



MANAGERIAL STRESS SURVEY

Evaluation

for company support of stress prevention and rehabilitation measures

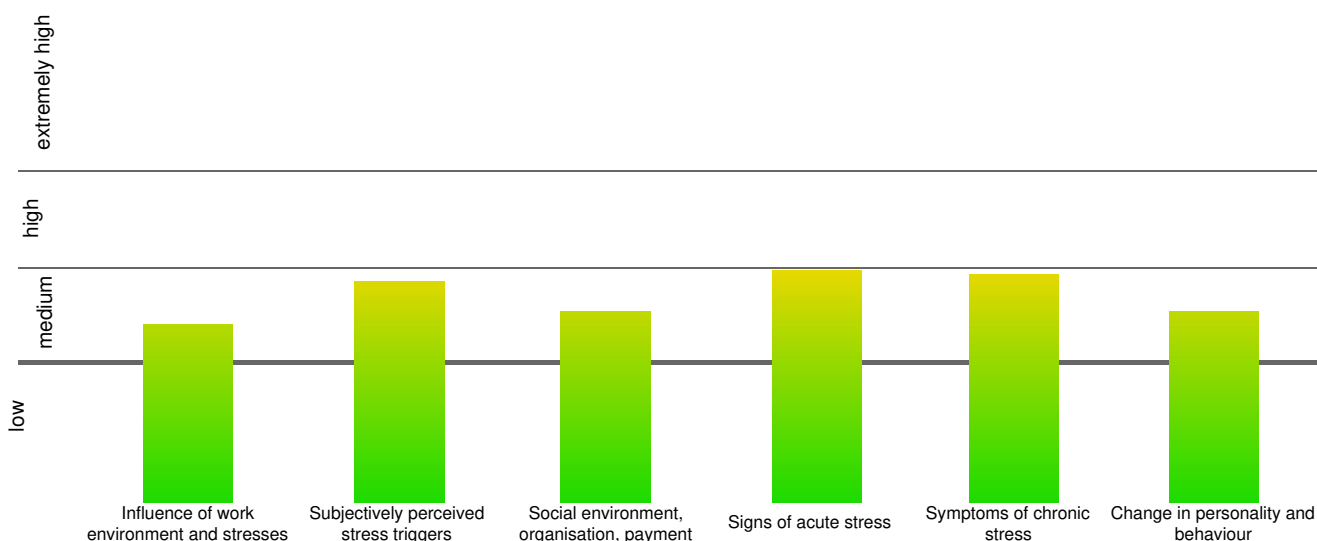
Marco Muster



Overall level of stress at a glance:

Your overall stress level is **moderate to medium** but still within the permissible normal values at the moment. However, there is a risk that individual factors will intensify over time, causing the general stress level to rise further. This could have an adverse effect on your health and work performance.

A graphic overview of your results:



General answering behaviour

The results of your evaluation indicate correct, consistent response behaviour.

We distinguish between four different levels of potential psychological stress-burden:

Low stress level:

Overall, the stress values are well within the permissible norms and therefore have no impact on occupational performance or health.

Moderate to medium stress level:

The stress values as a whole are still within the permissible norms. However, there is a risk that individual stress-inducing factors may become more pronounced over time, thereby impairing health and occupational performance.

Increased to high stress level:

The stress values as a whole are already outside the permissible norms. There are clear risks for the general state of health and, as a result, for professional performance.

Very high to extremely high stress level:

The overall stress values are far outside the permissible norms. There are very serious risks to the general state of health. In the foreseeable future, this may result in severe impairment of the ability to perform and of the actual occupational performance.



On 03.11.2021 you have answered approx. 150 questions of the DNLA - Managerial Stress Survey which analyses current levels of occupational stress.

Stressors

First, you were asked about existing stress triggers in your personal environment. The index for personal stress level (see below) therefore indicates whether you have experienced potentially stressful events in the last six months (=exceptional events in your private life; of both a positive and negative nature).

The scale shows the possible effects that the current personal stress load can have on your overall performance.




no influence little influence possible infl. Noticeable infl. significant infl.

.This value results from stress-inducing events from the last six months and shows their possible effect.

