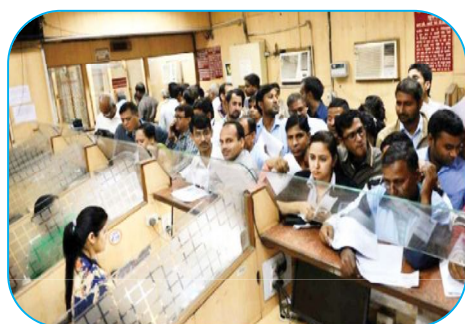




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EFFECTIVE WAYS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT AND COPING STRATEGIES IN BANKING SECTOR

R. Balamurugan¹ and Dr. M. Nazer²

¹Full Time Ph.D., Research Scholar , Department of Business Administration Khadir Mohideen College Adirampattinam , Thanjavur District , Tamil Nadu State.
² Associate Professor of Commerce , Guide & Supervisor Khadir Mohideen College , Adirampattinam , Thanjavur District , Tamil Nadu.

ABSTRACT:

Be realistic about what you can achieve: don't take on too much. Learn to say 'no' now and then Time management is also crucial: plan your time, address things one by one and make sure you give yourself a break in between – and don't make too many big changes at once. Devising a stress management plan can be a good way of controlling the causes

and effects of your stress: write down the problems in your life that may be causing your stress, then think about and write down possible solutions to those problems. Eat well. A balanced diet will help give your body what it needs to function properly. And don't rush or eat on the go – avoid eating at your desk and where possible take time over your meals. And have some fun!!! Enjoyable leisure time is essential for a healthy mind and a stress – free life. Plan a short break away or holiday; having this on the horizon can give you a lift when things are getting a bit heavy.

KEYWORDS: Time management, stress management, Balanced diet planning.

DISTRACTION

Distraction techniques help to take your attention away from anxious thoughts:

Try to visualize a pleasant scene in your mind; perhaps somewhere you've been where you felt calm and happy – or an object, like a flower or your favorite car. Really concentrate on it, bring it to life in your mind.

A 'bridging object' such as a photograph or souvenir from a happy time can, when looked at, help trigger positive thoughts

and reduce anxiety. Try doing a puzzle or sums in your head, or reading a good book, or counting the number of red doors you see do for a living.

Once you are able to use distraction techniques effectively, try not to remain dependent on them, but also learn to challenge the anxious, frightening thoughts you're experiencing.

SIMPLE BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Simple breathing techniques can also help you relax. When you become anxious or frightened you often start to breathe more quickly, irregularly and deeply, causing oxygen to be pumped

around the body faster than normal, leading to tingling sensations, faintness and dizziness. One of the effects of over breathing, often associated with anxiety, is that you feel you need more air when actually you don't.

Try to recognize if you're doing this and slow your breathing down. If breathing can be controlled, the severity of symptoms may be reduced and conditions successfully managed. It's important that you establish a regular breathing rhythm, such as "in two three, out two-three", until things have returned to normal.

RELAXATION

To manage your stress you can also reduce the severity of your symptoms by practicing relaxation techniques. Relaxation could merely consist of doing something you find relaxing, such as reading, watching TV, listening to music or doing exercise. Such activities can help you unwind by taking your mind off any tension you might be experiencing. Deep music relaxation is great for anyone experiencing stress or anxiety.

GET ACTIVE

It might seem like a bind at times, but exercise and moderate physical activity of and kind (e.g. gardening) has been proven to help improve your mood and emotional wellbeing. If you find yourself getting a bit low or depressed now and then, there's nothing like a quick burst of energy and regular exercise to pick you up again. In fact, doctors often prescribe exercise as a natural antidote to 'the blues' and mild-to-moderate depression.

Walking, running, cycling, skipping or organized sport can lead to feelings of wholeness, security and unity and help stimulate certain brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) or hormones, which mediate our moods and emotions. Increased levels of these natural antidepressant chemicals can make us feel less stressed, more relaxed, more satisfied with life and generally better all round. Physical activity can also lead to increased self-esteem, a sense of achievement and motivation, feelings of wholeness, security and unity.

Becoming more active can help to break down this negative mood cycle, as it will help reduce physical symptoms such as tiredness and low energy, which in turn will have knock-on-effects on our moods and/or thoughts. Physical activity can also help reduce the difficulties with sleep associated with depression and other mental health problems, which can in turn help increase energy levels. People, who are physically active (especially during the daytime) fall asleep faster, sleep deeper and longer than people who are inactive.

Why not try cycling to and from work, or getting off the bus one stop earlier and walking. Go for a brisk walk at lunchtime – even if it is just for ten minutes – or perhaps a jog if practical (e.g. if your workplace has showers). Use the stairs instead of the lift when at work. Whatever the form of physical activity/exercise, it can help make you feel better.

