



HOW TO LOWER THE **STRESS LEVEL**

IN YOUR VETERINARY PRACTICE



WHERE STRESS COMES FROM

Veterinary practices are stressful places to work. We can start to deal with stress at its root causes by understanding the process of how stress starts, how we can handle it, and even what not to do. Knowing this, as leaders, we can help our practice become less stressful for everyone.

● **Reality that is different than expectations**

This often is the first thing that happens to cause stress. We expect things like traffic on the way to work, so it doesn't cause too much stress. But when something unexpected happens, suddenly our world is not quite what we thought.

● **The feeling that nothing will get done or no progress is being made**

Have you ever heard, "It's just always been this way"? It's an exhausting feeling when nothing is getting done, and feeling that way will cause us stress.

● **Feeling a lack of control**

The amount of control we have over our environment influences how engaged we are. When things feel out of our control, we feel stuck and powerless, and that causes stress.

● **Interpersonal conflict**

Perhaps there is not conflict in your practice. That would make you unique! Interpersonal conflict is likely to happen in chaotic practices, and conflict is a significant contributor to stress.

● **Experiencing inefficiency**

If we feel like we're taking unnecessary steps to do something, or we're waiting for someone else, we may not have the best processes in place, and stress is bound to happen.

● **Wanting to move away from things**

When we feel like we want to escape, it's likely because we are feeling stressed.

TOWARD IS SUSTAINABLE, AWAY ISN'T

When things are stressful or we feel like there's a lot of chaos, often we just want to get away from it. If we don't have a clear definition of success, we can fall into survival mode, where we just want to make it through, to complete the day.

Completion and Success are Very Different.

When we're in motion, it's important that we're moving toward something rather than getting away. That's where our definition of success matters. It motivates us to move in the direction we want to go to make the changes we want to make. When we are moving in that direction, our journey is no longer about just surviving the day.



HOW TO LOWER STRESS FOR YOUR TEAM

- **Planning**
Hold morning and/or afternoon huddles to plan and prioritize work.
- **Individual development**
Coach others by asking questions about their future and what they want to move towards.
- **Hiring the right people**
Hire people that add to the efficiency of your practice.
- **Collaborating on projects**
Involvement creates a sense of control.
- **Resolving conflicts**
Face conflict immediately before it grows.
- **Teamwork**
You can accomplish more when you're working together as a team.

WHAT WON'T LOWER STRESS

- More breaks or longer lunches
- Less work or fewer clients
- Hiring the wrong people when we are short-staffed
- Keeping the wrong people when we are short-staffed
- Micromanagement or ineffective leadership

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