Managing Individual and Organizational Stress: a Pragmatic Approach

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This paper introduces a simple model of organizational stress which can be used to educate or inform employees, managers and health professionals about the relationship between work related stress factors; environmental, individual, group and organizational, and the negative outcomes of stress; and thus proposes a pragmatic approach to stress prevention and management. The paper draws together evidence from literature to the pragmatic approach underlying the effective management of stress/work-based problems. It moves away from the traditional and sometimes vague concept of stress and stress management, to propose pragmatic problem solving approaches/ techniques which employees’ and managers may adopt, combine and apply in a practical way to cope with stress. Thereby facilitating a systematic and better understanding of workplace issues.

Key words: Individual stress, Organizational Stress, Stressors, Pragmatic Management of Stress.

INTRODUCTION

The experience of work and life stress is certainly not new. Our cave dwelling ancestors faced stress every time they left their caves and encountered their enemy, the saber toothed tigers and lions (DeFrank and Ivancevich,1998 : 55-56). The tigers and lions of yesteryear are gone but they have been replaced by other predators- work overload, a nagging boss, computer problems, time deadlines, downsizing, mergers and acquisitions, poorly designed jobs, marital disharmony, financial crimes and accelerating rates of change. These work and non-work predators interact and create stress for individuals both on and off the job. Thus, much of the stress experienced by people in our developing society originates in organizations; and much of the stress that originates elsewhere affects our behavior and performance in these same organizations.

In view of this, it has long been a common opinion that prolonged strain resulting from individual job related stress can make individuals sick. Medical researchers have collected some evidence that job related stress can be and is a contributor to chronic illnesses such as heart
disease and peptic ulcers (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1982:144). Managers being bombarded by stress producing job demands, and non managers being prodded by restrictive managers, may eventually become statistics in reports on coronary heart disease or other illnesses. Employers should therefore provide a stress free work environment, recognize where stress is becoming a problem for staff, and take action to reduce stress. Stress in the work place reduces productivity, increases management pressures and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing. So, there are clearly strong economic and financial reasons for organizations to manage and reduce stress at work, aside from the obvious humanitarian and ethical considerations.

However, there is a great deal of confusion about what stress is and how individuals deal with it. We hear a great deal about the dangers of TABP. TABP is an acronym for type A behavior pattern on stress. Individuals/employees who fit the TABP classification resembles a “drummer” who requires winning at all costs. The type A style employee is to wade in, do the job, enjoy the taste of success, and move on to the next challenge; so they are prone to stress. Thus, individual differences must be considered when discussing stress and how people react to it. In this regard, there is some concern over the practice of classifying individuals. Hans (1978:63), a leading medical authority on stress, believes that all the stress inventories used to classify respondents are flawed because they fail to give enough weight to individual differences. He is of the view that each individual is really the best judge of his/her stress threshold. Instead of using an inventory to detect stress tolerance or conditions, each person should be the judge. Stress awareness is the best way to deal with stress conditions. The type A may know without doubt that he/she is a hardcharger, competitive, and a perfectionist. This person may also know how healthy he/she feels physically and psychologically. There are just some individuals who need stress, long hours, and a lot of work pressure. Instead of stating that TABP is bad, it is more accurate to state that some people are not suited to be Type As.

Nevertheless, during the 1990s, the Health and safety Executive (HSE) in the United States coupled with the Federal Ministry of Health in Nigeria published a number of documents which provided information for health and safety practitioners and employers on stress, stress research and stress prevention and management (Cox, 2000). However the guidance for employers lacked a structured pragmatic approach for work related stress prevention and management programmes although the publications highlighted many possible techniques/strategies, such as staff training and improving communications (Joshi, 2007). It is therefore against this background that this paper explores managing individual and organizational stress using a pragmatic approach.

**THE NATURE OF STRESS**

Stress is a reaction to any change that requires you to adapt or respond. Stress means different things to different people. From a layman’s perspective, stress can be described as feeling tense, anxious, or worried. Scientifically, these feelings are all manifestations of the stress experience, a complex programmed response to perceived threat that can have positive and negative results. Thus, in an uncomplicated way it is best to consider stress as something that involves the interaction of the individual with the environment (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1980:6).
In this regard, stress can be defined as either a stimulus or a response. A stimulus definition treats stress as some characteristics or event that may result in a disruptive consequence. In this respect, stress refers to the external force or stimulus acting upon the individual that results in a response of strain. One problem with this definition is that it fails to recognize that two people subjected to the same level of stress may show far different levels of strain.

