

# SECTION 15

## WORKPLACE WELLBEING



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# SECTION 15 - WORKPLACE WELLBEING

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## 15.2 What is workplace wellbeing?

Workplace wellbeing is created by positive practices that influence the overall workplace health. This can be achieved through:

- fostering supportive environments
- enhancing positive social conditions
- creating an environment free from discrimination (Equal Opportunity principles)
- building personal skills
- promoting healthy lifestyles
- providing a safe and healthy work environment

Creating a harmonious healthy workplace has great benefits, which include increased worker engagement, team cohesiveness, reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and an improved business image.

In short, by creating a place of trust and respect, workers will enjoy coming to work, be more likely to listen to instructions and strive to do a good job.

The following topics in this section explore the following areas in more detail:

- Equal opportunities - creating a fair work place
- Teaching workers to take care of their mental health
- Providing Good Workplace Hygiene and House Keeping

## 15.3 Emotional Health

Working and developing relationships with customers is a common joy for most working in the Hair industry.

With instinctive communication skills and empathy, there is natural engagement with clients in discussions about their lives. Conversations will range from family, relationships, health and work covering both the good and the bad.

In some cases, clients may even choose to discuss very personal challenges such as depression, grief, relationship issues, drugs and alcohol and domestic violence.

Hearing this sort of information about client's hardship can be distressing especially when we don't know how to process or deal with the information.

It may even cause us to feel mentally overwhelmed and stressed - after all 'it's our job to make people feel better' and if we can't help, we may find this distressing.

For this reason, it is important for us all to learn to manage our emotional health so that we can support our clients whilst not upsetting our own health and wellbeing.

The best way for us to deal with a situation is to learn to put some emotional boundaries in place.

## 15.4 Emotional Boundaries

Emotional boundaries will allow you to distinguish separating your emotions and responsibility from someone else's.

Healthy boundaries prevent you from giving advice, blaming or accepting blame. They protect you from feeling guilty for someone else's negative feelings or problems and taking others' comments personally. Healthy emotional boundaries require clear internal boundaries – knowing your feelings and our responsibilities to yourself and others.

In addition to having good emotional boundaries, you can pre-plan what advice and information you can provide. It is always best to suggest for your clients seek professional help with these matters.

If you'd like to find out more there are plenty of online resources that will provide advice on how to set healthy emotional boundaries.

## 15.5 Employers

As an employer, it's important to consider the emotional health of your workers. The nature of the industry and services means that the workers are going to be exposed to many situations where there is the potential for them to be impacted by client discussions.

If not managed poor emotional boundaries in the workplace can even reduce staff productivity as staff can be distracted and unhappy which can create a negative working ethos. It may even lead to sick leave requests.

To help your workers in the salon you can:

- ✓ Raise awareness about good emotional boundaries

- ✓ Provide strategies for them to manage their own emotional health
- ✓ Provide strategies to deal with different customer circumstances
- ✓ Provide support and assistance as required, and listen to worker's concerns
- ✓ Provide information and resources about where workers can seek help if they feel emotionally distressed.

Extra consideration should also be given to young hairdresser who perhaps haven't developed enough life skills to know how to deal with the situation appropriately too.

## 15.6 Mental Health in Hair & Barbering

Whether you're a salon owner or are self-employed as a hair and beauty professional, work isn't always easy on the nerves. The pressure of pleasing clients whilst stretching out your time, energy and resources can steer us off our sense of calm and cause significant emotional strain. And life outside work isn't without its share of troubles as well, whether it's our relationships, finances or unexpected surprises.

But life happens, so we have to power through it. Or so we're told. The stigma of discussing our mental health, forces us to keep our problems under wraps until it becomes too much to handle. This is particularly true in the hair and beauty industry where there are added pressures to aspire towards unrealistic expectations, such as those portrayed in media. But what is the extent of the problem, and what can we do to manage, and even improve, our mental health?

## 15.7 Mental Health as a Business Owner or Freelancer

1 out of 4 people have had a problem with mental health in the past year. This might come as a surprise since a majority of people with mental health issues in your life might not show obvious symptoms. This statistic may be even higher for business owners and freelancers, particularly when it comes to anxiety and stress since long hours and financial worries related to work aren't uncommon in this line of work. Of those 1 in 4 people, only around 2 out of 3 who need help, will actually visit the GP to discuss their problems.

Knowing this, it's even more important to educate ourselves and encourage an open-door policy on talking about any mental health issues, whether it's in our personal or professional, lives.

