12 - Stress Prevention: Safety Training

Goals: This safety session should teach you to:
A. Understand the causes and dangers of work stress.
B. Use stress-reducing approaches and techniques.

OSHA Regulations: General Duty Clause Sec. 5 (b)

1. Stress Is a Physical and Emotional Reaction to Pressure, Change, Fear, or the Unknown
   A. Physical reactions include:
      1. Release of adrenaline
      2. Muscle tension
      3. Increased heart rate and blood pressure
      4. Perspiration

2. Stress Can Be Positive
   A. It energizes and focuses your body and mind to meet challenges.

3. Repeated or Constant Stress Is Physically and Emotionally Harmful
   A. It can cause:
      1. Increased heart attack risk, elevated blood pressure and strain on the heart
      2. Strong headaches
      3. Exhaustion and susceptibility to illness
      4. Depression
      5. Panic or inability to cope with serious or even everyday situations

4. Many Work Situations Can Cause Stress
   A. New job responsibilities or work procedures
   B. Concern over job security
   C. Work overload and tight deadlines
   D. Difficult personal relationships
   E. Feeling you lack control over your job, future, etc.
   F. Work stress can have a stronger impact if combined with other sources of stress such as family, financial, health, or personal problems.
5. Learn to Reduce Negative Stress
   A. Even when you can’t change a situation, you can change your reaction to it.
   B. Treat problems as situations to be corrected, not threats to your future.
   C. Put things in perspective; every problem isn’t a crisis.
   D. Don’t take everything personally; changes, criticisms, or difficulties reflect what’s happening on the job, not a negative response to you as an individual.
   E. Don’t try to control everything and everyone; it’s impossible and adds to stress.
   F. Accept that no one is perfect – not you, your boss, your co-workers. Everyone makes mistakes of action or judgment. Be forgiving to others and yourself.
   G. Set priorities and tackle tasks in order to achieve a sense of accomplishment.

6. Try to Reduce Negative Reactions to Stress
   A. You add to stress and accomplish nothing positive if you react to stress by:
      1. Getting angry at yourself or others
      2. Trying to place the blame on yourself or others
      3. Expecting the worst and worrying about the unknown
      4. Suffering in silence and refusing to admit your anger or concerns
      5. Withdrawing from potentially stressful situations or people
      6. Using alcohol or drugs to reduce stress

7. Try to Head Off and Work Off Stress
   A. Minimize small annoyances
   B. Develop a cooperative work style; give and get help.
   C. Exercise. It clears the head, relaxes the muscles, and helps the body fight negative stress.
   D. Get enough rest. Your body needs a chance to recover from stress.
   E. Laugh at situations, yourself, or a joke. It eases stress.
   F. Get professional help if you feel overburdened by constant stress. You may learn techniques to help you deal with stress or avoid some of its causes.

**Summation: Reduce Negative Stress and Its Physical and Emotional Problems**

You can’t eliminate stress from life. You can identify and try to minimize situations you find stressful and head off negative reactions to them.