



ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY
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PSY 470 INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY
WEEK 14

WORKER STRESS & BURNOUT



Worker Stress and Burnout

Work can be both rewarding and burdensome. While jobs provide purpose and satisfaction, they also create pressure through deadlines, workloads, and difficult relationships.

This presentation explores the complex nature of workplace stress, its causes, and its effects on both individuals and organizations.





Understanding Worker Stress



Physiological Reactions

Increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and plentiful sweating are common physical responses to stress.



Psychological Reactions

Anxiety, fear, frustration, and despair are typical emotional responses to stressful situations.



Perception Matters

What one person finds stressful, another may find energizing. Stress is highly individual.

Defining Worker Stress

Hans Selye's View

Stress is primarily a physiological reaction to threatening environmental events.

John French's Perspective

Stress results from a lack of "fit" between a person's skills and the demands of the job.

Richard Lazarus's Approach

Stress comes from perceiving an event as a threat or challenge, combined with one's perceived ability to manage it.

Distress vs. Eustress

Distress (Negative)

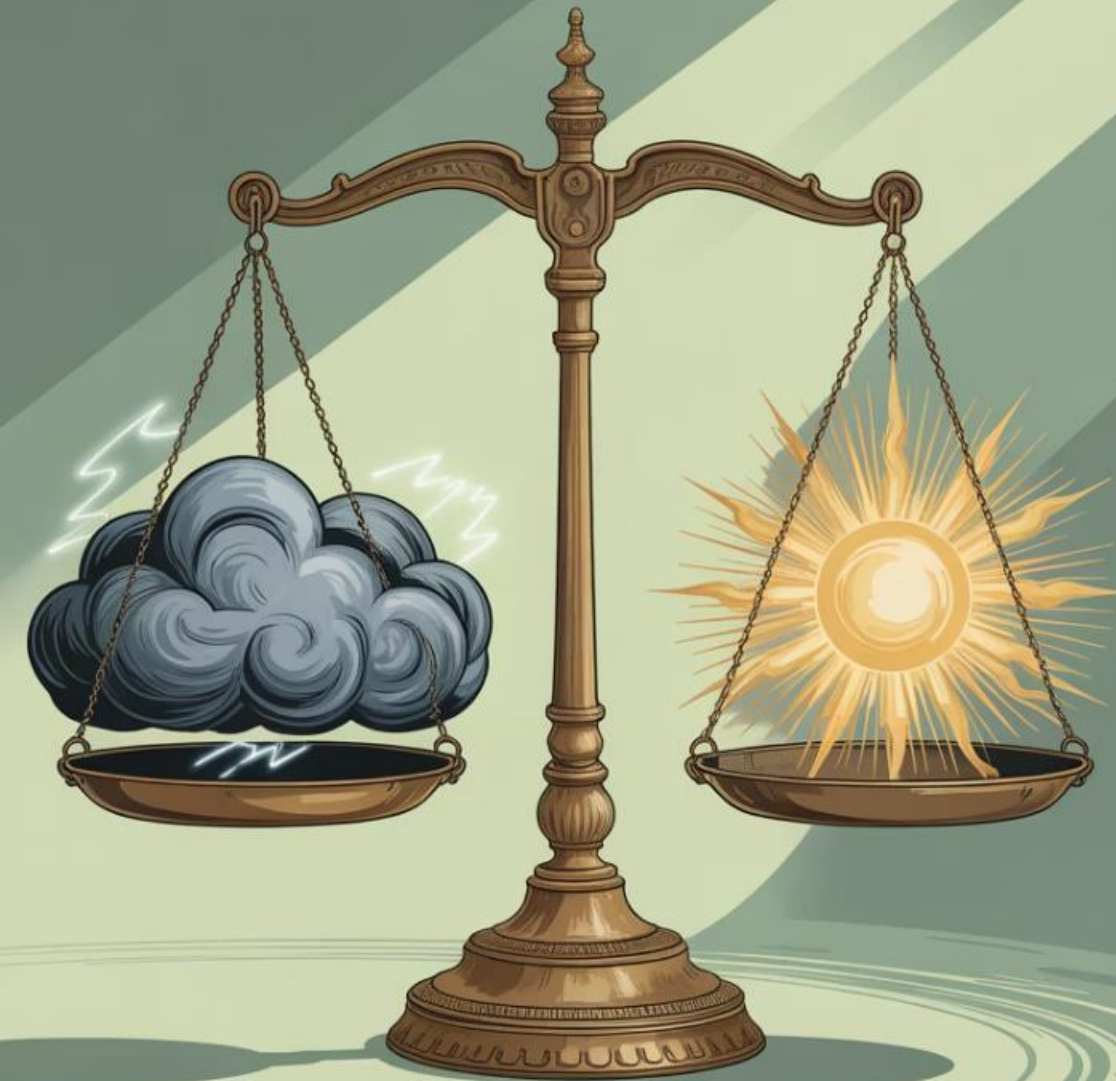
Working overtime without compensation, facing criticism, and taking on unwanted responsibilities create harmful pressure.

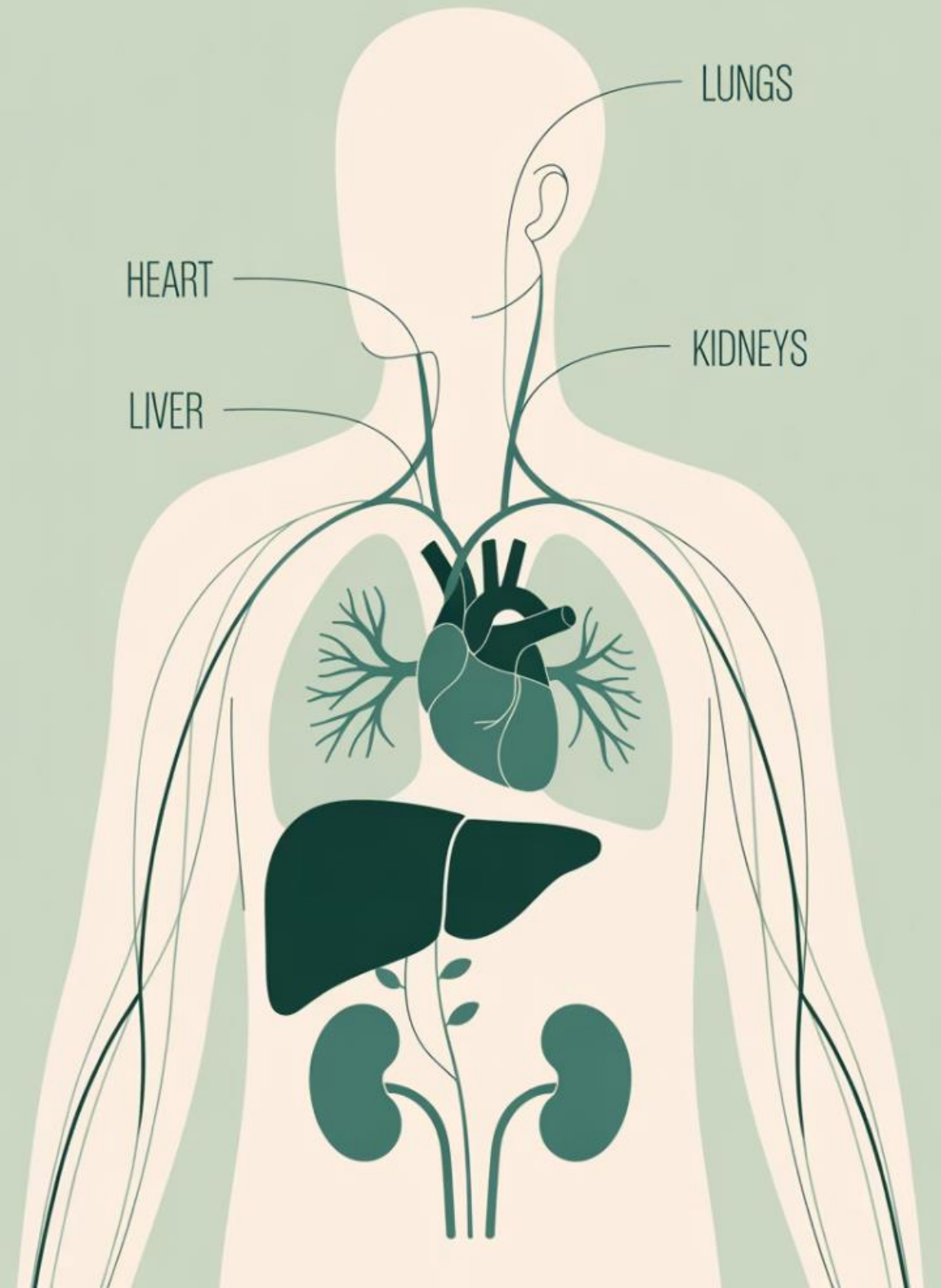
Eustress (Positive)

