

Spotting stress early: Triggers and warning signs

Adaptive module

~20 min

40% of workers worldwide report a lot of daily stress (Gallup), and the biggest risk is not the peak of stress but the phase where people keep “holding on” until they are exhausted. This module teaches how to spot stress early: four families of triggers, each person’s own warning lights (body, emotions, mind, behavior), and the three phases described by Hans Selye, so learners know where they stand before their resources collapse.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Identify your stress triggers in four families: the way work is organized, relationships, environment, and socioeconomic context.
- 02 Recognize your personal warning lights across the four dimensions (body, emotions, mind, behavior) using the stress journal.
- 03 Identify your phase (alarm, resistance, exhaustion) in Hans Selye’s model and avoid the over-adapting trap.
- 04 Allow yourself to see your stress despite a culture of “holding on,” and ask for a trusted outside view.

WHO IT’S FOR

Anyone who wants to read their own signals in time and act before stress sets in.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

Since two branches merged in March, Inès, a project officer, has been arriving at 7:30 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. and rereading her messages every evening. Her tracking sheet still shows eight cases completed a week. On Friday, Inès reviews her month. What does Inès do?

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- 3 phases of stress (alarm/resistance/exhaustion) – Hans Selye, General Adaptation Syndrome (1936)
- 4 categories of stress triggers (organization, relationships, physical/technical environment, socioeconomic) – Afthonios method
- The fable of the frog – Olivier Clerc, “La grenouille qui ne savait pas qu’elle était cuite...” (2005)

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Gallup, “State of the Global Workplace” – 40% of employees report having experienced a lot of stress the previous day (50% in the United States)
- Tasha Eurich (organizational psychologist), reported in Harvard Business Review – 95% of people think they are self-aware, but only 10 to 15% actually are
- Hans Selye – General Adaptation Syndrome in three phases (alarm, resistance, exhaustion), formulated in 1936
- INRS (French national occupational health and safety institute) – stress at work and prevention based on work situations