

# stress management training services

from AXA ICAS, Europe's leading EAP provider

## Did you know?

- A total of 12.8 million working days were lost to stress, depression and anxiety in 2004/5
- The TUC reported a twelve-fold increase in the number of stress cases that they took to court between 2000 and 2001
- Stress is now the main cause of long-term sickness absence for non-manual workers
- The average length of absence for someone with work-related stress is 29 days
- Absenteeism currently costs UK employers an estimated £601 per employee per year
- The two main causes of stress are workload and organisational change and restructuring
- The Health & Safety Executive expects employers to have a plan for managing stress in their workplace

Sources: CIPD, HSE, TUC, Personnel Today



ICAS WELLBEING

## The risks to your organisation

Stress continues to grow as a major source of occupational ill-health. The costs of absence through stress to UK industry have been estimated at £3.8 billion every year although there are obvious additional 'hidden costs' that should be added but that are difficult to quantify. For every one person absent through stress there are likely to be several more who are present at work but who are seriously under performing. Such people represent a serious behavioural risk to any organisation.

Now the second most common cause of workplace absence, the TUC have reported massive increases in the number of claims brought by members against their employers for ill-health caused through occupational stress.

In spite of all this, many organisations have been slow to deal with this important issue, often because they simply have not been able to understand how to tackle the issue proactively.

The HSE's Management Standards for stress provide all employers and managers with a standard framework upon which they can develop procedures and practices to prevent stress from occurring wherever possible and support those employees who may need help in managing the demands of the job.

All UK organisations have a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for the mental as well as physical well-being of their employees and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to carry out risk assessments for potential health hazards including mental health. Failure to comply with these legal requirements places an organisation at risk of prosecution.

In addition, the common law duty of care to look after employees can also expose an organisation to civil liability claims for compensation from employees experiencing stress at work that has led to illness.

### Compensation awards have included:

- £100,000 paid by a High Street bank group to one of their financial services managers
- £67,000 paid by Birmingham City Council to a former employee who had retired due to ill health caused by stress
- £203,000 paid by Worcestershire County Council to a former site warden made ill by work related stress

Many, if not all, of these could have been prevented if the correct systems and procedures had either been in place or correctly applied.

## Preventing stress in the workplace

Well established ways of preventing work pressure from turning to stress include:

- **Carrying out a stress audit risk assessment**  
This can identify risk areas within an organisation as well as the changes that need to be implemented to manage those pressures effectively and prevent them turning to stress. (Our Stress Audit Service leaflet contains full details on how we can help with this)
- **Implementing a stress policy for dealing with stress**  
It is important to deliver a clear statement to all employees on how the subject of stress will be treated. We can work with you to help you develop a policy and guidelines to meet the needs of your workforce
- **Training for Managers**  
The HSE recommends that all managers are given guidance on how to proactively prevent and manage stress within their workgroups (See opposite for details)
- **Training for Employees**  
Employees can benefit from learning how to manage the pressures of work and life more effectively (See opposite for details)

### Case Study One: National Air Traffic Services

The National Air Traffic Services (NATS) is responsible for the safe movement of all aircraft in UK airspace. As part of their commitment to employee health and safety NATS decided to adopt a proactive stance with regard to the management of workplace stress. Having agreed a policy through discussions with occupational health, the unions and company safety representatives, it was important to communicate this effectively throughout the organisation and ensure that the policy, and how to interpret it, was fully understood by all levels of management.

NATS chose AXA ICAS to help with this process. By working closely with a NATS steering group, AXA ICAS was able to develop a training programme aimed specifically at helping managers understand the issues of workplace stress and how to implement the NATS stress policy in practice.

Over a period of around eighteen months over 600 managers benefited from this training.

## Training for managers and employees

AXA ICAS Consultancy and Training has had over a decade of experience in designing and delivering training programmes to meet the needs of a wide variety of organisations.

All our training programmes are designed with your specific needs in mind and are tailored to your desired outcomes.