In a response definition, stress is seen partially as a response to some stimulus, called a stressor. A stressor is a potentially harmful or threatening external event or situation. In a response definition stress is more than simply a response to a stressor, it is the consequence of the interaction between an environmental stimulus (a stressor) and the individual’s response. That is, stress is the result of a unique interaction between stimulus conditions in the environment and the individual’s predisposition to respond in a particular way. In other words, it is an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences and/or psychological processes, that is, a consequence of any action, situation, or event (stressors) that places special demands on a person.

In the context of the response definition of stress, it is important to understand that stress is the result of dealing with something that places special demands on us. Special here means unusual, physically or psychologically threatening, or outside our usual set of experiences. Starting a new job assignment, changing bosses, having a flat tyre, missing a plane, making a mistake at work, having a performance evaluation meeting with the boss - all these are actions or events that may place special demands on us. In this sense, they are potential stressors. We may say potential because not all stressors will always place the same demands on people. In this sense, they are potential stressors. We may say potential because not all stressors will always place the same demands on people.

In view of this, stress is not necessarily bad in and of itself. Although stress is typically discussed in a negative context, it also has a positive value (Cavanaugh, et al., 2000: 65-74). It has a positive value or is an opportunity when it offers potential gain. Consider, for example, how many professionals see the pressures of heavy workloads and deadlines as positive challenges that enhance the quality of their work and the satisfaction they get from their job. Thus, the stress response can lead to eustress- a positive outcome or distress- an unhealthy outcome. In this sense, stress is concerned with how individuals adjust to their environments, achieve high level of performance and health; and become distressed in various physiological, medical, behavioral or psychological ways (Quick, Quick, Nelson and Hurrell, 1997:3).

Stress is thus, the adverse reaction that people have due to excessive pressure at work, and this includes when their employer places unreasonable demands on them. Extra pressure can encourage some people to work more effectively once in a while (i.e. a case of eustress). However, when this pressure exceeds the individual ability to cope with the demands, this can give rise to the feeling of being stressed in the long term; and such stress can lead to physical and mental ill-health. Stress therefore, was traditionally conceptualized to be the result of external insults beyond the control of those experiencing the stress. More recently, however, it has been argued that external circumstances do not have intrinsic capacity to produce stress, but instead their effect is mediated by individual’s perceptions, capacities and understanding. In order for an action, situation, or event to result in stress, it must be perceived by the individual to be a source of threat, challenge, or harm. If there are no perceived consequences- good or bad, there is no potential stress.
MODELS OF STRESS

A stress model is designed to help illustrate the link among organizational stressors, stress, and outcomes. The stress model provides managers with a framework for thinking about stress in the workplace and providing mechanisms for controlling stress. In other words, stress model suggests that interventions may be needed and can be effective in improving negative stress consequences. Two models of stress have been described by the Wikipedia free online dictionary. These are the transactional model, and the health realization/innate health model.

Transactional Model

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) interpretation of stress focuses on the transaction between people and their external environment/sources of stress/stressors; known as the transactional model. The model contends that stress may not come from a stressor if the person does not perceive the stressor as a threat but rather as positive or even challenging. Thus, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggested that stress can be thought of as occurring when “pressure/demands exceeds one’s perceived ability to cope”. The pressure/demands are termed the stressors. Under this model, stress management was developed and premised on the idea that stress is not a direct response to a stressor but rather one’s resources and ability to cope, mediate the stress response and are amenable to change, thus allowing stress to be controllable.

This model thus suggests that in order to develop an effective stress management programme that it is first necessary to identify the factors that are central to a person controlling his/her stress, and to identify the intervention methods which effectively target these factors. Thus, if the person possesses or can use adequate coping skills, then stress may not actually be a result or development because of the stressor. The model proposes that people can be taught to manage their stress and cope with their stressors. They may learn to change their perspectives of the stressor and provide them with the ability and confidence to improve their lives and handle all types of stressors. A working model of stress and work based on the transactional model is shown on figure 1 below.

