

S. S. Jain Subodh Management Institute

MBA IVth Semester, (Model Paper & Suggested Answers)

Subject: Stress Management

Paper Code: M-432

Time: 1 Hour

Max Marks: 10

Attempt any two out of the three questions given below:

Q1) What is Stress Management. What are the types of stress? Discuss the symptoms, and management of stress.

Q2) Discuss work related stress . How does it impact employees and how can it be overcome? What are the benefits of managing stress for the organization?

Q3) What are the major sources of stress? Discuss the sources of stress both at the organizational level as well as the individual level.

Suggested Answers

Ans 1)

Stress, is a feeling that people have when they are overloaded and struggling to cope with demands. These demands can be related to finances, work, relationships, and other situations, but anything that poses a real or perceived challenge or threat to a person's well-being can cause stress.

Stress can be a motivator. It can be essential to survival. The "fight-or-flight" mechanism can tell us when and how to respond to danger. However, if this mechanism is triggered too easily, or when there are too many stressors at one time, it can undermine a person's mental and physical health and become harmful.

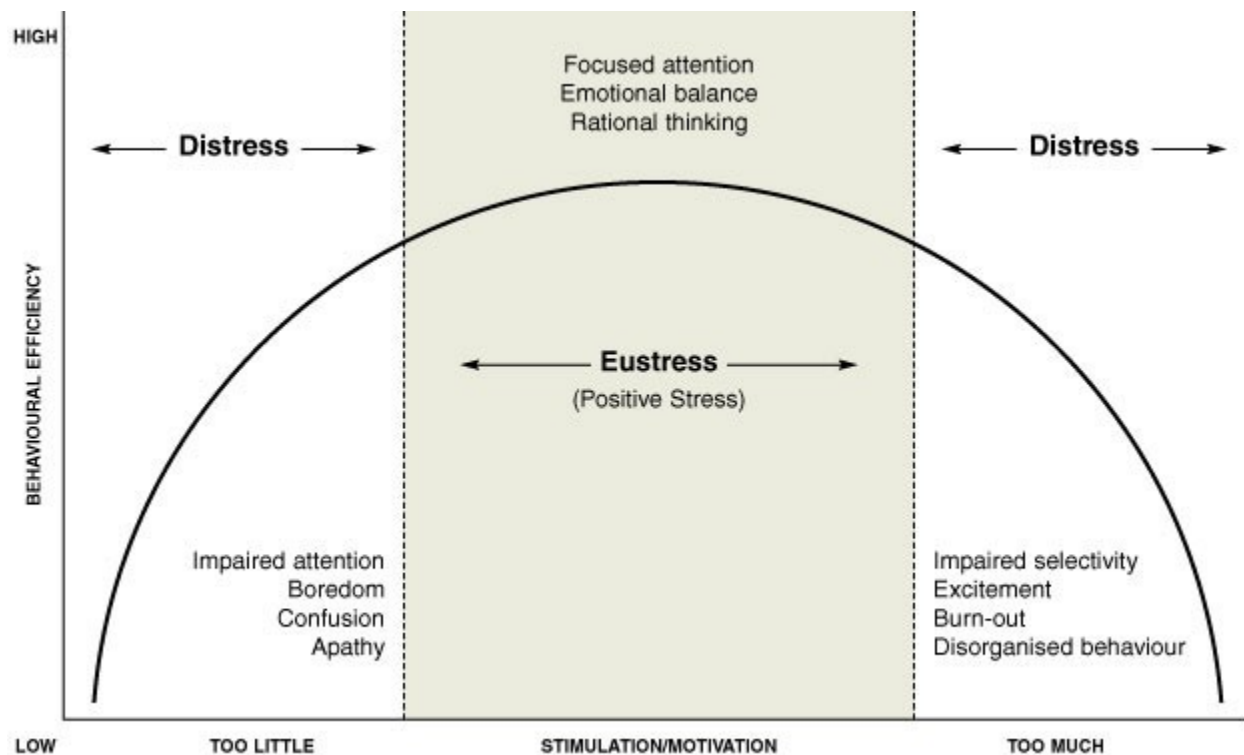
- Stress helps the body prepare to face danger.
- The symptoms can be both physical and psychological.
- Short-term stress can be helpful, but long-term stress is linked to various health conditions.
- We can prepare for stress by learning some self-management tips.

