


## Constructive Management of Stress in the Workplace

(Or, how to keep your sanity AND friends all at the  
same time!)

**Company Name**


See slide  
19 – does  
company  
want to  
include?



## Ground Rules


**H** – honest  
**O** – open  
**P** – participate  
**E** – expect success  
**S** – sensitive to others

*Confidentiality – what's said in this room stays in  
this room.*



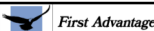
## Objective

To increase participants' awareness of  
how our reactions to workplace stress  
impact others and to develop tools for  
better managing stress and our  
reactions to it.



## Agenda

- Rise of Workplace Stress
- The Cycle of Stress/Loss of Respect
- Its Impact on Employees & Organizations
- Ways to Combat Stress & Develop Synergy
- Group Relaxation Exercise
- Summary




## Statistics

**Occupational Stress – at an all time HIGH:**

- 80% of workers feel stress on the job
- 50% admit they need help in managing stress
- 42% say their coworkers need this help
- 42% report that yelling and other verbal abuse is common in the workplace
- One in four employees report being driven to tears because of workplace stress.

\*National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2000  
 \*2000 Integra Survey



## Causes of Workplace Stress

- Corporate downsizing, layoffs
- Employees working longer & harder - "doing more with less"
- Crowded work conditions
- Job insecurity
- Internal competition
- Feelings of helplessness
- Change
- Decrease in 2-way Communication

**Causes of Workplace Stress**  First Advantage®

**What additional factors may be contributing to stress in our environment?**

**Effects of Stress**  First Advantage®

**What are some of the physical effects of stress?**

**Physical Effects of Stress**  First Advantage®

- Appetite Changes
- Headaches
- Tension
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Weight Change
- Colds
- Muscle aches
- Digestive upset
- Pounding heart
- Accident prone
- Teeth grinding
- Rash
- Restlessness
- Foot-tapping
- Finger-drumming
- Increased drug, alcohol, tobacco use

\*From: Structured Exercises in Stress Management, Nancy & Donald Tubesing, Whole Person Press (Duluth, MN), Vol 3, pg 109.

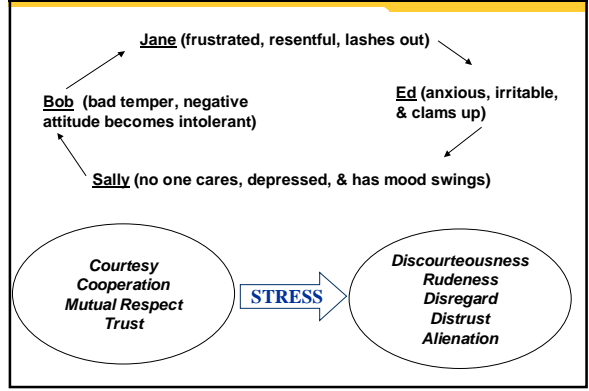
**Emotional/Behavioral Effects**  First Advantage®

**What are some of the emotional and behavioral effects of stress?**

**Emotional/Behavioral Effects**  First Advantage®

- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Mood swings
- Bad temper
- Irritability
- Depression
- Crying spells
- Easily discouraged
- Negative attitude
- Intolerance
- Resentment
- Lashing out
- Clamming up
- Distrust
- Nagging
- Unforgiving

**Cycle of Stress/Loss of Respect**  First Advantage®





**Lack of Respect**

- Disregard of Others
- Deterioration of Workplace Norms
- Decrease of Cooperation & Motivation
- Decrease in Communication
- Disconnection



***What types of discourteous behaviors have you experienced or witnessed in the workplace?***



- Impatience
- Rumoring, gossiping, damaging co-worker's reputation
- Making rude remarks while on mute
- Sending "flaming" e-mail
- Condescending tone
- Taking other's food from break room
- Disrupting meetings
- Interrupting others or not listening
- Not sharing information others need
- Using last of supplies – not telling anyone
- "Forgetting" to share credit on collaborative work
- Emotional tirades
- Slamming down telephone
- Demeaning, belittling harassing others
- Taking last of coffee and not making new pot
- Asking for, then discounting, input
- Not acknowledging someone in the hallway



1. Work is mirroring society
  - a. *Lack of manners being taught*
  - b. *Blurring of lines between appropriate and inappropriate interactions*
  - c. *No sense of community*
2. Pressures of having to do more with less, more quickly
3. Use of part time and temporary employees – fragmentation of workplace relationships



4. Business casual dress codes
5. E-mail, voice mail, teleconferencing technology – takes away the "human face"
6. "Us vs. them" environment – managers and employees



**Impact on Employees**

- Increased anxiety, stress, or anger
- Lower morale
- Exhaustion
- Depression

## Discourteous Behavior First Advantage®

### Impact on Organizations

- Increased employee tardiness, absenteeism, sick leave
- Decreased productivity
- Reduced commitment to organization
- Sabotage, work slow-downs
- Diminished workplace citizenship behaviors
- Retaliation which can lead to escalating, violent behaviors
- Grievance, complaints & lawsuits

