



A Union of Professionals

## WORK SHOULDN'T HURT

# Workplace Stress Self-Assessment

### Are you stressed by your job?

There's a difference between stress and pressure. We all experience pressure daily and need it to motivate us. But too much can lead to damaging stress. Take this test to find out if you're experiencing too much pressure at work.



### Questions

1. **How do you manage your time at work?**
  - a. My time is fairly flexible, and I can have a say in deciding how I work and when to take a break. (0 points)
  - b. I have some say over the way I work but would like more. (1 point)
  - c. I don't have very much control over how I work. (2 points)
2. **When something is going to change at work, what happens?**
  - a. I have plenty of opportunity to speak to my boss about any changes at work. (0 points)
  - b. We're always asked about possible changes at work before they happen but don't have much involvement in how decisions are made. (1 point)

- c. We aren't told about changes, and I'd find it hard to speak to my boss. (2 points)

### Information about change

People who feel valued and involved in decision-making play a big part in a high-performing workplace. Empowering individuals at work, giving them the right skills, and getting them involved in making decisions all show that their health, safety and well-being are being taken seriously. People will also raise concerns and offer solutions more often.

3. **How do you get on with your boss or supervisor?**
  - a. I can rely on them to help me out, encourage me and provide support. (0 points)
  - b. I can talk to them about something that has upset or annoyed me at work, but that's about it. (1 point)
  - c. I don't get on with them very well and don't feel very supported. (2 points)

### Talking to your boss

Open communication develops a positive culture and reduces accidents and ill health. It also improves overall efficiency and productivity. The law states that employers must consult employees regularly.

If you find it difficult to talk to your boss, talk to your trade union representative or employee representative who can provide advice on a range of work-related topics. Alternatively, you can speak to your HR department.

4. **How do you get on with the people you work with?**
  - a. My colleagues will help me and are always willing to listen to any work-related problems. (0 points)

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.7 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Randi Weingarten  
PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



- b. I don't think my colleagues offer me much support. (1 point)
  - c. I get on with them OK but wouldn't discuss any problems with them. (2 points)
5. **Are any of the following causing you problems? (You can pick more than one.)**
- a. People harassing you with unkind words or behavior at work. (2 points)
  - b. Friction or arguments with your work colleagues. (1 point)
  - c. Bullying from one or more work colleagues. (2 points)
  - d. Difficulties or strained relationships with someone at work. (1 point)
  - e. None of these. (0 points)

## More about bullying

Bullying can make your work life miserable. You can lose all faith in yourself, start to feel ill and depressed, and find it hard to motivate yourself to work. It's not always due to people's tribal instincts, or someone picking on the weak. Sometimes a person's strengths in the workplace can make the bully feel threatened, and that kicks off their behaviour.

Never ignore it. Talk to your colleagues, talk to your boss, talk to your family and, above all, talk to the experts. If you belong to a union, talk to your union rep or steward. They have well-established tactics for helping you bring the joy back into your working day.

6. **Which of the following best describes how you feel about your role at work?**
- a. I am clear about what is expected of me at work and know how to go about getting my job done. (0 points)
  - b. I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are but sometimes don't manage to get everything finished. (1 point)
  - c. I am unclear what my role is. (2 points)

## More about roles

Employees should have a clearly defined role and be encouraged to talk to their line manager or boss if they are not clear about priorities or the nature of their job.

This means you should be clear about what your job entails, what is expected of you and what you can expect

from your employer. Team meetings can help to clarify your role and discuss any possible role conflict.

7. **Do you worry about any of the following? (You can pick more than one.)**
- a. Different people at work demand things from me that are hard to combine. (1 point)
  - b. I have unachievable deadlines, and I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do. (1 point)
  - c. I have to work very intensively and find it difficult to take sufficient breaks. (1 point)
  - d. I am pressured to work long hours. (1 point)
  - e. None of these. (0 points)

## More about demands

It's important that your line manager monitors workloads to ensure people are not overloaded and there are sufficient resources to do the work allocated. People should be encouraged to have a healthy work-life balance and take their annual leave and meal breaks. There should also be good communication about unplanned tight deadlines or any exceptional need to work long hours.

## Results

### 0-3 points

We all experience pressure daily, and your responses today suggest that with the help of your employer you're managing that pressure well.

Remember, if you do start to face stressful problems at work, it's always good to speak to your boss or supervisor to stop the problem from becoming bigger, and to improve the workplace for everyone.

### 3-9 points

We all experience pressure daily, but your responses today suggest that some areas of your work could be improved to avoid any unnecessary stress.

### 9-40 points

We all experience pressure daily, but your responses today suggest you may be experiencing more than healthy pressure at work. To improve the situation before it gets worse, it's important to speak to your boss, supervisor, union or HR department.

For more information, contact the health and safety team at [4healthandsafety@aft.org](mailto:4healthandsafety@aft.org) [May 2022]