Feelings of accomplishment, anticipation, pride, and challenge can create positive stress that motivates performance.

Common Misconception

Not all stress is bad. Some stress can be motivating and challenging, leading to growth and achievement.





Health Impacts of Chronic Stress



Cardiovascular Issues

Hypertension and coronary heart disease can develop from sustained stress exposure.



Digestive Problems

Ulcers and colitis are common stress-related digestive conditions.



Mental Health

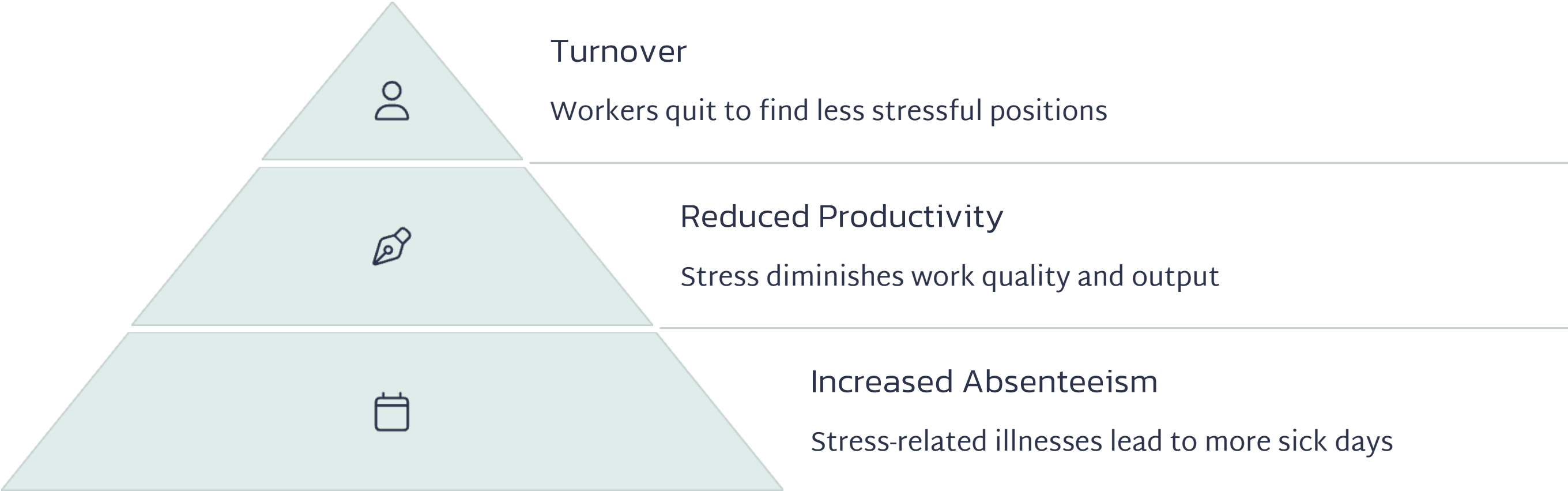
Mental strain, fatigue, anxiety, and depression can reduce productivity and work quality.



Respiratory Effects

Stress can trigger or worsen asthma attacks in susceptible individuals.

