



Managing Stress in the Workplace

Session starts at 2pm



HELLO!

I am **Karen Maher**

I am an experienced HR consultant and workforce development specialist originally from the North East of England.

I specialise in coaching, mentoring, mediation and training delivery. I deliver QQI accredited courses including People Management, Supervisory Management and Medical Secretaries

I am also qualified to administer and deliver psychometric tests including EQi2 (Emotional Intelligence) and MBTI (Personality Types).



Introduction

In these times we are all adapting our style of work which has, in some cases, introduced extra pressure and requirements to balance our work and life, requirements that otherwise may not have been necessary. Communicating remotely and limited resources can bring their challenges.

In this course we will identify the reasons behind the release of stressful hormones and ways in which we can manage them without them becoming too damaging.



Overview

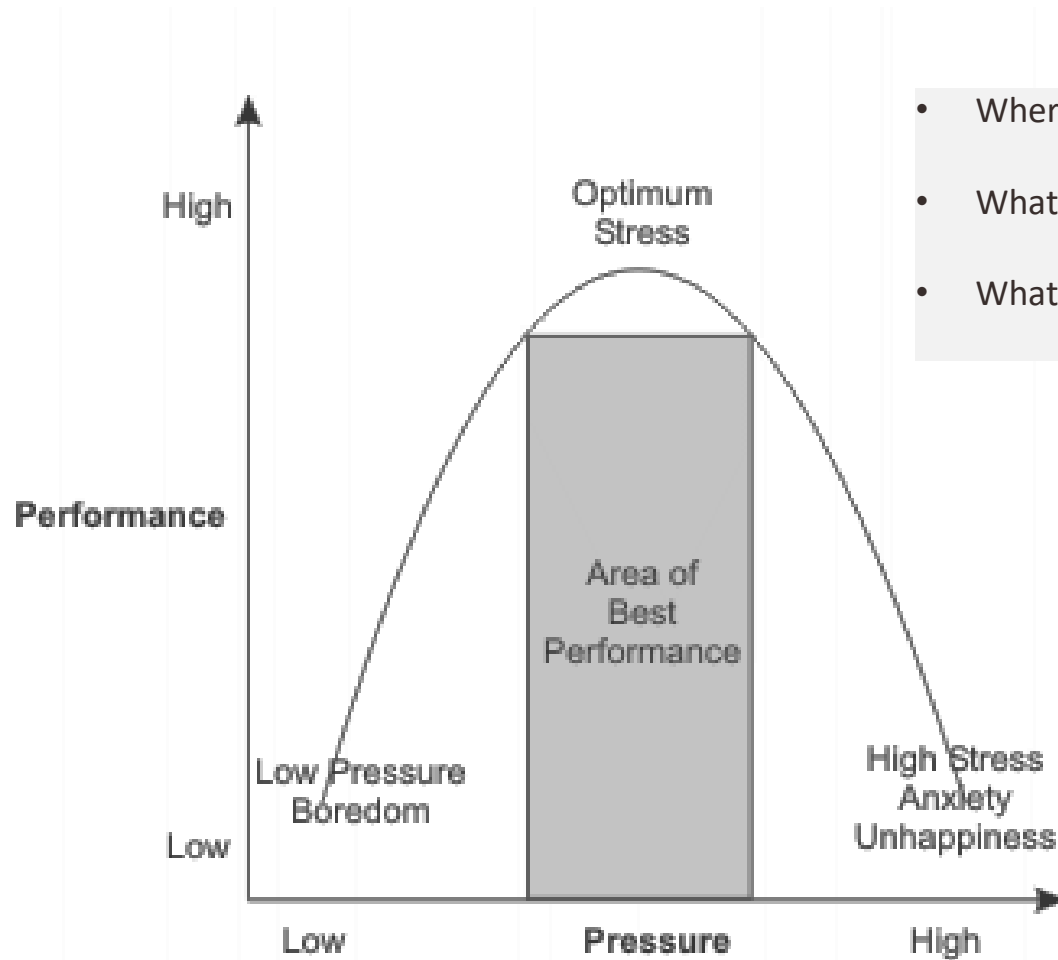
- Understanding stress, stressors and eustress
- Categories of stress
- Identifying stress triggers
- Physical and psychological reactions to stress
- Tips for managing anxious thoughts
- Stress management techniques and tips