Resilience

In the following, you were asked about factors in your personal environment that make you **more resistant to stress** and that can help you to cope better with stress at work or in your private life. The personal resilience level (see below) therefore indicates the extent to which you have factors that strengthen your resilience and **help you to deal with stress** and impairments at work.

The scale shows how strong these resilience factors are at present:



no influence little influence possible infl. Noticeable infl. significant infl.

Important notice

The information and (self-)assessments provided here should not be seen as a substitute for professional medical advice or individually suitable treatment and counselling services. They are intended to prepare the way for such individually suitable further steps and/or to supplement, accompany and support them. Please seek the support of suitable specialists for further counselling on the subject of (work-related) stress.

Questions and content in the main part of the analysis

However, the questions in the main catalogue mainly concerned the professional level (responsibility), the type of activity (indications of stress), the type and extent of recreation and, in particular, questions relating to the following areas:

Influence of working environment & workload

- Impact of the working environment
- Working conditions
- Workloads
- Work content / type of work
- Work organisation

Subjectively perceived stress triggers

- Variety of tasks
- Complexity of the tasks
- Importance of the tasks
- Freedom of decision

Social environment, organisation, remuneration

- Social relationships
- Income/remuneration
- Feedback
- Performance monitoring



Signs of acute stress

- Physiological discomfort
- Cognitive tension
- Emotional tensions
- Communication problems
- Behavioural disorders
- Well-being (= (subjective) well-being)

Symptoms of chronic stress

- Worries/anxieties
- Aggression
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Psychosomatic reactions
- Sleeping disorders

Changes in personality and behaviour

- Type A behaviour (= fixated on professional success)
- Characteristics of burnout
- Mental stress reactions
- Sub-optimal coping (= sub-optimal handling of stressors and burdens (e.g. suppressing / denying problems))



The results in detail:

Important notes:

In addition to the general stress level in the individual areas, the psychological strain caused by specific, potential sources of stress is measured:

How does psychological stress manifest itself? / What consequences may occur?

People who are exposed to psychological stress at work are subject to psychological strain. The short-term effects can manifest themselves in the form of desired stress or incorrect stress. Long-term consequences can also be desirable, such as the further development of individual physical and mental abilities. However, they can also result in health complaints or illnesses.

Why is mental stress neutral?

Mental stress is neutral according to the DIN EN ISO 10075 standard. It can, for example, cause stimulation and activation (desirable effects) as well as mental fatigue, monotony or mental exhaustion (detrimental effects).

The strains measured are those that are most likely to trigger stress. The information on the burden of stress in the individual areas serves as the basis for a personal feedback session with the participant.



1. Stress triggers due to influences of the working environment or due to workload (bar I)

Various risk factors in your professional environment already have **amoderate effect** on your general stress level. The following possible mental stressors (=potential stress triggers) have been recognised:

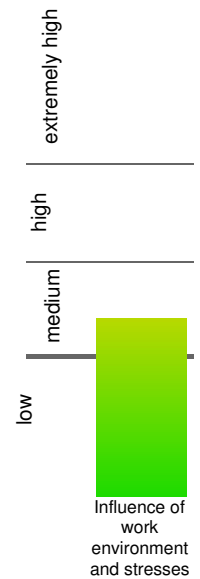
Partially difficult working conditions

Certain working conditions are stressful and can provoke stress. These include

- Noise at the workplace, restlessness due to disturbing background noise
- Frequent disruptions and associated interruptions to the workflow for important tasks
- Problems with technical equipment
- Long working hours at a computer screen
- Heavy, physically demanding work
- Mental stress (for example when working in a hospital, in care or in the social sector)

Problems in the organisation of work processes

Shortcomings in the organisation of the workplace or work processes can cause stress. Frequent changes to work plans or schedules also contribute to this, as does the unclear or ambiguous distribution of tasks and responsibilities.



2. Subjectively perceived stress triggers (bar II)

The subjectively perceived occupational stress already has a **moderate effect** on your general stress level. The following possible mental stressors (=potential stress triggers) have been recognised:

Little freedom of action, lack of decision-making authority, little autonomy

People want to be taken seriously at work. They want to think and help shape things. If personal initiative is not desired, this is frustrating and stressful. It can lead to a feeling of incapacitation and being controlled by others. For example, when employees cannot plan work independently, but are only allowed to react to direct work instructions. Or if their freedom of action is severely restricted and controlled by regulations and strict rules. This can be a great mental strain.