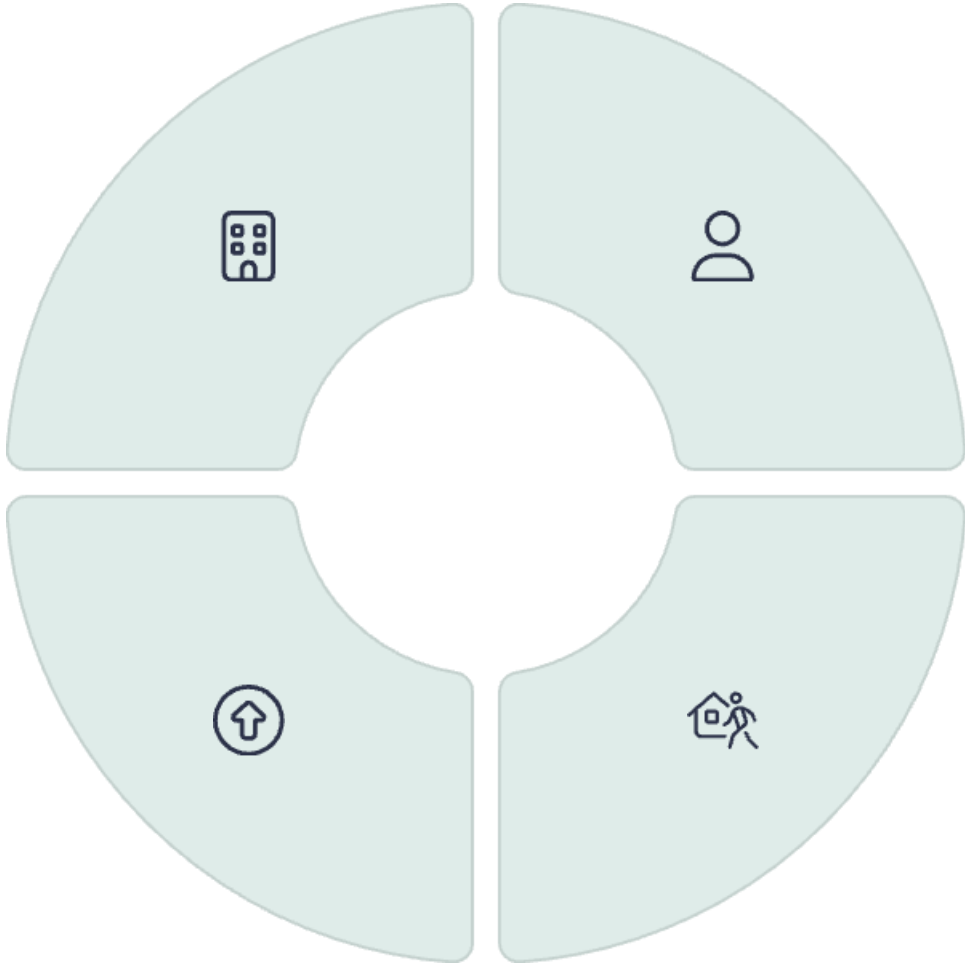
Organizational Impact of Worker Stress



Sources of Worker Stress

Organizational
Work environment factors including tasks, roles, and physical conditions.

Spillover
Stress from one area affects other areas of life in a cumulative manner.



Individual
Personal characteristics, history of stress exposure, and personality traits.

External
Stressors from home, school, and interpersonal relationships outside work.

High-Stress Occupations



Certain occupations face unique stressors. Air traffic controllers deal with fear of causing accidents. Healthcare providers face heavy workloads. Police officers and firefighters confront physical dangers.

Work Task Stressors



Work Overload

Excessive work speed, output, or concentration demands



Underutilization

Too little to do or not using workers' skills



Physical Conditions

Extreme temperatures, noise, poor lighting, or ventilation

Technology-Related Stress



Email Overload

The constant influx of messages creates pressure to respond quickly and manage large volumes of information.



Information Overload

Too much data from too many sources makes it difficult to process and prioritize effectively.



Always-On Culture

Technology blurs the line between work and personal time, creating pressure to be constantly available.



Interpersonal Stress at Work



Difficult Boss

A harsh, critical supervisor with a punitive management style creates tension.



Coworker Conflict

Competition for promotions or resources strains working relationships.



Office Politics

Power struggles and organizational politics generate anxiety and uncertainty.



Social Isolation

Virtual work can lead to feelings of disconnection and lack of support.



Emotional Labor

57%

Service Workers

Percentage who report high emotional labor demands in customer-facing roles.

3x

Burnout Risk

Increased likelihood of burnout for workers with high emotional labor demands.

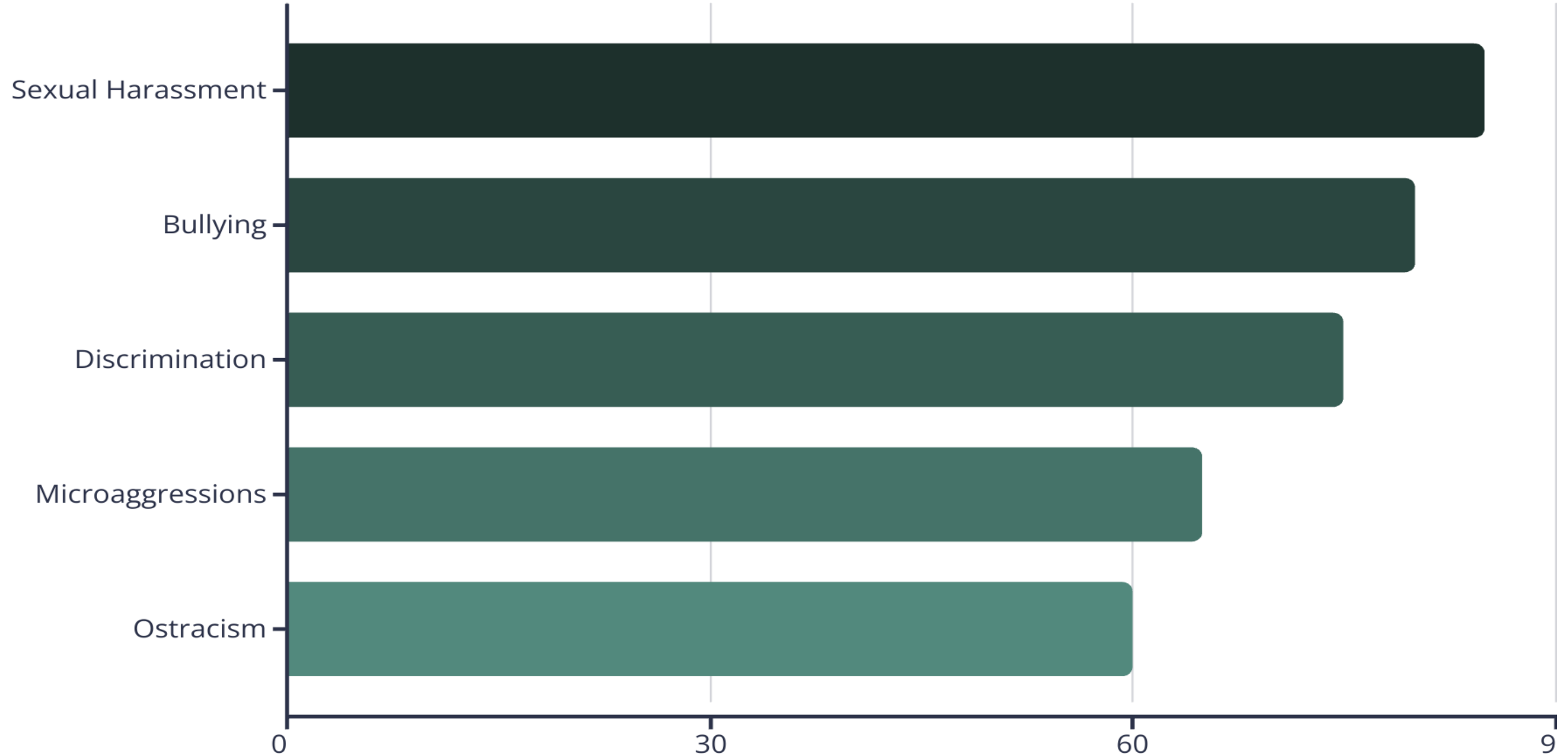
42%

Turnover Impact

Percentage of service industry turnover attributed to emotional exhaustion.

