



■ Welcome to the Self care Guidebook

The aim of the stress check test is to check your working environment and the status of support. By doing so, it will help your mental health, and also will prevent mental disorder.

There are many factors that may cause mental disorders, and by stress factors at one's job environment such as the amount of task you carry, discretion, and human relationship may provoke to show stress reaction on the body and the mind.

To prevent from suffering serious mental illness or disorder, it is important to handle it quickly.

There are many times where it is hard to handle stress on your own, and support from other people is necessary.

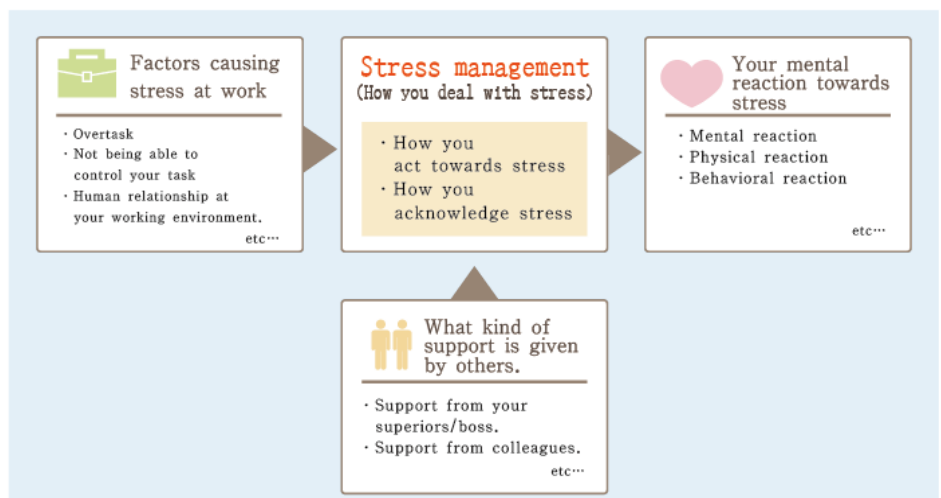
To make the problem clear and to take action towards problem solving, or to view the problem from another perspective are some of the ways one can control his or her stress (Stress Management).

To have people who you can rely on when you are having trouble, is also a buffer towards stress.

About the Self care Guidebook

This guidebook will help you on self management against stress. In order to handle stress, you must first recognize what is causing you stress.

Look over on subjects you scored low, and we hope that you will find this guidebook helpful when taking care of your mental stress.



?? What's "STRESS"?

What causes stress at work

About mental stress

The support from others

About "Work Engagement"

The degree of satisfaction about your working environment

About "Stress Management"

■ WHAT IS “STRESS” ?

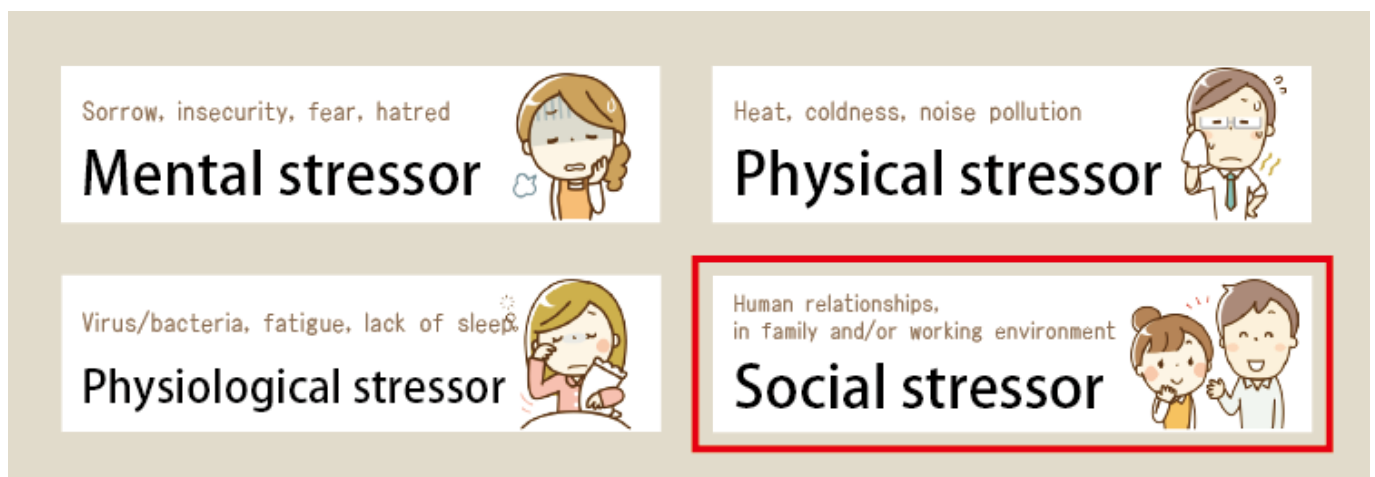
Stressor and Stress Reaction

The word “stress” was mainly used in physical fields, meaning a physical force or pressure on an object.