## Where Do We Want to Be Instead? First Advantage®

### In order to promote:

- Less frustration
- Increased productivity
- Empowerment
- Greater opportunities to grow
- SYNERGY

### We must:

- Use communication and behaviors that help to preserve workplace norms for mutual respect
- Use communication and behaviors that are fundamental to relationship building

## Combating the Stress Cycle First Advantage®

1. Commit to the Vision
2. Use Stress Management Techniques
3. Take Responsibility for Yourself and Hold Yourself Accountable
4. Keep To Your Own Counsel
5. Embrace Tolerance
6. Remember the Golden Rule
7. Revive Common Courtesy
8. Lead by Example
9. Practice the Grandmother Rule

## Remember the Vision First Advantage®

- Less frustration
- Increased productivity
- Empowerment
- Greater opportunities to grow
- A more comfortable and enjoyable work environment
- Increased 2-way communication
- SYNERGY

## Stress Management Techniques First Advantage®

### Top Ten Stress Busters:

1. Start the day off right. The first 15 minutes are the most important for setting the tone of the day.
2. Be careful what you think. No stinkin' thinkin' allowed. Remember, regardless of how tough it is right now it probably isn't really the worst day of your life.
3. Give yourself a time-out, maybe a two minute moment, from whatever is getting to you.
4. Value who you ARE – not just what you do.
5. Get Back to Basics:
  - a. Eat right
  - b. Sleep enough
  - c. Exercise your mind, body and spirit every day
  - d. Reduce your alcohol and caffeine intake

by Dr. Carol Renand Gaffney, © 1996-2004 People SOLUTIONS, Dr. Gaffney.com & Dr. Carol Renand Gaffney

## Stress Management Techniques First Advantage®

### Top Ten Stress Busters Continued:

6. Plan your work and work your plan. List all the things you do, select the most important and leave the rest for later.
7. Come from love and kindness
8. Become self-caring, not selfish. This often means saying "no" to someone else or something else, which is a "yes" to you.
9. Spend time with people you care about and who care about you.
10. Know yourself.
  - a. What are your hot buttons?
  - b. What are your signs of stress and STOP before they stop you.

And the most important: BREATHE, BREATHE AND BREATHE SOME MORE.

### **Stress Reducers for Work**



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- Maintain your perspective
- Set reasonable expectations for yourself and others
- Reduce interruptions as much as possible
- Remain flexible
- Take a time out
- Avoid battles with your co-workers
- Develop some workplace friends
- Change the channel
- Allow yourself to have a less than perfect day
- Deep breathing

### **Take Responsibility for Yourself**



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- Be aware of, and monitor, your own interactions with others.
- Apologize quickly for offenses or mistakes you have committed.
- Don't retaliate when another employee has been discourteous to you.
- When feeling stressed out, take constructive steps to de-stress so you don't take it out on others.
- Increase 2-way communication: ask & provide
- Confront the person assertively but focus on the rude behavior, not the person – use I statements.

### **Keep to Your Own Counsel**



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- Follow protocol for addressing problems
- Keep your problems between yourself and the other person involved
- Avoid the temptation of getting involved in a co-worker's problems
- Encourage co-workers to address problems using proper organizational channels
- Avoid gossip

### **Practice Tolerance**



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Tolerance – a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc., differ from one's own

Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 2001

### **The Golden Rule**



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Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You

NOT

Do Unto Others Before They Do Unto You

### **Revive Common Courtesy**



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“It is incredible what difference it makes to one's feelings towards the whole human race when one is treated with politeness and kindness in buses, trains, trams, subways, ferries, stores, ships and streets.”

John Cowper Powys,  
The Meaning of Culture

## The Grandmother Rule



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Don't write e-mails that you would be ashamed to share with your grandmother.

- *Read your e-mail aloud to check for its tone.*
- *Before responding to an upsetting e-mail, take time to cool off. Consider, instead, talking to the person directly or by phone.*
- *Before sending your response, wait a period of time and re-read it.*

Stacy Brice, President, ASSISTU, a virtual assistance firm

## Group Relaxation Exercise



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### Procedure:

- Sit or lie down quietly in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
- Breathe through your nose slowly for eight counts and out through your mouth for eight counts; repeat 3-4 times.
- Inhale and tense each muscle group for 4 to 10 seconds, then exhale and completely relax the muscle group. Start with your feet and progress to the top of your head.
- After relaxing all muscle groups, continue breathing slowly while maintaining this relaxed state for several minutes.
- Return back to alertness by counting backwards from 10 to 1.

## Summary



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- Although workplace stress, and its negative impact on employees and organizations, continues to rise, we can develop positive tools in which to manage stress and our reactions to it.
- We can also take steps to improve our organization's working environment by taking responsibility for our own attitudes and actions toward others.

## EAP Services



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7 days a week

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800.935.9551