What is stress? Stress is the body's natural defense against predators and danger. It flushes the body with hormones to prepare systems to evade or confront danger. This is known as the "fight-or-flight" mechanism. When we are faced with a challenge, part of our response is physical. The body activates resources to protect us by preparing us either to stay and fight or to get away as fast as possible. The body produces larger quantities of the chemicals cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenalin. These trigger an increased heart rate, heightened muscle preparedness, sweating, and alertness. All these factors improve the ability to respond to a hazardous or challenging situation. Factors of the environment that trigger this reaction are called stressors. Examples include noises, aggressive behavior, a speeding car, scary moments in movies, or even going out on a first date. The more stressors we experience, the more stressed we tend to feel.

Changes in the body: Stress slows normal bodily functions, such as the digestive and immune systems. All resources can then be concentrated on rapid breathing, blood flow, alertness, and muscle use. The body changes in the following ways during stress:

- blood pressure and pulse rate rise
- breathing is faster
- the digestive system slows down
- immune activity decreases
- the muscles become tense
- a heightened state of alertness prevents sleep

How we react to a difficult situation will affect how stress affects us and our health. A person who feels they do not have enough resources to cope will be more likely to have a stronger reaction, and one that can trigger health problems. Stressors affect individuals in different ways. Some experiences that are generally considered positive can lead to stress, such as having a baby, going on a trip, moving to a nicer house, and being promoted. This is because they often involve a major change, extra effort, new responsibilities, and a need for adaptation. They are also steps into the unknown. The person wonders if they will cope. A persistently negative response to challenges can have a detrimental effect on health and happiness. However, being aware of how you react to stressors can help reduce the negative feelings and effects of stress, and to manage it more effectively.



There are three different **types of stress** that require different levels of management.

Acute stress

This type of stress is short-term and is the most common way that stress occurs. Acute stress is often caused by thinking about the pressures of events that have recently occurred, or upcoming demands in the near future. For example, if you have recently been involved in an argument that has caused upset or have an upcoming deadline, you may feel stress about these triggers. However, the stress will be reduced or removed once these are resolved. It does not cause the same amount of damage as long-term, chronic stress. Short-term effects include tension [headaches](#) and an [upset stomach](#), as well as a moderate amount of distress. However, repeated instances of acute stress over a long period can become chronic and harmful.

Episodic acute stress

People who frequently experience acute stress, or whose lives present frequent triggers of stress, have episodic acute stress. A person with too many commitments and poor organization can find themselves displaying episodic stress symptoms. These include a tendency to be irritable and tense, and this irritability can affect relationships. Individuals that worry too much on a constant basis can also find themselves facing this type of stress. This type of stress can also lead to high blood pressure and heart disease.

Chronic stress

This is the most harmful type of stress and grinds away over a long period. Ongoing poverty, a dysfunctional family, or an unhappy marriage can cause chronic stress. It occurs when a person never sees an escape from the cause of stress and stops seeking solutions. Sometimes, it can be caused by a traumatic experience early in life. Chronic stress can continue unnoticed, as people can become used to it, unlike acute stress that is new and often has an immediate solution. It can become part of an individual's personality, making them constantly prone to the effects of stress regardless of the scenarios they come up

against. People with chronic stress are likely to have a final breakdown that can lead to suicide, violent actions, heart attacks, and strokes.

Causes of Stress: We all react differently to stressful situations. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another. Almost anything can cause stress. For some people, just thinking about something or several small things can cause stress. Common major life events that can trigger stress include:

- job issues or retirement
- lack of time or money
- bereavement
- family problems
- illness
- moving home
- relationships, marriage, and divorce
- abortion or miscarriage
- driving in heavy traffic or fear of an accident
- fear of crime or problems with neighbors
- pregnancy and becoming a parent
- excessive noise, overcrowding, and pollution
- uncertainty or waiting for an important outcome

Some situations will affect some people and not others. Past experience can impact how a person will react. Sometimes, there is no identifiable cause. Mental health issues, such as depression, or an accumulated sense of frustration and anxiety, can make some people feel stressed more easily than others. Some people experience ongoing stress after a traumatic event, such as an accident or some kind of abuse. This is known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Symptoms of Stress