For example, the finger pressing the balloon is 「**Stressor (The factor causing the stress)**」 , and the balloon being distorted is 「Stress Reaction」 .

In medical and psychology fields stressor is acknowledged as an external stimulus to one’ s body and mind. The body and the mind tries to adapt oneself to the stressor, and by doing so the body and mind shows different kinds of reaction, which is known as “stress reaction”
(reference from “Kokoro no Koe” by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

Also, stressor can be divided into several categories below.



By taking the stress check test, you will be able to know what kind of stressor you are suffering from during work, and what your stress reactions are.

Please note that the test results show the amount of stressor and stress reactions you carried when you took the test, so the present situation may change from the time you took the test.

■ Factors of stress at work

What causes stress at work

The stress check goes over the stress factors from 9 different criteria.

In order to improve your job working environment, it is necessary to analyze each criterion in sections of several groups and organizations.

At the same time, it is also important for each person to put effort in improving the working environment as well.

Here we will introduce several ways that one could start easily.

仕事のストレス要因の項目

Stress reaction is made mostly out of factors listed below:

- Mental burden (overtask at work)
- Mental burden (the quality of work)
- Physical burden
- Stress caused by relationships with other people at work
- Stress caused by the working environment
- Task controllability
- Your job skills
- How much you think you are fit for the job
- Job satisfaction

In which subject did you score low according to your result?

See below for further advice on categories which you scored low.

◆ Mental burden (overtask at work) ◆

Heavy workloads



★Comment from the public health nurse ★

It is hard to reduce the amount of your work, so we recommend you to ask your boss or colleagues for advice.

Also, it is effective to keep a record of what task you did and how much time it took you to complete it.

By visualizing, your task and your job schedule, it will be easier for your boss or colleagues to give a precise advice.

Reference site : <http://news.doctor-trust.co.jp/?p=37057> ("Sangyo Hoken" newspaper)

◆ Mental burden (the quality of work) ◆

This occurs when you are required a high knowledge, skill level which becomes stressful.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

It is important for you to switch your on & off mode. For example, you arrange your day off from work in advance and tell yourself “I will not think about work when I come here” .

That will keep you from thinking about work endlessly. When you are constantly thinking about work, it will keep on making you feel insecure, which will lead to shortage in sleep.

Moderate amount of rest is essential to keep a good quality in work.

◆ Physical burden ◆

Physical work stress due to physical labor



★Comment from the public health nurse★

Too much physical labor leads to higher amount of stress.

By taking enough amount of rest, it will reduce the stress from the body.

After a long time of physical labor, make sure to take enough amount of sleep to reset your body.

Also make sure to sleep in a well-ordered environment, such as good bedding, and suitable lighting.

◆ Stress caused by relationships with other people at work ◆

This occurs when the human relationship at your working environment is not going well.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

Each person has his or her own will and emotions, so it is very hard to control him or her at your own wish.

On the other hand, you are able to change your way of thinking, and to control your emotions and actions.

One way to change yourself is to enhance your EQ.

EQ is short for “Emotional Intelligence Quotient” , which means “a mental intelligence quotient” .

To increase your EQ, you must understand both your feelings and the partner’ s feelings, and also to understand that what people say on the outside does not always show his or her true emotions.

Reference site : : <http://news.doctor-trust.co.jp/?p=37155> (“Sangyo Hoken” newspaper)

◆ Stress caused by the working environment ◆

This occurs when noise, lights, the temperature, and other exterior influences distracts you during work.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

Let us say, that there was a problem in the humidity or the temperature in the office or the environment you are working in.

In those cases, it is recommended that you check the temperature and humidity, and then report it to the person in charge.

There might be several risks according to what kind of job you are doing, and what your position is at work, but by reporting some improvement can be expected.

There is no need to buy an expensive device to measure the room temperature and humidity, and the intensity of illumination. You can measure by using your smartphone.

Reference site : : http://doctor-trust.co.jp/pdf/201402_humidity.pdf

◆ Task controllability ◆

This occurs when you are overloaded with task and unable to control it.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

How much discretion you have at work leads to high self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy occurs when you realize that your ideas and thoughts are reflected on your work, or when you are able to make decisions in your work.

There may be times when you must do as you are told to by the rules or by your boss and there are not much flexibility in your task.

In those cases, it is necessary for you to negotiate with your boss in order to complete your task in the way you want to as much as you can.

