

Top Sources of Job Stress and Research- Proven Stress Management Strategies

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Dr. Coburn-Litvak is a neuroscientist, author, speaker, and certified executive coach. She uses her 25 years of experience in stress research and mental health to help executives and business leaders manage their stress in terms of overwhelm, personnel issues, and time management.

Introduction



Even before covid-19, the World Health Organization had classified stress as the health epidemic of the 21st century.[1]

While it would be foolish to say that workplace stress has had the same, devastating impact as covid-19, it IS fair to say that workplace stress has had its own long, slow burn on global physical and mental health. According to a recent survey, 94% of American workers are experiencing job stress.[2]

This white paper summarizes workplace stress data from multiple sources. Some comes from for-profit companies that serve the business community; other data comes from non-profit organizations that keep their fingers on the pulse of stress in the United States and around the world.[3]

Using this information, we will review:

1 Top Sources of Job Stress

4 How We Handle Job Stress

2 Impact of Job Stress

5 Research-Proven Stress Management Strategies

3 Generational Differences in the Impact of Job Stress

Part 1 – Top Sources of Job Stress

Workplace stress comes from two main sources: 1) the work itself and 2) the people who do the work. Of course, these are intricately linked. The systems and processes we use to do the work are, after all, designed by people...at least for now (hello, A.I.). And when we get stressed out by work and deadlines, our relationships with others can become even more strained.

POOR COMMUNICATION



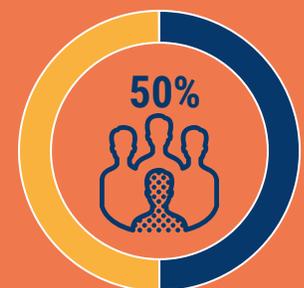
80% reported feeling stressed over ineffective communication.

POOR SUPPORT



60% felt their supervisors did not regularly check on their needs at work.

POOR RELATIONSHIPS



50% reported that poor relationships and poor teamwork caused stress.

UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS



50% reported feeling stressed over unforeseen issues and problems.

UNREALISTIC DEADLINES



50% reported that unrealistic deadlines caused stress.

OVERLOAD & BOTTLENECKS



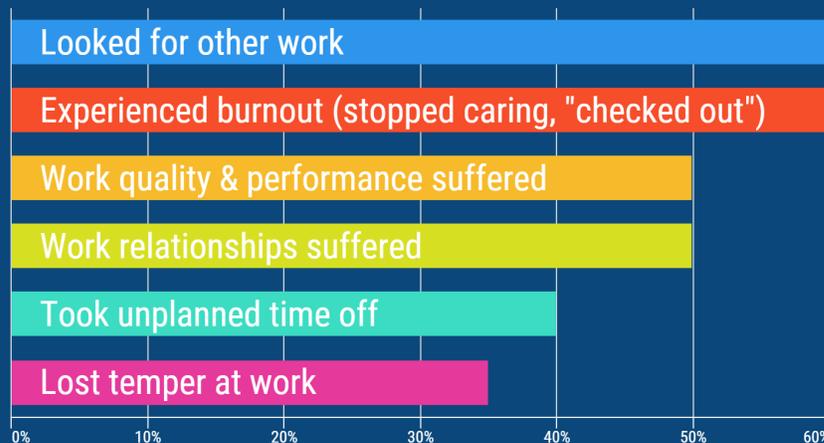
30% to 50% reported that overload and office bottlenecks caused stress.