(I) **Physical** effects of stress include:

- sweating
- pain in the back or chest
- cramps or muscle spasms
- fainting
- headache
- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- lower immunity against diseases
- muscular aches
- nervous twitches
- pins and needles
- sleeping difficulties
- stomach upset

(II) **Emotional reactions** to stress can include:

- anger
- anxiety
- burnout
- concentration issues
- depression
- fatigue
- a feeling of insecurity
- forgetfulness
- irritability
- nail biting

- restlessness
- sadness
- (III) **Behaviors** linked to stress include:
- food cravings and eating too much or too little
- sudden angry outbursts
- drug and alcohol abuse
- higher tobacco consumption
- social withdrawal
- frequent crying
- relationship problems

The **Diagnosis of** stress is usually done by asking the patient about symptoms and life events. Diagnosis is complex. It depends on many factors. Questionnaires, biochemical measures, and physiological techniques have been used, but these may not be objective or effective. The most direct way to diagnose stress and its effects on a person is through a comprehensive, stress-oriented, face-to-face interview.

The Treatment of stress includes self-help and, in instances where the stress is caused by an underlying condition, certain medications. Therapies that may help to induce relaxation include aromatherapy or reflexology. Developing some coping strategies before stress hits can help an individual manage new situations and maintain physical and mental health. If a person is experiencing overwhelming stress, seeking medical help is advised.

Management of Stress

Lifestyle choices can manage or prevent the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Exercise: Studies have shown that exercise can benefit a person's mental and physical state.

Reducing intake of alcohol, drugs, and caffeine: These substances will not help prevent stress, and they can make it worse. They should be cut out or reduced.

Nutrition: A healthy, balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables helps maintain the immune system at times of stress. A poor diet will lead to ill health and additional stress.

Prioritizing: Spend a little time organizing your to-do list to see what is most important. Then focus on what you have completed or accomplished for the day, rather than what you are yet to finish.

Time: Set aside some time each day just for yourself. Use it to organize your life, relax, and pursue your own interests.

Breathing and relaxation: Meditation, massage, and yoga can help. Breathing and relaxation techniques can slow down the system and help you relax. Breathing is also a central part of mindfulness meditation.

Talking: Talking to family, friends, work colleagues, and your boss about your thoughts and worries will help you "let off steam." You may be comforted to find that you are "not the only one." You may even find there is an easy solution that you had not thought of.

Acknowledging the signs: A person can be so anxious about the problem that is causing the stress that they do not notice the effects on their body.

Noticing symptoms is the first step to taking action. People who experience work stress due to long hours may need to "take a step back." It may be time to review their own working practice or to talk to a supervisor about reducing the load.

Find your own destressor: Most people have something that helps them relax, such as reading a book, going for a walk, listening to music, or spending time with a friend or a pet. Joining a choir or a gym helps some people.

Establishing support networks: People can develop networks of social support, for example, by talking to neighbors and others in the local community, or joining a club, charity, or religious organization. Even if you are not feeling stressed now, being part of a group can prevent stress from developing and provide

support and practical help when hard times come. Online social networking can help, as long as it does not replace face-to-face contact. It can allow you to stay in touch with friends and family who are far away, and this can reduce anxiety. If the stress is affecting your daily life, you should seek professional help. A doctor or psychiatric specialist can often help, for example, through stress management training.

Stress management techniques

Stress management can help to:

- Remove or change the source of stress
- Alter the way you view a stressful event
- Lower the impact that stress might have on your body
- Learn alternative ways of coping

Stress management therapy pursues one or more of these approaches.

Ans 2)

Work-related stress is a growing problem around the world that affects not only the health and well-being of employees, but also the productivity of organizations. Work-related stress arises where work demands of various types and combinations exceed the person's capacity and capability to cope. Work-related stress can be caused by various events. For example, a person might feel under pressure if the demands of their job (such as hours or responsibilities) are greater than they can comfortably manage. Other sources of work-related stress include conflict with co-workers or bosses, constant change, and threats to job security, such as potential redundancy. What one person may perceive as stressful, however, another may view as challenging. Whether a person experiences work-related stress depends on the job, the person's psychological make-up, and other factors (such as personal life and general health).

Symptoms of work-related stress

The signs or symptoms of work-related stress can be physical, psychological and behavioral.