If you are not sure about the discretion you have at work, you may want to check with your boss and make it clear and maybe keep it in document.

◆ Job Skills ◆

This means whether your job skills and techniques are inflected in your work.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

If you wish for more opportunities to use your techniques and skills, you should make suggestions to your boss, or think about transferring to a different department.

At the same time, we are expected to acquire new skills in accordance with the times.

To brush up your skills which you have already is essential, but at the same time training and acquiring new skills or techniques is highly recommended too.

To have interest in a new skill may lead you to a new work, or a collaboration with something you would have never known.

By holding interest in skills which differs from your profession, you might be able to expand your insights which may help your career enhancement.

◆ How much you think you are fit for the job ◆

Whether you think the job is fit for you or not can change the amount of stress you are under.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

When you think that your present job is not fit for you, do you tend to persuade yourself by thinking “I’m only doing this for money” , or “It’s my job, so I should cope with it” ? These thoughts may lead to less interest and more stress towards your job.

You may need to look at your job objectively.

For example, by looking at your job from a different point of view such as “How useful is my job in the society?” and “What is the meaning in doing this job?” , may teach you how your job suits you. Or it may be a chance to search for your new career.

◆ Job Satisfaction ◆

This means whether your working environment is satisfactory or not.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

What kind of work do you feel worthwhile?

To feel worthwhile, to be able to challenge new things, to be relied on, to have great teamwork with your colleagues, to receive high evaluations from your boss, to be appreciated from your customers, to achieve your goal, to improve your skills, to be paid an amount which fits your performance…etc.

There are varieties in sense of values to feel worthwhile.

It is necessary to recognize what you feel worthwhile and what kind of worthwhileness you wish for, and then work on what you can do to fill the gap between your ideal situation and the present.

You may feel that it is useless, and that only by your effort nothing will change.

Let’s put those negative thought aside for a while.

It is true that there are many things that you cannot do only by yourself, but to challenge, not to give up, and those process will let you grow to enhance your worthwhileness.

So why not try from something you can do by yourself to make a small change?

■ Mental Stress Reaction

Stress Reaction

Stress reaction appears differently for every person, but in the world of psychiatry and psychology it is said that stress reaction mainly appears in 3 sections; action, body, and mind.

For example, what would you think if your colleague who was always eating lunch together suddenly stopped asking you out for lunch?

You might think that you have done something to him or her which made that person to stop taking contact with you.

However, it might turn out that your colleague was under major stress at work, and he or she was mentally disordered (reaction in the mind), and lost his or her appetite (reaction in the body), and started to avoid other people (reaction in the action).

By taking the stress check test, you will be able to check your stress reaction by 6 sections.

How to eliminate fatigue accumulation state, and how to handle stress

There are 2 ways to reduce stress and to eliminate fatigue accumulation.

First is to maintain enough time to sleep. By doing so you will get enough amount of rest, which will reduce the stress which distracts you.

Secondly, ask for somebody's help, and do not keep the stress to yourself.

By talking with someone, you could get relieved and make undefined problems clear.

Varieties of stress reaction

Here we will introduce the varieties of stress reaction.

- Active
- Physical complaint
- Frustration
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Depression

Which category did you score low?

See below for further advice on categories which you scored low.

◆ Active ◆

A good condition full of energy and liveliness.
It is different from work engagement, so it does not mean that it is always related to work.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

When people lack liveliness, he or she tend to be late for work, or might not be able to go to work, and the quality of his or her work is most likely to be unsatisfactory.

Also, the outward appearance such as clothing becomes lazy.

This may lead to a loss in your mental health, so before becoming so, you must be careful to have enough rest and sleep.

◆ Physical complaint ◆

All sorts of physical symptoms.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

There are many stress reactions such as insomnia, loss of appetite, headache, backache, eyestrain and dizziness.

If you have these kinds of reactions in your body, recognize that those are signs coming from your mind.

At this kind of state, you need to rest.

Every working environment has the responsibility to keep their employees working safely and in good health.

Ask your boss for help and advice, and make sure to take enough rest and recovery before your situation gets worse.

◆ Frustration ◆

To feel frustrated because things are not going the way you want it to be.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

This condition shows that you are feeling fretful and irritated.

You are irritated because things are not going as well as you expected, or you may be irritated towards yourself and start to act harsh towards other people.

Irritation is usually caused when there is a big gap between ideal and reality, so it is controllable if you accept the present situation and compromise between your expectations.

◆ Fatigue ◆

To be tired and worn out.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

There are two kinds of fatigue.

One is a good type, which anyone may feel after working for a certain period of time.

The other one is a bad type, which makes you feel stiff, as if the body is not yours, and you suddenly feel very heavy.

