

Managing stress in a productive team of professionals

Stress Awareness Day 4 November

Running a high-achieving school and managing a diverse team of trained professionals isn't necessarily a walk in the park. Demanding and rewarding yes; but sometimes problems arise. Hard-working staff are affected by the day-to-day stresses of their work - and inevitably also from their home and personal lives. A strong leadership team can keep an eye on the performance of staff as well as supporting them. We all need to be



good role models to young people when it comes to how we manage stress. Head teachers are in the best position to promote good practice by influencing the culture of the school.

Stress Awareness Day has been timed for November 4th to make us all more aware of the part stress plays in our daily lives. In a

demanding environment we all have to stretch ourselves to achieve success. It is important that we look after ourselves at the same time. We can't say that all stress is a bad thing. But we need to be aware of its dangers too. The stress of work can sometimes lead to anxiety and depression in addition to physical ill health.

Stress in our professional lives can result in diminished performance, tension in the staff room and ultimately absence and long-term leave. Staff sickness levels may indeed be an indicator of the mental health environment in your school.

Ideally, the management team should create a culture within the school which minimises stress. Support, advice and practical guidance should be available to your team, as a matter of policy.

Dr Julia Moss of Your School Mind says:

Stress can't be ignored, but it can be managed. I'd advise schools to get in touch with a team experienced at working on mental health issues with teachers, parents and young people within schools. Creating a culture where the negative effects of stress can be minimized is just as necessary in education as in our personal lives. A professional informed approach has to be the starting point.

Janet Kennedy Consultant Nurse, Your School Mind adds:

If teachers and parents can learn strategies for dealing with stress everyone in school can feel more positive about the stress in their lives. Training in stress management is a valuable addition to the armoury of leaders, teachers parents and pupils. Guidance can be helpful in responding positively to the warning signs.

As you will see from our website, professional advice from a specialist clinical team *YOURSCHOOLMIND* – medical and nursing experts - experienced in working with young people will ensure you can build an effective strategy for mental health difficulties including depression, stress, bullying, autism and self-harm.

Your School Mind can bring a professional clinical mental health in education service to your school.

Contact us directly on the website to arrange for us to give you a free short PowerPoint presentation meeting in your school, to discuss your needs (you should allow an hour for full discussion). Our visits to schools so far have focused discussion of concerns and we have been able to equip schools with solutions. We look forward to hearing from you and visiting your school.

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