Workplace Mistreatment

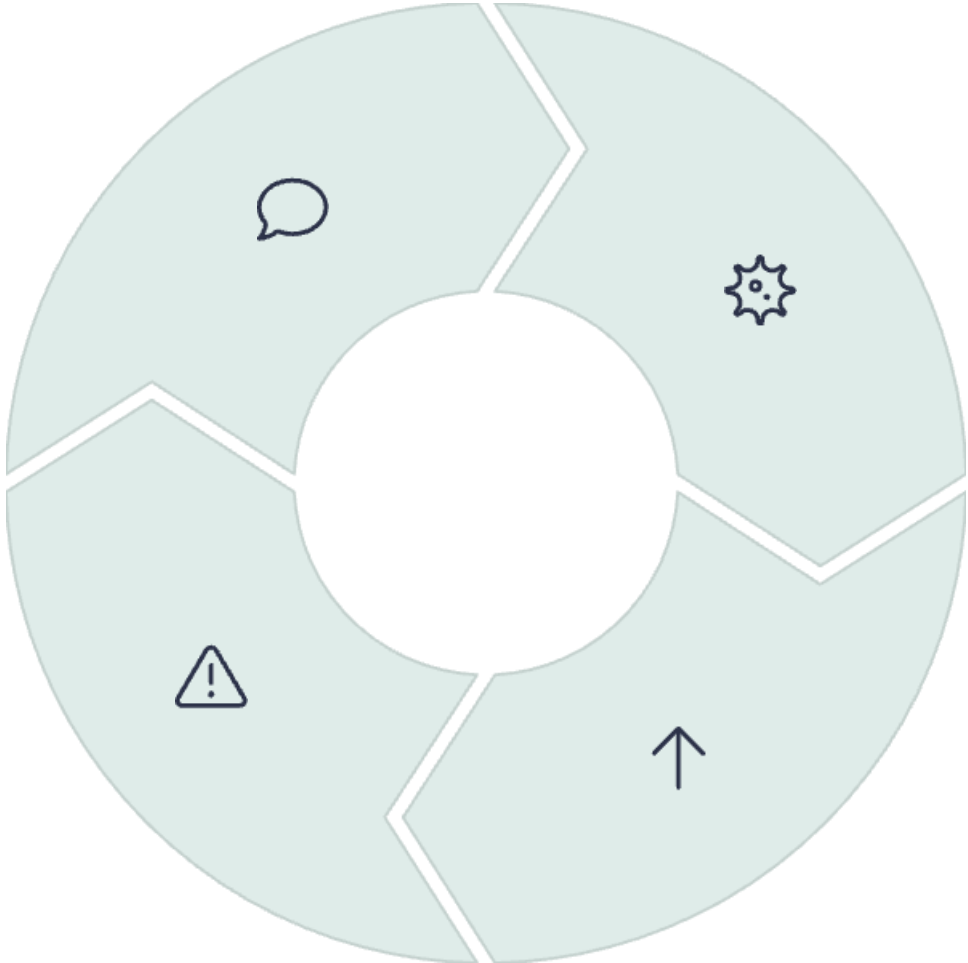
All forms of workplace mistreatment significantly increase stress levels. Even subtle forms like microaggressions and ostracism can have serious negative effects on well-being and performance.



The Escalation of Workplace Incivility

Minor Rudeness
Small acts of incivility begin the cycle

Aggressive Behavior
Culminates in serious workplace issues



Contagious Spread
Uncivil behavior becomes normalized

Escalation
Behavior worsens over time

Workplatement Types of Workpplace Mistreatment



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Categories of Workplace Mistreatment

Interpersonal-Covert	Interpersonal-Overt
Gossip, exclusion, silent treatment	Verbal abuse, bullying, harassment
Formal-Covert	Formal-Overt
Unfair evaluations, subtle discrimination	Blatant discrimination, wrongful termination

Stereotype Threat

Awareness of Negative Stereotype

Individual becomes conscious of negative stereotypes about their group.

Fear of Confirming Stereotype

Anxiety develops about potentially confirming these negative expectations.

Performance Impairment

Cognitive resources are diverted to managing anxiety, reducing performance.

Reinforcement of Stereotype

Reduced performance appears to confirm the stereotype, creating a cycle.



Physical Work Environment Stressors



Temperature Extremes

Working in very hot or cold conditions creates physical strain and discomfort.



Noise Levels

Loud or distracting noise in open-space offices significantly increases stress.



Poor Lighting

Inadequate illumination causes eye strain and affects concentration.



Crowded Spaces

Cramped, crowded work environments create tension and reduce privacy.



Shift Work Disruption

1

Natural Rhythm

Body's circadian cycle regulates sleep-wake patterns and hormone release.

2

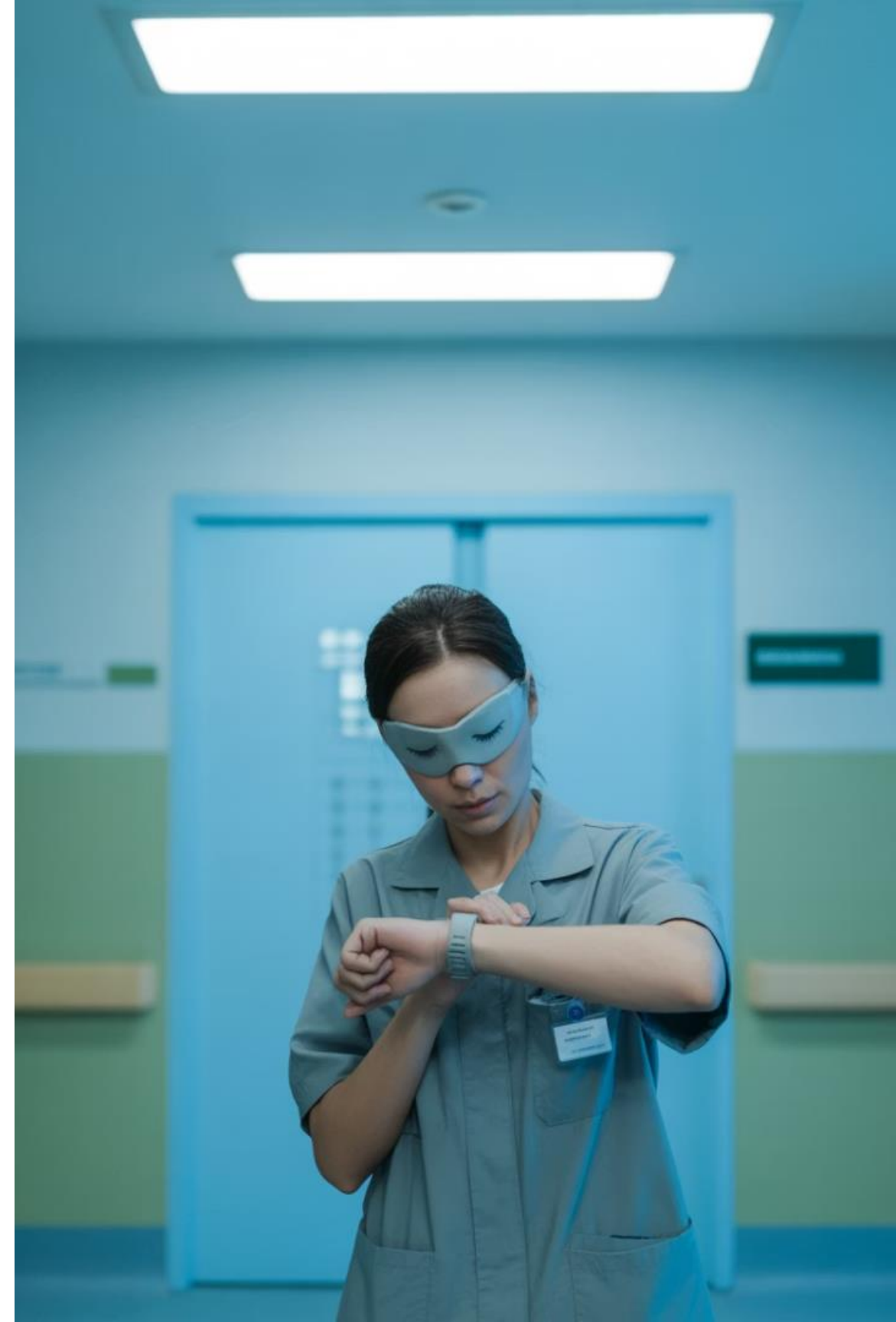
Shift Work Disruption

Late-night shifts force the body to be active when it's programmed to rest.