Health Realization/ Innate Health Model

The health realization/innate health model of stress is also founded on the idea that stress does not necessarily follow the presence of a potential stressor. However, instead of focusing on the individual’s appraisal of so called stressors in relation to his/her own coping skills as the transactional model does, the health realization model focuses on the nature of thought, stating that it is ultimately a person’s thought processes that determine the response to potentially stressful external circumstances. In this model, stress results from appraising oneself and one’s circumstances through a mental filter of insecurity and negativity, whereas a feeling of well-being results from approaching the world with a “quiet mind” (Mills, 1995; Sedgeman, 2005:47-52).

This model thus proposes that helping stressed individuals understand the nature of thought, especially providing them with the ability to recognize when they are in the grip of insecure thinking, disengage from it, and access natural positive feelings will reduce their stress.
Potential Sources/Stressors

Environmental Factors
- Economic Uncertainty
- Political Uncertainty
- Terrorism
- Technological Uncertainty,
- Light, Noise, Temperature,
- Polluted Air

Individual Factors
- Role Conflict
- Role Ambiguity
- Work over load
- Responsibility of People
- Lack of Career progress
- Family Problems
- Economic Problems

Group Factors
- Poor Relationship with peers,
- Subordinates, and boss
- Inter group conflict

Organizational Factors
- Management Styles
- Political activity, game playing and power Struggles
- Orgtinal Design
- Lack of clear policies

Demographic / Behaviour

Individual Differences/Moderators

- Age, Sex, Education,
- Physical well-being
- Personality;
- Types, A behaviour
- Self esteem
- Tolerance for ambiguity

Consequences / outcome

Behavioural
- Accident Proneness
- Productivity
- Absenteeism
- Turnover
- Substance abuse
- Explosive temper

Cognitive
- Poor decision making
- Lack of concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Frustration
- Apathy

Physiological
- High blood pressure
- Headaches
- Heart Disease (CHD)
- High Cholesterol
- Elevated Stomach acid production

Organizational
- Lower Productivity

Psychological
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Decrease in Job Satisfaction

Figure 1: Stress and work: A working model; source: Adapted from; Ivancevich J.M, Konopaske R. And Matteson, M. T. (2005), Organizational Behaviour and Management, Boston: McGraw Hill Irwin; Robbins, S. P. (2005), Organizational Behaviour, New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Ltd.
The model shown in figure 1 above is designed to help illustrate the link among organizational stressors/sources of stress and outcomes. The experience of work-related and nonwork-related stress produces behavioural, cognitive, physiological, organizational and psychological outcomes. The model suggests that the relationship between stress and outcomes (individual and organizational) is not necessarily direct; similarly, neither is the relationship between stressors and stress. These relationships may be influenced by stress moderators which includes personality/individual cognitions/perceptions. Individual differences such as age, social support mechanisms, and personality are introduced as potential moderators. A moderator is a valuable attribute that affects the nature of a relationship.

SOURCES/ CAUSES OF STRESS

The stress model naturally leads us to the sources/causes of stress. The factors leading to stress among individuals are called stressors cum sources/causes of stress. Stressors are those actions, situations, or events that place special demands on a person. Since in the right circumstances, virtually any occurrence can act as a stressor, the list of potential stressors is infinite. However, this paper will focus on a small number of stressors that are relatively common in the model described in figure 1.

Environmental Factors

There are certain factors outside the organization (i.e. the environmental factors), which lead to stress among employees. They include; economic uncertainties, political uncertainty, technological uncertainty and terrorism. Economic uncertainty caused by changes in the business cycle causes stress among employees. When the economy is contracting, for example, people become increasingly anxious about their job security. Political uncertainties also create stress among employees especially in developing economies where we do not have stable political systems. Related to political uncertainty is terrorism which is an increasing source of environmental induced stress in the twenty-first century. Employees in Israel, Pakistan, Somalia, for instance, have long faced this threat and have learned to cope with it. Even Americans particularly after the 9/11 attacks including contemporary Nigeria being ravaged by the menace of Boko Haram attacks (especially after the Abuja UN building, the police headquarters and the ThisDay/ The Sun Newspapers bombings) are not immune to this terror-induced stress among employees. Technological uncertainty is another environmental factor that can cause stress. Because new innovations can make an employee’s skill and experience obsolete in a very short time, computers, robotics, automations and similar forms of technological innovation are a threat to many people and would cause them stress.