Data from:

- Wrike: <https://www.wrike.com/blog/stress-epidemic-report-announcement/>
- Dynamic Signal: <https://dynamicsignal.com/2019/03/20/2019-employee-communication-and-engagement-study/>
- Korn Ferry: <https://www.kornferry.com/insights/articles/workplace-stress-motivation>

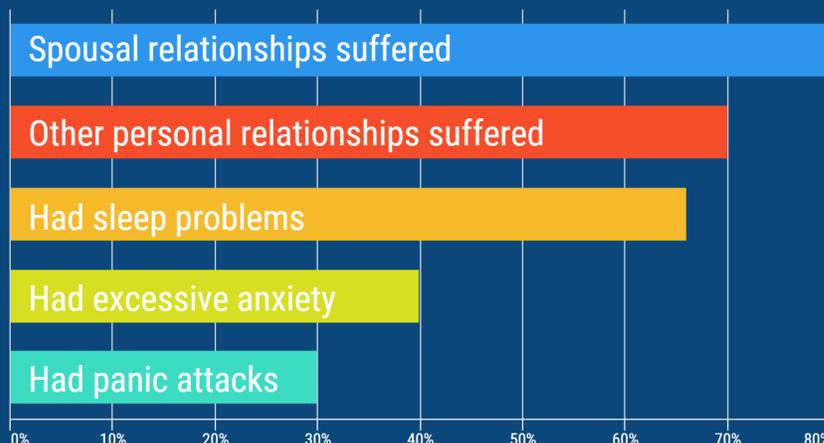
Part 2 – Impact of Job Stress

Results of Workplace Stress (Professional)



REMEMBER that job stress affects us professionally...

Results of Workplace Stress (Personal)



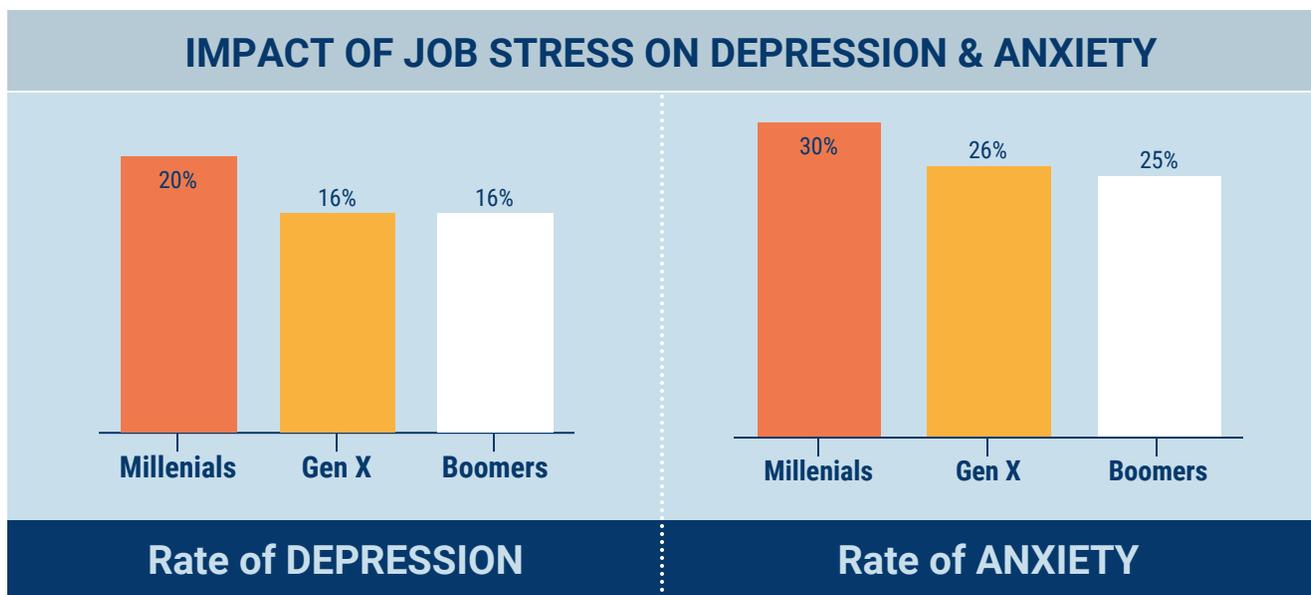
...but also personally. The vast majority of workers say that job stress bleeds into their personal lives, as well.

