

The practical RubyBlosse Minifesto to address stress in the Events Industry

1. Talk about it openly without prejudice

The issue of stress is still a taboo subject for many and there is still fear that admitting to stress will affect promotional opportunities or perception of ability to carry out the role. It needs to be spoken about openly within organisations, in public forums and at industry events and trade shows. Experiencing stress is not a weakness, and nothing to be ashamed of. It's a reaction to a set of often complex factors.

2. Provide a safe, confidential environment or forums for discussing stress

The culture and structure of an organisation needs to facilitate discussion, albeit publicly or privately (or both). Consider providing regular forums (in working hours) or online community portals where employees can share their concerns anonymously and/or publicly. Set up support groups with other organisations or freelancers.

3. Educate everyone to recognise the triggers and symptoms of stress

Perhaps the instances of stress related mental and physical illnesses could be averted if there was more awareness of the triggers and symptoms. Training and education helps. Consider including it in induction programmes or organisational wide regular training programmes.

4. Be a champion of flexible working arrangements

The events industry is well versed in working long hours, and it is expected and generally understood that this is part of the nature of the industry. However, outside peak times organisations can promote flexible working conditions such as working from home, flexible hours, job sharing, part time working, encouraging the uptake of Time Off In Lieu (TOIL).

5. Ensure sufficient resources for events

If the wellbeing of your workforce is really a priority then the appropriate resources will be allocated to events. Sounds obvious, but so often teams are still left short staffed leading to huge pressures on decision making, excessive working hours (12-16 hour days often cited) and unnecessary duress.

6. Introduce wellbeing initiatives

Promoting healthy minds and bodies will help reduce all round stress. Consider initiatives such as free meditation/yoga/pilates classes. Can you provide discounted access to gyms or retreats?

7. Don't ignore it

As a Manager, you have a responsibility to address someone's return to work from stress in a measured and considered way. Give the person an opportunity to discuss the situation with you or an independent colleague or provide external support (e.g. through occupational health services/coach/mentor). Equally, do not hammer home the situation. People deal with stress in different ways. Ask people what would help reduce stress and do something about it.

8. Provide opportunities for access to a mentor or coach

Have funding available for access to a pool of coaches or mentors that people can reach out to. These should be a mixture of people within, and outside an organisation and with different levels of expertise (from CEO through to Assistant level). The sign-off process should be simple and short so people can access at short notice if necessary.

9. Consider the impact of financial decisions (e.g. shorter venue tenancies) on event teams (including suppliers, contractors, venue staff and operational staff)

Financial considerations are a high priority when booking a venue, but consider the long term financial cost to your business if the impact of this means staff or event partners experience the effects of stress as a result, or safety is compromised.

10. Support national initiatives on wellness and mental health wellbeing

There's a tonne of great initiatives out there, such as [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) and the newly launched event industry's [EventWell](#) week. Support them. Make sure your teams know you support them. Organise fundraising initiatives around these campaigns.