Exploring your Personal Mind Map

What's going on for you right now?
What/who is most important?
Who are your allies?
Who do you spend most of your time with?
Who/what do you avoid?
What do you find easy/pleasant?
What do you find difficult/unpleasant?
What has most influence on your success?



Optimum Stress Levels



- Where would you currently place yourself?
- What is optimum stress for you?
- What is high stress for you?

The Inverted-U relationship between pressure and performance

A Continuum?

Most people who feel 'stressed' are more likely to be feeling tension and strain.

Stress is an **extreme adverse psychological response to personal perception of uncontrollable pressure, tension or strain.**

The symptoms of stress only become obvious to colleagues when the impact has started to embed itself and this is often too late for a quick recovery



↑
Pressure
(a stimulant)



↑
Tension
(a stimulant)



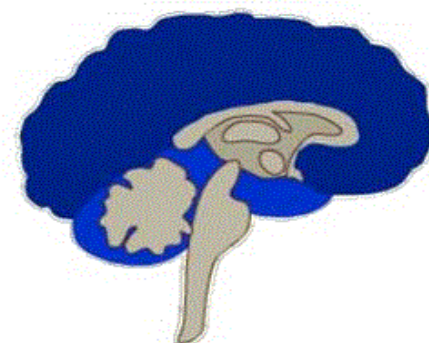
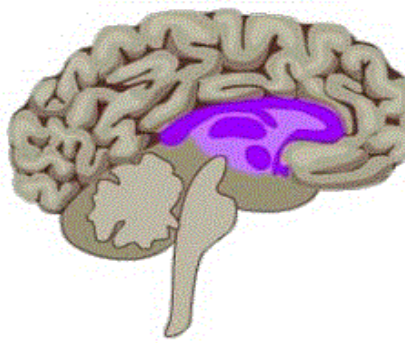
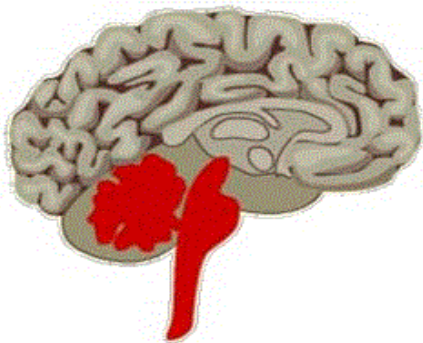
↑
Strain
(an impairment)



↑
Stress
(a condition)

