

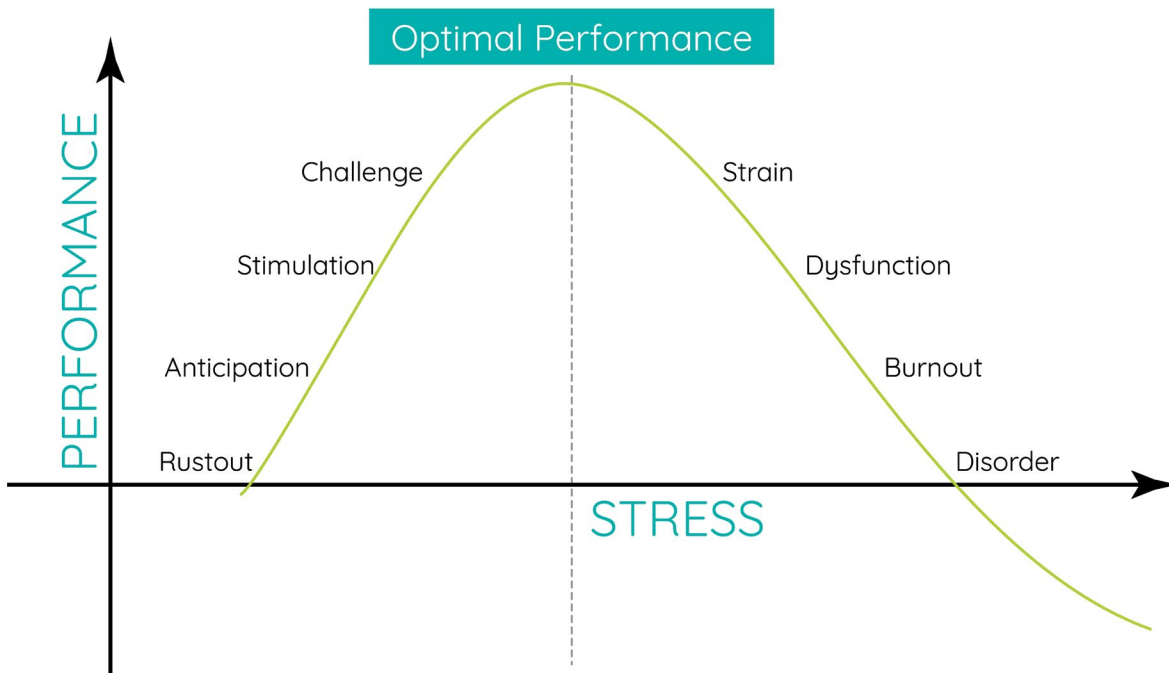


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# Identifying Job-related Stressors

Stress is something we all have—and not all stress is bad stress. Stress can give us the biological response we need to act and can keep us motivated and performing well. Stress can become a problem when emotional, cognitive or physical demands exceed the resources we have to deal with them—that’s when we start to “stress out”. Since many people identify their jobs as a significant source of stress, understanding how to manage our stress at work is a great place to start in managing our overall stress levels.<sup>1</sup>

Some stress allows us to perform at our “peak”, but we all have a point where stress becomes too much and it hinders our performance and impacts our mental health.



*The Inverted-U Theory: Balancing Performance and Pressure With the Yerkes-Dodson Law. Mind Tools, July 2019, [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/inverted-u.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/inverted-u.htm)*

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel, P. and Liimatainen, M-R. (2000), *Mental Health in the Workplace: Introduction, Executive Summaries* (Geneva: International Labour Office).





## Signs You Might Be Stressed Out

Everyone sits in a different place on the stress-performance continuum so it's important to understand signs that you might be moving into negative stress.<sup>2</sup> Here are some things to watch out for:

**Feelings:** Anxious, Sad, Irritable, Tired

**Behaviours:** Withdrawn, Aggressive, Tearful, Unmotivated



**Physical:** Heart palpitations, nausea or stomach upset, headaches

**Thinking:** Trouble concentrating and problem-solving

## Identifying what's causing negative stress can help us manage it.

All types of life events can cause negative stress—even positive ones like having a baby, moving to a new job or getting a promotion. By identifying what's causing the stress, we can begin to manage it so it doesn't have a negative impact on our mental health and sense of well-being.

Some stressors take longer than others to resolve, and some may not be within our control—but even small actions to address the stress can have a big impact.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper CL and J. Marshall, *Occupational sources of stress: a review of the literature relating to coronary heart disease and mental ill health*, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology 49 (1976): 11–28.



Explore the table below to identify what might be protecting you from stress at work, and what might be adding to your stress. Answer the questions in the first column, Yes or No.<sup>3, 4</sup> Once you've identified possible stressors, explore solutions in columns 4 and 5.

Are the following statements true about your work?	Yes (Great! This is protection against stress.)	No (Explore solutions in the next two columns.)	What are some potential actions I can take to address this stressor? (i.e., check out the “de-stress” tips, do the <i>Stop Stressing Out Worksheet</i> , talk to a colleague or manager)	Who can I reach out to for support?
I have a sense of job security.				
The compensation and benefits I receive are fair.				
I feel physically safe at work.				
My workplace is free from bullying, harassment and stigma.				
I understand how the role I fill fits into broader organizational goals.				
I understand the requirements of my job and what is expected of me.				
I have the resources I need to do my work and meet deadlines.				
I have control over how my work is organized.				
My workplace is flexible about how and when work is done.				
I have a healthy work-life/family balance.				
My skills, talents and interests match the requirements of my job.				
The effort I put in at work is acknowledged and/or rewarded.				
I have positive and supportive relationships at work.				

3 Canadian Standards Association. (2013). CAN/CSA-Z1003-13: *Psychological health and safety in the workplace – Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation*.

4 Tennant (2001), Khamisa et al. (2015), Czabala et al. (2011), Vicar (2003).





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## Not Myself Today resources to help you address stress:

- Video: *Understanding Stress*
- Resource Sheet: *Tips to De-stress at Work*
- Resource Sheet: *De-stress Tips for Teams*
- Webinar: *Building Your Resilience*
- Activity: *Stress-busting for Teams*
- Worksheet: *Stop Stressing Out*
- Worksheet: *Train Your Brain*

Take the *Stress Less Quiz* to assess your stress levels: [notmyselftoday.ca/stress](https://notmyselftoday.ca/stress)

If you see that a co-worker may be struggling, you can access tips and conversation starters in the *Let's Get Talking* activity and in the Resource Sheet: *How to Support Someone Who May Be Struggling with their Mental Health*.

## References:

Canadian Standards Association. (2013). CAN/CSA-Z1003-13: *Psychological health and safety in the workplace – Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation*.

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