



International  
**Wellbeing** Insights  
People, Culture & Wellbeing



Stress Management Society  
from distress to de-stress

# Plan International

28th March 2022

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## WELCOME

Stress is the driving force that keeps us on our toes and ensures that we push to be the best we can be. However that is only valid up to a certain point. If we have too much stress and endless wear and tear, it can drive us into physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.

Certainly we can't avoid the problem. Situations arise on a day-to-day basis, which make physical, mental and emotional demands on us. There may be decisions that need to be made, deadlines that need to be met, and lessons to be learned.

Unreasonable stress affects one in five of the working population and after acute medical conditions it is the most common cause of long term sickness absence from work (CIPD Absence Management 2014).

Stress undoubtedly makes people ill. It is now known to contribute to heart disease, hypertension and high blood pressure, it affects the immune system, is linked to strokes, IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain, miscarriage, allergies, alopecia and even premature tooth loss.

Therefore it is imperative to strike the right balance. As individuals, we must take stock of all aspects of our life and situations and learn to cope better.

Treat it early, and your prospects are good. Ignore the problem, and there is a risk that 'burnout' may become a permanent state of affairs.



# THE TOP PRINCIPLE

Write down the TOP 3 issues in terms of importance from your exercise

1.

---

2.

---

3.

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Worrying about the future can cost us a lot of time and energy. It is a time robber just like unexpected or unscheduled interruptions. Time robbers are a massive problem when trying to manage your time effectively. Dealing with time robbers is ultimately a problem solving exercise. This consists of a logical 'step by step' analysis of what the problem actually is. It is also necessary to define the level of control.

A useful device for ascertaining this level is the TOP principle: *is the problem...*

**T**otally within my control

**O**utside of my control

**P**artially within my control

If the problem is totally outside of your control, then there is absolutely no point in attempting to solve it, we have to re-focus our energies on to things that we can an effect over

How would you classify each of your 3 worries? Circle the respective letter.

1. T O P

2. T O P

3. T O P

# RESOURCES

COMMENTS	RANK
Own list of various deliverables	
Lack of clarity on when the team's permanent managers will be hired	
Gaps in resourcing to deliver ALL the deliverables	
Multiple projects suspended because we have roles that are vacant	
Serious health issues requiring a lot of energy and time	
The mass exodus from the team	
When I email people in admin, HR, finance, or any other team, they do not respond or provide the necessary support to do my role	
Not enough support from line-managers to support our wellbeing	
Not being able to work on the things that interest me and will improve girls' rights more meaningfully	
There is a concerning amount of turnover and majority of it correlates to fatigue, burnout, stress and unmanageable expectations without much incentive (in terms of clear growth opportunities, progression, recognition, salary increments, etc.). The workload has stayed the same and the expectations from Leadership has risen. Junior staff are staying on to complete the work without clear direction and limited resources	

## TOP THREE IN TERMS OF IMPORTANCE

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## RESOURCES: WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE?**

**WHAT COULD WE DO ABOUT IT?**



## RESOURCES: ACTION PLANNING

### S.M.A.R.T.O. PLAN

#### **SPECIFIC**

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?  
WELL-DEFINED AND CLEAR

#### **MEASURABLE**

KNOW IF THE GOAL IS  
OBTAINABLE AND HOW FAR  
AWAY COMPLETION IS FIND OUT  
WHEN YOU HAVE ACHIEVED  
YOUR GOAL

#### **ACHIEVABLE**

AGREEMENT ON WHAT THE GOAL  
SHOULD BE AND IF IT IS REALISTIC

#### **REALISTIC**

WITHIN THE AVAILABILITY OF  
RESOURCES, KNOWLEDGE AND  
TIME

#### **TIME-BASED**

ENOUGH TIME TO ACHIEVE THE  
GOAL, NOT TOO MUCH TIME  
WHICH CAN HINDER  
PERFORMANCE

#### **OWNERSHIP**

WHO IS DOING THIS?  
WHO CAN HELP?

#### **BUDDY SYSTEM SUPPORT**

**TO IMPLEMENT POSITIVE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE, WE MUST FORM NEW HABITS - IT TAKES AT LEAST 28 DAYS TO FORM A NEW HABIT. WE MUST DECIDE OUR ACTIONS, CARRY THEM OUT, SUPPORT AND BE ACCOUNTABLE TO OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER.**

**WHO WILL YOU MAKE YOURSELF  
ACCOUNTABLE TO OVER THE NEXT  
\_\_\_ DAYS?**

**HOW WILL YOU STAY IN TOUCH?  
HOW MANY TIMES OVER THE NEXT  
\_\_\_ DAYS?**



# UNCERTAINTY

COMMENTS	RANK
Job insecurity for some roles - temporary contracts	
Isolation and loneliness from being in a remote team	
Inability to project into the future and get excited about work because of uncertainty	
Uncertainty	
A lot of diverse narratives that may not necessarily meld together at this point	
Stressed from some engagements moving away from our true values on meaningful participation for young activists	
Grief and loss of friends and family from COVID	
Anxiety about more people leaving... who will I be working with tomorrow?	
I feel increasingly stressed, anxious; working remotely it is even more difficult to communicate wellbeing/ needed support. I also feel like when these issues are brought up, not much action is taken. It is difficult to find solutions or have these conversations as well when it is usually a collective and not individual feeling. Right now it doesn't feel like a bridge that we can cross over, but a never ending highway.	