Triune Brain Theory

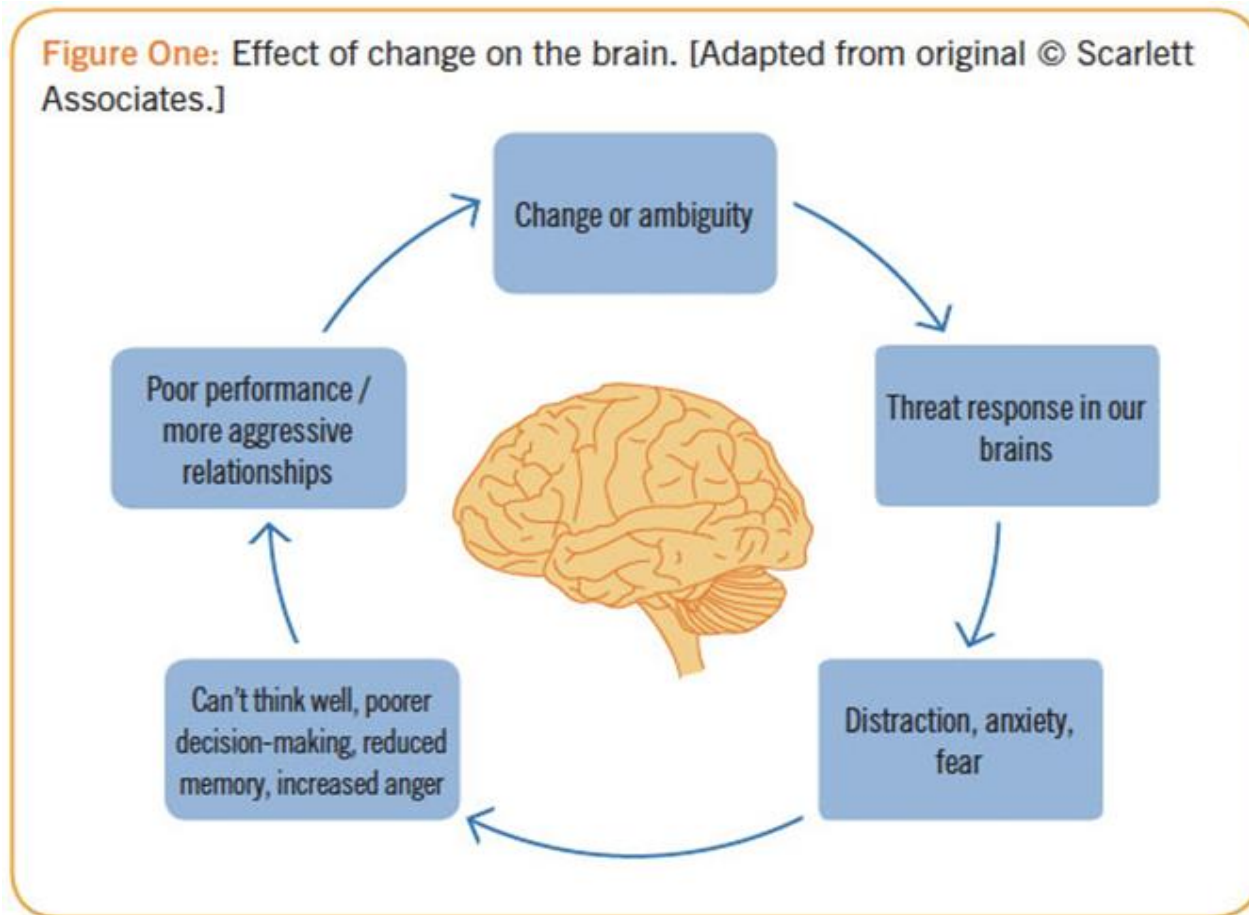
Lizard Brain	Mammal Brain	Human Brain
Brain stem & cerebellum	Limbic System	Neocortex
Fight or flight	Emotions, memories, habits	Language, abstract thought, imagination, consciousness
Autopilot	Decisions	Reasons, rationalizes



