



# The Healthy Worker

October 2014 Newsletter

## Caring for yourself over the coming winter.

Neil Shah from the Stress Management Society tells us that September was a stressful month for many. "In our experience" he says "September is the beginning of the Stress Calendar: the kids are back at school, the summer holidays are officially over, the weather is starting to change, and we have to wait until Christmas for the next public holiday". How was your September?

The study saw almost 90% of people admit to suffering from some form of stress in their lives, with almost 40% saying they are regularly, frequently, or constantly stressed.

The Stresstember survey which was undertaken by the Stress Management Society, in conjunction with the Sleep Council, found that stress affects 5.3% of the population soon after the summer breaks have ended and the academic year has commenced. This rises however and by the end of October when the clocks go back and darker nights fall, stress levels are reported by the survey to affect 6.5% of the nation.

There's worse to come as rates more than double to 14% in the hectic run-up to Christmas—but then peak at 15% during the gloomy winter months. December is deemed to be the single most stressful month (by 9% of respondents).

The impact of these non-work related factors can impact our performance at work. As the months in which our mood tends to dip are approaching, it is beneficial to remind or inform your employees of stress reduction and personal resilience measures. Taking care of your employees health and wellbeing will bring increased productivity through improved health and engagement. Contact us if you are looking to improve stress management or personal resilience within your teams.

## This Editions Health and Wellbeing Tip.

Exercise is a great way of increasing our feel good factor and increasing our personal resilience. Start planning now for how you can include an exercise program in your life during the winter months. You'll feel better the fitter you are.

## Special Offer

Free one hour consultation on evaluating your wellbeing spend. Let us help you establish how effective your wellbeing spend is.  
Until 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014  
**Contact us today!**

## Dates for your diary

**1-28<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Stoptober, 28 day no smoking challenge  
**12-19<sup>th</sup> Oct** – National Arthritis week  
**6-12<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Back awareness week  
**17-22 Nov** – anti-bullying week  
**17-23 Nov** Alcohol awareness week and Road Safety week

## Do you have a pessimist in your team?

Teams are usefully made up of different personality types but just as you are unveiling plans for a new initiative which will help your company or organisation achieve one of its goals, so the pessimist on the team revs up. It can be a heart sink moment. Suddenly all the positive energy you had may disappear.

### Identifying pessimists:

- Pessimists are predictably negative.
- They often fail to appreciate others, and they rarely feel grateful or say "thank you."
- Pessimists regularly feel that others have wronged them.
- They can find fault in most situations or interactions, and things are rarely good enough.
- Pessimists often hold grudges, and they have difficulty letting things go.
- Pessimists tend to fear change, perceiving it as "too risky."

This attitude is not associated with depression or low mood – there are highly structured arguments which accompany a pessimists views. However note the key characteristics as this helps you manage them.

### Key characteristics:

**Permanence:** Pessimistic people unconsciously assume that the causes of bad events are permanent, while optimists believe that bad events are temporary.

**Pervasiveness.** Pessimists make universal statements about their lives when something goes badly, while optimists make specific statements.

**Personalisation.** When we experience a negative event, we can think about it in one of two ways. We can blame ourselves for the event (internalizing it). Or, we can blame something outside ourselves (externalizing it).

Pessimists often internalize blame.

To manage your pessimists effectively, listen and acknowledge their points of view. Remember, they can provide a valuable perspective for your team, so thank them for their thoughts and ideas.

When they shoot down a suggestion, ask them to come up with ways that could help it succeed. This shifts their thinking and forces them to find a creative way forward.

## Exciting news.....

Through our work with many private and public sector organisations we are aware of the scale, pace and extent of changes which are taking place. This is leading to individuals, at many levels of the organisation, having new or extended remits at work and potentially finding they are struggling to adapt.

Coaching has been researched and recognised as helpful to an individual's professional development. For us at the Healthy Worker, it fits well with our ethos of supporting individuals to feel increased levels of control and providing development which will assist their health and performance, whilst also providing benefits to the employing organisation.

So, we are delighted to let you know that we are able to offer coaching on a one to one basis for individuals who would benefit from this.

We also embrace and use coaching techniques within many of our shorter resilience and stress management training sessions.

Please let us know if this is of interest to you, call us or drop us a line at [info@thehealthyworker.co.uk](mailto:info@thehealthyworker.co.uk). We look forward to hearing from you.

### Thought for the day

Do not dwell on the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present.

Buddha

### About 'The Healthy Worker Ltd'

We support organisations to improve employee health and wellbeing, and reduce sickness absence. We provide Consultancy and Training Services, including our National Award winning Health Worker Course.

Liz Preece, the Founder, has extensive experience and an MSc in Occupational Health. See our website for further details, [www.thehealthyworker.co.uk](http://www.thehealthyworker.co.uk)