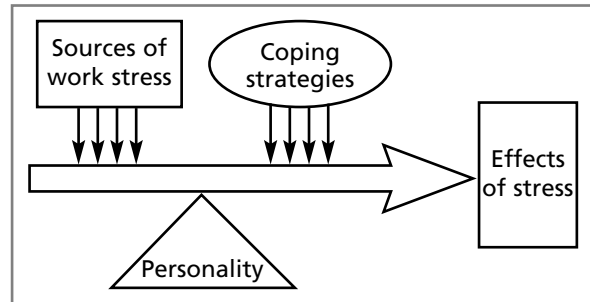


- 1 Work stress is the single most important source of stress throughout the developed world. In one recent study of over 3,000 people 17 per cent of the sample said that they had experienced 'unpleasant emotional strain for at least half of the previous day'. In another study it is suggested that 60 per cent of absences from work are caused by stress-related disorders – the equivalent of 2–3 per cent of gross national product.
- 2 With the introduction of high speed information technology and communication, combined with increased global competitiveness, rising expectations, loss of job security and reduced staff levels, experts suggest that workers have experienced significantly increased job stress over recent years.
- 3 One study showed that a certain type of person could cope with high levels of stress but have low levels of illness. This type of person, labelled as stress resistant personality, had three characteristics all beginning with 'C'. These included, a sense of *control* or purpose or direction in their life; a sense of *commitment* to work, hobbies, social life and family, and a sense of *challenge* – seeing changes in life as normal and positive rather than as a threat.
- 4 There are three main ways of dealing with work stress, which correspond to the sections in the following Work Stress Questionnaire. First, identify the sources of stress in your job and try to make appropriate changes – often people are not exactly sure of what the problems are but just feel demoralised, stressed or fed-up. Second, examine your strategies for coping with stress and see if they can be improved. Third, identify your symptoms of stress and attempt to manage them better.

A model of work stress



Relevant factors involved in stress

Sources of work stress

- Quantity/quality of work
- Role issues
- Level of responsibility/authority
- Social/relationships
- Job satisfaction
- Organisational issues
- Domestic effects

Coping strategies

- Assertiveness
- Social support
- Self-organisation
- Rationality
- Hobbies/leisure
- Self-care
- Maladaptive

Effects of stress on the individual

- Mental
- Physical
- Emotional
- Behavioural

Ten unhelpful coping strategies

- 1 Bottle up feelings.
- 2 Work longer hours.
- 3 Don't delegate.
- 4 Don't say no.
- 5 Take work home.
- 6 Be a perfectionist.
- 7 Procrastinate and avoid.
- 8 Don't take breaks.
- 9 Don't talk about it.
- 10 Squeeze out hobbies.