Start by fixing your biological rhythm by taking enough amount of sleep and exercise, and to eat well.

If you are still feeling tired, the fatigue might be caused by some kind of stress in your life.

In those cases, you must first find out what is causing the stress, and if needed, take several days off from work.

◆ Anxiety ◆

You are constantly nervous and feeling uneasy.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

Anxiety is a mental alarm which tells you danger beforehand, so it is an essential mental reaction. However, to feel a strong anxiety mixed with irritation, or to feel unrelaxed all the time because of anxiety will lead to mental disorder.

If you are feeling uneasiness for no reason, or if the anxiety continues for a long while, you may be in need of help.

◆ Depression ◆

Lack of concentration, feeling distressed, not having the will to do anything.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

Depression shows when one is under great amount of stress and the stress situation is at its worst point.

At this state, one will lose the sense of joy and interest in anything he or she does and loses the will to do or start something.

In this kind of situation, people tend to carry the problem by themselves.

Talk about the problem you are carrying with people who you can trust such as your boss, colleagues, family and friends.

The type of your stress

In your test result, did you find that your mental reaction appears more in your body? Or more in your mind?

For those of you who have more mental reaction means that your mental reaction is stronger, and for those who have more physical reaction means the opposite.

Stress reaction appears differently among people.

See below for further advice.

► For those who are more likely to react mentally



It is said that stress reaction comes in a certain order.

First comes "frustration" , then "fatigue" , "anxiety" , and lastly "depression" .

Each reaction is necessary to avoid danger, but when feeling a strong sense of depression, you may need extra care.

When one is under terrible depression, he or she finds it hard to clear his or her mind, feels like there' s nothing interesting to do, and feel negative about themselves.

When you are feeling either of the below, you must ask for help.

- ① Even if you are doing something you usually love, you cannot enjoy it at all.
- ② The depression does not go away even after the problem which caused the depression is resolved.

► For those who are more likely to react physically



For this type of people, the stress reaction comes out to their bodies more than the heart or mind.

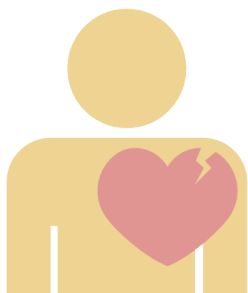
Some example of physical reaction are losing appetite and unwilling to eat, or the opposite (overeating).

When you body is in a bad condition, it is difficult to find out whether it is caused by disease such as cold or if it is caused by mental disorders.

If those bad conditions do not recover for a long while, it may be because of the stress you are under. Physical reactions caused by stress is a sign which your body is telling you that you need to rest.

Ask for help from people who you can trust before the situation becomes worse.

► For those who have both mental and physical reactions



It is normal for both the body and mind to react when feeling stress.

When suffering from stress, people tend to first feel down, then some kind of reaction is shown on his or her body, then a strong depression takes over.

It is important to recognize the stress reaction before reaching the "strong depression phase" , reduce the stress in ways such as to take a rest.

When being under stress, the body tends to get stiff and heavy, as if you are in someone else' s body.◦

The most important thing to do is to handle stress constantly, and to examine your stress reaction in order to deal with stress at an early stage.

■ Support from others

Support from others

In the stress check test, we check 3 points listed down below for 3 targets; “boss/superior” , “colleagues” , and “friend/family” .

What kind of support would you ask to others?
Social support is mainly divided in to 4 types.

① **Mental support:**

To console you at times of sorrow, and to cheer you up.

② **Informational support:**

To help you with advice and information.

③ **Physical support:**

To help you by doing your work together.
To support you with resources and money.

④ **Evaluative support:**

To appreciate your effort in work, and to value your skills.

To rely on one person for all 4 types of support is very difficult, so it is best to ask for a different person for each type of support.

For example you may ask your boss to value your skill and effort in your job, ask your colleague to give advice when you are struggling with a new task, and ask your family for understanding and mental care when you are having a hard time at work.

By doing so, you will be able to receive support constantly.

The categories on “Support from others”

Here we will introduce the support from others.

- Support from your boss
- Support from your colleagues
- Support from your family and friends
- How satisfied you are with your life and job

In which article did you score low?

See below for further advice on categories which you scored low.

◆ Support from your boss ◆

Whether your boss is easy to talk to, if you can rely on him/her.
What kind of support your boss give you.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

If you need support from your boss, you cannot just wait for support.

Think about how you can have good communication with your boss before thinking “My boss should already know this by now” or “It’s useless to ask for help in the first place” .

It is better not to give up.

When asking your boss for help, it is necessary to sort out what the problem is, and what kind of support you need.

To think logically and clearly is important.

