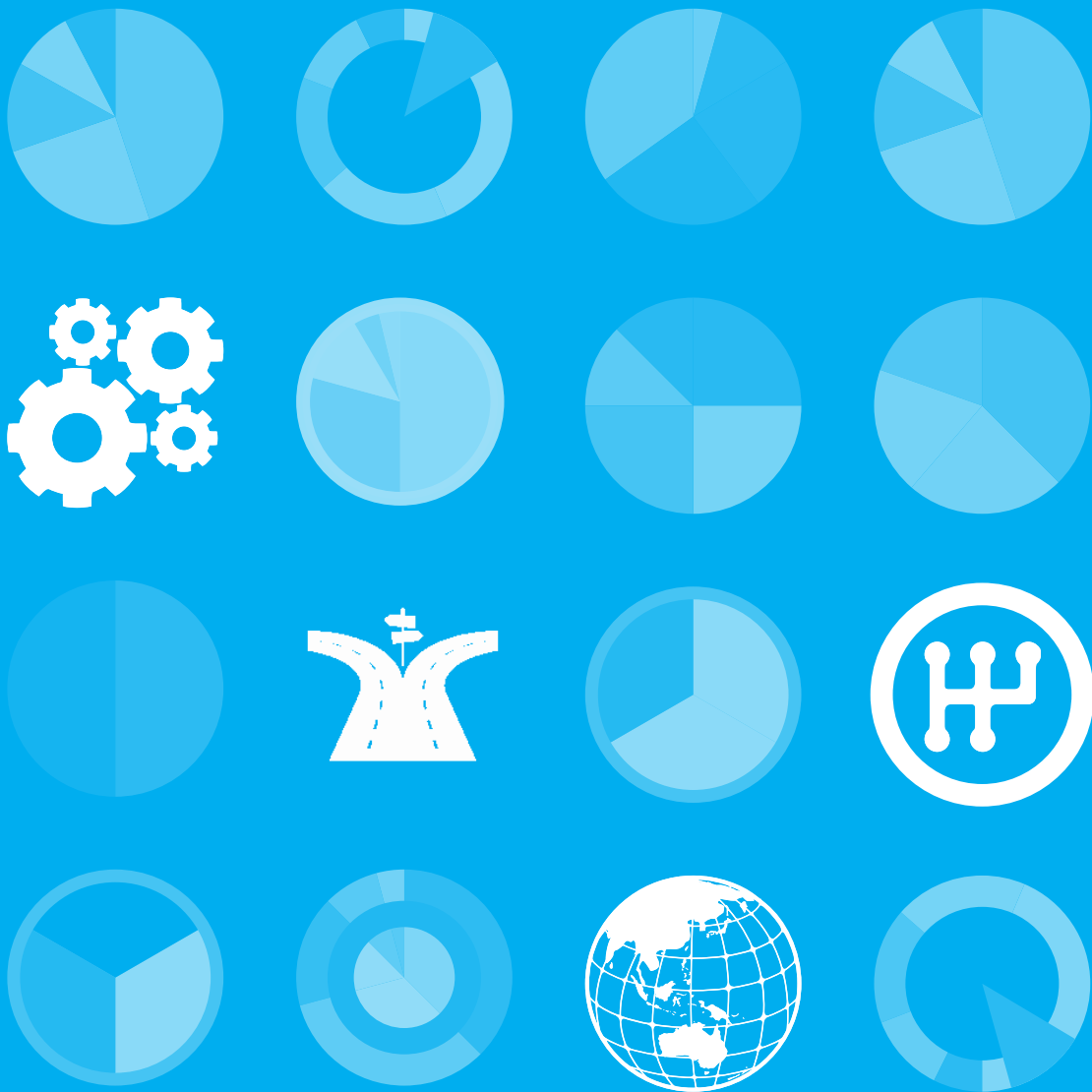


# Minimising Stress

How can managers assist in times of uncertainty like COVID-19?