Being left to your own devices

A lack of support can be a very strong stress factor. For example, the feeling of being solely responsible for the success or failure of a project or, in extreme cases, even the entire company can be very stressful. In general, a lack of involvement and isolation is an ever greater challenge in today's working world and is a frequent cause of stress. Working from home and forms of (pseudo) self-employment can further increase this kind of stress.

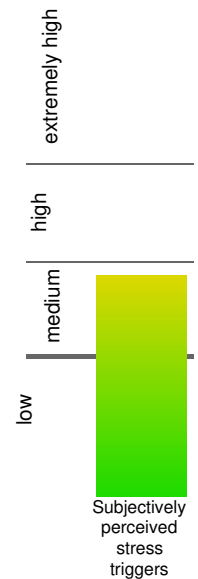
High degree of responsibility for others

A high degree of responsibility for others and the feeling of being responsible for the well-being and future prospects of many other people in the organisation can create a great deal of pressure for those affected. This can lead to excessive demands and a high level of stress and impairment.

There are no stress-related symptoms in the areas:

Little variety of tasks

Lack of support



3. Social environment, organisation, remuneration (bar III)

The social environment at work, the way work is organised and/or remuneration already have a **moderate effect** on your general stress level. The following possible mental stressors (=potential stress triggers) have been recognised:

Possibly too little income and career prospects

Too little income and career prospects

If employees do not receive a fair counter-value for the work they do or if their own salary is perceived to be lower than that of colleagues who do the same work, this leads to dissatisfaction among those affected and puts a strain on them. They not only suffer from material disadvantages, but also perceive this as a lack of appreciation/devaluation of their work.

They often even doubt themselves and their work and wonder what they have done wrong, as they get so little in return for their work.

It is important that the work performed is honoured both materially - through wages, salaries, further training opportunities, etc. - and immaterially - in the form of appreciation, recognition and appropriate rewards.

Part of this consideration is always the future career prospects and the opportunity to develop professionally. All of this is an important motivating factor - and can also help people to accept other working conditions and burdens more readily and perceive them as less stressful if they at least receive the immediate and long-term/perspective rewards they need in return.

Insufficient career prospects and a lack of personal encouragement and support, as well as few or no adequate training and further education opportunities, have a twofold negative impact:

- Firstly, they act as a signal of a lack of appreciation.
- and secondly, there are the real consequences: lower chances of rising wages and salaries as well as competitive disadvantages on the labour market compared to other employees who benefit from better promotion and further training

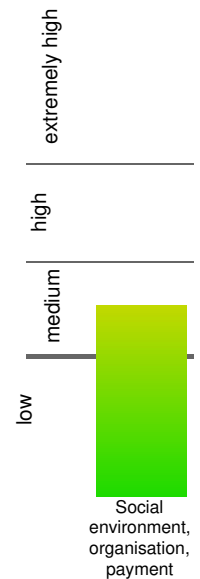
There are no stress-related symptoms in the areas:

Too few opportunities for participation and a lack of career prospects

Lack of recognition / performance on the job is not recognised

Lack of feedback on your performance

Disorientation



4. Signs of acute stress (bar IV)

Symptoms of acute stress already have a **moderate effect** on your general stress level. The following possible mental stressors (=potential stress triggers) have been recognised:

Cognitive tension

Acute stress can cause you to be under so much inner tension that it affects your cognitive capacities. You then have difficulty focussing and concentrating on one person or one thing. Your thoughts go round in circles. This makes it difficult to take in information and later to remember important things.

Such signs of acute stress can be warning signals from your own body. These should be taken seriously and not suppressed.

Deficiencies in concentration

Problems concentrating or focussing on a single issue and making simple mistakes at work that would otherwise never happen can be a sign of acute stress. Those affected should take such signals as an opportunity to reflect on the current (work) situation and consider how they could achieve better, calmer working conditions and a better balance to the current high level of stress.