Physical symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Muscular tension
- Headaches
- Heart palpitations
- Sleeping difficulties, such as insomnia
- Gastrointestinal upsets, such as diarrhoea or constipation
- Dermatological disorders.

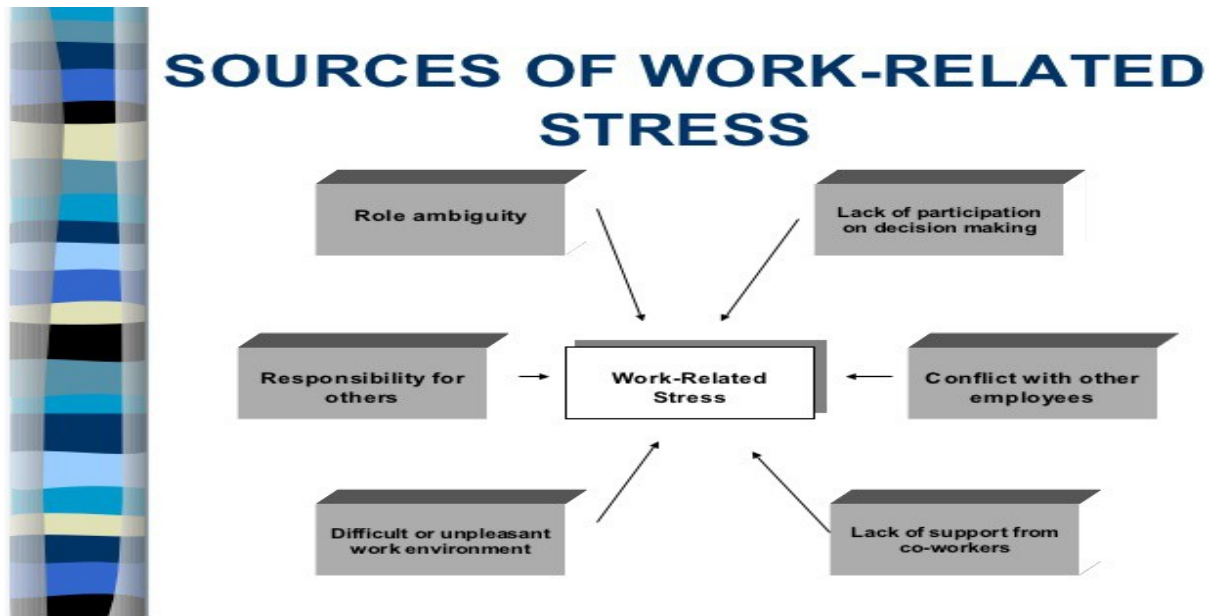
Psychological symptoms include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Discouragement
- Irritability

- Pessimism
- Feelings of being overwhelmed and unable to cope
- Cognitive difficulties, such as a reduced ability to concentrate or make decisions.

Behavioral symptoms include:

- An increase in sick days or absenteeism
- Aggression
- Diminished creativity and initiative
- A drop in work performance
- Problems with interpersonal relationships
- Mood swings and irritability
- Lower tolerance of frustration and impatience
- Disinterest
- Isolation.



Main work-related stressors:-

All the following issues have been identified as potential stressors at workplaces. A risk management approach will identify which ones exist in your own workplace and what causes them. They include:

- Organization culture
- Bad management practices
- Job content and demands
- Physical work environment
- Relationships at work
- Change management

- Lack of support
- Role conflict
- Trauma.

Causes of work-related stress:-

Some of the factors that commonly cause work-related stress include:

- Long hours
- Heavy workload
- Changes within the organization
- Tight deadlines
- Changes to duties
- Job insecurity
- Lack of autonomy
- Boring work
- Insufficient skills for the job
- Over-supervision
- Inadequate working environment
- Lack of proper resources
- Lack of equipment
- Few promotional opportunities
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Poor relationships with colleagues or bosses
- Crisis incidents, such as an armed hold-up or workplace death.

