



# HOW THE STRESS OF LIFE SHOWS UP AT WORK



Today, we're going to have a quick, real conversation about something that affects every single one of us: stress. But we're not just talking about job stress. I want us to think about how the stress from life—stuff that happens off the clock—shows up when we're on the job.

Life stress is all that stuff that keeps you up at night. It could be family issues, money problems, health concerns, loss, grief, relationship breakdowns and more.

## HOW LIFE STRESS SHOWS UP ON THE JOB

You might think, "I leave my personal life at the door when I come to work." But the reality is, we're all human, and life stress has a way of sneaking into our workday whether we like it or not. Let's break down some common ways this can happen:

- **Short Fuse:** Ever snapped at a coworker or felt yourself getting irritated over something small? Life stress can make your patience a lot shorter. When you're already dealing with heavy stuff, even a minor inconvenience can feel like the last straw.
- **Distracted Mind:** If you're worried about something at home, it's tough to stay focused here. Your mind might wander, which can lead to mistakes, missed steps, or forgetting important safety procedures. And in our line of work, a moment of distraction can have serious consequences.
- **Physical Tension:** Stress isn't just in your head—it's in your body too. You might notice tight shoulders, headaches, or just feeling drained. If you're already physically tired from life stress, that fatigue can affect your energy and stamina on the job.
- **Substance Use as a Coping Mechanism:** It's common to lean on alcohol or other substances to take the edge off after a rough day. But what starts as a way to unwind can turn into a crutch that affects your focus, reaction time, and overall safety at work.
- **Withdrawing from Others:** Sometimes, when life feels overwhelming, it's easier to put up walls. You might find yourself keeping your head down, avoiding conversations, or skipping lunch with the crew. But isolation can actually make stress feel worse.

All of these things can translate into distractions, clouded judgment, or slow reaction times, **So here's the bottom line: life stress isn't just a personal issue, it's a safety issue.**

## WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

- **Talk About It** - You're not alone. It's okay to pull a buddy aside and say, "Hey, I'm having a rough day." Sometimes, just getting it off your chest can lighten the load a little.
- **Take a Breather**- If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a quick break. Step away, get some fresh air, stretch it out, or take a few deep breaths. It's better to pause and reset than push through and risk a mistake.
- **Use Available Resources** -Use the resources available to you through the company, the union, or even free resources available. Check out the QR code to scan for an access to a variety of resources for yourself or to share with others during times of stress and challenges.
- **Healthy Coping Strategies** - I get it—after a long day, it's easy to reach for a beer. But think about other ways to unwind, too. Try a walk, listen to music, hit the gym, or spend time with people who lift you up.
- **Watch Out for Each Other** - If you notice a coworker who seems off—maybe they're more quiet than usual, or they've been making mistakes—check in with them. A simple "You good?" can go a long way.

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