A suggestion is a proposal offered for acceptance or rejection. It is also a psychological process by which an idea is induced in or adopted by another without argument, command, or coercion. The researcher would like to put forth certain ideas as suggestions. If implemented the researcher hopes it would bring certain improvements and a probable change for the better.

The Researcher suggests some effective ways for the management for a better working environment

1. Compensation

Employees are more satisfied when they feel they are offered salaries/wages/rewards fairly for the work they do. Consider employee responsibilities, the effort they have forth, the work they have done well and the demands of their jobs.

Actions:

- Make sure rewards are for genuine contributions to the organization.
- Be consistent in your reward or salary policies.
- If your wages are competitive, make sure employees know this.
- Rewards can include a variety of benefits and perks other than money.
- As an added benefit, employees who are rewarded fairly, experience less stress.

The management should accept the challenge to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their compensation system, so that it would help the organization attract, motivate and retain the right people to achieve the organization objectives; improve the company's competitiveness by managing

labour costs more efficiently, and meet the needs of employees by convincing them that the system is equitable. Salaries or wages should be offered according to the experience and performance of the employees towards the organizational objectives.

2. Work allocation

Employees are more satisfied when work allocation is done keeping in mind the capabilities and limitations of the employees. Work allocation with respect to the limitations of the employees help to enhance the confidence within the employees to achieve the objectives/goals of the organization.

Actions:

- Employee appraisal should be done at regular time to know their strengths and weakness and too their interest area so that they can contribute their best for the attainment of organizational objectives.
- Ensure equitable distribution of work loads and review workload concerns.
- Consult with employees in planning and reviewing annual workload allocations. Recognize the importance of a balance between working life and family/social responsibilities.
- Ensure that employees can take recreation leave and long service leave in a timely manner so that employees have adequate breaks from work.
- Ensure that workloads are taken into consideration in the development of strategic and operational goals and objectives and in workforce planning.

3. Welfare measures

Employees are more satisfied when periodical assessments of welfare measures and timely improvements on the basis of feedback are deployed in the company.

Actions:

- The service should satisfy real needs of the employees.
- The service should be such as can be handled by cafeteria approach ie., a package total value of benefits should be determined and the selection of the mix of benefits should be left to the choice of each individual.
- The employer should not assume a benevolent posture.
- The cost of the service should be calculable and its financing established on a sound basis.
- There should be periodical assessment or evaluation of the service and necessary timely improvement on the basis of feed back.

4. Recreational Facilities

Employees are more satisfied when sufficient recreational facilities are provided for the employees in the company. Recreation is an essential and growing activity in various companies. A balanced life between personal and official life is required to work more productively. Recreation activities can act as catalyst to reduce the negative stress in the work place. It is an activity that a person does for enjoyment, usually to refresh the body and mind.

Actions:

- Promote a balance of work and personal lives. Make sure that senior managers model this behavior.
- Distribute work evenly (fairly) within work teams.
- Review work procedures to remove unnecessary “red tape” or bureaucracy.
- Organizations can utilize exercise like Play areas, golf, Swimming pools, gyms, or “fun” breaks at work.

5. Promotional Policies

Promotion refers to advancement of an employee to a higher post carrying greater responsibilities, higher status and better salary. It is the upward movement of an employee in the organisation's hierarchy, to another job commanding greater authority, higher status and better working conditions. The desire for promotion is generally strong among employees as it involves change in job content, pay, responsibilities, status and the like.

Actions:

- Promotional policy must provide for a uniform distribution of promotional opportunities throughout the company.
- The basis for promotion should be clearly specified. Due weightage should be given to seniority, merit and future potential of an employee.
- Suitable training and development opportunities should be provided so that 116 employees can prepare themselves for advancement.
- Detailed records of service and performance should be maintained for all employees.
- The policy should be fair, impartial and consistent, i.e., it should be applied uniformly irrespective of the person concerned.
- Proper promotion policy should be framed, followed and evaluated keeping in mind the needs of the employees.
- Promote from within when possible.
- Reward promising employees with roles on interesting projects.
- Divide jobs into levels of increasing leadership and responsibility.

6. Fair recognition and rewards with respect to suggestions or Ideas

Employees can be made a part of the development of the organization by their valuable suggestions. Fair recognition and rewards is one of the important intrinsic motivating factors which increase the job satisfaction among the employees. Employees can be encouraged to give a minimum of two suggestions per month and giving small monetary rewards for the same. This system can bring life into the suggestion scheme and motivate the employees to be a part of the development of the organization.

Actions:

- Make sure rewards are for genuine suggestions or ideas.
- A team can be established comprising all the departments who can deliver genuine suggestions or ideas for the development of organization.
- Encourage the ideas and suggestions from your employees or subordinates.

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