

Managing Stress and Fatigue at work

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Key Points

- Statistics show that 1 in 4 adults will suffer a mental health problem at some time in their life. Some question whether that could actually be closer to 1 in 2.
- Suicide is the biggest cause of death of men under 45.
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle: pay special attention to your nutrition, diet, exercise, water.
- Work/life balance is something everyone is trying to achieve. However, is it really possible to separate the two parts of our lives?
- 'Work related stress' is a term many GPs are familiar with and appears on many 'sick notes'. But stress is a complex issue and what appears to be work-related could, in fact, be exacerbated by an issue in the person's personal life.
- A manager will need to carefully manage the employee's return to work after a period of stress-related absence. This can take the form of a pre-return interview to understand the issues.
- It is important to assess the job the employee will be returning to. It may be necessary to alter the equipment/workstation, working hours/shift patterns (often a phased return is advisable), or even job location.
- Consider who in the workplace, if anyone, should be made aware of the problems/issues. Always gain the worker's consent!
- Consider the role of the mental health first aider in both a preventative and support context.
- Be aware of organisations and charities who can offer support.
- Remember, if nothing changes and the reason for the original stress-related absence is not addressed/remedied then the worker is likely to become unwell again.