# Typical sources of stress



## PHYSICAL



Headaches or Backaches  
Sweating  
Muscle stiffness or tension  
Diarrhoea or constipation  
Nausea, dizziness  
Insomnia  
Chest pain, Rapid heartbeat  
Tremors  
Weight gain/loss  
Skin problems  
Loss of libido  
Frequent colds

## EMOTIONAL



Moodiness  
Agitation  
Restlessness  
Short temper  
Irritability/impatience  
Inability to relax  
Feeling tense  
Feeling overwhelmed  
Loneliness & isolation  
Unhappiness  
Depression

## COGNITIVE



Memory problems  
Indecisiveness  
Inability to concentrate  
Muddy thinking  
Poor judgement  
Negative perspective  
Anxious or racing thoughts  
Constant worrying  
Loss of objectivity  
Fearful anticipation

## BEHAVIOURAL




Eating more or less  
Sleeping more or less  
Isolating yourself  
Procrastination  
Neglecting responsibilities  
Self-medication  
Nervous habits  
Teeth grinding, jaw clenching  
Overdoing exercise  
Over reacting to surprises  
Picking fights

**Any of these symptoms is debilitating at worst and obstructive and discouraging at best.**

## **STRESS IS AN INSIDIOUS NEGATIVE FORCE THAT COMES IN MANY FORMS**

**It manifests itself as physical symptoms such as lack of sleep and eating disorders, mental symptoms such as confusion, anxiety and anger and a whole array of symptoms which are combinations of these.**

## Typical sources of stress

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- Domestic disharmony, isolation
  - Teenagers
  - Ill health in the family
  - Managing a building activity such as renovation or a new house
  - Financial insecurity triggered by many different causes, not the least, insecure employment and income
  - Work role dangers, poor OH&S or inherently dangerous roles
  - Workplace culture fit, if the culture and ethics are not a good fit with yours, then you feel compromised and unable to provide full commitment to your role

Stress is additive; making it even more dangerous and difficult to deal with.

It is not unusual for a person to be suffering stress in their lives from one or more sources.

Under these circumstances, the total stress is very high.

Add a stress spike from an unusual or irregular event such as illness, accident or teenagers or pets and suddenly the stress level can peak at crisis point.

## What can I do to minimise stress?

**The first action is to admit you are under stress, possibly by using the symptoms guide as starting point and then seeking to rectify the situation through a combination of self-awareness and appropriate professional help.**

Suitable responses can include professional intervention using, on a private basis; GP, EAP, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Psychiatrist or similar skilled individuals.

## THE EMPLOYER ORGANISATION CAN ALSO MINIMISE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYEES' STRESS LEVELS

### THEIR ACTIONS FALL BROADLY INTO THREE CATEGORIES:

- **Board of Directors**

Ensure there is clarity and focus on the organisation's Culture and Ethics and a clear, admirable Corporate purpose.

- **Human Resources & Safety**

HR & Safety is best placed to instigate and evangelise on improvements to the workplace environment. HR and Safety can monitor and enhance awareness of inherent risks in each type of role.

HR & Safety can promote and enforce mitigating HR & Safety policies to minimise inherent risk and remove unnecessary corporate processes which enhance the stressors.



**A recent example is implementing continuous performance review processes instead of the annual charade and 360 assessments.**

- **Managers**

Managerial levels carry a heavy responsibility in the task. Each functional manager should ensure that each of their employees is in a compatible role and position with respect to their:

- **Values** the employee's values must match those required by the role and the Board of Directors.
- **Role** the tasks and operational style required must suit the employee's personality otherwise they will be operating under extreme stress to the detriment of the employee and the function and the organisation.
- **Personality** of each employee must be compatible with the style and personal interaction habits of the others in the team and the supervisor. Mismatch results in lack of respect in all directions, disharmony and destruction of self- confidence.



## Three aspects that must be aligned to our needs for us to thrive

**The Covid-19 pandemic is forcing a rapid and radical change to the management of employees. While many are adapting in the short term, the new remote configuration is here to stay as it has many benefits, enabled by IT capabilities and an independent mindset of employees. Managers now need to judge performance on output quality and timeliness, not the hours worked or the sycophantic abilities of their employees.**

