



# How to Manage Down Stress in the Help Desk and Workplace

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# Top Workplace Stressors

A survey of the Top Workplace Stressors  
*July 01, 2006*

Office stress is a common complaint of corporate culture; 77 percent of workers report feeling burnout on the job.

## **Top Workplace Stressors:**

1. Difficult coworkers 16%
2. Unrealistic workload 15%
3. Tight deadlines 11%
4. Last-minute projects 10%
5. Overbearing or interfering boss 9%

Source: [CareerBuilder.com](http://CareerBuilder.com) online survey of 2,500 workers



# Ways to Deal with Difficult Co-Workers

*Difficult coworkers 16%*

1. Breathe, think, and speak lightly.
2. Ignore the behavior – deal with the issue.
3. Disarm them – get them comfortable and lesson the undesirable emotions.
4. Don't propagate gossip – use compliments for control.
5. You don't have to be right – at least not every time – even if you are.
6. Be open to constructive criticism – don't be defensive.
7. Improve communications – eliminate confusion in commitments  
(i.e. Help Desk can let customer know on the call when field technician will arrive because they have immediate communication with external staff using mobile solutions.)

**First ask, “Are YOU the difficult co-worker?”**



# Effective Workload Management

*Unrealistic workload 15%*

1. Say No! – for real – or negotiate task delivery time. The more you take on, the more they will continue to throw on the pile. (i.e. take calls – not log – then say need more help – forget it – no stats to justify needs.)
2. Don't take on other's tasks – set realistic boundaries
3. Ask/confirm task priorities
4. Offer up solutions - not problems
5. Being a perfectionist is not always necessary.

**“Mobile solutions can contribute substantially to improved workload balancing.”**



# Improve Time Management

*Tight Deadlines 11%*

1. Meetings – get in and get out!
2. Work-life balancing
3. Set realistic deadlines – tight deadlines can sometimes be adjusted (ASK to GET)
4. Make a date with yourself - schedule time for email, vmail, exercise, and daytime downtime
5. Eliminate distractions – people, music, TV, the weather
6. Mobilization will help when managed within realistic time frames

**“Nearly one in 10 workers (8%) said their stress caused physical symptoms. Many reported other work-related stress symptoms. The most common were irritability (29%), changes in sleep patterns and inability to relax (both 28%).”**

Source: [http://www.channel4.com/health/microsites/0-9/4health/stress/aas\\_poll.html](http://www.channel4.com/health/microsites/0-9/4health/stress/aas_poll.html) (statistics from 20000



# Respond Better to Last Minute Projects

*Last Minute Projects 10%*

1. Recognize what you can and can't do and be honest with yourself and others.
2. Don't be a hero – delegate.
3. Be mindful of other's time commitments.
4. Ability to cope is key to stress management.
5. "It's not personal."
6. Understand what causes the last minute rush – procrastination yours or someone else's then address

"Rudeness and aggressive behavior are less likely to get the desired results.  
Calm, clear instructions work best and remain approachable."

"Think hospital, 911, air traffic controller, police, fireman, help desk, crisis clinic, etc. "



# Ways to Deal with the Boss

*Overbearing or interfering boss 9%*

1. Work at home a lot – tell ‘em you can use your mobile solution to manage tasks effectively.
2. Talk to the boss about how their behavior impacts your work performance – don’t let it get personal.
3. Make the boss successful.
4. Don’t have a high need to be liked – just respected.
5. Use tactics used to deal with overbearing parent.

*Hmmm...Couldn't find many ways to deal with the boss in all these statistics though.*

**“Are you an overbearing / interfering boss?”**

**Try using the techniques for dealing with an overbearing mother.**



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[www.helpdeskconference.com](http://www.helpdeskconference.com)

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[www.governmentconference.com](http://www.governmentconference.com)





Reach out anytime. I would love to hear from you and will be happy to try to help you with your questions,

*Ivy*

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# Resources

- **Employer Advice:**  
[www.careerbuilder.com/JobPoster/SmallBiz/articles.aspx?articleid=Bottom-10](http://www.careerbuilder.com/JobPoster/SmallBiz/articles.aspx?articleid=Bottom-10)
- **5 Key Traits of Great Leaders:**  
[www.careerbuilder.com/jobposter/smallbiz/articles.aspx?articleID=ENT00004&siteid=JP\\_Mail\\_NL\\_A&sc\\_extcmp=JP\\_Mail\\_NL\\_Leader](http://www.careerbuilder.com/jobposter/smallbiz/articles.aspx?articleID=ENT00004&siteid=JP_Mail_NL_A&sc_extcmp=JP_Mail_NL_Leader)
- **Stress Relief - Relaxation Techniques:**  
[www.helpguide.org/mental/stress\\_relief\\_meditation\\_yoga\\_relaxation.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_relief_meditation_yoga_relaxation.htm)
- **Stress Statistics:**  
[www.channel4.com/health/microsites/0-9/4health/stress/aas\\_poll.html](http://www.channel4.com/health/microsites/0-9/4health/stress/aas_poll.html)
- **Stress Management from Mind Tools:**  
[www.mindtools.com/stress/WorkOverload/StressIntro.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/stress/WorkOverload/StressIntro.htm)



# Resources

## **The New Workforce - Three Out of Four Workers Report Job Burnout**

[www.recognizeserviceexcellence.com/newworkforce.php](http://www.recognizeserviceexcellence.com/newworkforce.php)

## **What makes us stressed?**

(source: [www.channel4.com/health/microsites/0-9/4health/stress/aas\\_poll.html](http://www.channel4.com/health/microsites/0-9/4health/stress/aas_poll.html))

- Workload was the biggest bugbear for stress. A small but significant minority (4%) blamed workplace bullying or harassment. People blamed these factors for their stress:
- unrealistic workload (32%)
- long hours (29%)
- poor line management (25%)
- work impacting on family and personal life (23%)
- workplace politics (22%)
- workplace bullying or harassment (4%).