3

Negative Outcomes

High stress, fatigue, job dissatisfaction, and performance errors result.



Individual Differences in Stress Response



Stress Resistance

Some personality traits help people remain calm under pressure and recover quickly from stressful events.



Stress Vulnerability

Certain personality characteristics make people more prone to experiencing stress and its negative effects.



Perception Differences

The same event can be perceived as threatening by one person and challenging or even exciting by another.



Key Takeaways on Worker Stress

Complex Phenomenon

Stress involves both physiological and psychological reactions to events perceived as threatening or taxing.

Multiple Sources

Stress comes from organizational factors like work tasks and roles, as well as individual characteristics.

Significant Impact

Worker stress affects health, productivity, absenteeism, and turnover, making it crucial for organizations to address.

Individual Differences

People vary greatly in how they perceive and respond to potentially stressful situations.



Understanding Organizational Stress

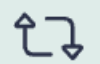
Stress impacts both individuals and organizations. It affects health, productivity, and workplace dynamics.

This presentation explores the sources of workplace stress, its effects, and strategies for coping at both individual and organizational levels.





Sources of Organizational Stress



Organizational Change

Reorganizations, mergers, acquisitions, and policy changes disrupt stability and predictability.



Role Ambiguity

Unclear job tasks and responsibilities create uncertainty and anxiety.



Interpersonal Conflict

Difficult relationships with coworkers and supervisors increase tension.



Workload Issues

Both overload and underutilization can trigger stress responses.

Table 9.1 Characteristics of Jobs that Cause Worker Stress

Work overload (e.g., time pressures and too much work)	Interpersonal conflict
Underutilization of worker knowledge, skills, ability, or energy	Decision making
Dangerous work conditions	Organizational change
Responsibility for the health and well-being of others	Lack of support from supervisors or coworkers
Difficult or complex work tasks	Lack of control over the work situation
Unpleasant or uncomfortable physical work conditions	Work–family conflict
	Personal factors (e.g., Type A behavior or stress-prone personality)

Table 9.2 Type A Behavior Pattern

Two popular self-report instruments are designed to assess Type A behavior. They are the Jenkins Activity Survey (JAS; Jenkins et al., 1979) and the Framingham Type A Scale (FTAS; Haynes et al., 1978). Following are examples of questions that determine Type A behavior:

- Are you a hard-driving and competitive person?
- Do you always seem pressed for time to get errands done?
- Are you the type of person who has a strong desire to excel and accomplish things?
- Are you impatient when you have to wait for service?
- Are you the kind of person who gets easily irritated?
- Would other people consider you bossy?
- Is your temper sometimes fiery and hard to control?
- Do you often feel like there is too much to do and not enough time to do it?

Affirmative answers to these questions indicate a Type A behavior pattern.

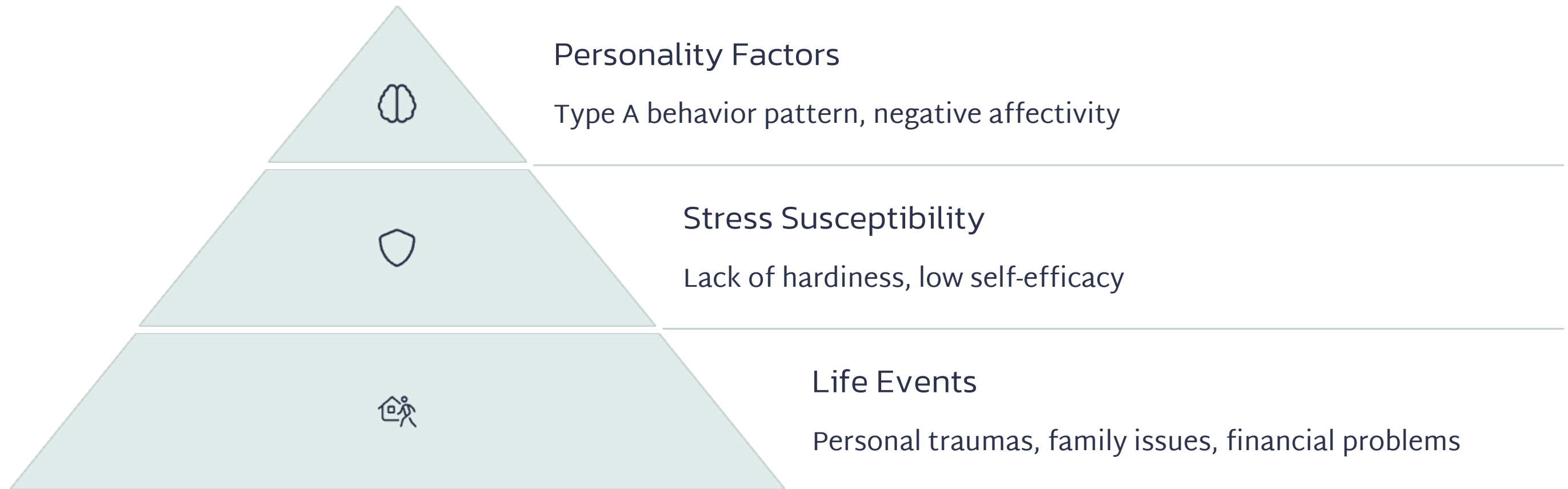
ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Workplace Bullying: An “Invisible” Epidemic?

A 2017 survey by the Workplace Bullying Institute found that 19% of employees in the United States have experienced bullying at work, and another 19% have observed bullying at work. Bullying behaviors include threats, aggression, ridiculing, sabotage of employees’ work, and giving them the silent treatment. Targets of workplace bullying become emotionally depleted, which affects their motivation and can lead to disengagement at work (Tuckey & Neall, 2014), and experience severe stress reactions, including psychological and physical illness (Hogh et al., 2012). The cost of workplace bullying to organizations in terms of reduced productivity and increased absenteeism and turnover likely runs into the billions of dollars (Paludi, 2015). In Australia, where combating workplace bullying is a priority, it was estimated that bullying led to depression that cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually in increased absenteeism and lost productivity (McTernan et al., 2013).

