

**Stress Management Café Overview**

The Stress Management Café is a short, blended learning experience based on the concepts and skills found in the Harvard ManageMentor Stress Management topic. The Stress Management topic will help managers:

* *Identify their sources of stress and assess how it affects them and their teams*
* *Adopt strategies to manage stress as it occurs*
* *Build resilience at work*
* *Cultivate well-being through healthy habits*

The learning experience has three components:

*60 to 90 minutes 60 minutes Ongoing*

Part 1: Pre-work (self-paced, individual)

Before the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Review the following online lessons from the Harvard ManageMentor Stress Management topic:
  + Understand Stress
  + What Stresses You Out – and Why?
  + Manage Stress in the Moment
  + Build Resilience to Stress
  + Cultivate Well-Being
* Complete the online assessment from the Harvard ManageMentor Stress Management topic.
* Complete the following tool from the Harvard ManageMentor Stress Management topic:
  + Worksheet for Identifying Your Emotional Triggers

Part 2: Café session (live, group)

The Café session represents the core element of the learning experience. The session provides an opportunity for managers to:

* Exchange ideas and questions with others
* Discuss how the concepts and skills apply in the workplace
* Practice and begin to apply those concepts and skills
* Build momentum and support for applying the concepts and skills in the workplace

The Café session focuses specifically on the following concepts and tasks from the Stress Management topic:

* Identify stress triggers
* Calm down and refocus in challenging situations
* Build resilience

Facilitating the Café session as outlined should take approximately 60 minutes. If the facilitator prefers a shorter session or wishes to spend more time on a specific concept or activity, he or she may want to cover only those concepts and activities that are most relevant to the group.

| SECTION | ACTIVITY | TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | Show the icebreaker questions while participants are arriving to the session (WHAT SITUATIONS CAUSE YOU STRESS AT WORK?)   * Introduce facilitators. * Review tips for using technology during the session. * Debrief icebreaker question. * Set context: We are all busy, with many demands on our time and attention. By becoming aware of what triggers stress flare-ups—those times when we feel acute frustration or anxiety—it’s easier to calm down and refocus when we do get upset. In this group session, we’ll learn about stress triggers, talk about strategies to avoid being hijacked by stress, and discuss how to become more resilient. With more self-knowledge and team awareness, we’ll be able to work well together even as our business environment becomes increasingly complex. * Review session objectives. | 10 minutes |
| **Skill focus:**  **Identify stress triggers** | * Facilitate debrief activity: Discuss what triggers stress. Participants:   + Share insights from their pre-work “Worksheet for Identifying Your Emotional Triggers”   + Identify overall patterns in their responses   + Discuss how people react to stress differently   + Share strategies they use to remain calm * Conduct poll and facilitate discussion: Where does your workplace stress come from? Participants:   + Respond to the poll question, choosing between task, role, and cultural stressors as their most common workplace stressors.   + Discuss the most common stressors and their potential significance, elaborating on their own responses. * Facilitate discussion activity: Strategies to address workplace stressors. Participants:   + Discuss strategies for discussing each of the categories of workplace stressors. | 12 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Manage Stress in the Moment** | * Facilitate discussion activity based on scenario: Defusing immediate stressors. Participants:   + Respond to the question on the slide about how Zoe might lower her stress levels in the moment to deal more effectively with the situation.   + Discuss the 3-step calm down method: pause and breathe, reflect and label, analyze and decide and how this might help Zoe in the moment. * Facilitate discussion activity: Stress hijack. Participants:   + Discussion situations in their experience where they felt hijacked by stress and how they handled them. How might the 3-step calm down technique have helped in these situations? * Facilitate discussion activity based on scenario: Mind traps. Participants:   + Respond to the question on the slide and discuss David’s reaction to the situation. * Facilitate discussion on common mind traps: should statements, all-or-nothing thinking, overgeneralizing, catastrophizing, and personalizing. | .22 minutes |
| **Skill focus:**  **Build Resilience** | * Facilitate discussion activity: Building resilience by connecting with one’s purpose and values, by connecting with others, and adapting to change. Participants:   + Discuss strategies for building resilience in the near future.   + Reflect on the resilience factor they would most want or need to work on and steps they may take to strengthen their use of that practice. | 10 minutes |
| **Applying what you’ve learned** | * Review session objectives and skill areas discussed. * Review directions for completing the On-the-Job section of the online Harvard ManageMentor topic, including the action plan. * Close the session. | 5 minutes |

Part 3: Application (self-paced, individual)

After the live Café session, participants are expected to:

* Complete the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Stress Management topic. The section provides learners with an opportunity to choose a skill to focus on and create an action plan for applying and developing the skill. *Note:* If your organization does not include the On-the-Job section in your configuration of Harvard ManageMentor, ask participants to think of two things they can do over the next 90 days to further apply and develop their skills in this area.
* Execute their action plan over a specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days).
* After the specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days), access the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Stress Management topic to update the action plan and reflect on the experience.