

STRESS

A LOOK AT SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO HANDLE STRESS



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The telecommunicator is expected to be at their best when the public is at their worst. The obligation to listen, coupled with the expectation to fix every hurt, or solve every issue is an innate stressor for the telecommunicator.

The World Health Organization has called workplace stress the health epidemic of the 21st Century.

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The nature of the job

There are some stressors that are inherent to the job of a telecommunicator.

- Shift work
- Unpleasant phone calls (shootings, unexpected deaths etc.)
- Emotional exhaustion - feeling impatient, moody, sad etc.
- Compassion Fatigue/Secondary Traumatic Stress – sometimes referred to as the cost of caring.
- Burnout – the lack of motivation or enthusiasm.

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The nature of the job

There are some unnecessary stressors to the job of a telecommunicator.

- Poor leadership
- Minimal help/lack of adequate resources etc.
- Disgruntled co-worker
- Staff shortage
- etc.



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Things to avoid

- Do not criticize a co-worker about the way they handle a critical incident. People handle things differently.
- Do not offer unsolicited advice.
- Be mindful of how you treat your teammates - even though you may be in the same storm, everyone is in a different boat.

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Things to avoid

- The Rescuer Personality

- ✓ Need to be in control
- ✓ High need for stimulation
- ✓ Strong need to be needed
- ✓ Need for immediate gratification

- Pessimism



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Things to do daily

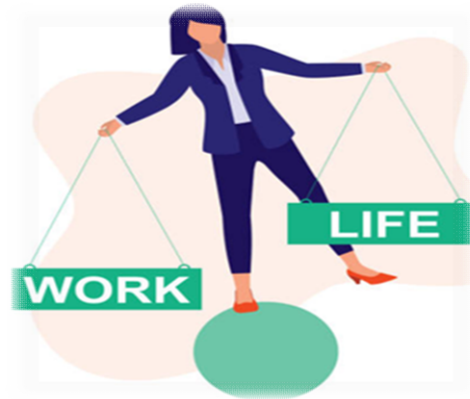
- Keep things in perspective
- Stay in the moment, one call at a time
- Accept you cannot save everyone
- Take care of yourself before others
- Maintain social support
- Acknowledge your feelings



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Things to do daily

- Get Enough Sleep – sleep is important to your emotional and physical wellbeing.
- Maintain Proper Nutrition
- Exercise Regularly
- Get support/help at work
- Balance between work and home



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Anti-Stress Snacks

Frozen Yogurt – Has calcium and tryptophan which convert to serotonin and acts as a mood stabilizer

Lean Protein – Fish, white meat chicken and turkey will stabilize blood sugars which fluctuate under stress

Almonds, Walnuts and Pistachios – Contains fiber and unsaturated fatty acids and helps lower blood pressure (can be added to salad, oatmeal etc.)



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Anti-Stress Snacks

Cherries – High in melatonin which initiates the sleep cycle

Citrus and Bell Peppers – Contains vitamin C which lowers Cortisol released during the flight or fight response. Studies suggest vitamin C can curb stress hormones

Let's not forget : **Chocolate** (in moderation of course)

Choose dark chocolate with cocoa content of 65 percent or higher. Limit yourself to around 3 ounces (85 grams) a day. Contains antioxidants that lower cortisol and improve mood.

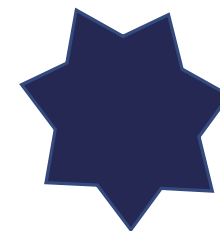
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It is vitally important that telecommunicators remember to help themselves and not just the public.

“...Place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping small children or others who may need your assistance.”



THANK YOU



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