Problems with attention and concentration

Lack of concentration and absent-mindedness are a warning signal from your body and a clear sign of acute stress. This increases the risk of mistakes and errors in the fulfilment of ordinary tasks. Concentrating on work involves additional effort. The people affected are more easily distracted at work and lost in thought. All of this is to the detriment of your health - due to the extra energy required to complete your tasks - and to the detriment of your performance at work.

Motion problems

„Erratic“ or uncontrollable movements can be a sign of acute stress. Those affected should take such signals as an opportunity to reflect on their current (work) situation and consider how they could achieve better, calmer working conditions and a better compensation for the current high level of stress.

There are no stress-related symptoms in the areas:

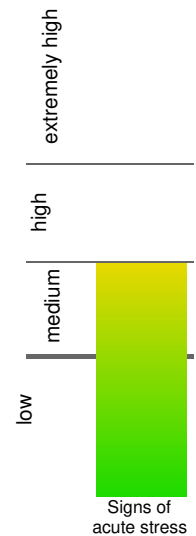
Perceptual difficulties

Nervousness

Establishing contact

Uncertainty

listlessness / lethargy



5. Symptoms of chronic stress (bar V)

Symptoms of chronic stress already have a **moderate effect** on your general stress level. The following possible mental stressors (=potential stress triggers) have been recognised:

Increased aggressiveness

Chronic, prolonged stress can encourage aggressive reactions and behavioural tendencies. At work, this can lead to feelings of strong dissatisfaction and corresponding gestures towards others, unfairness towards colleagues, personal criticism and even unjustified outbursts of anger and rage.

Such situations are therefore a signal that the person concerned needs support and help (and should not just be punished for their - of course incorrect and unacceptable - behaviour).

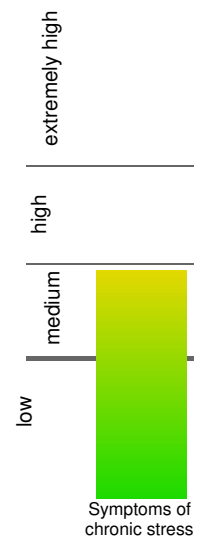
Chronic fatigue, exhaustion

Prolonged tension and strain and chronic stress can lead to chronic fatigue and general exhaustion. This then manifests itself, among other things

- through increased sleepiness during the day and longer periods of tiredness
- through rapid fatigue and the feeling of being tired and exhausted right from the start
- through a feeling of exhaustion and permanent weakness
- and through the inability to get things done

There are no stress-related symptoms in the areas:

Helplessness



6. Changes in personality/behaviour (bar VI)

Various risk factors in the area of personality and behavioural change already have **amoderate effect** on your general stress level. The following possible mental stressors (=potential stress triggers) have been recognised:

First signs of burnout

To date, there is no standardised, conclusive, generally recognised definition of burnout syndrome. In addition, it usually develops gradually over a longer period of time and progresses in different phases. Initially, those affected are usually very committed to their job - they "burn" for their work. They tend to prioritise work over their own needs and eventually deny them. At the same time, they have the feeling that they never have time and are constantly tired and exhausted. They are less and less able to recover from the stress of work in their already limited free time.

In a second phase, the professional commitment or over-commitment slowly turns into a spreading state of exhaustion. What is noticeable is the reduced resilience, the increasingly unstable and changing mood and ever-increasing problems with really recovering. The perceived fatigue becomes chronic, but is also accompanied by increased inner restlessness and nervousness, even irritability and aggression.

In the end, those affected give up, they are burnt out. Those affected are discouraged and lack motivation and feel inferior. They are disillusioned and disappointed with the work that meant so much to them before.

Many situations that are simple in themselves - such as socialising with other people - quickly become overwhelming and frustrating. It is difficult to concentrate on something, to make decisions or to tackle things.

Psychosomatic problems and symptoms of illness are usually added to this. People with burnout syndrome are severely impaired by their symptoms, both at work and in their private lives. The private environment - relationship, partner, family - is often affected. Many people are at risk of losing their jobs due to their greatly reduced performance.

Treating burnout is difficult. Depending on the individual severity, various elements must come together to help. Firstly, it is important to recognise and admit to yourself that you are overworked and burnt out. Therapy programmes and support from specialists are also strongly recommended. It is also important that the (perceived and actual) pressure to perform and (self-)expectations are significantly reduced.

