

STANDARDS

An investigation should initially be conducted by the employee's manager and include:

- Investigating the facts of the report.
- Making a decision about the work-relatedness of the problem.
- Discussing the results of your investigation.
- Recommending solutions.
- Asking for additional solutions.
- Agreeing on the implementation of the solutions

STEP	ACTION	RATIONALE
1.	<p>Investigate the facts of the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the person mean by 'stress' and how long has it been going on? • Have they consulted a doctor? If so, do they have a diagnosis? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may have to report this as 'Serious Harm' -refer 2.1.4 protocol 1 Incident Management Standards & Severity Assessment Codes (SAC). Note: 'Stress' is not a medical diagnosis. A certificate stating that someone is unwell from 'stress' does not automatically constitute evidence of Serious Harm. • An appropriate diagnosis from the treating doctor should relate to established diagnostic categories and may require referral to a specialist. Nevertheless, the Manager should investigate a certificate citing 'stress'.
2.	<p>What work factors have led this employee to consider they are 'stressed'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are other employees doing similar work affected similarly? • What workplace changes have occurred for the employee – have there been recent organisational changes that have caused problems for numbers of employees? • Are there any significant out-of-work or personal factors? • What do you as the employer think has caused a problem (if a problem exists)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the sort of business you are in known to be difficult for employees to cope with? - Is the stressor to do with the match of the person to the job? 	<p>If it is work related –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it the content of the work? • Is it how work is organised? – e.g. too much to do, conflicting reporting requirements, little performance feedback, not trained for the sort of work e.g. constantly dealing with difficult customers, unsupportive relationships at work, communication difficulties at work, the physical environment, the safety of the environment, shift work - particularly badly designed shift work, the prospect of violence or bullying.

STEP	ACTION	RATIONALE
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the stressor environmental: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are other people in the workplace experiencing the same problems? Is there evidence of organisational 'ill health'? Is the stress related to something in the person's life outside the workplace? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sickness rates, absenteeism, declining productivity, industrial relations problems, increased labour turnover, negative feedback from other staff, resignations from 'stable' staff, etc
4.	Make a decision about the work-relatedness of the problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the problem is work related need not be accepted without question but employers should investigate with an open mind.
5.	Discuss the results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the results of your investigation with the employee. Give him / her the chance to comment on any aspects they have not been involved in. Agree on the nature of the problem, its severity and whether it is work related. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you think it isn't work related be frank with your employee. You may be able to offer some assistance in dealing with non-work issues, such as EAP, flexible hours, job sharing, budgetary advice, etc while they cope with whatever life has thrown at them. Employees do not have to accept the DHB's findings.
6.	Discuss solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss solutions – if you agree that it is work related. Ideally these solutions will address both the causes and the symptoms of stress. Ask for additional solutions that the person might think are necessary. 	
7.	Agree on the implementation of solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree on the implementation of the solutions, and how they will be followed up.
8.	Find solutions to reports of work-related stress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggests how to approach finding solutions that can involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> removing the stressors improving the 'fit' between the person and the job helping the person recover from the effects of stress 	

STEP	ACTION	RATIONALE
<p>9.</p>	<p>Communicate throughout the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parties need to communicate, to work together in good faith and to focus on a solution that both find satisfactory. • Dealing with problems before they escalate is always best practice. • As with all problem-solving, the first step is to ensure that you have all the facts, and that you have looked at them calmly and carefully. The second is to talk the issue through with everyone involved, and identify not just the obvious cause but also any underlying causes. • Employees affected by stress or feelings that they cannot cope may especially benefit from having a supporter present during any discussions. • Employers who need assistance can consult with the Specialty Nurse, Employee Health & Safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is where a robust employee participation system can add significant value through ensuring dialogue. • The Act is about assessing the potential for harm and taking some practicable steps to avert that harm. Hoping the issue will go away increases the risk of harm occurring, and may also cause attitudes and poor practices to become ingrained • The workplace EHS representative, a trusted colleague, a union representative or a family supporter can help make sure the issues are clear and all possible solutions are considered.
<p>10.</p>	<p>If you need further help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of organisations can assist including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EAP Employee Assistance Programme 0800 327 669 - OSH and the Employment Relations Service – Contact Work Info on 0800 20 90 20 - Local Employers Associations - Unions or the CTU 	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of the process and records of meetings are to be maintained and forwarded to Human Resources for filing in the employee's personal file. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be critical if personal grievance or legal action is a possibility.

 BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD HAUORA A TOI	STRESS & FATIGUE - INVESTIGATING REPORTS	Policy 5.4.11 Protocol 2
STRESS & FATIGUE PROTOCOL		

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 5.4.11 Stress and Fatigue – Management in the Workplace
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 5.4.11 protocol 1 Stress and Fatigue - Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Workplace
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 2.1.4 protocol 1 Incident Management Standards and Severity Assessment Codes (SAC)
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 3.50.02 protocol 7 Supporting Staff
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 3.50.02 protocol 9 Investigation Process
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 5.4.7 Threatening Behaviour, Bullying, Harassment and Violence in the Workplace - Management

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Protocol Steward: Employee Health & Safety Manager	Authorised by: GM Governance & Quality	