Along with that, preparing objective data and records to persuade your boss will not only help you receive support, but it will help your boss and may lead to improvement in your job environment.

◆ Support from colleagues ◆

Whether you feel easy to communicate with your colleagues,
and you can rely on them and help each other.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

In order to ask your colleagues for support, doing nothing but waiting will not do. You must act towards your colleagues first.

Here you can get two tips of building better relationships with your coworkers.

① Even if you can do little to help, do what you can do to help the person in trouble.

If you find somebody in trouble, do not hesitate to lend a hand.

If you find that there is little you can do to help him/her, that person will not forget the fact that you tried to help and will not forget the gratitude towards you.

This will lead to good relationship of trust and will strengthen the horizontal connection at your job environment.

② Do not ask for something in return, instead hope for the team to grow.

When you help other people with their tasks, do it for the team’s sake and not to personally receive something in return.

It is important to have team spirit when helping others.

◆ Support from your family and friends ◆

What kind of support your family, friends, and other people outside of your job gives you.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

In order to get support from people who are not in your working environment such as your family and friends, you need to have close communication with them so that when you find yourself in trouble, they will notice it quickly.

By having frequent conversation with your family, they will be able to recognize your current situation, and support you quickly when you are suffering from stress.

◆ How satisfied you are with your life and job ◆

This shows your satisfaction towards your work and everyday life.



★Comment from the public health nurse★

This article asks your current satisfaction with your job and private life.

Note that the satisfaction level will change depending on your situation at home and at work. Also, satisfaction and worthwhileness are linked.

Getting more support Tip #1 Frequency of communication

In order to receive enough support, it is necessary to have enough communication.

One way to improve communication is to improve the frequency and not the quality.

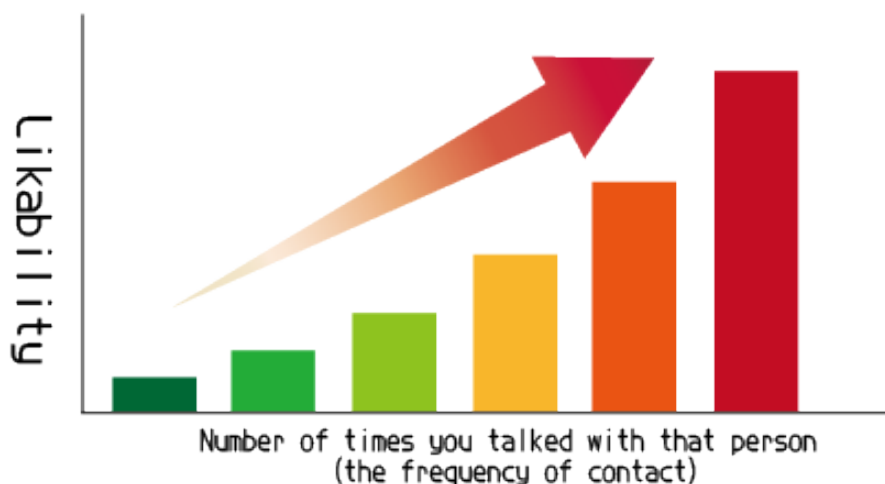
It is easier to improve the number of times you communicate with people, than to improve the quality of what you talk with others.

There is a data proving that even though the quality of the conversation is not a rich content, a high frequency of conversation leads to enriching human relationship.

This is known as **“Zion’s effect”** , or **“Mere-exposure effect”** , which shows that a person’s favorability increases according to the frequency of contact.

There is no need to have a long conversation, you could start by a short chat or just saying “Hello” .