## Stress management training for managers

Typically these are provided as one day events although we have run longer, more in depth programmes when required. This training is designed to give managers a practical working knowledge of how to manage stress within their own work area and support their team members.

### The subject areas typically include:

- The manager's responsibilities within the law
- Understanding how healthy pressure can turn into unhealthy stress
- Identifying the causes of stress
- Recognising the early warning signs in employees
- Carrying out a risk assessment
- How to support staff under pressure

We can also provide a more general half-day awareness programme covering much of the same material but in less depth. This option is helpful for those requiring a more general introduction to the subject.

## Managing pressure for peak performance

These programmes are aimed at helping employees, at all levels within an organisation, learn how to manage their own personal pressures more effectively.

### Typical content includes:

- What makes pressure turn to stress
- Identifying your personal stress "triggers"
- Spotting the early warning signs in yourself
- How to manage your response to pressure
- Developing resilience
- Adopting a healthy lifestyle

Depending upon the depth that you wish the programmes to cover we generally offer these as either half-day awareness seminars or full day training programmes.

## The benefits

### Training your managers in stress prevention will:

- Give managers more confidence to deal with stress "issues"
- Enable them to apply your organisation's policies appropriately
- Encourage more "openness" about stress and help remove its stigma
- Help ensure that problems are identified at an early stage enhancing the chances of problem resolution
- Reduce the risks associated with stress

### Training your staff will:

- Enable them to feel more comfortable when asking for support with work problems
- Help them manage their own pressure more proactively

## Case Study Two: ICI Paints

ICI Paints UK Operations took the initiative to prevent unnecessary stress by commissioning AXA ICAS to carry out an initial stress audit to determine current levels of pressure within the business. This led to the implementation of a series of training programmes to all managers, aimed at helping managers learn how to deal with their own pressures more effectively and to help them understand how to support their own staff. These programmes were then followed by a series of shorter workshops aimed at non-managerial staff designed to help them understand how to manage pressure better for themselves and how to access the organisational resources available to them.

## Why use AXA ICAS?

As one of the UK's leading Employee Assistance Programme providers AXA ICAS is uniquely placed to help organisations manage the risks of stress at work.

All our consultants are experienced in the area of behavioural risk management and are qualified in Occupational or Clinical Psychology, Counselling and Stress Management or Human Resources Management. In addition they have all held management positions within organisations enabling them to adopt a pragmatic approach when offering solutions. They have extensive experience of running stress management courses in a variety of occupational settings.

All our training is:

- Designed to your needs
- Practical and pragmatic
- Learner oriented
- Lively and participative

## Feedback from previous course delegates

- *"The course was a great help, not only with work situations, but in personal life in particular"*
- *"Helped me better understand my role as a manager in preventing stress"*
- *"A good mix of the HSE standards and practical examples"*
- *"A well balanced programme that provide an opportunity to reflect on the whole question of stress"*
- *"I found all of it useful especially the case studies as they gave practical examples"*
- *"A good balance of talk and activity"*
- *"I now have a clearer understanding of how to recognise and deal with my pressures"*
- *"A very easy and comfortable atmosphere making it easy to discuss the issues openly"*
- *"It has helped me to reduce my stress levels and understand myself which will benefit those I work with"*

If you would like to find out more about how AXA ICAS can help protect your organisation against the risks associated with workplace stress then please call AXA ICAS on 0800 17 0800 or e-mail [info@axa-icas.com](mailto:info@axa-icas.com)

[www.axa-icas.com](http://www.axa-icas.com)

[info@axa-icas.com](mailto:info@axa-icas.com)

Radlett House, West Hill  
Aspley Guise  
Milton Keynes MK 17 8DT  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0) 1908 285200  
Fax: +44 (0) 1908 285201

Old Sheriff Court  
70 Hutcheson Street  
Glasgow G1 1SH  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0) 141 553 5000  
FAX: +44 (0) 141 553 5001