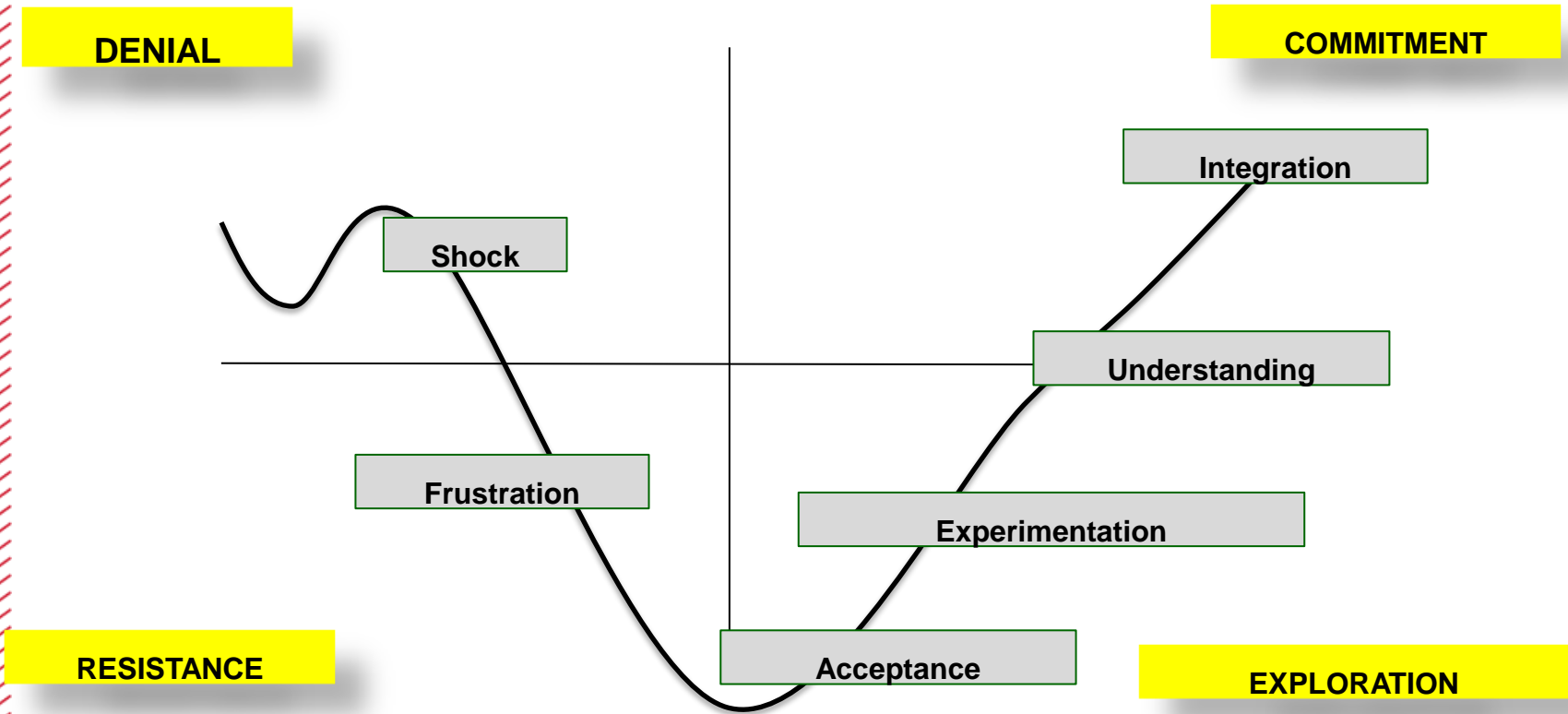
The Triune Brain in Evolution, Paul MacLean, 1960

Effects of Change

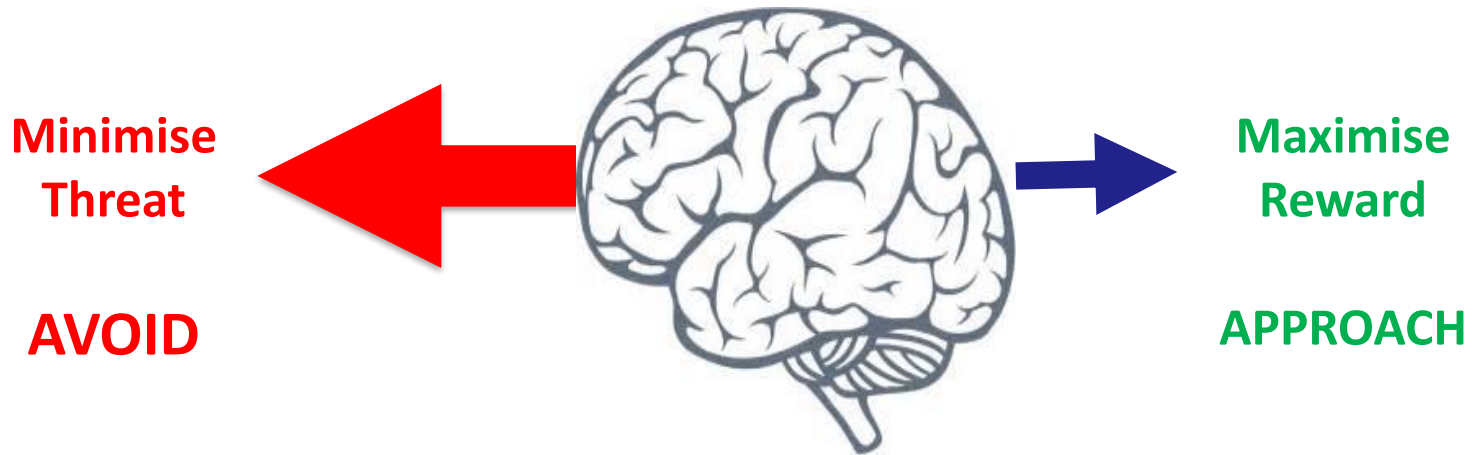
Figure One: Effect of change on the brain. [Adapted from original © Scarlett Associates.]