In order to prevent the final state of burnout syndrome, it is important to recognise the first signs of the syndrome at an early stage and take preventative action. All stressful factors must be consistently minimised. This may seem difficult to realise at first, but it is also in the interests of the company, which otherwise runs the risk of losing the affected employee completely.

A positive, open and appreciative corporate culture as well as recognition and appreciation from superiors, colleagues and third parties is also helpful. Managers and companies should also be aware of their responsibility to care for their employees - even those who are currently very high-performing, committed and seemingly "stable" and properly fulfil this responsibility. Factors that strengthen individual resilience can also contribute to burnout prevention.

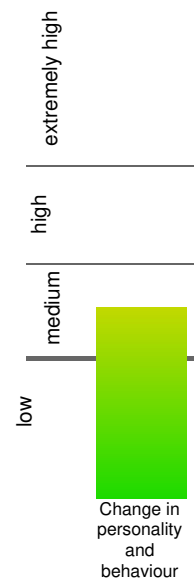
Slightly suboptimal coping

"to cope" means "to manage or come to terms with something". In psychology, "coping" refers to the totality of all measures with which a person attempts to cope with stress or a stressful situation. Solution-orientated measures for coping in the workplace include learning processes, adapting work strategies, mediation and discussions with conflict partners and much more. Measures that help people to relax are also part of this.

Psychological changes

People adapt to stressful situations and high levels of stress by changing their behaviour. Some of these behavioural changes and stress reactions are typical, but suboptimal. They do not make a real, lasting contribution to solving the problem and reducing the stress, even if it may seem so in the short term.

The forms of psychological and behavioural changes that typically occur in the workplace include:



- A tendency to want to escape - you just want to leave or simply drop everything.
- Frustration and aggression - everything becomes too much and you quickly become irritable, react dismissively or defensively and would prefer not to be disturbed but simply to be left alone.
- You don't feel respected, but criticised - you feel a lack of respect and appreciation and react more sensitively to criticism or perceive certain things as criticism that weren't meant to be.

If you notice such tendencies and changes in behaviour in yourself or in others, you should seek or offer help.

Risk factors of the behaviour

Prolonged (professional) pressure can lead to a change in one's own behaviour and personal risk assessment, to the effect that one tends to make riskier decisions than before and to also want to implement them.

Increased alcohol consumption

Alcohol is often misused as a "problem solver". Excessive or significantly increasing alcohol consumption is harmful to yourself and those close to you. You should therefore be very sensitive and take signs of increasing or excessive alcohol consumption critically and very seriously.

There are no stress-related symptoms in the areas:

Fixation on success

Switching from work to rest

Smoking

Fear of conflict



7. Summary and possible measures

Maintaining or restoring mental and physical health is our common goal, because any kind of stress puts a strain on a person's psychophysiological resources, which is expressed both in acute symptoms and in chronic negative changes.

Stress develops differently in each person and depends on individual behaviour in certain situations within the social environment, but especially in the workplace.

Some people have consciously or unconsciously acquired special skills and abilities that enable them to overcome difficult situations. But not always and not everyone is successful in doing so. Sometimes the difficulties become greater than the acquired defence mechanisms. As a result, stress increases.

Your personal stress level **is moderate to medium** at the moment. Hence, the situation cannot yet be considered as critical. Nevertheless, you should take appropriate measures now to maintain your health and your ability to perform in the future. You can strive to optimise certain factors in order to prevent possible negative influences right from the start.

In a personal talk with friends or with your family doctor or company doctor, you will get more information that will help you to decide whether certain therapeutic measures are necessary or whether a few corrections to your lifestyle, work organisation etc. will suffice to improve your situation. We have compiled some ideas and suggestions for you below:

7.1 Try to become clear about what professional obligations and responsibilities you have taken on. Which of these can you fulfil and to what extent will you be able to do so in the foreseeable future. If there are any discrepancies, please discuss them with your superiors, friends or colleagues.

7.2 Analyse the main causes of conflicts that arise in your department, team or work group. Systematise your observations and figure out what you find most disagreeable. Once you are clear about this, it is easy to work out an appropriate strategy for your future behaviour in conflict situations. It is best not to do this on your own, but with friends. Note down the most important causes of conflict, as well as how you intend to behave in these situations in the future.

