

# SAFETY OUTLOOK

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## Stress & the Workplace

**According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse & professional mental health experts, there is a strong correlation between anxiety & substance abuse.**

In fact, stress can be one of the most powerful triggers of relapse, even after an extended time of abstinence of drug abuse. Stress is a real issue that affects our health, emotional well-being, and the workplace!

Substance abuse can become an easy escape from the stress of the workplace if healthy responses are not established. It is best to find simple ways to either eliminate, minimize, or perhaps even remove the stress from a situation so that you can enjoy a healthy lifestyle and a safe workplace.

Here are 5 ways to help you handle stress in the workplace:

1. **Be sure you know your responsibilities in your job role.** Do you know what your employer expects of you? Sometimes, it's easy to assume what is expected. However, this can be frustrating for both you & your team leader. Be sure to communicate on a regular basis with your leaders so that you are both on the same page in regards to your expected duties.
2. **Have a plan.** If you feel overwhelmed in the tasks that you need accomplish, simply take out a piece a paper and write down every task that comes to mind. Go back through your list and make sure that all the tasks are your responsibility. If you find that you have tasks that are beyond your role, talk with your team leader about having those delegated to the right person. Next, go through your tasks that you have written down and find the tasks that must be accomplished today and focus on those, highlighting the 3 most important tasks. Focus on those three tasks until they are completed and then move through your list of tasks that need to be accomplished today. At the end of the day, take a few minutes to enjoy the success of your day and update your list for the following day.
3. **Take a walk.** Walking is a form of stress management that is available to almost everyone and doesn't cost anything! However, it is a very effective tool in handling stress & anxiety. While it would not be wise to take a walk during a time when you are supposed to working, finding times to walk before work, after work, or during breaks & lunch are a great way to release frustration while enjoying the fresh air & increasing your oxygen levels - which helps us to be able to handle stress more effectively.
4. **Find the right person to talk to.** If you need to resolve a situation or can not find a solution to the problem or conflict, be sure to go the right person in your organization for guidance. Respectfully communicating your dilemma with your team leader is more effective than sharing your frustrations with colleagues who have no control over a situation and will ultimately cause more anxiety for you & your fellow employees.
5. **Develop a support group outside of work.** Having healthy relationships with family & friends is an important key to dealing with stress in the workplace. Establishing relationships with those that share your values and commitments will help you handle hard times without escaping to substance abuse. Find ways to enjoy time together after work hours are finished and be sure to nurture those relationships intentionally.

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