Common Reactions



Human Social Behaviour



David Rock

STOPP!

Stop and step back

Take a breath

Observe

Put it into **P**erspective

Practise what works



Minimising your Stress

Everyone experiences stress. However, when it is affecting your life, health and wellbeing, it is important to tackle it as soon as possible.

1. **Realise when it is causing you a problem**
2. **Identify the causes**
3. **Review your lifestyle**



Your Stress Triggers

Work-related stressors

- Exams and work deadlines
- Losing your job
- Long-term unemployment
- High demand and high levels of responsibility
- Retiring



Whether it's too heavy a workload, uncooperative colleagues or a high-intensity working environment, the workplace is one of the most common triggers of stress.

Tips to minimise work-related stress

1. Prepare in advance to reduce time procrastinating and organise your work wherever possible, invest in planners to better manage your time.
2. Always take your designated breaks and use them as a time to separate yourself from your work – this is a good opportunity to go for a walk and get some fresh air or to take some time to read a book, meditate or listen to some music.
3. Delegate some of your workload if you really find yourself struggling to cope and are feeling overwhelmed.
4. Talk things through with a superior – let them know your situation and how you are feeling and what they recommend to remedy the situation.
5. Although not always a practical option for some people, a change of career can help to eradicate work-related stress. Often, particularly if we've been in the same job for some time, we can feel stuck, scared or unwilling to change our career path. However this can be a liberating way to relieve work-related stress (as well as potentially removing any financial stress caused by work too).

Your Stress Triggers

Financial stressors

- Worries about having enough money to get by comfortably
- Debt
- Unexpected large bills

Often work-related stress and financial stress are linked. If you feel like you're struggling to make ends meet then it is possible that you will experience stress as a result of your finances.

Although it can feel like you're alone when coping with financial stress, it's important to remember that you're not and there are many people who go through similar financial hardships.



Tips to minimise the pressures of financial stress

1. Tackle it head on! When we are dealing with stress as a result of financial problems, looking at your out-goings and incomings can cause a lot of frustration, anxiety and, in most cases, fear. However, burying your head in the sand sadly won't help you to brainstorm and figure out a solution. Take time to look at the numbers so that you have a better understanding of why you are currently in this position and identify some potential cuts you could make.
2. Budget appropriately – planning a monthly budget can be extremely beneficial for helping you to manage your money better.
3. Ask for help – if you feel like you can't work your way through the numbers help is always at hand. Asking friends or family to sit down and look at ways you can make some smart savings can help. Alternatively, you can investigate what advice and free resources are available to you at your local bank.

Your Stress Triggers

Relationships and social stressors

- Public speaking
- Social interactions with groups
- Getting married
- Getting divorced
- Raising young children or having a baby
- Being a carer for a friend or relative who needs extra support



We come across all sorts of people and sometimes the relationships we develop can cause us stress. Not all of our relationships are smooth sailing.

