

Health Bulletin

April is a time when environments often change, so it's also a time when a lot of stress can be felt. Let's learn coping strategies together!



4 Types of Mental Health Care

Various Stress Factors

Stress is caused by various changes.

- Environmental factors: Climate, noise, etc.
- Physical factors: Illness, lack of sleep, physical discomfort, etc.
- Social factors: Interpersonal relationships, being busy with work, social interactions, etc.

Stress Factors in the Workplace

Trouble with Interpersonal Relationships

(Example) Conflict with superiors or subordinates, sexual harassment, power harassment, etc.

Relationships



Changes in the Quality and Quantity of Work

(Example) Long working hours, personnel transfers, occurrence of problems, etc.



Changes in Role and Position

(Example) Promotion, demotion, reassignment, business trip, etc.



Increased Responsibility

(Example) Workplace accidents or failures, etc.



Key Points

Everyone has some level of stress. Objectively thinking about what is causing you stress is the first necessary step in dealing with it. Also, if you know in advance what things tend to cause you stress, it will be easier to cope. Be careful when changes in your environment or physical condition occur!



Even happy events (marriage, childbirth, getting a job, travel, moving, etc.) can cause stress, so you don't need to blame yourself thinking, "Even though it's a happy occasion."



Mental health care in the workplace



The annual stress check conducted once a year falls under self-care.

Besides the care mentioned below, encouragement from family and colleagues, as well as creating an environment where people feel comfortable opening up, are very important!"

Line care (by managers):

Managing the work environment and being available for employee consultation



Care by external specialists:

Use outside professional organizations or experts for support.



Examples:

Training programs (for new employees, physical health, mental health, etc.)
Health consultations, interviews with public health nurses, new employee interviews
External consultation services (via email, phone, online, or in-person meetings), etc.

We also offer this service upon request!



Warning Signs from the Mind and Body

< Signs of Mental Distress You Can Recognize in Yourself >

- Feeling down or depressed
- No energy to do anything
- Irritable or quick to anger
- Feeling anxious for no reason
- Restlessness
- Heart racing or shortness of breath
- Compulsive checking behavior
- Hearing voices when no one is around
- Believing others are speaking badly about you
- No appetite or food doesn't taste good
- Difficulty falling asleep or poor quality sleep
- Waking up multiple times during the night



If these symptoms persist or interfere with your daily life, consult with an occupational physician, public health nurse, or specialist.

< Signs of Mental Distress Observable by Others >

- Increase in lateness, early departures, and absences
- No notice given for absences (repeated unexplained absences)
- Frequent and inconsistent overtime or weekend work
- Decline in work efficiency; decreased thinking and judgment ability
- Work results are not produced as expected
- Lack of reporting, consultation, or communication at work (or the opposite—excessive communication)
- Lack of expression or energy in actions (or the opposite—unusual liveliness)
- Noticeably unnatural speech or behavior
- Frequent mistakes or accidents
- Disheveled clothing or inappropriate attire



If someone continues to behave in a way that is unlike themselves or shows signs of difficulty in daily life, reach out to them and encourage them to consult with an occupational physician, public health nurse, or specialist.

How to Manage Stress

Relaxation

① Stretching

Slow, gentle stretching of the muscles helps relieve muscle tension, improve blood circulation, and promote relaxation of both the body and mind. Even when you stay in the same position for a long time—whether standing or sitting—your muscles remain tense. Stress from workload or interpersonal relationships can also cause muscle tension. Doing stretches during work breaks can help loosen up tight muscles and lead to better performance.

POINT

- ① Stretch slowly without bouncing
- ② Don't hold your breath
- ③ Hold the stretch for 10 to 30 seconds
- ④ Avoid overstretching
- ⑤ Focus on the area you are stretching
- ⑥ Do it with a smile



< Specific method >

Shrug your shoulders up and down

Raise your shoulders and hold your breath, then exhale as you lower them



back stretch

Clasp your hands together and stretch your arms forward, rounding your back as if you're looking down at your belly button



Neck

Hold your head with four fingers (excluding the thumbs) and use your thumbs to massage the nape of your neck."



Rotate your neck

Relax your neck and shoulder muscles, and slowly rotate your neck



Lower back

Stretch your lower back, twist your body backward, and hold onto the backrest of the chair.



Upper body

Clasp your hands together, stretch your arms out, and straighten your chest



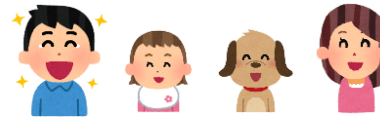
② Spend time interacting with close people



By talking about your current situation and feelings, you can discover your concerns, organize your thoughts, and sometimes receive good advice. At times, it also provides an opportunity to release emotions and stress built up inside, helping you regain mental stability.

③ laugh

Laughter helps regulate the balance of the autonomic nervous system and activates NK (natural killer) cells that attack cancer cells, thereby normalizing the immune system.



④ relieve tension bit by bit

If you feel tension continuing throughout the day, taking a trip to the restroom, going outside for some fresh air, doing deep breathing, light stretching, or having a small snack are all ways to refresh yourself.



⑤ Have a place to feel calm

Use your break time to create your own personal space by listening to your favorite music and setting up a calming environment. Also, within the limits allowed at your workplace, adjusting your desk, chair, and computer to your preferences is another effective way.



⑥ Have hobbies unrelated to work

Hobbies you can do alone and hobbies you can enjoy with others—having a variety of hobbies helps you refresh your mind and enrich your daily life. Try out different things and see what suits you.



⑦ connect with nature

As with forest therapy, immersing yourself in nature is highly effective. It is said that phytoncides, which help refresh the mind and body, provide feelings of healing and peace.



⑧ moderate exercise

Engaging in moderate exercise can provide a sense of satisfaction, relaxation, and refreshment, helping to relieve both physical and mental stress. Since it's important to enjoy the activity, those who are not good at exercising should try light, easy-to-do exercises that put less strain on the body!



We conduct "Radio taisou" during working hours and have established a walking club!



Don't rely on alcohol or smoking to relieve stress



Alcohol and tobacco are highly addictive, so when people rely on them to escape stress, the amount they consume often increases over time, making it difficult to quit. In the long run, this can actually harm both mental and physical health. Therefore, it is important to recognize that they are not suitable for stress relief and to have other ways to cope with stress.

This time, we talked about relaxation methods, but maintaining a healthy lifestyle is also very important. "A balanced diet, moderate exercise, and quality sleep." When you look back, it's easy to realize you haven't been able to do these because of a busy schedule, so it's important to be mindful and pay attention to them.



Make good use of consultation resources outside

Kokoro no mimi



Consultation services are set up according to the type of concern.

<https://kokoro.mhlw.go.jp/agency/#anc2>

