wellbeing – Dealing with stress

# hwwb-wideBackground

Everyone feels stressed sometimes. A small amount of stress can be good for us, giving us an extra boost to perform better or run faster. However, when you're stressed for long periods it can become a problem for your mental and physical health. Many people in industry are likely to be more at risk of long-term stress because of the pressures they face every day.

The first step in dealing with stress is to recognise that it's happening. You may have so little time to yourself that you don’t realise at first. When you do start noticing the symptoms of stress (see below), don't struggle on hoping it will go away. The sooner you deal with the problem, the better. Just talking about how you feel can help you find a way to deal with it.

## Relevance to this site / location

Explain the reasons why this TBT is being given. Is it due to a recent event that has occurred locally or somewhere else within Carillion / industry; or has the subject matter been specifically identified as being directly or potentially relevant to the site / location? If so explain that relevance.

# Toolbox Talk

## Carillion Stress and Mental Health Charter

The Carillion Stress and Mental Health Charter underpins our commitment to creating a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our employees, it is accompanied by a guidance that provides the framework of available tools to support the reduction of ill health caused by stress. There is also a Stress awareness training module that you should undertake to give you more information.

## Symptoms of stress

The symptoms of stress can be both mental, physical and behavioural and can vary from person to person:

* Mental symptoms can include anxiety, anger, depression, lack of appetite, sleeplessness, crying often, tiredness and difficulty concentrating.
* Physical symptoms can include chest pains, cramps, muscle spasms, dizziness, restlessness, nervous twitches and breathlessness.
* Behavioural symptoms can include increased absenteeism, increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs and irritability

Some of these stress symptoms can affect your health in the long term. They do this by putting you at risk of high blood pressure, which can lead to heart attacks and stroke.

## Treatment

Talk to your Doctor, who will have seen a lot of patients with stress-related problems. Your Doctor may recommend counselling or talking therapy. A counsellor will listen to you and help you find ways of dealing with your stress.

There are also medicines available that might relieve some of the symptoms of stress. If stress is making you feel depressed, your Doctor may prescribe antidepressants to help make life feel better.

If stress is making you feel anxious, there are a number of different medicines your Doctor may prescribe. These include particular types of antidepressant, antihistamines, sedatives and beta-blockers. Talk to your Doctor about which of these is most suitable for you.

## Support

Talking to other people who are in a similar situation can be helpful when you're feeling stressed. Ask your Line Manager or Human Resources for assistance. We have various tools in place that can help reduce the instances of stress occurring.

Also we also operate an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) on 0800 282193. The EAP service is free service for all Carillion employees and their families and offers a source of information and personal support on a wide range of issues; both work and non-work related such as childcare arrangements, managing debt, DSS benefits and other general citizen’s advice issues. In addition to the information services, callers can speak to a trained counsellor over the phone at any time of the day or night, about any issue of concern to them, whether work or non-work related.

Talk to your family and friends about how you feel can make you feel better. Sharing your feelings and problems with those close to you may mean that they realise that you need more help from them.

## Self help

If you're feeling tearful, angry or have other symptoms of stress, there are steps you can take to help reduce your stress levels:

* **Take Regular Breaks** - Schedule regular breaks into your working day, even a ten-minute walk around the block can help clear your head and provide new perspective.
* **Eat Well** - Healthy meals and snacks during your work day are critical. When you eat poorly, you're more likely to be impatient and tired, and have difficulty concentrating. This will only increase your stress level
* **Breathe** - Use deep-breathing techniques to calm both mind and body. Focus on each inhale and exhale
* **Stretch** - Learn some simple stretching exercises — they can combat stress and sluggishness, helping you get through the day
* **Limit Caffeine / alcohol** - Limit caffeine and alcohol and if you smoke quit. It takes extra energy to process the chemicals in these substances and long term you will feel better without them
* **Be Active** - Exercise won’t make your stress disappear, but it will reduce some of the emotional intensity that you’re feeling, clearing your thoughts and enabling you to deal with your problems more calmly.”
* **Take control** - The act of taking control is in itself empowering, and it's a crucial part of finding a solution that satisfies you and not someone else
* **Say No** - Know your limits and say no if you will not enjoy the task or do not feel you have the capability
* **Connect with People** - A problem shared is a problem halved. A good support network of colleagues, friends and family can ease your work troubles and help you see things in a different way
* **Have some ‘me’ time** - Spend time having ‘me time’ doing things you enjoy whether that is socialising, relaxing or exercising
* **Challenge yourself** - Setting yourself goals and challenges, whether at work or outside helps to build confidence. This in turn will help you deal with stress
* **Think Positive** - Use positive talk with yourself to help you succeed at an upcoming challenge. Say to yourself "I can," then set your mind to do it. If you anticipate a stressful situation coming soon, think it through ahead of time and make plans how you will react to it
* **Go to bed on time** - Stress levels go up when your aren’t rested, try to go to bed on time
* **Accept the things you can’t change** - Changing a difficult situation isn't always possible. If this proves to be the case, recognise and accept things as they are and concentrate on everything that you do have control over

# Questions to Ask

**Note:** Where appropriate the questions should be put forward in a way that makes them relevant to the circumstances of the site / location.

**Q - Name some ways in which you can help yourself feel less stressed**

*Walk away from the stressful situation, taking deep breaths, relaxing muscles, avoiding alcohol,* cigarettes *and caffeine, taking physical exercise*

**Q - How do think you could recognise a person who is stressed what could you do to help?**

*Local discussion required*

**Q - Have you got any questions on the topic?**

**Q - What are you going to do differently as a result of this Toolbox Talk?**

If you believe you need more training then please discuss this with your line manager / supervisor.

# Supporting Information

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| [Wellbeing - Lifestyle Choices TBT](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_137_core_wellbeing_lifestyle.docx) (extranet) | [Wellbeing - Exercise TBT](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_140_core_wellbeing_excerise.docx) (extranet) |
| [Wellbeing - Looking After your back TBT](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_138_core_wellbeing_back.docx) (extranet) | [Wellbeing - Emotional TBT](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_141_core_wellbeing_emotional.docx) (extranet) |
| [Wellbeing - Fitness for Work](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_146_core_wellbeing_fitness.docx) (extranet) | [Wellbeing - Depression TBT](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_143_core_wellbeing_depression.docx) (extranet) |
| [Wellbeing - Sleeping Well TBT](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_139_core_wellbeing_sleeping_well.docx) (extranet) | [Wellbeing - Looking after your eyes](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_135_core_wellbeing_eye.docx) (extranet) |
| [Wellbeing - Complimentary Therapies](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_147_core_wellbeing_therapies.docx) (extranet) | [Wellbeing - Looking after your respiratory system](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_145_core_wellbeing_breathing.docx) (extranet) |
| [Wellbeing Eating Well](file:///C%3A%5Cstellent%5Cgroups%5Cpublic%5Cintranet%5Cbusiness%5CIMS115_Carillion_IMS%5CIMS_Tools_Tool_Box_Talks%5Chssq_tbt_144_core_wellbeing_eating_well.docx) (extranet) |  |

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| Matters Raised by Attendees: |
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