Definition of stress

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Stress is a factor which can affect everyone at some point in thier lives. Stress can be defined in general terms whereby mental and physical health is affected by events. A stressor is the condition which causes an individual to feel stressed (physiological response). As organisational psychologists, our focus is on looking at anything which might cause stress in the physical environment at work and looking at how changes in performance occur. Understanding the causes of stress is important for any organisation, as it can have a direct impact on the performance of employees. For example, stress can affect an employee by increased anxiety levels, low morale or even depression. It can lead to drug use, fatigue, muscle aches, high blood pressure, burnout or suicidal behaviours. For example, on the 23rd of December 2008 in Hong Kong, one man attempted to commit suicide by jumping of a building because he had missed a deadline and was stressed that he might lose his job. Work life stress can affect all areas of an individual’s life, such as the social aspect.

Some causes of stress can be the current economic situation, violence, harassment, lack of job security, low decision latitude, high demand to do a job such as increased workload or time pressure. These are just some factors in the environment which organisations have to be aware of when discussing stress and getting affecting treatment for stress management is crucial as this results in job performance being affected. Coming up with solutions to reduce or manage stress is important. PsyAsia offers a Stress Management at Work course which is delivered by organisational psychologists and is beneficial for anyone wanting to know more about this topic.

Reference

Beehr, T., (2000). Theories of Organizational stress: An organisational psychology meta-model of occupational stress. University Press, Oxford