## TOP THREE IN TERMS OF IMPORTANCE

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Enter your commitments to log your actions and progress





# UNCERTAINTY: WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

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**WHAT COULD WE DO ABOUT IT?**



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# INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMENTS	RANK
Interdependencies with other departments pulling the team in different directions	
Short notice requests to input/ provide information in various initiatives/ meetings etc.	
Tasks take longer because I don't have connections across the org from being new to the team	
Too much admin tasks! Takes time away from meaningful work	
Boredom from admin and looking for translators, rather than more strategic thinking	
Last minute requests from management to provide more information	
Lack of opportunities for professional development and learning for us in the team	
Major zoom fatigue	
There isn't a clear mechanism for resolving conflicts	
Holding pieces of work of my line manager who left, but these aren't in my job description	
Unclear expectations or information about how to do my job, as so many colleagues who had institutional memory have left	
Lack of accountability of how line management is done and how our line managers care for our wellbeing	
We're missing 5 positions in the team, 2 of them have interim replacements, all of them are senior positions. In the past 8-12 months 7-8 people have left the team with 4 of them leaving without jobs lined up. I have been in the team/organisation the longest and that is only 3-4 years.	

## TOP THREE IN TERMS OF IMPORTANCE

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# INFRASTRUCTURE: WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE?**

**WHAT COULD WE DO ABOUT IT?**



# INFRASTRUCTURE: ACTION PLANNING

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WELL-DEFINED AND CLEAR

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# SWITCHING OFF - EVALUATION EXERCISE

Before we begin looking at mindsets, it may be helpful for you to think about your own, how it affects your life and to share this with a partner.

<https://switchingoff.questionpro.com>

1. What does switching off mean to you?

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2. When you are unable to switch off, what is the cause?

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3. When you are unable to switch off, how does it affect you:

A. Mentally?

---

B. Emotionally?

---

C. Physically?

---

4. How often are you unable to switch off?

---

5. What do you do to switch off?

---

6. What else could you do to help you switch off?

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# REPLAY THE DAY EXERCISE

This is a powerful mindfulness exercise to help you re-evaluate an existing behaviour or more quickly install a new positive behaviour. This purpose of this exercise is about:

## BEING PRESENT IN THE MOMENT

### WITNESSING OBJECTIVELY

## SWITCHING FROM 'ACTOR' TO 'DIRECTOR' IN YOUR STORY

Before you start; do a quick check-in - notice your surroundings, what you can see and hear, how you feel right now.

Sit calmly and start with some deep breathing – in through the nose and out through the mouth. After a few deep breaths, slowly close your eyes and let your breathing return to normal - you don't need to force it.

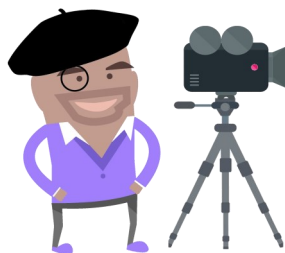
In this quiet state, begin to replay the events of your day from the moment you woke up to where you are sitting right now. If you find it difficult to picture the events of the day, try to list them instead— you might find that after a short while pictures will come into your mind.

Just observe. The movie in your head doesn't require any judgment, self-criticism or voice-over...this isn't a DVD extra!

When no more events come to mind, start to notice your breath again - in through the nose and out through the mouth. Slowly, start to count your breaths. When you breathe in; that's one. When you breathe out; that's two. Do this up to 10 - when you get to 10... start again!

It is time to start coming back. Notice how you feel sitting in the chair; your feet on the ground, your back and legs in the seat.

In a few moments, in your own time when you open your eyes, sit quietly after the good practice you have done. Check-in and notice your surroundings, what can you see and hear? How do you feel now?



#### Contraindications

- You are in control of any practice that you participate in
- Do not feel compelled to 'carry on regardless' or complete the practice because of any perceived expectation to do so - there is no expectation.
- If you feel 'unwell', 'panicked' or just 'weird' at any point...simply stop and sit the practice out—there's no judgement here.



## ABOUT INTERNATIONAL WELLBEING INSIGHTS

Stress is a much used (and abused) term these days. You frequently hear people say “I’m stressed” or “I’m depressed”, yet there is still much confusion about what these terms actually mean and how best to tackle them. This is where we can help. We are the UK’s leading authority on stress management issues, which is why you will regularly hear us talking about this topic in the media.

International Wellbeing Insights is an organisation dedicated to leading effective universal change by maximising your resilience, happiness, productivity and success with our passionate approach to reducing stress and promoting wellbeing. Our extensive knowledge of stress and wellbeing and our cutting edge interventions have made us the primary organisation dealing with work-related stress reduction and wellbeing promotion in the UK since 2003.

For years, we’ve been empowering individuals to take charge of their wellbeing through our workshops, guides and regular updates. We also act as a trusted advisor for many companies such as SMBC, Garrett, Dragados, DHL, and the NHS—guiding them through the wellbeing solution maze.

For more information or to book a workshop or a coaching session see [www.wellbeing.work](http://www.wellbeing.work) or call +44203 142 8650 or email [info@stress.org.uk](mailto:info@stress.org.uk)

If you want to promote wellbeing in your company using branded stress management products, go to [www.stress.org.uk](http://www.stress.org.uk).





# NOTES

A large rectangular area defined by a dashed purple border, intended for taking notes.



We provide a range of services across the UK and internationally. We are always happy to discuss how we can support you.

*We look forward to supporting your wellbeing journey.*

**Find Us Here:**

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[www.wellbeing.work](http://www.wellbeing.work)

**We have supported many organisations, including:**

