

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRESS
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: A SOCIO -LEGAL STUDY
WITH REFERENCE TO LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Introduction

Management of stress now a day are an important and effective tool for those who spend maximum time with their work. The co-relation of health and work is apparent and inseparable at the same time. More the work load, more is the stress. In this article researcher have tried to emphasize on effective management strategies in order to sustain in all spheres of life. Legal education has been developed as a multi dimensional professional sector in this globalised world. Typical to trace out whether Globalization is multi dimensional or Legal education sector has become globalized. Jurisprudential aspects and thoughts of various jurists claim that Legal education has its own dynamism which is responsible for the growth and development of the society. At the same time study reveals that Laws and Legal education are a must for society who wants to develop, grow and sustain with ethical practicing norms. Society and its transformation depends upon the effective implementation of laws only. If the laws are stringent, effective and are really made for the development and transformation of society, they must have sanctions behind them with effective mechanism of their implementation. Such a dynamic sector like Legal education and professionals who belong to legal fraternity needs to effectively manage the stress whether they deals with public, doing consultancies, practicing advocacy, teaching, judiciary, executives or corporate professionals. A great need is there to develop the strategies through which the increasing stress of Legal professional can be reduced. There should be a great combination of work, health and legal impacts.

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Researchers have tried to mention some important discussion on the Role of stress management in all round development of Legal Education in India, which positively impacts the society and its transformation.

Stress causes because of work pressure and overburden on the mind. It can be defined as a stage where mind confuses between the load of work, ultimately results to fatigue and poor health of the individual. Some people also defines the stress as tensions. Some defines it as something which happens because of improper management of work. Individuals who are engaged in the field of legal education mostly faces the stress in their day today life, because of burden, dealing with clients and lot of research data, cases etc. Therefore a Legal professional needs to manage his work pressures for sound contribution towards the society and his health on priority basis. A sound mind can work soundly.

Importance of stress management at work

Effects of stress are fatal and lead to substantial and serious impacts on body and mind. Inability to manage stress leads to strive for the work and person is pressured to move towards other areas. One must be able to manage the time balance during work and at home life. Effective weekly or daily management of work reduces the stress and one can take wise decisions during crisis and other situations in work. Setting of the ground rules for working and time management is useful for all spheres of life. A perfect harmonization of work, health and time is necessary for long life too. Sometimes we loses so many opportunities while in stress and some times we take so much of work burden on own. An effective management can only motivate to take the work burden and time management on the other part will give the desired results. Management of stress for legal professional and practioners is extremely helpful for sound life. Lets have a discussion on various stress management strategies.

Various kinds of Stress Management

Stress is a part of day today life and will always be there with the person who is associates with some kind of work. To deal with the stress one must know what is stressing him? What are various physical and psychological responses to that stress? What actions can be taken to make a positive change in life. It would be challenging to deal with stress management due to the

existence of various kinds of stress and it becomes more complicated to maintain indifferent types of stress having its own features, symptoms, extent and management approaches. Before undergoing the effective management we need to understand the different kinds of stress:

A. Acute stress

The most frequent form of stress is Acute Stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. In other words it causes due to imbalance of hassle and strain during long duration working hours. Acute stress is thrilling and exciting in small doses, but exhausting if it continues too much. Acute stress is fast run down challenging ski slope,² for example, is enlivening early in the day. The same ski run late in the day is taxing and wearing. But skiing beyond your limits can lead to serious hurt. At the same time overdoing on short-term stress can lead to psychological distress, tension, headaches, upset stomach and other symptoms.

Acute stress symptoms can be recognized easily by most of the people. It could be laundry list of what has gone distorted in their lives, the auto accident that crumpled the car, a deadline they're rushing to meet, long assignments one after another without break, challenging issues sometimes unable to perform in the manner as per required, their child's occasional problems at school and so on. Acute stress can crop up in anyone's life, and it can be treated and manageable as well.

It is also called short term stress as it doesn't have enough time to do the extensive damage associated with long-term stress. The most common symptoms are:

- Emotional distress, some combination of anger or irritability, anxiety and depression, the three stress emotions.
- Muscular problems including tension headache, back pain, jaw pain and the muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendon and ligament problems.
- Stomach, gut and bowel problems such as heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation and irritable bowel syndrome.