Individual Factors

Stressors at the individual level have been studied more than any other category presented in figure 1. Role conflict is perhaps the most widely studied individual level stressor (Cooper, 2000: 63-65). Role conflict is present whenever compliance by an individual to one set of expectations about the job are in conflict with another set of expectations. Being torn by conflicting demands from a supervisor about the job, and being pressured to get along well with people you are not compatible with are facets of role conflict. An increasing prevalent type of
role conflict occurs when work and nonwork roles interfere with one another. The most common nonworking roles involved in this type of conflict are those of spouse and parent. Balancing the demands of work and family roles is a significance daily task for a growing number of employed adults (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000). Pressure to work late, to take work home, to spend more time travelling and to frequently relocate in order to advance are a few examples of potential sources of conflict between work and family.

Nevertheless, in order for employees to perform their jobs well they need certain information regarding what they are expected to do and not to do. Employees need to know their rights, privileges, and obligations. Role ambiguity is a lack of understanding about the rights, privileges, and obligations a person has for doing the job. This is another potential individual stressor.

Work overload is another individual stressor at the work place. Overload may be of two different types; quantitative and qualitative. Having too many things to do or insufficient time to complete a job is quantitative overload. Qualitative overload, on the other hand, occurs when individuals feel that they lack the ability to complete their jobs or that performance standards are too high. Studies have established that both those who experience work overload and underload had significantly elevated number of medical problems including high blood cholesterol levels, boredom and apathy (Wieman, 1977: 119-122). Other individual factors causing stress are inherent personality traits such as being impatient, aggressive, rigid, feeling time pressure always, etc. Similarly, family issues, personal financial problems, sudden career changes all lead to stress.

**Group Factors**

The effectiveness of any organization is influenced by the nature of the relations among groups. There are many group characteristics that can be powerful stressors for some individuals. Poor relationship within and between groups can be a source of stress. Poor relationships may include low trust, lack of cohesion, low supportiveness, and lack of interest in listening to and dealing with the problems that confront a group or group member(s).

**Organizational Factors**

With the growth in organizational stress and complexity, there is increase in organizational factors also which cause stress among employees. Such factors include; lack of participation in decision making. Participation refers to the extent that a person’s knowledge, opinions, and ideas are included in the decision making process. Groups and organizations that do not encourage or allow participation will be a source of frustration to those who value it. Likewise, others will be frustrated by the delays often associated with participative decision making. Secondly, high levels of political behavior in organizations (organizational politics) can be a source of stress for many employees. Office politics, political activity, game playing, and power struggles can create friction, heighten dysfunctional competition between individuals and groups, and increase stress. Moreover, like individuals, organizations have distinct personalities. The personality of an organization (organizational culture) is shaped largely by its top executives. A tyrannical and autocratic executive team is able to create a culture that is filled with fear. Such managers are stress producers in their organizations because of the culture they have established with their
hard-driving styles, unrelenting insistencies on superior performance, and low tolerance for failure. Downsizing is another potential organizational stressor. Downsizing is primarily associated with the reduction of human resources by layoffs, attrition, redeployment, or early retirement (Kivimaki, Vahtera, Elovainio, Pentti and Virtanen, 2003: 57-67). As some organizations strive to cut costs, increasing numbers of employees are either downsized or fear being downsized. In either case, it is a potent stressor. It can have negative effects for both individuals and organizations.

**MANAGEMENT OF STRESS: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH**

The stress model shown in figure 1 provides managers with a framework for thinking about stress in the workplace. In this regard, it suggests that interventions may be needed and can be effective in improving negative stress consequences. Stress prevention and management can be initiated by individuals or the organization. There is a very important distinction between preventing stress and managing it. Stress prevention focuses on controlling or eliminating stressors that might provoke the stress response. Stress management suggests procedures for helping people cope effectively with or reduce stress that is already being experienced. It is the purpose of this paper therefore, to present a number of organizational programmes and individual approaches to stress prevention and management, with an emphasis on management which shall provide the background for the pragmatic approach to the management of stress in organizations.

**TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGEMENT OF STRESS**

Several techniques are widely canvassed as possible solution to stress in organizations. These techniques include both the organizational approaches and the individual approaches to stress prevention and management. Some of these approaches which may be relevant to contemporary Nigerian organizations shall be highlighted here:

**Organizational Techniques for Managing Stress**

Several of the techniques for managing stress particularly organizational structure/design and management styles are controlled by management. As such they can be modified or changed. In addition to the variety of activities that may be undertaken to improve organizational structure/design and management styles; an increasing number of organizations have developed very specific stress prevention and/or management programmes and wellness programmes.

**Redesigning Jobs**

Redesigning jobs to give employees more responsibility, more meaningful work, more autonomy, and increased feedback can reduce stress because these factors give the employee greater control over work activities and lessen dependence on others. However, it should be noted that in work/job design that not all employees want enriched jobs. The right redesign, then, for employees with a low need for growth might be less responsibility and increased specialization. If individuals prefer structure and routine, reducing skill variety should also reduce uncertainties and stress levels.
Increasing Employee Involvement in Decision Making

Encouraging employees’ involvement or participation in decision making will go a long way in reducing role stress. Role stress is detrimental to a large extent because employees feel uncertain about goals, expectations, how they will be evaluated, and the like. By giving these employees a voice in the decisions that directly affect their job performances, management can increase employee control and reduce this role stress (Jackson, 1983:3-9).

Increasing Formal Organizational Communication

Encouraging more of formal organizational communication with employees reduces uncertainty by lessening role ambiguity and role conflict. Effective communication can also change employee views/perceptions given the importance that perceptions play in moderating the stress response relationship. Management can thus use effective communication as a means to shape employee perceptions. Remember that what employees categorize as demands, threats or opportunities are merely an interpretation, and that interpretation can be affected by symbols and actions communicated by management.

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs)

Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) are designed to deal with a wide range of stress related problems, both work and non work- related including behavioural and emotional difficulties, substance abuse, family and marital discord and other personal problems. EAPs tend to be based on the traditional medical approach to treatment. Workers treated for alcohol and drug problems through the use of EAPs missed fewer days of work after the EAPs programme (Shaimi, 2000:225). Crucial to the success of any EAP is trust. If employees do not trust the programme or company management, they will not participate. EAPs with no customers cannot have a positive effect on stress prevention and management.

Wellness Programmes

Wellness programmes sometimes called health promotion programmes, focus on the employee’s overall physical and mental health. Simply stated, any activity an organization engages in, that is designed to identify and assist in preventing or correcting specific health problems, health hazards or negative health habits can be thought of as wellness related. Among the most prevalent examples of such programmes are those emphasizing hypertension identification and control, smoking cessation, physical fitness and exercise, nutrition and diet control, and job and personal stress management. Stress has been cited as the greatest cost of poor health habits (Danna and Griffin, 1999: 357-384), and poor health habits are what wellness programmes attempt to change. Thus, in a sense, wellness programmes represent a broad-based, contemporary extension of stress programmes; their focus is concern for employee health and quality of life issues and consequently to healthier, more productive, and more effective organization.
Sabbaticals

What some employees need is an occasional escape from the frenetic space of their work. In recent years, companies have begun to provide extended voluntary leaves. These sabbaticals-ranging in length from a few weeks to several months- allow employees to travel, relax, or pursue personal projects that consume time beyond normal vacation weeks. Proponents argue that these sabbaticals can revive and rejuvenate workers who might be headed for burnout.

Individual Techniques/Approaches to Stress Prevention and Management

Organization members do not have to nor should they rely on formal organizational programmes to assist in stress prevention and management. There are many individual approaches to dealing with stressors and stress. This means that an employee can take personal responsibility for reducing his or her stress level. These individual approaches can be categorized into two; problem-focused coping approaches and emotion-focused coping approaches. Problem-focused coping refers to the actions taken to deal with the source of stress, while emotion-focused coping refers to the steps a person takes to deal with stressful feelings and emotions. Some of the more popular problem focused coping approaches/strategies include time management, working with a mentor, and training to improve competencies. A few of the more popular emotion focused strategies include meditation, relaxation training, biofeedback, exercise, joining a work support group, and taking personal days.

Time Management

Many people manage their time poorly. The well-organized employee, like the well-organized student, can often accomplish twice as much as the person who is poorly organized. So an understanding and utilization of basic time management principles can help individuals better cope with tensions created by job demands. Some of the well known time management principles include: (a) making daily lists of the activities to be accomplished; (b) prioritizing activities by importance and urgency; (c) scheduling activities according to priorities set; and (d) knowing your daily cycle and handling the most demanding parts of your job during the high part of your cycle when you are most alert and productive (Tracy, 2004).