Part 3 – Impact of Job Stress by Generation

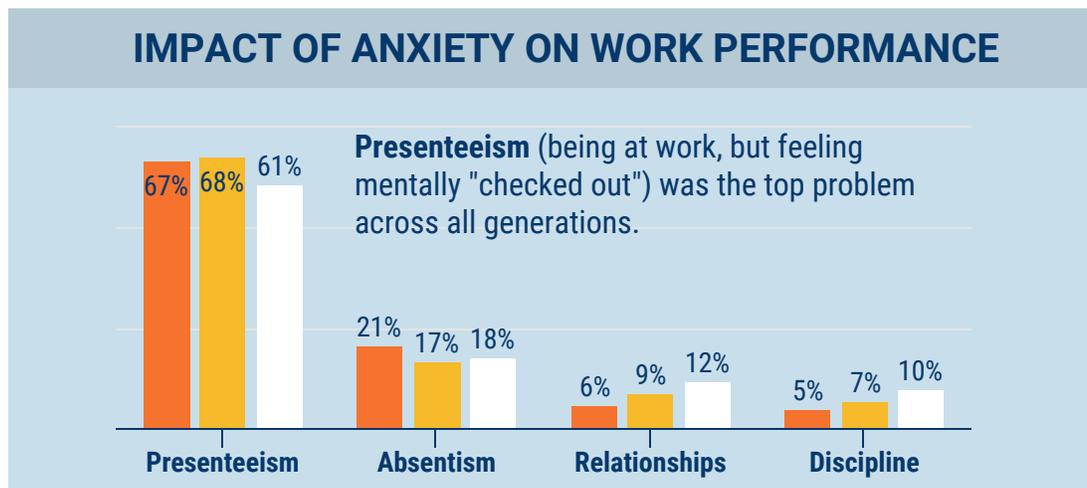
Morneau Shepell, a HR management firm, recently published a series of white papers on the impact of stress-related disorders like depression and anxiety on work performance. They broke this data down by generations currently in the workplace:

- **Millenials (Gen Y):** born 1978-1999
- **Generation X (Gen X):** born 1965-1977
- **Baby Boomers (Boomers):** born 1946-1964

Data from the youngest generation (Generation Z, born after 1999) and the oldest (Traditionalists, born 1927-1945) was omitted due to low sample size.



Data from: Shepell: <https://us.morneaushepell.com/resources/anxiety-and-work-impact-anxiety-different-generations-employees>



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Presenteeism costs more than absenteeism and most other chronic health problems combined.[4] In the United States, presenteeism costs companies around **\$226 billion a year**.

Part 4 – How We Deal with Stress

Men and women handle stress slightly differently:



While both tend to sleep more, women also choose to eat (46%) and talk to family and friends (44%) while these fall further down the list for men (eating 27% and talking 21%).

Both used some strategies at the same rate: caffeine (31%), smoking (27%), exercise (25%), over the counter or prescription drugs (23%), and alcohol (20%).

Data from:

- Anxiety & Depression Association of America: <https://adaa.org/workplace-stress-anxiety-disorders-survey>
- Mental Health America: <https://www.mhanational.org/sites/default/files/Work%20Health%20Survey%202019.pdf>

Part 5 – Research-Based Stress Management

Stress Management Pyramid



Adapted with permission from Dr. William MacCarty, DMin

LEVEL 1 STRESS MANAGEMENT

To build a strong foundation for the next two levels, we must make healthy lifestyle choices, like getting quality rest, good nutrition, exercise, and learning how to manage our time well. Brain and body health are intimately connected, which means that if we take care of our physical health, good mental health is likely to follow. With **peak mental performance**, we will feel much more equal to any stressful task at hand.

LEVEL 2 STRESS MANAGEMENT

At the second level, we address our workplace stressors at their source. Survey data in this report suggest that much of job stress boils down to either the **people** we work with or inefficient work **processes**.

