

# I Don't Suffer from Stress, I am the Carrier!

By Chrissie Webber

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**I DON'T SUFFER FROM STRESS, I AM THE CARRIER!**

So how many carriers are there in your organisation? This is an important question for any organisation to ask because the balance is a fine one between "Optimum Stress" where adrenaline levels are creating work of the highest and most effective levels and "Over Stress" where personal productivity and motivation break down. Coupled with the fact that sick leave for stress and related illness along with litigation are on the increase, it makes this issue a real 'hot potato!'

For high levels of motivation and productivity people need to be working at their Optimum Level of stress. This is where there are high levels of effective communication, even healthy confrontation, creativity and effective problem solving, energy, enthusiasm and commitment. The problem for managers is that "Optimum Stress" levels vary from person to person and the impact of their management style can tip the balance towards "Over Stress" without them realising it.

Keeping an "Optimum Stress" level is a tricky balance of personal responsibility and management responsibility. On the personal side individuals need to be aware of the signals that identify that they have over balanced into the Stress Lane. These signals differ from person to person and may include things such as irritability, insomnia, panic attacks, tension, headaches, forgetfulness and reduced communication. Brought on, often, by a combination of work and personal pressures each individual should take action to get themselves back in balance. The problem for staff and management alike is that they find themselves way too far down the line of imbalance by the time they acknowledge they are stressed! **THESE ARE THE CARRIERS!**

Often in management positions, though they can be found amongst the staff, they are a threat to productive "Optimum Stress" levels and the finances of the organisation. Paralysed by fear of litigation on grounds of stress organisations often fail to recognise that with the right procedures, training and staff care schemes the problems can usually be avoided. Like any illness the trick is to catch it before it takes hold and spreads from one person to another. The first step is to identify the **CARRIERS** and then take action to provide an affective method of returning them to a state of "Optimum Stress." Working together on this with commitment from both the individual who is over stressed and the organisation, personal action plans, behavioral competencies and stress reducers forms the basis of the treatment for all **CARRIERS**.

Sharing the responsibility for the management of stress in the workplace requires a commitment from all staff at all levels. It is no longer an issue to be ignored as it's impact is both personal and financial whether we look at it from a staff or organisational perspective. Now is the time to share the

responsibility and create CARRIER free environments that can sustain a high degree of "Optimum Stress" creating a competitive advantage through even the most difficult and stressful situations and economic climate.

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