Relaxation Training

The purpose of this approach is to reduce a person’s arousal level and bring about a calmer state of affairs, both psychologically and physiologically. Psychologically, successful relaxation results in enhanced feelings of well-being, peacefulness and calm, a clear sense of being in control, and a reduction in tension and anxiety. Physiologically, decreases in blood pressure, respiration and heart rate should take place. Relaxation techniques include breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, autogenic training; which combines elements of muscle relaxation and meditation, and a variety of mental relaxation strategies, including imagery and visualization.

Conditions conducive for achieving relaxed states include a quiet environment, a comfortable physical position, and closed eyes. Simply taking a few moments of “mental rest” from job activities can be effective relaxation activity.
Meditation

Christian meditation has been found to be an important stress prevention and managing technique for individuals and employees. However, other meditative forms that have achieved some degree of popularity around the world are derivatives of Eastern philosophies. Included in this category are Zen meditation and Nam Sumran, or Sikh meditation. Perhaps the most widely practiced around the world is transcendental meditation or TM. Its originator, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, defines TM as turning the attention toward the subtler levels of thought until the mind transcends the experience of the subllest state of thought and arrives at the source of thought. The basic procedure used in TM is simple, but the effects claimed for it are extensive. One simply sits comfortably with closed eyes and engages in the repetition of a special sound (a mantra) for about 20 minutes twice a day. TM practices are associated with reduced heart rate, lowered oxygen consumption, and decreased blood pressure.

Biofeedback

Individuals can be thought to control a variety of internal body processes by using a technique called biofeedback. In biofeedback, small changes occurring in the body or brain are detected, amplified, and displayed to the person. Sophisticated recording and computer technology make it possible for a person to attend to subtle changes in heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, and brain-wave patterns that normally would be unobservable. Most of these processes are affected by stress. By interpreting the feedback, individuals know how high their blood pressure is, for example, and discover, through practice, means of lowering it.

Biofeedback training has been useful in reducing anxiety, lowering stomach acidity (and thus reducing the likelihood of ulcer formation), controlling tension and migraine headaches, and, in general, reducing negative physiological manifestations of stress. Despite these positive results, people looking to biofeedback for stress control should understand that success requires training and the use of equipment that may be very expensive.

Noncompetitive Physical Exercises

Noncompetitive physical exercises such as aerobics, walking, jogging, swimming, and riding a bicycle have long been recommended by physicians as a way to deal with excessive stress levels. These forms of physical exercise increase heart capacity, lower the at-rest heart rate, provide a mental diversion from work pressures, and offer a means to “let off steam” (Kiely and Hodgson, 1990: 551-572).

Expanding Your Social Support Network

Employees should build social support. They should have close connections with trustworthy peers, friends, family or work colleagues who can listen to their problems and boost their confidence level. Expanding your social support network, therefore, can be a means of tension cum stress reduction. It provides you with someone to hear your problems and to offer a more objective perspective on situations.
CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed the nature of stress with particular reference to individual and organizational stress and has offered latitude of stress management techniques, which employees/individuals and managers of enterprises or public agencies may adopt, combine and apply in a pragmatic way to manage the stress which is real in contemporary Nigerian organizations.

Therefore, armed with the stress prevention and management techniques, the wise employee, corporation/public agency manager can cope with stress in a practical and courageous manner without necessarily following any set of principles or ideas. However, the skill of stress prevention and management is to apply the right technique for the situation, based on the contingency approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Simply offering stress prevention and management programmes (including EAPs and wellness programmes) does not guarantee positive results for either employers or the sponsoring organization. However, a number of recommendations, if followed will increase the likelihood of achieving beneficial outcomes:

1. The greatest payoff from stress prevention and management comes not from one-shot activity, but from ongoing and sustained effort; thus, long-term commitment by employees/management is essential.
2. Top management support, including both philosophical support and support in terms of staff and facilities, is necessary.
3. Unions should support the programme and participate in it where appropriate. This can be particularly difficult to accomplish. Many unions take the position that instead of helping employees deal with stress, management should focus on eliminating those conditions that can contribute to the stress in the first place.

REFERENCES