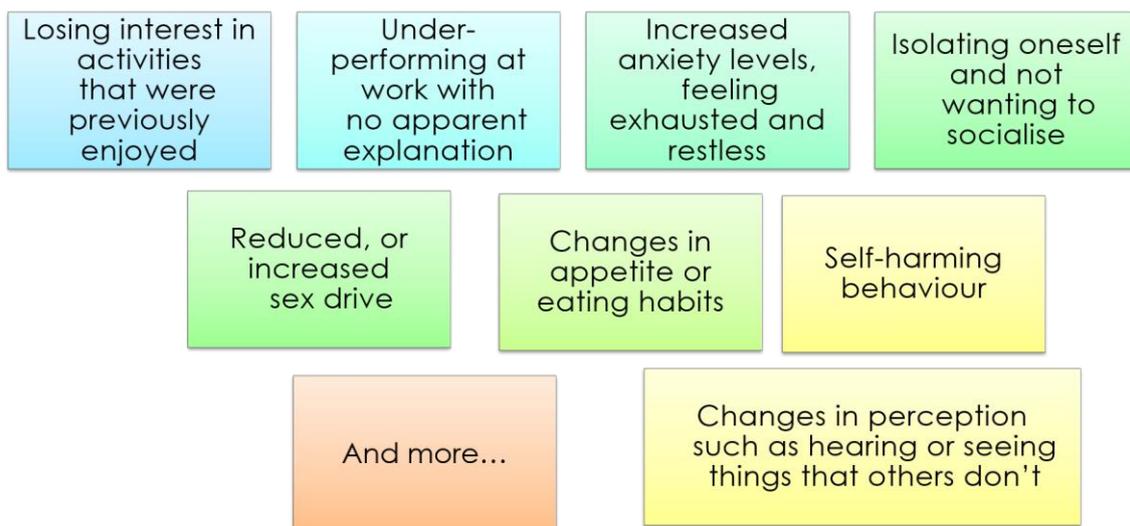
## 15.8 Mental Health Problems

Everyone reacts differently to mental health issues, and so the following is not an extensive, but a very general list, regarding signs and symptoms that may be associated with having mental health troubles. Of course, the more prolonged the symptoms, the more crucial it is to discuss these issues with a GP or a counselling professional.

To deal with workplace stress effectively, you and your managers need to have an understanding of what causes stress and how to identify the symptoms at the earliest possible stage.

### 15.8.1 Early Warning Signs

Here are some early warning signs that someone might be having mental health problems:



## 15.9 Stress

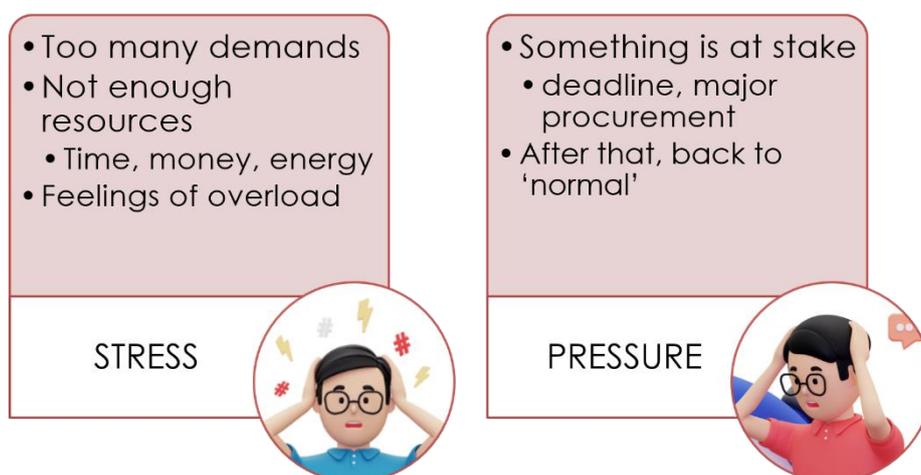
Stress is the “adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

### STRESS

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- HSE

Stress and Pressure are related, but not the same. Some pressure tends to be good for us, as it makes us overcome barriers, grow and expand our horizons. Too much pressure turns into stress, where it becomes all-consuming.



Stress can arise from aspects outside of work, and from work itself. You do not have a legal duty to deal with stress arising from circumstances outside work. However, it is sensible to deal sympathetically with employees suffering from such stress.

Employers **do** have a legal duty to reduce and, where possible, prevent work-related stress impacting on the health of their employees.



It is important to make sure that stress is **not** seen as a sign of weakness or failure. but as a health problem. Employees should be encouraged to discuss

their stress related problems and seek professional help as and when appropriate.

## 15.10 Resources

For more information, see

[INDG73, Protecting lone workers. How to manage the risks of working alone](#) (HSE)

[INDG424, Working Together to Reduce Stress at Work](#) (HSE)

[INDG430, How to Tackle Work-Related Stress](#) (HSE)

[HSG256, Managing shift work: Health and safety guidance](#) (HSE)

[WBK01, Tackling Work-Related Stress using the Management Standards Approach](#) (HSE)

[Management standards for tackling work-related stress - Securing management commitment](#) (HSE)

[Management standards for tackling work-related stress – Are you doing enough?](#) (HSE)

[Management standards for tackling work-related stress - Action plan template](#) (HSE)

