# HN1400 – OHS

# Chapter 6 – Psychosocial Hazards

**CHAPTER OBJECTIVES**

After reading this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

1. Describe and distinguish between the concepts of stressor, stress, and strain.

2. Explain the transactional model of stress and its implications.

3. Identify major sources of stress in the workplace.

4. Discuss the psychological, physiological, behavioural, and organizational consequences of stress.

5. Describe and distinguish primary, secondary, and tertiary stress interventions.

6. Describe violence, injustice, technology, and sexual harassment as emerging stressors

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 6 defines and distinguishes between the concepts of stressors, stress, and strain. It expands on the major sources of workplace stress, and how stress is a function of both the individual and the situation. The chapter describes the serious physical, emotional, and financial consequences of stress due to psychological, physical, behavioural, and organizational strain reactions. It provides strategies that human resource managers can use to effectively manage continuing and emerging workplace stressors such as: mental health, violence, injustice, technology, and sexual harassment. The chapter concludes by discussing the various organizational and individual primary, secondary, and tertiary stress interventions.

**Psychosocial hazards are hazards that result from stress or stress related activity on the job. Workplace stress is recognized as a major problem in today’s workplace and it has a definite cost to business in the form of lost productivity and lost time issues.**

**Stressors**

There are several classifications of the types of events that bring on stress in the workplace. These events are known as stressors.

* **Acute Stressors** - these stressors have a specific start time, are high intensity, are typically short in duration and are relatively rare. e.g.: a fire in the workplace, a job interview, a performance review.
* **Chronic Stressors** - no specific start date, no certain end, may be short or long in duration, repeats frequently. e.g.: Fear of job loss
* **Daily Stressors** - These have specific onsets, short in duration, low in intensity. e.g.: jammed photocopier
* **Catastrophic Stressors** - a disaster with direct threat of loss of life. These are very rare but have a specific onset and are intense. e.g.: terrorist attack, earthquake

**Stressors in the Workplace**

* Workload – Too Much work
* Work pace – Too fast work
* Role conflict – Too many jobs at work
* Career concerns – Will there be work?
* Interpersonal relationships – Who do you work with?
* Job Content and control over that content – What is my work?

**Stress Issues**

General Adaptation Syndrome: Individuals respond to stress differently. Stress is natural as it is the body's way of protecting itself from danger.

There are three stages to stress response: ALARM-->RESISTANCE-->EXAUSTION

**Stress Moderators**

1. The individual's Personality - Type A Behaviours & Negative Affectivity are problematic
2. The Social Context - Does the person have a social support system?

**Strain** arises from long periods of exposure to stress. There are four types:

* Psychological Strain
* Physical Strain
* Behavioural Strain
* Organizational Strain

**Managing Stress and Strain in the workplace**

1. **Primary Interventions:** Reduce or remove stressors
2. **Secondary Interventions:** Minimize negative outcomes - stress management programs
3. **Tertiary Interventions:** Therapy after the fact

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| **See how GOOGLE has managed workplace stress – watch:** [**Inside the Mind of Google**](http://youtu.be/mfXeoP4SJ2g) |

**Emerging Stressors**

* **Workplace Violence – See: Ottawa Massacre:** [**OCTranspo Shooting**](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ottawa-massacre/2)
* **Sexual Harassment – Watch:** [**The Unmaking of Jian Ghomeshi - the fifth estate**](http://youtu.be/aV2wzubgh1M)
* **Injustice at work –** [**Diversity at Work – Globe and Mail**](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/video-workplace-diversity-think-functionality/article546266/)
* **Technology -** [**Google chief warns of IT threat**](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/206bb2e2-847f-11e3-b72e-00144feab7de.html#axzz3S1e42L1A) **– Financial Times**