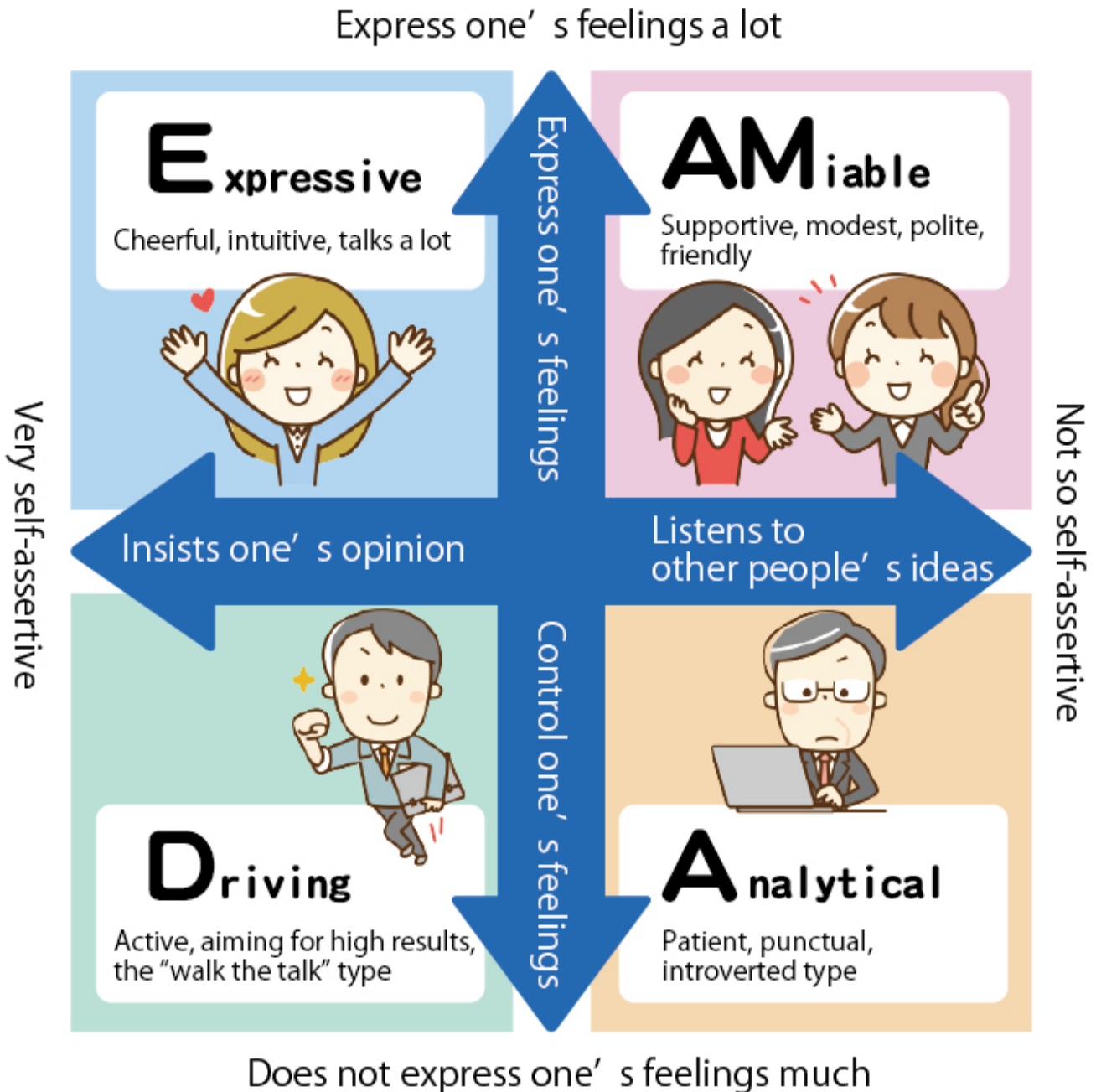
The important point is to do this as much as possible.



Getting more support Tip #2 Social styles

Social style is a way of self-assertion and the way one express their emotion, and it is categorized into 4 types.

By knowing what you and the other person' s type will help you to communicate smoothly.



To find out what your social style is, click the URL below

<https://ailesplus.com/news/?p=36964>("Sangyo Hoken" newspaper)

■ Work engagement

What is “work engagement” ?

For those who answered the 80 questions of the stress check test is also able to measure your work engagement level.

Work engagement is one kind of conception which shows your mental health.

When your work engagement is high, you have enough enthusiasm to be devoted to your job, and you are fulfilled.

【Motivation】

To feel a high motivation towards your work, and to have good concentration.

You find significance in your task, and have pride with your job.

【Absorption】

You are being absorbed in your work.

You feel worthwhile, and feel so much delight that you get immersed into your job and forget about the time.

【Energy】

You feel that you are full of energy and liveliness, that you can overcome any difficulties.

You have confidence in your job.



◆ How to see the graph

The horizontal axis shows your stress level (from A to E).

This graph shows that your stress level is low if the ★ mark is placed on the right side, and is it is placed on the left side, your stress level is high.

The vertical axis shows the level of your work engagement, and the higher the ★ mark is placed, the higher your work engagement is.

★ 「Energized」 Zone

Your stress level is low and you are working with enthusiasm.
By holding a strong purpose in your job, your company will be able to develop rapidly.
Look back on the worthwhileness of your job to participate in your work more actively.

★ 「Burned out」 Zone

You have passion in your work and seek for high job satisfaction.
To reach that goal you don't mind being a little bit overworked.
However, sometimes you try too hard and get fatigued without noticing.
In order to reach the Iki-iki zone, you must not miss the sign of fatigue, and take time to rest to control your stress.