² <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-kinds.aspx>

- Transient over arousal leads to elevation in blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath and chest pain.³

B. Episodic Acute stress

Episodic Acute Stress seems perpetually in the clutches of acute stress. There are people who suffer acute stress frequently and whose lives are so muddled that they studies in chaos and crisis. They always remain in a rush, but always late. If something can go wrong, it does. They take on too much, have too many irons in the fire, and can't organize the slew of self-inflicted demands and pressures clamouring for their attention.

It is common for people with acute stress reactions to be over aroused, short-tempered, irritable, anxious and tense. Most of the time, they describe themselves as having "a lot of nervous energy." Always in a hurry, they tend to be abrupt, and sometimes their irritability comes across as hostility. Interpersonal relationships deteriorate rapidly when others respond with real hostility. The workplace becomes a very stressful place for them.⁴

Another type of episodic acute stress comes from ceaseless worry known as "Worry wart" who use to see disaster around every corner and pessimistically forecast catastrophe in every situation. The world is a dangerous, unrewarding, punitive place where something awful is always about to happen. These "awfulizers" also tend to be over aroused and tense, but are more anxious and depressed than angry and hostile.

The symptoms of episodic acute stress are the symptoms of extended over arousal, persistent tension headaches, migraines, hypertension, chest pain and heart disease. Treating episodic acute stress requires intervention on a number of levels, generally requiring professional help, which may take many months. The lifestyle and personality issues are so entrenched and consistent with these individuals that they see nothing wrong with the way they conduct their lives. They blame their woes on other people and external events. Frequently, they see their lifestyle, their

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.jobsbridge.com/AllUsers/Articles/StressManagement.aspx>

patterns of interacting with others, and their ways of perceiving the world as part and parcel of who and what they are.

C. Chronic stress

Chronic stress is extremely different from acute stress. Acute stress can be thrilling and exciting but chronic stress is not. This is the mincing stress that wears people away day by day and year after year. Chronic stress destroys bodies, minds and lives. It wreaks havoc through long-term attrition. It can be due to dysfunctional families, of being trapped in an unhappy marriage or in a detested job or career. These types of stress are never-ending “troubles” and persist for long duration.⁵

Such stress comes when a person never sees a way out of a dejected situation. It is the stress of inexorable demands and pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time. An individual gives up his whole life in searching the solution with no hope. Some chronic stresses stem from traumatic, early childhood experiences that become internalized and remain forever painful and present. Some experiences profoundly affect personality. When personality or deep-seated convictions and beliefs must be reformulated, recovery requires active self-examination, often with professional help. The worst aspect of chronic stress is that people get used to it. People are immediately aware of acute stress because it is new but they ignore chronic stress because it is old, and sometimes, almost comfortable.

Chronic stress kills through suicide, violence, heart attack, stroke and, perhaps, even cancer. People wear down to a final, fatal breakdown. Because physical and mental resources are depleted through long-term attrition, the symptoms of chronic stress are difficult to treat and may require extended medical as well as behavioural treatment and stress management.⁶

Effective Implementation of Stress management Strategies:

Most essential thing is to identify the level of stress erstwhile adopting any techniques to get rid of stress. Once you have identified your level of stress, the next step is to learn what triggers

⁵ <http://www.bacfo.com/NutriArticle.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.ppccfl.com/know-your-stress-to-manage-your-stress>

your stress response. A good way to identify your sources of stress is to make a list of situations, concerns or challenges which elevate your stress levels. There are some strategies to consider⁷:

1. Identify stress:

Awareness of your stress triggers, thoughts, and feelings when the first step is towards taking action to control or manage your stress. When you have spent a few minutes in listing your stress triggers, you are ready to begin with the journey towards reducing and managing your stress.

- a) **External Stressors** – *major life changes* like marriage or the death of a loved one; *your environment* – noisy, too little light, dangerous neighbourhood; *unpredictable events* – discovering your pay has been cut unexpectedly or uninvited houseguests arriving out of the blue; *workplace* – endless emails, impossible workload, urgent deadlines; *social* – meeting new people, going out on a blind date.⁸
- b) **Internal Stressors** – *fears* like fear of public speaking or fear of failure; *lack of control* – not being able to control outcomes in life like medical test results; *childhood beliefs* – a belief system carried over from childhood trauma like not living up to expectations or inadequacy.

