



SHIFT MANAGEMENT

STRESS RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST		
1. Do You have a Stress Problem?	Yes	No
Do you have a number of cases of sickness absence due to stress?		
Do you see stress and related terms featuring on fit notes?		
Do you know someone who is currently off due to stress?		
Would your employees be unlikely to recommend your organisation as a good place to work?		
2. Management and Culture		
Have you made yourself aware of the HSE's six stress risk standards (demands, control, support, relationships, roles and change) and management standards?		
Have you included stress in your general risk assessments?		
Does everyone have clear roles and responsibilities?		
Has everyone been trained so that they can carry out their duties safely and confidently (don't forget managers and supervisors)?		
Do you review performance regularly (an annual performance appraisal is good but most people need more frequent feedback and guidance to perform at their best)?		
Do you give consistent messages about what is important so that people can set priorities within their work- load? ('They don't know what they want' is a common reaction from stressed employees. If everything's a priority, nothing is.)		
Do you recognise that too little pressure can be stressful as well as too much? (Allow people to take on greater responsibility when they are ready for it.)		
Do your managers take action when stress issues arise?		
Can employees concerned about stress get help from an occupational health team, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or a confidential helpline?		
3. Training		
Have you trained managers and supervisors to recognise and know how to handle stress cases?		
Have you provided diversity training?		



4. Harassment and Bullying		
Have you set out your policy, either as a section in your health and safety policy or separately?		
Is everyone clear about what behaviour constitutes bullying or harassment, and that they are unacceptable?		
Do you investigate any cases objectively, taking advice from HR colleagues?		
Do managers display a non-bullying approach in their dealings with others?		
5. Violence and Aggression		
Have you set a policy, either as a section in your health and safety policy or separately?		
Does your policy cover how you will report, classify and record incidents?		
Do you have arrangements to monitor, investigate and (where appropriate) report to outside bodies such as the police?		
Do you have measures in place to support staff suffering verbal abuse or physical injury (for example, counselling, special leave, advice on legal action)?		
Have you investigated physical measures such as changes in the design of the working environment and installation of safety/security devices such as screens, CCTV, alarms and panic buttons?		



Thought for the Month

May is Mental Health Awareness month, but what do we know about mental health?

May is Mental Health Awareness month and England is celebrating May as Mental Health Week. So, I thought it would be appropriate to reflect on the changes that have, or are occurring to the treatment and attitudes surrounding mental health.

Working in health and safety has been a real eye-opener to me when it comes to all aspects of mental health. I thought that I knew quite a lot about it, having been affected both directly and indirectly by the subject.

I learn new things every day from research and from the information provided by employees when they have the courage to come and discuss their concerns with me.

Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Week should be a time to celebrate the advances in the mental health field and to bring awareness of the ongoing struggles of mental illness. It is also hoped that through awareness we can put to rest some of the continued stigmas that persist surrounding mental illness.

There have been advances in science, research and medicine, but the common feeling continues that mental illness is in some way or another due to a lack of character or motivation. It has also been implied that mental disorders are borne by those who are not 'strong' enough to overcome them.

Let me assure anyone who has not suffered from mental disorder that lack of strength can be immediately crossed off the list of suspected shortcomings. The strength that is required to bear mental ill health is immeasurable. The courage of its victims is boundless.

Stigma

Stigma is one of the main causes for people not seeking treatment at the outset of a disorder, and this is typically when disorders are easiest to treat and overcome.

Research and surveys hold some promising news for sufferers of mental health disorders. I can say from experience that Palletline gave encouragement and support to me the minute I reported my symptoms which were of stress and anxiety, and I found it a huge help.

There is a long, long way to go, until the population at large begin to fully understand mental health problems and start accepting and supporting sufferers as they would a person suffering a physical ailment, but we have indeed come far, however these days we hear far more sad stories about the lack of hospital places and the unavailability of professional help and care.

Raising awareness

If you know anyone who is affected by mental health issues then stop and think a while. Don't look on them as weak but realise how strong they are. Don't pity them but encourage them. Most sufferers haven't 'lost their marbles' in any way and do not need to be treated as though they are in any way lesser able to function.

This month is an opportunity to celebrate the advances, break down stigma, but to also reflect on what we as individuals can do to dispel the myths surrounding mental illness.