★ 「Lack of passion」 Zone

Stress is not always a bad thing.
At times, stress may become a good stimulation.
Right now, you may not have much passion towards your job.
You may want to think over on the significance of your work and think where your goal is at.
Also, it might be good opportunity to achieve new skills and interact with people with other jobs in order to regain and enhance your motivation.

★ 「To be overworked」 Zone

If you are in this zone, it means that you are tired and worn out because you have tried too hard.
Or you may be stressed out because of the harsh working environment.
Do you find yourself tired and exhausted after coming home from work?

You first need to take a decent rest from work or ask your friends or colleagues for help to recover yourself from exhaustion.

Click the URL below for further information in how to enhance your work engagement.

Click the URL below for further information in how to enhance your work engagement.

<https://ailesplus.com/news/?p=42850> ("Sangyo Hoken" newspaper)

■ The degree of satisfaction about your working environment

What is “Degree of satisfaction about the working environment” ?

In the stress check test, the work environment is measured from 22 factors, and the sufficiency is checked for each factor.

Each factor is related to stress reaction.

<p>Emotional burden</p> <p>The stress when your feelings are disturbed while work.</p>	<p>Conflict regarding your position at work</p> <p>The stress you feel when you are in between several different opinions and find it hard to accomplish your job.</p>	<p>Clarification of your position</p> <p>Everyone knows clearly about your position at work.</p>	<p>Growth opportunity</p> <p>Your job gives you opportunity to grow and achieve new skills.</p>
<p>Financial reward</p> <p>Your contribution is properly rewarded by salary.</p>	<p>Mental reward</p> <p>A suitable evaluation from your superior.</p>	<p>Economic stability</p> <p>Your job does not give you a stable salary and you may have the danger of losing your job.</p>	<p>The leadership of your boss</p> <p>Your boss checks how the task is progressing and helps his/her subordinates to accomplish their tasks.</p>
<p>The fairness of your boss</p> <p>Your boss treats his/her subordinates equally.</p>	<p>An office where your job is complimented</p> <p>One’s good work is respected and complimented.</p>	<p>An office where mistakes and faults are acknowledged</p> <p>Even if you make a mistake or fail your task, everyone encourages you to recover.</p>	<p>A good relationship between the employees and the managers</p> <p>The employees and the managers trust each other and have a good relationship.</p>
<p>Pliability</p> <p>There is enough explanation and preparation when changes are being made in your office or job.</p>	<p>Respect</p> <p>The tasks are sorted out according to each one’s skill and advantage.</p>	<p>Fair personnel evaluation</p> <p>The personnel evaluation is done in a fair way and with explanation regarding the result.</p>	<p>Employees’ diversity</p> <p>Every employee is respected regardless of one’s characteristics. (Eg) women, elderly, young people...</p>
<p>Career developments</p> <p>The policy and aims for personal affairs are clarified, and there is enough opportunity for education and training to reach that aim.</p>	<p>Balance of work and self (negative)</p> <p>The stress you feel at work is giving you negative influence</p>	<p>Balance of work and self (positive)</p> <p>What you earned from your job is related to enhancement in your private life.</p>	<p>Harassment at work</p> <p>If there are any harassment done at work.</p>
<p>Social capital</p> <p>Each member in the office is sharing information with others and understands well of each other.</p>	<p>Work engagement</p> <p>You have pride in your job and have passion in your work.</p>		

◆ How to read the graph

The graph below shows the total satisfaction of your working environment.

(※This result shows your status at the time when you took the test)



From 25 ~ 50%

You are very dissatisfied with the 22 factors of your working environment.

From 50 ~ 70%

You are not satisfied with the 22 factors of your working environment.

More than 70%

You are satisfied with the 22 factors of your working environment.

■ About Stress Management

Stress Management

People are constantly exposed to stress in their everyday lives.

There are good types of stress which leads to enhancement in his or her work and private life, but it is necessary to realize bad types of stress and to manage those stress.

To deal with stress is always known as “coping” , and there are 2 ways to cope with stress (Problem-solving and Correction of recognition).

Problem-solving

If the problem is clarified or easy to deal with, it is recommended to act directly towards solving the problem.

The two ways to do so is to reduce the negative factors and to increase the positive factors.

① Reduce the negative factors.

If you are able to find out the main reason which is causing the stress, let' s think what the negative factors are and find a way to lose or reduce those factors.

For example, if you are suffering from a task which you are not so good at and the deadline is close, you may reduce stress by working on that task earlier than you usually do to reduce the pressure of the deadline.

② Increase the positive factors.

By increasing the positive factors, you can change your feelings towards the stress you are under.

Such positive factors are the feeling of worthwhileness, and good job environment where each member of the company respects each other.