7.3 Learn to say "no" when you are asked to take on new or additional tasks and responsibilities when you have already reached the limit of your capacity.

7.4 Avoid accumulating small annoyances over time and bottling them up. Express yourself as spontaneously and openly as possible, but in a way that is acceptable to those around you, if something does not suit you or if you disagree. Listen carefully to the opinions and arguments of the person you are talking to and respond appropriately.

7.5 Take an active part in group or team discussions, especially when it comes to conflicts or crises. The information you can gain from this will enable you to better define your own point of view so that you can exert more influence later on and influence the outcome of the matter in your favour.

7.6 When you start to work, sort your daily tasks according to their importance and scope. ("Work analysis"). Make a schedule in which you determine the times for the individual tasks as precisely (realistically) as possible in advance.

7.7 You should not rely on your memory when working out personal task plans, even if you have an excellent memory. It will repeatedly play tricks on you. The only remedy is to put things in writing!

7.8 Make sure that your short and medium-term plans are realistic:

- Always check the extent and quality to which you have achieved a goal or completed a task.
- If you have not achieved a goal, you should check why it was not achieved and record the reasons for this in bullet points.
- Compare the times you estimated for completing tasks and the actual time required.
- When planning again, you should definitely use your experience to reduce or avoid planning errors in the future.

7.9 If you are asked to take on new tasks or responsibilities, you should consider the following points before you agree:

- What results are expected from me and when?



- What goals are being pursued?
- From whom will I receive feedback during the ongoing work?
- Who is the responsible contact person?
- Who will assess the results?

7.10 Before you start an important task or project, you should decide from the outset how you will reward yourself personally. (When I've done this, I'll go to the theatre, ...then I'll invite friends over, ...then I'll buy myself, then....

7.11 When a project is being worked on or is being implemented, make brief interim assessments and check what has already been achieved or not achieved. Do not focus so much on the shortcomings that have arisen, but rather on the successes or partial successes that have already been achieved.

7.12 Sensitise yourself and learn more about yourself, your body and your state of mind (phases of tension or relaxation). Then you can use relaxation exercises, autogenic training and breathing exercises in a targeted way to relax better and faster in phases of tension!

You can do this either under the guidance of a specialist (trainer, GP or company doctor) or on your own with the help of appropriate specialist literature, tutorials or training videos.

7.13 Use these acquired self-control skills whenever you find yourself in emotionally challenging situations, when you have to do a long, difficult or unpleasant job, or when you are suffering from insomnia.

7.14 Keep yourself in good physical shape:

Ten to 15 minutes of gymnastics, jogging or aerobics every day work wonders.

At the weekend, long walks, gardening or other outdoor work can also provide balance and relaxation.

7.15 Take every opportunity during work to relax. Use breaks at work to get some exercise, e.g. light gymnastics at the workplace or outside the workplace; do relaxation exercises and take part in your company's health programmes.

7.16 Do not only plan your work and your tasks, but also plan what you could do best in your free time outside working hours!

- Avoid working at home
- Avoid working late in the evening or even at night.
- Sleep at least 7-8 hours
- Make sure you normalise your diet
- Stop thinking about work when you are with friends or acquaintances

7.17 Don't postpone your planned holiday because of unexpected and urgent matters (there will always be some!). On public holidays or long weekends, you should take the opportunity to spend time with friends, relatives and family members. Short trips, dining out together, a barbecue, joint visits to cultural events, etc. provide a change of pace, do you good and help you relax. During this time, do without any work, no matter how urgent!

7.18 Everyone needs to be on their own sometimes. But you should not overdo it by spending whole weekends or even holidays in solitude!

Keep in touch with your friends, relatives and family members regularly and plan joint activities with them.

7.19 Make plans today for a holiday, for activities on one or more weekends and already start imagining the best things you will be experiencing then. Pleasant anticipation and optimism act like a vaccination against stress.

DNLA-MSS - a diagnostic tool developed by Prof. Dr Anna Leonova, Professor of Work & Organisational Psychology.

If you have any further questions or require scientific background material, test versions and programme descriptions, we will be happy to provide these free of charge.