LEVEL 3 STRESS MANAGEMENT

A **change in perspective** is often the key in releasing ourselves from stress, depression, and anxiety.

Litvak Executive Solutions can help.

Hi, I'm Pam Coburn-Litvak.

I use my 25 years of experience in stress research and mental health to help executives and leaders reduce their stress and boost productivity.



Stress Management Pyramid



I HELP with all 3 levels of stress management.

As a certified executive coach, I lead clients through research-based best practices at all three levels.

We can start wherever your needs are. To establish a firm foundation, I CAN HELP you understand and optimize your nutrition, rest, and time management strategies.

I also EMPOWER my clients with specific tools to deal with problems like team engagement, conflict resolution, and changing institutional culture.

I use my background in neuroscience and psychology with my clients to tackle thoughts and behaviors that may be causing them stress. A change in perspective is often the key in releasing ourselves from stress, depression, and anxiety.

Level 3 stress management principles IN ACTION.



Some examples to consider...

There are many **Level 3** principles we could talk about.

Here are just three for you to consider.

Focus your time and energy on what you can control.

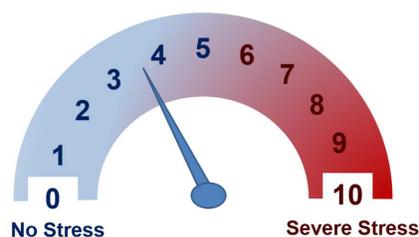
How often do you and I worry and stress out over things at work that we *can't* control? This exercise in futility is sure to raise our blood pressure but have very little impact on the stressful circumstances.

Ask yourself:

- What outcomes do I control in this situation?
- What resources do I control that I could use here?
- Who could help me with parts that I can't control?

Keep things in perspective.

Try using a **stress scale**, with one being low stress and ten being severe stress (e.g. being diagnosed with cancer).



Ask yourself:

- Where would this situation realistically fall on my stress scale?
- Is it really as bad as I think it is, or is it actually quite minor in the grand scheme of things?

When in crisis, think opportunity.

Time and again, those who show the most resilience to stressful situations are those who look at it as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Ask yourself:

- What's stressing me out right now?
- How might this situation possibly stretch me, improve my skills, and force me to grow?
- How can I turn this crisis into an opportunity?

**Want to learn
more?**

**Interested in
coaching or
training with me?**



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Visit

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References:

1 Ganesh, R., Mahapatra, S., Fuehrer, D. L., Folkert, L. J., Jack, W. A., Jenkins, S. M., Bauer, B. A., Wahner-Roedler, D. L., & Sood, A. (2018). The Stressed Executive: Sources and Predictors of Stress Among Participants in an Executive Health Program. *Global advances in health and medicine, 7*, 2164956118806150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2164956118806150>

2. <https://www.wrike.com/blog/stress-epidemic-report-announcement/>

3. Data for this article is a summary from workplace stress surveys conducted by four for-profits (Wrike, Dynamic Signal, Korn Ferry, and Morneau Shepell) and two non-profits (Anxiety & Depression Association of America, Mental Health America). More information about each can be found at their respective websites:

- Wrike: <https://www.wrike.com/blog/stress-epidemic-report-announcement/>
- Dynamic Signal: <https://dynamicsignal.com/2019/03/20/2019-employee-communication-and-engagement-study/>
- Korn Ferry: <https://www.kornferry.com/insights/articles/workplace-stress-motivation>
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- Mental Health America: <https://www.mhanational.org/sites/default/files/Work%20Health%20Survey%202019.pdf>

4. Collins, J. J., Baase, C. M., Sharda, C. E., Ozminkowski, R. J., Nicholson, S., Billotti, G. M., ... & Berger, M. L. (2005). The assessment of chronic health conditions on work performance, absence, and total economic impact for employers. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine, 47*(6), 547-557.