2. Reduce and manage stress:

All types of stress can be reduced and managed either through making changes in lifestyle for acute stress sufferers and stress management for episodic and chronic stress sufferers. The degree of stress can be reduced or managed by adopting following steps in day to day life⁹:

- a) **Make Small Adjustments To Your Lifestyle:** Under times of stress, a balanced diet, exercise, and sound sleep can lay the foundation for effective stress management. If you are not sleeping enough, try to push for 7 to 8 hours of sleep more regularly. Go for a 20 minute walk every day to increase your endorphins. Choose more healthy foods during meal time and minimize/eliminate caffeine. Schedule mandatory relaxation time, like watching a movie.
- b) **Changes to Your Behaviour:** Ask for help from friends or colleagues to lighten your load. Learn to be more assertive or practice time-management. Include more humour in your day through media or socializing. Create predictability in your home and work life.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://yourdost.com/stress>

- c) **Control Your Thoughts:** Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the good in other people and situations. Lower your self-expectations and be kind to yourself.
- d) **Seek Outside Help:** Talk with a trusted friend or counsellor. Find a support group and air your concerns.¹⁰

3. Use of Reframing:

This is a sort of mental activity that involves looking at a stressor or negative situation and explains it in a positive or neutral way. Many times, when something bad happens to us, we get emotionally wrapped up in the negativity. Using your strengths of critical thinking and hope to look at any negative situation in a fresh way might tap you into a hope to see how there are benefits to the stressor. You might set out critical thinking to examine the situation from multiple, detailed angles. This will help you see pros and cons, positives and negatives.¹¹

4. Improve planning:

A research by Robert Epstein on stress management has made it clear that stress can be managed through planning. One should start making daily checklists, dust off planners, and take action by organizing weekly activities. Prudence is the essential strength to use planning. One can learn to think prudently. Use prudence to take stock each morning on the work tasks likely to accomplish, the household tasks must get done, along with fun activities.¹²

5. Learning relaxation:

There could be no stress management be listed without relaxation techniques. Scores of studies have showed an important relation with relaxation tools such as progressive muscle relaxation; deep breathing, guided imagery, clinical hypnosis, and biofeedback are all useful for managing stress. Any relaxation strategy involves use of your self-regulation strength. This strength involves taking control of your breathing and creating a greater feeling of calmness in your body's physiology. As a result such self-regulation has a positive impact on your racing mind and your worries of the day.¹³

¹⁰ <http://www.ppcf.com/known-your-stress-to-manage-your-stress>

¹¹ <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/Hope>

¹² <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/Prudence>

¹³ <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/stress/relaxation.htm>

6. Values Affirmation:

Research studies have shown that those who think about their highest values before a stressful event actually experience less stress and show a substantial decrease in the stress hormone as compared to control groups. Prior to an upcoming stressor it is essential to reflect your values of your character strengths. Use of signature strengths has been proven in many researches across cultures, now show that using one of the top strength in a new way leads to greater happiness and less distress.

7. Manage strength imbalance:

It has been found that the over use of character strengths and the under use of character strengths are strongly linked with distress and depression. At the same time, balanced strength use is connected with less distress and greater flourishing and life satisfaction.

8. Develop a forgiving style:

The strength of forgiveness has been shown to have a powerful buffering effect on stress. Those who are highly forgiving of themselves and others have a far less chance of having a mental illness. One team of researchers, led by Loren Toussaint, explains that forgiveness takes the bad connection between mental illness and stress and makes it almost zero. Without forgiveness, we experience stress in a rawer, unblocked way.¹⁴

9. Practice mindfulness:

Thanks to the last two decades of research on mindfulness, there is now an impressive amount of research showing mindfulness approaches help with stress management, in many ways.¹⁵ Workplace stress is often associated with physical health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, and muscle tension; and psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, and burnout. All of which may contribute to overall career frustration. According to the American Institute of Stress (2014), workplace stress costs organizations over \$300 billion annually in lost productivity due to absenteeism, turnover and healthcare expenditures.¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/forgiveness>

¹⁵ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-matters-most/201701/10-new-strategies-stress-management>

¹⁶ <http://www.stress.org/workplace-stress/>

10. Use positive self-affirmation:

It has been found that those with low self-esteem felt better when they wrote about an activity they enjoyed doing but not when they wrote positive self-affirmations. The opposite is true for those with high self-esteem. These individuals felt better when they wrote positive self-affirmations but not when they wrote about an activity they enjoyed. To write about how you used character strength in doing is an enjoyable activity.