If we are stressed for another reason this can often spill over and we bring our stress home with us which can then affect our close relationships. In this situation we can react more aggressively, become more irritable and struggle to remain patient with the relationships around us.

Tips to cope with relationship and social stress

1. Communication is key! When we're stressed as a result of a relationship it's important to communicate to the other person how you're feeling – they might not even be aware!
2. If you need some space, take it. If you're in a position where you are the rock of support for another person it can become difficult to recognise and acknowledge your own needs and these should never be ignored!
3. Counselling is another option to consider as this will give you an impartial outside perspective on your situation and the counsellor will be able to provide you with support and advice on how to manage the situation.

Your Stress Triggers

Emotional stressors or internal stressors

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Lack of self-esteem and self-confidence
- The need to control events in your life

Many of the symptoms of stress and anxiety overlap so it can be tricky to know what the difference is between the two.

When we suffer from stress, the likelihood of developing anxiety, low mood and depression increases which can make it harder to dig ourselves out of these negative feelings.

Our mental health is often overlooked. It is just as important to look after our mental health as we do our physical health



Tips for managing emotional stressors

1. Exercise is a way to boost your mood because of its ability to reduce stress hormones like cortisol.
2. One of the major contributors of low mood and depression is isolation and lack of connection so make sure to make time for socialising with friends and family.
3. Take time every day to do something that makes you happy – whether it's going for a walk, listening to music, exercising, chatting with friends, going for a bath, drawing or gardening – the opportunities are endless and this down time will help to nurture positive thoughts and emotions.

Your Stress Triggers

Health-related stressors

- Illness or injury
- Pregnancy
- Coping with the loss of a loved one
- Mental health conditions such as depression, low mood and anxiety
- Long-term or chronic health problems

Stress takes a big emotional and physical toll on your body, particularly if we experience stress long-term. This can make existing health conditions worse.



Tips for tackling health-related stress

1. Exercise regularly helps support your circulation and prevent heart-related disease. It provides a boost to your immune system and mood. Exercise is a known stress reliever, helping to burn off excess amounts of our stress hormones and releasing feel-good endorphins.
2. Up your fruit and veg intake. Your diet will have an impact on the role and function of your immune system.
3. When we aren't feeling our best it is not a good idea to go to work or to run around after the kids or elderly parents. If we do this we may end up experiencing emotional burnout out.
4. Stress can use our body's important minerals such as zinc, which plays an important role in our immune system and magnesium, which is responsible for mood regulation and for preventing fatigue.

Manage Your Stress

ACUTE STRESS REACTION

Triggered by a threat to personal safety

Survival response

The body quickly returns to normal

CHRONIC STRESS REACTION

Triggered at a lower level

Remains active for long periods of time

Allows toxins to build up



Manage Your Stress – Some Suggestions

Be physically active

Enjoy the outdoors

Eat healthily

Improve your hydration

Get a good night sleep

Reduce caffeine intake

Reduce alcohol consumption

Have a support network

Mindful Eating

Mindless Eating

- 1** Eating past full and ignoring your body's signals
- 2** Eating when emotions tell us to eat (i.e., sad, bored, lonely)
- 3** Eating alone, at random times and places
- 4** Eating foods that are emotionally comforting
- 5** Eating and multitasking
- 6** Considering a meal an end product

Mindful Eating

- Listening to your body and stopping when full
- Eating when our bodies tell us to eat (i.e., stomach growling, energy low)
- Eating with others, at set times and places
- Eating foods that are nutritionally healthy
- When eating, just eating
- Considering where food comes from

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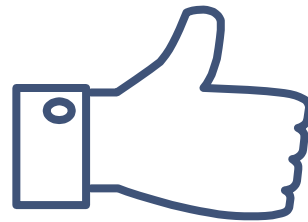
Summary & Recap

Q&A



**GOOD BYE &
GOOD LUCK!**





THANKS!

Any questions?
You can find me at
karen@dcmlearning.ie



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LEARNING
EXPERTS

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