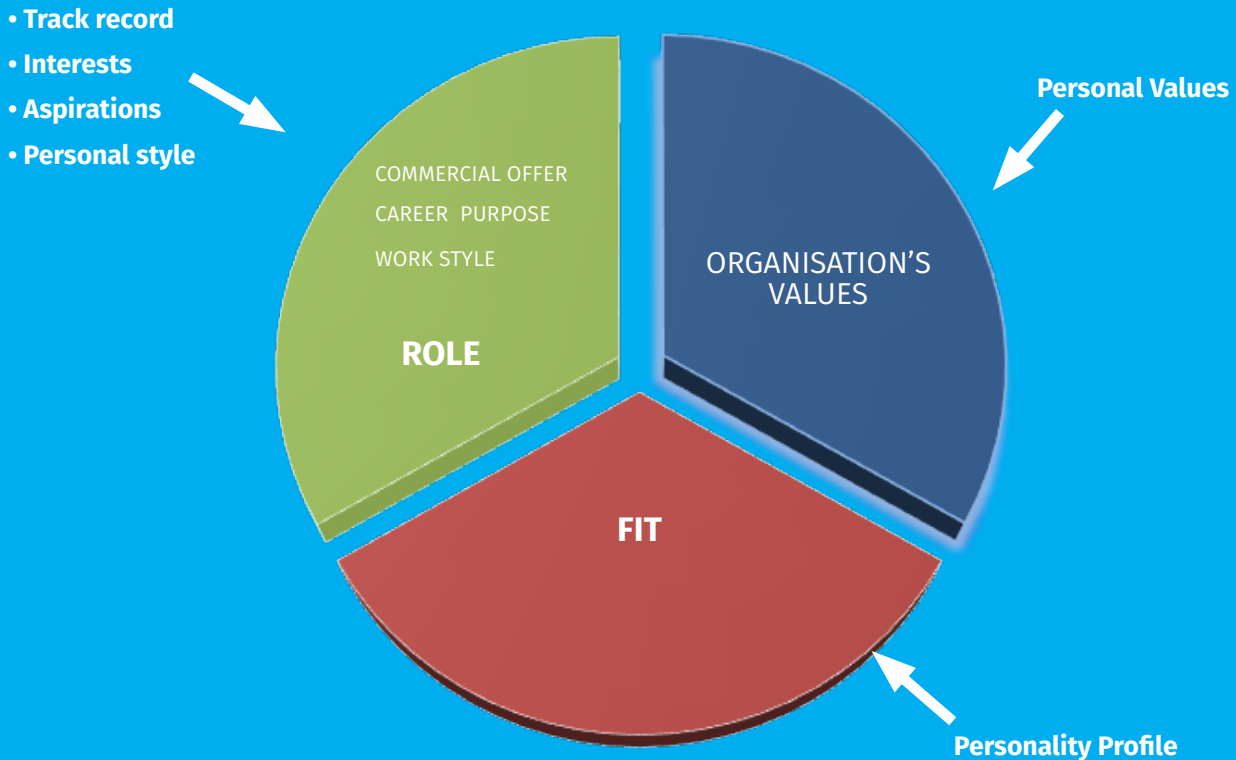
What were previously appropriate roles and position descriptions could be becoming inappropriate roles and performance requirements, these will set up new stresses as they highlight deficiencies in people selection and selection criteria. Redesigning roles based on new and different criteria will be essential to selecting the right people to work as a team.

**An employee's dysfunction usually stems from one or more of the following being out of alignment**

- 1. Values**
- 2. Role**
- 3. Personality Fit**

**When creating a role description, ensuring you have an insight into these characteristics of the leader and the candidates will enable a match up to create an effective, cohesive and productive workgroup.**

## THREE ASPECTS THAT MUST BE ALIGNED TO OUR NEEDS FOR US TO THRIVE



### This means that we need clarity about:

- who we are and our most suitable work environment,
- what we enjoy and are good at,
- what we have to offer to prospective employers or clients.

### Our values


Our values must match those demonstrated by the dominant party.

### The role

- our track record indicates whether we can perform the role.
- our career stage and aspirations dictate the personal purpose of the role.
- our personality dictates the style and key focus of the role.

### Our fit with the team

**If we are clear on these issues, we can select roles and work environments that suit us personally; our particular skills, interests and attributes.**



**We need to know what we need in our environment so that we can thrive**

**our personality and style cannot change significantly; we need to know what we need in our environment so that we can thrive.**

By knowing what we need, we can ensure we accept roles that suit us and hence we will be successful.

For example, if you like working in an environment that has few surprises, then don't join an organisation that is poorly organised.

If you like to work with a boss who respects you, don't get involved with a micro manager style of supervisor.

**If you know who you are, others will know who you are.**  
Opportunities to thrive will then appear.