There are several other proven strategies that can be implemented to reduce workplace stress and its associated consequences. For organizations and managers, creating an environment that is conducive to effectively coping with work stress results in significant economic benefits to the corporation. It is suggested to provide reasonable work demands and manageable work schedules. Increase employee control over the nature and timing of their work performance as well as decision-making within the organization. Enhance social support in the workplace; support from both supervisors and colleagues has been shown to be effective in reducing workplace stress. Programs designed to teach employees how to implement effective coping strategies in the face of workplace stress, including time management, conflict resolution, mindfulness meditation, relaxation and yoga, have been found to be effective.

Implementation of Stress Management in Legal Education

All the above mentioned stress management strategies if professionally administered shall impact the working environment of individuals dealing in legal education.

It really matters of how we educate and train the budding lawyers specifically the empirical and applied legal education. A practical training skill not only develops the interpersonal skills but necessary for future well-being of graduating lawyers. There is a vast need to research the satisfaction levels among practicing lawyers, Teaching fraternity of legal education at the same time should also adopt the ways to teach the law which could make them wiser in choosing their work and career choices. Strategies should be developed in the teaching pattern itself to make them ready to fight stress at their workplaces. Above mentioned techniques and process should be adopt during the tenure of legal education through counselling and stress management

techniques. Imparting Clinical legal education may help students develop professionally as well as personally and improves their chances of coping with high stress levels so that to enjoy a sound and productive life at work

Law firms, workplaces or profit centres requires thoughtful application of facts and logical arguments, creating mind pressures and lowering the thinking ability of the professional. Indirectly can be termed as inhumane pressure by artificially creating time bound tasks, undertaking unnecessary research, exaggerating the need to review everything during report preparations. Clinical exercises and mock trials at graduation level helps in reducing such kind of future stress. Overall it can be appealed that Values, ethics and practical dealings with legal education are undoubtedly helpful to prepare the future law professionals to reduce the stress during their work tenure. The great combination of management and law should be there. Apart from that the health part is important for managing the work. Sleeping and arising rules are equally applicable in reducing the stress.

Overall the researcher is suggestive of effective stress management skills to be dealt while imparting the legal education and to make enable the future professionals to deal with every stress forthcoming. In latest news, Jurists suggested that there is need for online legal education to keep students, teachers and others updated on the recent law and jurisprudence. Justice Madan B Lokur of the Supreme Court, Justice Geeta Mittal of the Delhi High Court and jurist-educator N R Madhava Menon had also made this view that such portals will prove helpful to the Lawyers to stay updated on various aspects of the law. They were speaking at the inauguration of an online website, www.lawskills.in, Law Skills here, launched by Manupatra EduTech, a private online legal information resource provider and platform for Indian and International cases. “Laws keep changing. Therefore there is a need for continuing legal education,” Justice Lokur, said that an online platform would introduce the legal fraternity to “new disciplines of law”, give “practical experience” to lawyers and students. Justice Mittal and Justice Menon added that an online legal education forum could provide sustained education and training to people, making them “practice ready.”¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/judges-stress-need-for-online-legal-education/28th> June 2017

Non management of stress consequently tends to bad health, weakening of memories, tensions, bad decisions and many other effects which are career and life ruining impacts which may derive various legal consequences too. Doctrinal law schools prioritise „legal analysis“ and teach that the law exists as a discoverable truth. There is no place for the chaos and uncertainty of real life when the focus is on finding the correct answer from analysing legislation and appeal cases. Most students are taught as if law is already justice, instead of an attempt to achieve it; as if there is a correct and identifiable answer in every case. Law schools often teach in the paradigm of a perfect world where legal services are affordable by those in need and legal aid covers the rest; politicians comply with international treaties; laws are comprehensive and comprehensible; judges reason consistently and follow precedents; juries make logical decisions; police are responsible; courts are efficient; lawyers are ethical; witnesses tell the truth; and the client’s instructions are complete. Students learn little about the uncontrollable variables in every case and the role of chance that make many legal outcomes unpredictable. The messiness of real life impacts significantly on legal practice but is largely ignored by legal education and training.¹⁸

Following suggestions may work for effective management of stress at work place for legal professionals:

¹⁸

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230757415_Lawyers%27_Wellbeing_and_Professional_Legal_Education
[accessed Oct 09 2017]