Some countries have begun to enact legislation to combat workplace bullying, including Australia, Canada, and several European nations. In the U.S., there is currently no federal law to reduce bullying, but many states have passed antibullying legislation that requires employers to offer harassment training and increases accountability over bullying (<https://healthywork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/015-HWC-Website-Page-Content-Resources-Healthy-Work-Strategies-Workplace-Bullying-Prevention-Laws-Regs-v1-092019-300res-CYMK.pdf>). As of 2020, Connecticut, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Illinois, and Rhode Island have introduced legislation allowing employees who have been victims of workplace bullying to sue their organizations. Further, it is important to note that, because bullying is often aimed at marginalized groups, it can fall under Civil Rights Act legislation (Cortina, 2008).

Individual Sources of Stress



Individual characteristics significantly influence how people perceive and respond to workplace stressors. Type A personalities, characterized by excessive drive and competitiveness, often experience stronger physiological stress responses.

Table 9.3 Sample Items from the Social Readjustment Rating Scale

Life Event	Stress Value
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Jail term	63
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Fired at work	47
Change to different line of work	36
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
Mortgage over \$10,000	31
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
Change in responsibilities at work	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse begins or stops work	26
Trouble with boss	23
Change in work hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas	12
Minor violations of the law	11

Source: Holmes & Rahe, 1967.

WORKER ISSUES

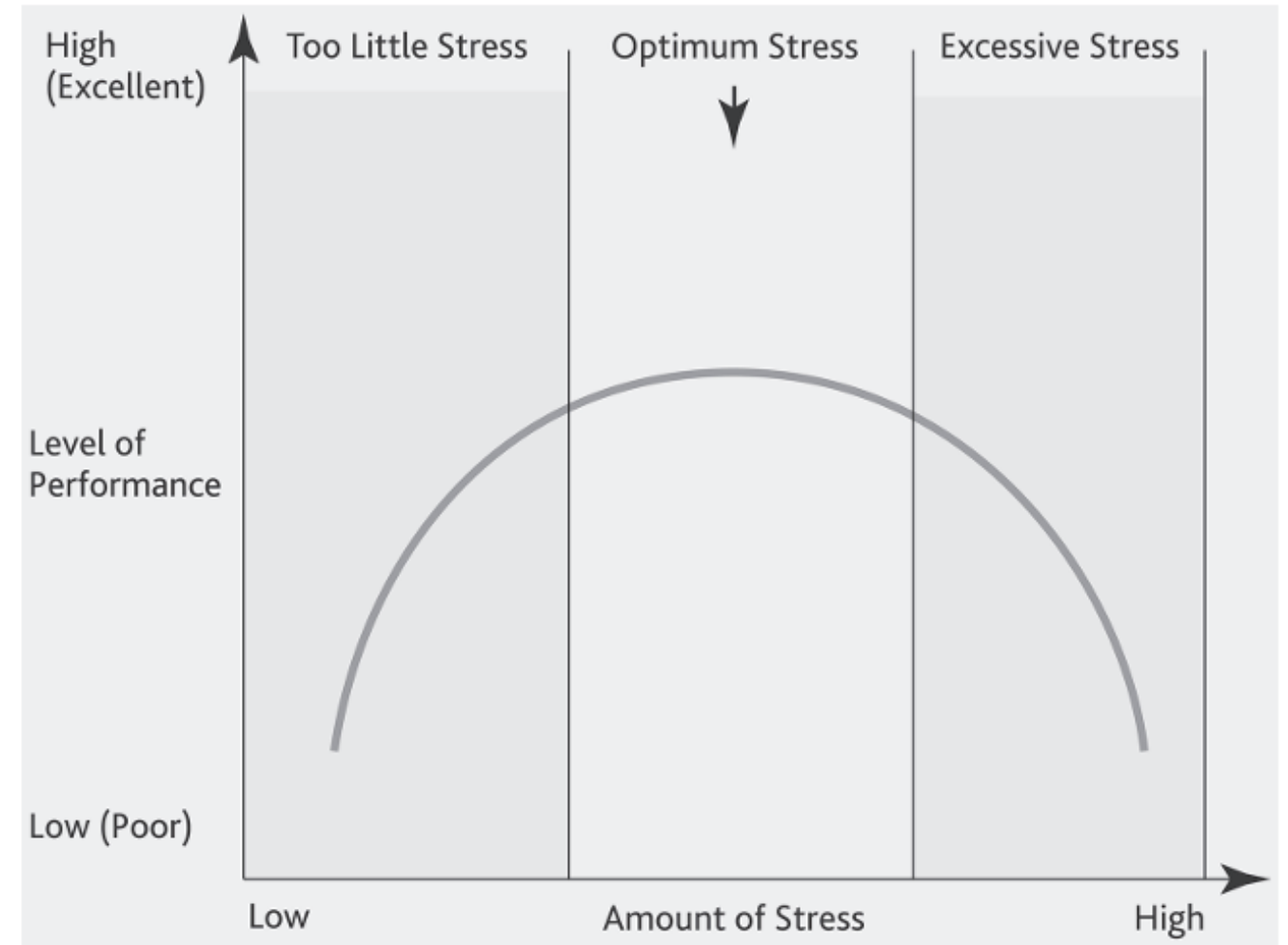


Figure 9.3 Relationship between performance and stress.

Source: Adapted from Cohen, 1980, p. 85.

The Type A Behavior Pattern

Key Characteristics

- Excessive drive and competitiveness
- Sense of urgency and impatience
- Underlying hostility

Health Implications

- Higher risk of coronary heart disease
- Stronger physiological stress reactions
- Potential long-term health consequences

Career Outcomes

- Tend to work harder
- Often achieve higher positions
- Generally earn higher salaries



Stress Resistance: Hardiness & Self-Efficacy

Hardiness

A personality trait that helps resist stress effects. Hardy individuals:

- View stressors as challenges, not threats
- Believe they can control life events
- Stay committed to their work
- Find meaning in challenging experiences

Self-Efficacy

Belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations.

High self-efficacy:

- Reduces perceived stress
- Improves coping abilities
- Enhances job performance
- Strengthens leadership capabilities



