

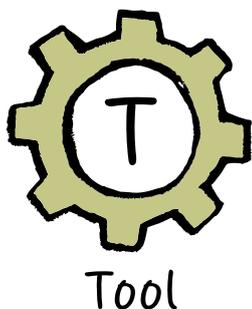
# Supervision

## Using the 'stress and support' tool in supervision

Individual employees will find different elements of their job or day stressful, and will each respond differently to these stressors.

Good supervision provides a forum for managers or supervisors to support members of their team in constructively addressing any issues causing stress within the workplace.

Using a person-centred approach in these situations enables managers or supervisors to support staff members to reflect on their stressors. They will feel empowered to take ownership of their reactions, and comfortable enough to talk about the support they want and need from others.



The '**stress and support**' tool can be used as a framework for discussions during supervision, assisting open conversation about how employees manage stress within the workplace.

The tool gives employees the opportunity to consider workplace stress, how they manage it and how they can better cope with the stressors. It also provides space for them to give feedback to their manager or supervisor.

Information and feedback from this process can feed into the employee's **one-page profile**.

Where relevant, information may also be added to the staff member's development plan, as sometimes further professional or skill development might be of assistance.

e.g.

*Wendy acknowledged that one of her major workplace stressors was monthly report writing. Her IT and writing skills were excellent, so it had not been raised as a performance issue.*

*However, she lacked confidence in pulling together the necessary information.*

*Her manager found a development opportunity related to writing proposals and reports that gave her the skill needed, therefore removing the stressor.*

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## How to use the stress and support tool

### **What makes me most stressed?**

Begin by supporting the staff member to reflect on and capture the elements of their work that make them feel stressed.

Their focus may be on a particular task at work, or something related to external factors that affects how they go about their day.

Ask the staff member to think about the times of the day, week or month when they start to feel tense or stressed. What tasks do they know they avoid or feel anxious about, and what is it about these tasks that causes the stress?

Initiating this type of conversation is an opportunity for managers or supervisors to provide feedback on what others – individuals and staff members – may have noticed about the person's stress levels and the impact this may be having on them and their work.

### **How do I react to being stressed?**

This section is about the employee identifying their reactions to stress (considering both positive or negative responses). Taking time to reflect on and becoming more aware of their reactions to stressful situations in the workplace can assist employees to develop their own positive solutions.

### **What I can do?**

Discuss current stress management strategies that the person finds useful now, and some that may have worked in the past.

Support them to think about other ideas they might like to try to feel 'on top of' stressful situations at work. This can include a more holistic approach that takes into account what people find useful outside of work.

Once we are aware of and acknowledge our own part in managing our stress levels, we are better equipped to take ownership and action.

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## What do I want others to know or do?

Information is captured that details what the staff member wants others to know or do to support them in managing stress.

This section can yield additional useful information to be included in a person's one-page profile, as it should detail how to best communicate with or provide support to the person in stressful situations.

This might also relate to support from others to assist the staff member to take more control over the situation.

e.g.

*A frontline worker regularly supported a young man, James, whose behaviour often posed a threat to himself and others. The support worker enjoyed working with James but often felt her stress levels rising when he was having a bad day. She struggled to let go of that stress at the end of the day.*

*With time to think through this in her supervision session, she identified that 'if I've been working with James all day, I just need someone to debrief with someone for five or ten minutes at the end of my shift.*

*'Typing up my notes from the day assists me to reflect on the day and to think about any new lessons. However, I sometimes need to get it off my chest because I've had to remain calm and not show my stress at all during the day.*

*'A quick phone call is all I need if I can't see someone face-to-face.*

*'I've also learnt some relaxation techniques and I've started to swim a couple of times a week, both of which help, but sometimes I also need to talk it through with another person.'*

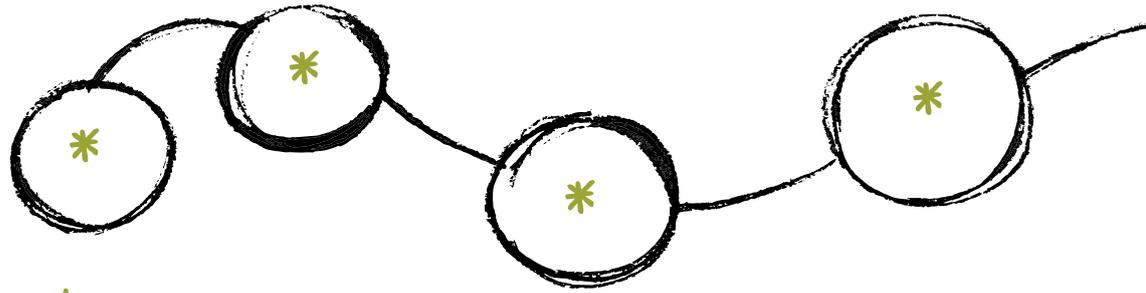
# Stress and support

Name	What makes me most stressed	How I react to being stressed	What helps	
			What can I do	What I would like you to know or do



Template

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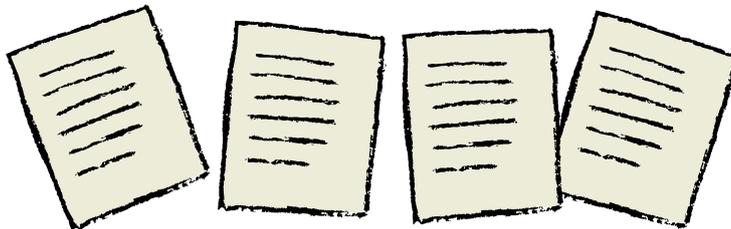
## Additional resources

- \* The Workforce Capability Framework
- \* The disability career planner and capability framework implementation guide
- \* Technique, tips and technique – a person-centred approach to supervision
- \* Tips – building on a one-page profile through performance planning, support and supervision
- \* Tips – using ‘what’s working/not working’ in supervision
- \* Technique and template – using ‘praise and trouble’ in supervision

## Definitions

The term **individual(s)** refers to an individual with a disability and their family and/or circle of support.

The terms **staff/employee(s)** refer to paid or unpaid members of the workforce regardless of their employment relationship with their employer i.e. permanent, casual, full-time, volunteer, etc.



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