Coping Strategies that individual's must use:

A person suffering from work-related stress can help themselves in a number of ways, including:

- Think about the changes you need to make at work in order to reduce your stress levels and then take action. Some changes you can manage yourself, while others will need the cooperation of others.
- Talk over your concerns with your employer or human resources manager.
- Make sure you are well organized. List your tasks in order of priority. Schedule the most difficult tasks of each day for times when you are fresh, such as first thing in the morning.
- Take care of yourself. Eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Consider the benefits of regular relaxation. Try meditation or yoga.
- Keep enough free time to yourself every week.
- Don't take out your stress on loved ones. Instead, tell them about your work problems and ask for their support and suggestions.

- Drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco, won't alleviate stress and can cause additional health problems. Avoid excessive drinking and smoking.
- Seek professional counseling from a psychologist.
- If work-related stress continues to be a problem, despite your efforts, you may need to consider another job or a career change. Seek advice from a career counselor or psychologist.

Benefits of preventing stress in the workplace

- Reduced symptoms of poor mental and physical health
- Fewer injuries, less illness and lost time
- Reduced sick leave usage, absences and staff turnover
- Increased productivity
- Greater job satisfaction
- Increased work engagement
- Reduced costs to the employer
- Improved employee health and community wellbeing.

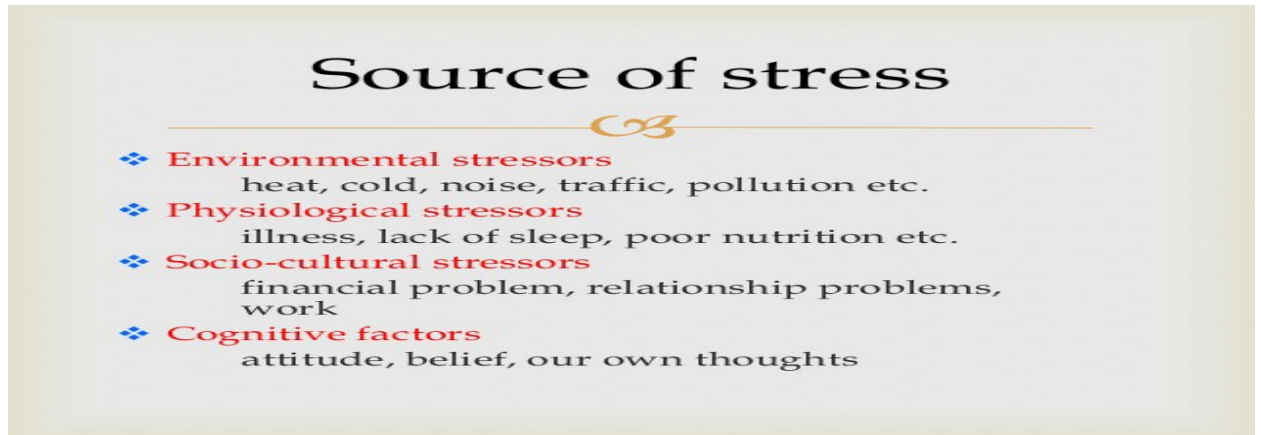
The organization must deal with Work-related stress as it is a management issue

It is important for employers to recognize work-related stress as a significant health and safety issue. A company can and should take steps to ensure that employees are not subjected to unnecessary stress, including:

- Ensure a safe working environment.
- Make sure that everyone is properly trained for their job.
- De-stigmatize work-related stress by openly recognizing it as a genuine problem.
- Discuss issues and grievances with employees, and take appropriate action when possible.
- Devise a stress management policy in consultation with the employees.
- Encourage an environment where employees have more say over their duties, promotional prospects and safety.
- Organize to have a human resources manager.
- Cut down on the need for overtime by reorganizing duties or employing extra staff.
- Take into account the personal lives of employees and recognize that the demands of home will sometimes clash with the demands of work.
- Seek advice from health professionals, if necessary.

Ans 3)

We can divide sources of stress or stressors into personal stresses and work stresses. Although if someone is experiencing personal stress, he or she will also experience it at work, which will result in lessened workplace performance.