Measuring Workplace Stress



Physiological Measures

Blood pressure, heart rate, hormone levels like cortisol



Self-Report Assessments

Standardized surveys like SDS, OSI, and JSS



Life Events Scales

Measuring impact of significant life changes



Person-Environment Fit

Assessing match between worker and job demands

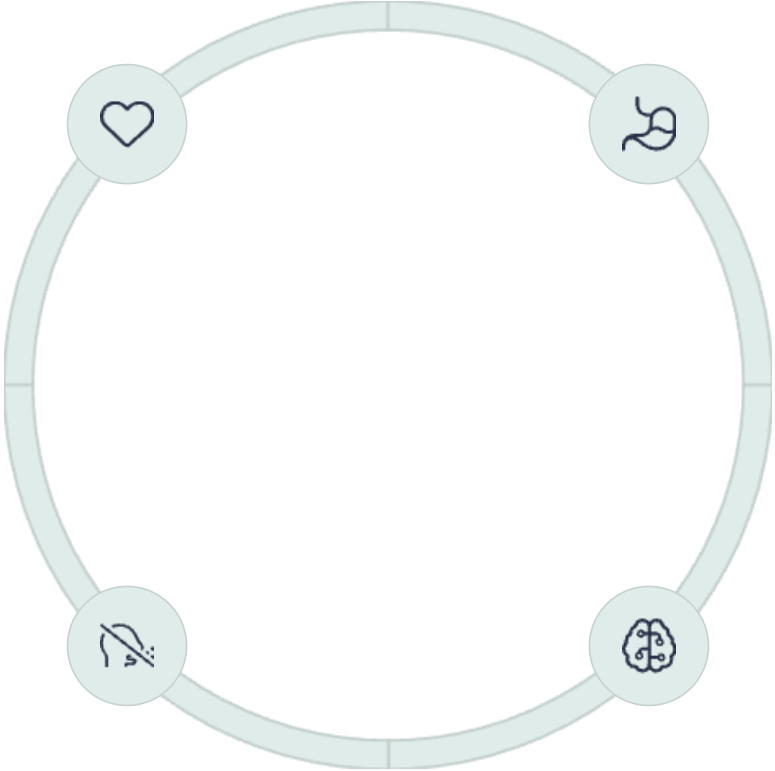
Effects of Stress on Health

Cardiovascular

High blood pressure, heart disease, increased risk of heart attacks

Immune System

Weakened immunity, longer recovery from illness



Digestive

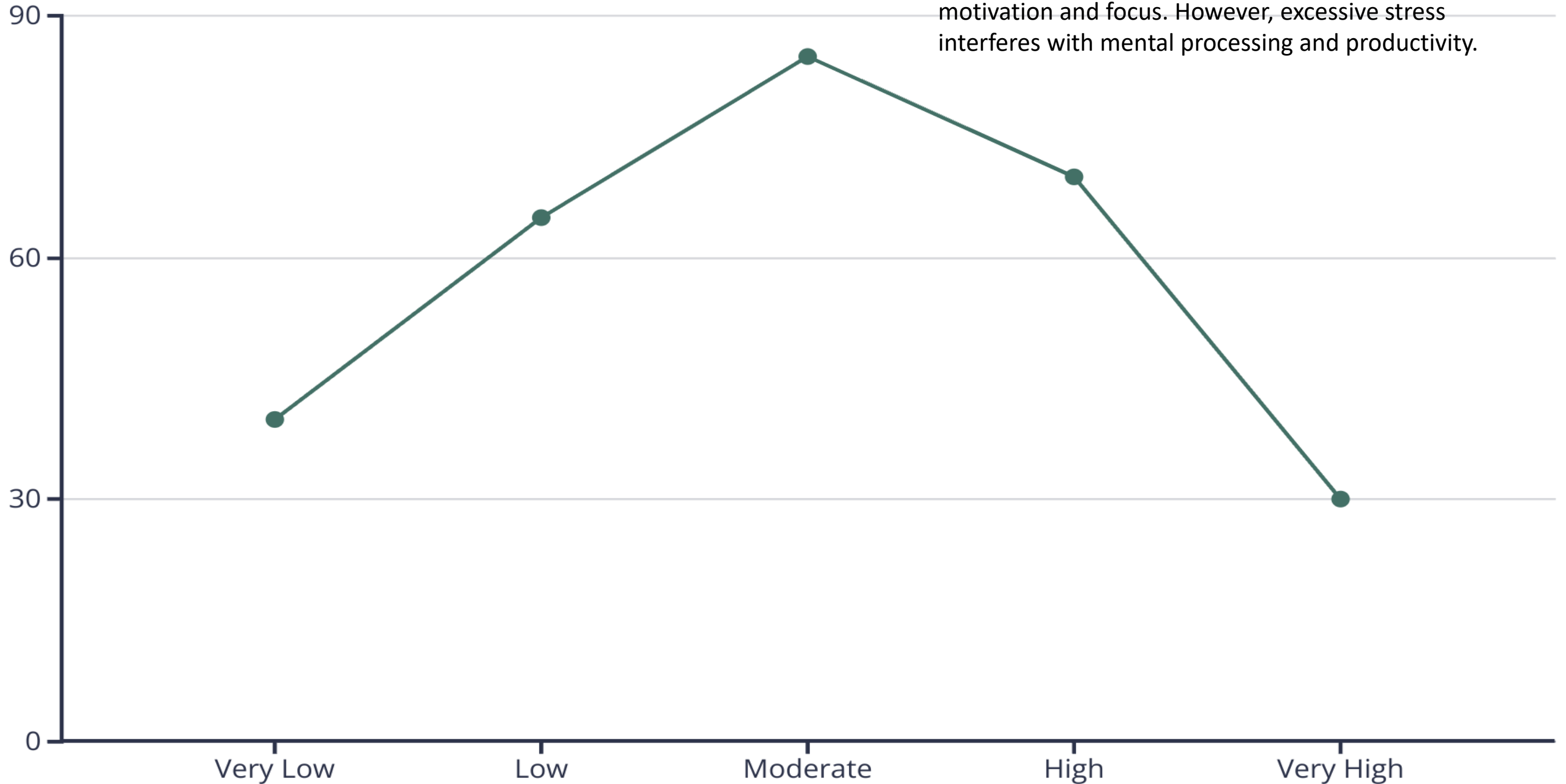
Ulcers, colitis, digestive disorders

Psychological

Depression, anxiety, chronic fatigue

Stress and Work Performance

The relationship between stress and performance often follows an inverted U-shape. Low to moderate stress can improve performance by providing motivation and focus. However, excessive stress interferes with mental processing and productivity.



Job Burnout: The Ultimate Stress Response



Emotional Exhaustion

Feeling drained by excessive demands



Depersonalization

Developing cynical attitudes toward others



Reduced Accomplishment

Feeling ineffective and unproductive

Burnout is especially common in helping professions like healthcare, teaching, and social work. During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers experienced unprecedented levels of burnout.

Table 9.4 Sample Items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBIHSS)

Directions: The purpose of this survey is to discover how various persons in the human services or helping professions view their jobs and the people with whom they work closely. Because persons in a wide variety of occupations will answer this survey, it uses the term “recipients” to refer to the people for whom you provide your service, care, treatment, or instruction. When you answer this survey please think of these people as recipients of the service you provide, even though you may use another term in your work.

Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, write a “0” (zero) before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

How	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Often:	Never	A few times a year	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I. Depersonalization

5. I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects.

II. Personal Accomplishment

9. I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives through my work.

III. Emotional Exhaustion

20. I feel like I’m at the end of my rope.

Source: From the *Maslach Burnout Inventory—Human Services Survey* by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson. Copyright 1988 by CPP, Inc. All rights reserved. Further reproduction is prohibited without the publisher’s consent. Modified and reproduced by special permission of the Publisher CPP, Inc., Mountain View, CA 94043 for Maslach Burnout Inventory-HSS by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson.