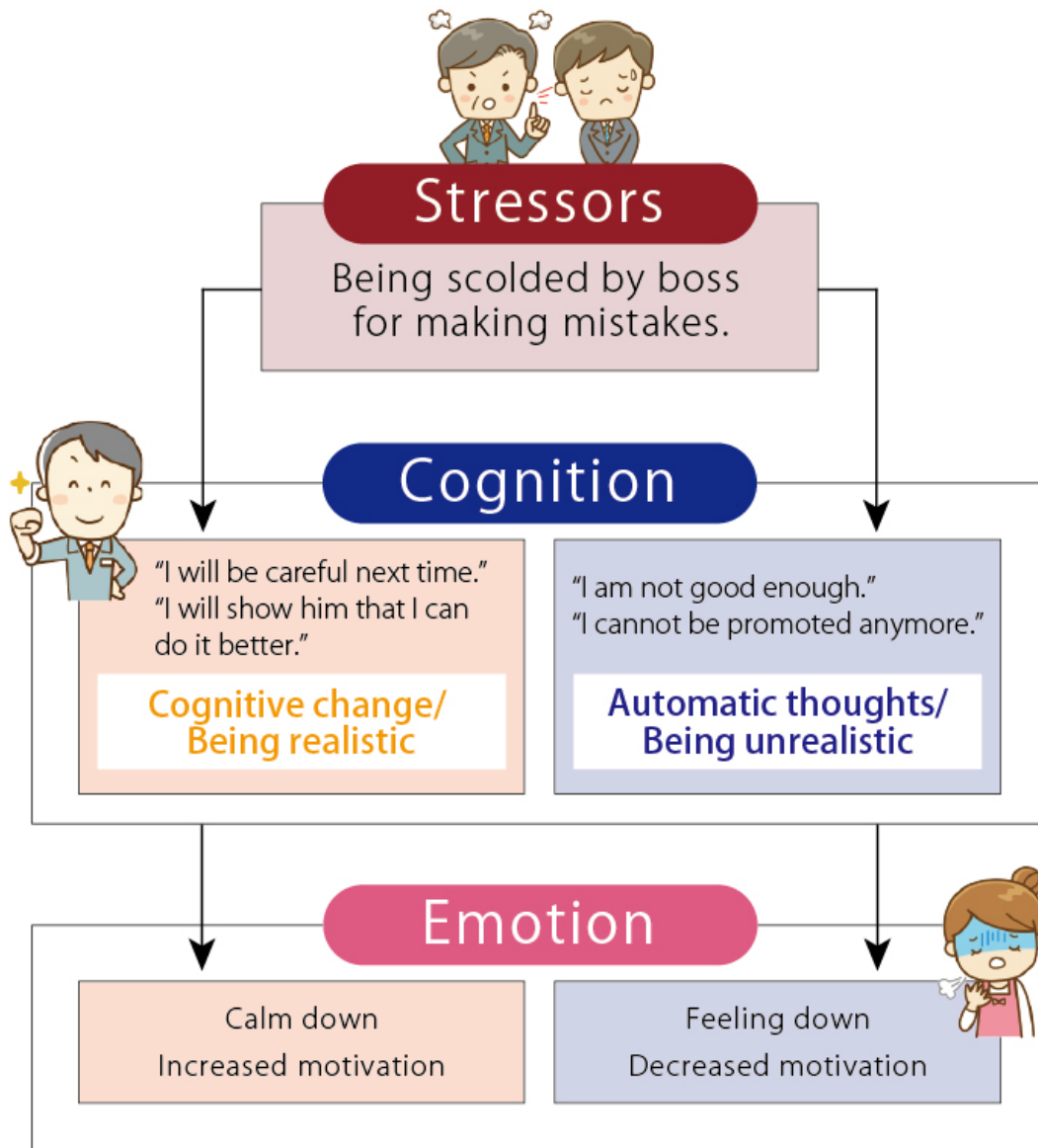
To increase these positive factors and by enhancing your work engagement (to have passion in your work, to have enough vitality with your work), you will be able to reduce the mental stress.

This is a new approach, which perspectives from career development was added to the former countermeasure towards stress.

Correction of recognition

Another approach in stress management is the correction of recognition.

This is essential because fatigue and depression, two major types of stress reaction, is said to be based on distortion in recognition, such as negative/unrealistic thoughts.



The amount of stress and the stress reaction changes in how one recognizes the occurrence causing stress.

People tend to narrow their perspective and think pessimistically.

To prevent that, ask for help and advice from people around you and try to adopt a new thought or perspective.

If you do not have anyone around you to ask for help, it is a good idea to write your thoughts down to clear out what your problem is, and to seek for a solution.

The best countermeasure towards stress is to ease your stress reaction by controlling your thoughts, emotions, and actions by stress management.