Some of the common causes of stress at the organizational level include the following:

1. **Long hours and increased demands.** Not only do long working hours cause stress but due to increased technology and expectations that employees will be available to answer e-mail on weekends and evenings. As a result of this added work time, employees find less time to engage in leisure and household activities such as grocery shopping and cleaning.
2. **Being treated unfairly.** Workplace issues such as harassment and bullying can cause people to feel stress at work. Additional issues such as feeling overlooked for promotions can also cause workplace stress. In extreme cases, perceived workplace unfairness can result in violence.
3. **Little or no acknowledgment or reward.** People can feel stress when they do not feel they are being recognized for the work they do. This kind of workplace stress can cause people to become withdrawn, unmotivated, or unfocused on being productive for the organization. This type of behavior can also materialize at home with people experiencing this stress being more irritable, cranky, and moody. These feelings can negatively affect our ability to relate to our coworkers and manager.
4. **Lack of control.** Micromanagement refers to excessive control of work details by a supervisor. For example, a micromanager might tell an employee specific tasks should be worked on in a given day and give specific instructions on how those tasks should be accomplished. This type of situation can create stress, as the employee feels he or she has little control of their own work.
5. **Lack of job security.** For obvious reasons, this creates stress upon the workers who had to leave and for those workers who stay. Those workers who have been laid off may experience financial hardship, and the workers who haven't been laid off may need to perform extra work and can suffer from physiological issues even if their jobs were not eliminated. This phenomenon is called layoff survivor. Many of the stressors caused by layoffs can include increased workloads, increased anxiety, and lower morale.
6. **Office politics.** Dealing with difficult coworkers or supervisors and different personalities and communication styles can create stress at work. Conflicts, disagreements, and misunderstandings are common in today's workplace, especially with the use of technology.

Sources of Stress at the individual Level:

While job stress is important to consider, stresses in our personal life can cause issues in our job. In this section, we will discuss some of the major personal stressors.

1. **Everyday challenges.** Getting caught in traffic or a leaky water heater would be examples of things that cause stress in our personal lives. Luckily, most of us have the abilities to cope with these daily stresses. However, too many of these types of stressors in one day can build up and cause major issues at work or in our personal life.
2. **Personality.** Our individual personalities can impact our ability to handle stress. Research published by Meyer Friedman characterized two main personality types, type A and type B. People with a type A personality tend to be more time conscious, impatient, and preoccupied with tasks. A Type A Behavior Pattern (TABP) is characterized by impatience, aggressiveness, a sense of time urgency, and the desire to achieve recognition and advancement. People with a type A pattern may have a hyperawareness of time and, as a result, perform tasks quickly. Because of these patterns, the person with TABP may feel constantly rushed as they strive to be constantly competitive, causing stress and related health issues. Type A personalities are not viewed as a fixed trait but rather a set of predispositions that may occur in certain situations only. For example, Amiee may exhibit a type A personality at work but at home may not be as time sensitive and impatient. Type B personalities are more focused on the here and now and are much more laid back. Type B personalities do not normally experience as much stress as their type A counterparts because their viewpoint on time and achievement is different.

3. Work-life balance. Everyone must manage multiple roles in their life. The roles of mother or father, boss, employee, spouse, sister, or brother have their own unique demands that can create stress at home and at work. When we have challenges at work, this can affect our roles at home and vice versa. Although many organizations promote a work-life balance and create a culture that allows people to have a “home life,” easy access to send that “one last e-mail” at 9 p.m. for work creates a blurred line between home and work. This creates an even greater need for our emotional intelligence skills (self-awareness and self-management) in that we must be aware of our emotions and handle them when they come.

4. Life changes. There are forty-three life changes that are characterized as creating stress. These life changes are measured on a scale called life change units, created by Thomas H. Holmes and Richard Rahe. The life changes are said to cause stress in one’s personal life. However, personality type and situational factors may affect how much a particular event affects a person. For example, suppose a major life change such as the death of a spouse occurs. This would cause an immense amount of stress, but assume the spouse was very ill for a long period of time. In this situation, the latter could have caused stress as well. So while the scale has value in terms of determining what life changes cause the most stress, it is also important to consider the other factors around the life change, along with a person’s personal coping ability?

5. Financial issues. Tough economic times, combined with increasing costs of fuel and other living expenses, create great stress on individuals and families. Not having enough money to buy basic needs and lacking the ability to buy the wants we have can lead to anxiety, tension, and depression. These emotions can carry over into our work life, resulting in lowered productivity and lowered human relations with our coworkers.

5. Friends and family issues. Challenges with family, in-laws, and friends create a great source of stress as well. While most of us depend on friends and family for support, tension and disagreements can cause stress.