Individual Coping Strategies



Physical Wellness

Exercise, proper diet, adequate sleep



Relaxation Techniques

Meditation, deep breathing, biofeedback



Time Management

Prioritizing tasks, setting boundaries



Cognitive Restructuring

Changing negative thought patterns

Organizational Coping Strategies



Improve Person–Job Fit

Better screening, selection, and placement of employees



Enhance Training Programs

Proper job training and organizational orientation



Foster Supportive Environment

Team-building and positive workplace relationships



Improve Communication

Clear information flow and feedback channels



APPLYING I/O PSYCHOLOGY

Designing Effective Work Stress Management Training Programs

A wide range of programs are used to help employees manage work stress. According to leading researchers, such programs must follow certain guidelines to ensure their effectiveness: they must be systematic; they must teach knowledge, skills, or attitudes that are useful in coping with stress; and their success must be evaluated and documented (Munz & Kohler, 1997).

The first step in designing a stress management program is the same as in designing any sort of training program: an assessment of training needs. An organizational stress analysis is needed and might include answering such questions as: What are the major producers of stress in the organization? Do these stressors necessarily detract from the accomplishment of organizational goals? (In other words, are they “bad”?) What sort of resources will be committed to the training program?

According to Matteson and Ivancevich (1987), most stress management programs take one of two forms: knowledge acquisition programs or skill training programs. Knowledge acquisition programs provide participants with some information about stress and a number of coping techniques. An outline of a sample four-part stress knowledge acquisition program is presented next:

- 1 *Overview of stress and its potential consequences (3 hours)*—This might include a lecture and readings on facts and myths about stress, the impact of stress on physical and psychological health and on work performance, and potential sources of stress.
- 2 *Self-analysis: Learning about your personal stress (3 hours)*—This section can include assessments of personal stressors using instruments such as the stressful life events scale or workers’ self-reports.

- 3 *Methods of coping with work stress (3 hours)*—Here, various individual coping strategies are presented and perhaps demonstrated.
- 4 *Developing a personalized coping plan (3 hours)*—In this final part, participants work on developing customized programs for managing stress, including setting personal stress management goals and finding means to assess their attainment.

The major advantages of knowledge acquisition programs are that they are relatively inexpensive, do not require a lot of time, and do not place heavy demands on participants. Unfortunately, these “one-shot” training programs may not be as effective as the more involved skill training programs in alleviating work stress (Hemingway & Smith, 1999).

Skill training programs are designed to improve specific coping skills in areas such as problem solving, time management, communication, social interaction, cognitive coping, or strategies for making changes in lifestyle. An example of a step-by-step problem-solving skill program developed by Wasik (1984) is illustrated next:

- 1 Identify problem (What is my problem?)
- 2 Select goals (What do I want to accomplish by solving the problem?)
- 3 Generate alternatives (What else can I do?)
- 4 Review the consequences (What might happen?)
- 5 Make a decision (What is my decision?)
- 6 Implement the decision (Did I do what I decided?)
- 7 Evaluate the decision (Does it work?)

This step-by-step program would be conducted in a series of 1–2-hour sessions over many weeks. Participants learn each of the steps, practice them using role-playing, and receive feedback concerning their skill

APPLYING I/O PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued)

development. They are also encouraged to use the skills to deal with actual work problems and then report back to discuss the success or failure of the strategy. The key to these programs is to practice using the coping strategies and applying them to real and simulated stressful situations.

The final stage in any stress management program is to evaluate its effectiveness. Too often, stress

management programs are not properly evaluated (Loo, 1994). It has been suggested that an assessment should consider trainees’ reactions; how well the program accomplished its immediate objectives; actual behavioral changes; the impact of the program on organizational outcomes such as productivity, absenteeism, morale, and employee health; and the cost-effectiveness of the program (Kirkpatrick, 1978).

UP

CLOSE

Stress Levels and Stress Sources of Executives around the World

A common stereotype in the U.S. is the highly stressed, top-level business executive (Friedman et al., 1985). Is this characterization accurate, and, if so, are high-level managers in other nations similarly stressed? The first question—"Are executives highly stressed?"—does not have an easy answer. For example, many executives constantly work under such stressful conditions as work overload, high levels of responsibility, and inter-role

conflict (e.g., being required to travel extensively on business, which interferes with family and personal commitments). The finding that executives have a higher rate of certain types of ulcers than certain blue-collar workers attests to the existence of executive stress (Hurrell et al., 1988). On the other hand, executives have the benefit of some working conditions that are believed to moderate stress, such as control over the job.

UPCLOSE *(continued)*

The answer to the question of whether executives worldwide experience similar stressors is also not completely clear. There is some indication, however, that executives in different nations experience different types or sources of stress. For example, executives in less-developed countries such as Nigeria and Egypt seem to experience a great deal of stress owing to lack of autonomy, whereas those from more developed countries, such as the U.S., the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Japan, experience greater stress from work overload (Carayon & Zijlstra, 1999). Workers in India rated lack of job structure, not workload, as their greatest source of stress (Narayanan et al., 1999). One study found that executives in New Zealand experience less job-related stress than executives in nine other countries (McCormick & Cooper, 1988). These researchers mention

that this may be owing to the more relaxed lifestyle in New Zealand and the fact that many of these executives worked for rather small organizations.

An interesting study by Kirkcaldy and Cooper (1993) found some evidence that work stress for executives may be modified by preference for leisure activities—and that preferred leisure activities may be related to culture. For example, managers from Germany, who tend to prefer nonaggressive leisure activities, experienced less job stress than British managers, who typically prefer aggressive leisure activities.

Overall, such studies seem to indicate that, although executive job stress is universal, the amount of stress experienced and the sources of the stress may vary depending on country or culture.



Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Services Offered

- Substance abuse counseling
- Stress management
- Personal problem assistance
- Mental health support

Program Types

- Internal (on-site services)
- External (contracted agencies)
- Hybrid approaches

Benefits

- Reduced healthcare costs
- Improved employee wellbeing
- Decreased absenteeism
- Enhanced productivity

Substance Abuse in the Workplace

\$160B

Annual Cost

Estimated cost to U.S. employers from substance abuse



Job Instability

Higher turnover rates among substance abusers



Productivity

Decreased performance and increased absenteeism

Workplace stress can trigger substance abuse, creating a destructive cycle. Effective policies and support programs are essential for breaking this pattern.



Resilience Training Programs

Awareness
Recognizing stress triggers and responses

Self-Efficacy
Building confidence in coping abilities



Emotional Regulation
Managing reactions to stressful situations

Mindfulness
Staying present and focused under pressure

Resilience training programs show small but significant benefits in reducing stress and improving performance. Individual-focused programs with extensive training time yield the best results.

Key Takeaways: Managing Workplace Stress

Recognize Stress Sources

Both organizational factors and individual differences contribute to workplace stress. Identify specific triggers in your environment.

Implement Multiple Strategies

Effective stress management requires both individual coping techniques and organizational support systems.

Build Resilience

Develop hardiness and self-efficacy to better withstand workplace pressures and prevent burnout.

Create Supportive Culture

Organizations that prioritize employee wellbeing see reduced stress-related costs and improved performance.

