**A good day and work logo**

# What are the 6 Essentials?

Feelings of stress can arise in a number of ways and can build up over time, or happen as a result of a specific event

or situation. Robertson Cooper’s 6 Essentials framework helps to break down feelings of stress and understand the causes. Almost anything that causes stress will fit into one or more of these areas, which are explained below.

## Resources and Communication

Resources cover everything from specialist training, to IT equipment, right through to a new stapler! Communication is having adequate information about what’s going on in the organisation, and the local team.

## Control

Control provides a sense of autonomy, and the change to influence what, and how, work is done. People need to have a feeling of control if that’s how they prefer to work - but remember, you can’t force it on everyone as, contrary to popular belief, some people want it more than others.

## Balanced Workload

A balanced workload means not being faced by work overload or a negative work-life balance. For some people, this relates to leaving work on time because they have commitments to fulfil outside of work; whereas in certain organisations a heavy workload will be seen as an inevitable part of the role. What’s important in managing a balanced workload is to establish how troubled people are by the situation.

## Job Security and Change

Some people embrace change, others recoil from it, but when our sense of job security is threatened it will be difficult for nearly all of us. While the situation can’t always be avoided, you can always ensure that you deal with it effectively.

## Work Relationships

Work relationships are at their best when the interaction between colleagues is collaborative, but also stimulating and challenging - for example in the form of constructive debate and/or healthy competition within the team.

## Job Conditions

Job conditions are the things that add up to a sense of job satisfaction, as well as covering pay and benefits and bullying.

See the following pages for possible things you can do as a manager to improve the six essentials within your team.

There is also a [workshop](https://staff-learning.brookes.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=285) available as part of the wider leadership and management development offer that provides further information and tools aligned with the six essentials.

| **Pressure area** | **Potential adjustment** | **Select those that apply** | **Proposed action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resources and Communication** | Clarify objectives and/or recommunicate purpose |  |  |
| Effective supervision & constructive feedback |  |  |
| Raise and resolve resource/communication issues that have been ongoing for some time. |  |  |
| Undertake training needs analysis; encourage self-development and support training and development |  |  |
| Ensure individuals know how to access the resources required to do their role |  |  |
| Look at opportunities to improve  communication and the channels used |  |  |
| Ensure team members know where and how to access available support |  |  |
| Identify any additional equipment, tools or resources required to enable team members to do their jobs more effectively |  |  |

| **Pressure area** | **Potential adjustment** | **Select those that apply** | **Proposed action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Control** | Review opportunities to provide team members with more autonomy in their roles. |  |  |
| Create an environment where all team members feel comfortable sharing their ideas and suggestions known |  |  |
| Provide greater clarity around roles within the team |  |  |
| Enable employees to have an input on their performance targets |  |  |
| Look at opportunities to craft jobs to give more control over the pace and way in which the work is completed (e.g. ‘[burstiness’](https://blog.dropbox.com/topics/work-culture/forget-brainstorming--burstiness-is-the-key-to-creativity--), silent meetings) |  |  |

| **Pressure area** | **Potential adjustment** | **Select those that apply** | **Proposed action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Balanced**  **Workload** | Review conflicting demands and how these can be resolved / managed; manage upwards if required |  |  |
| Identify how to proactively monitor workload on a regular basis and identify workload issues |  |  |
| Review options for flexible working hours and patterns to accommodate demands outside of work |  |  |
| Identify tasks that can be redesigned or reallocated |  |  |
| Review team etiquette/agreements about hours being worked and when emails are sent |  |  |
| Identify how to proactively identify workload issues |  |  |
| Include workload and pressures as a regular discussion item during 1-2-1s |  |  |

| **Pressure area** | **Potential adjustment** | **Select those that apply** | **Proposed action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Work**  **Relationships** | Address ongoing issues between team members and/or across teams |  |  |
| Proactively address conflict early |  |  |
| Look at current processes for giving and receiving regular feedback |  |  |
| Review how the team is currently connecting – what additional opportunities are there to improve relationships? |  |  |
| Look at how to improve the support I provide as a manager and my relationships with team members (e.g. develop coaching skills) |  |  |
| Ensure time is taken to acknowledge success within the team |  |  |

| **Pressure area** | **Potential adjustment** | **Select those that apply** | **Proposed action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Job Security**  **and Change** | Consult employees on proposed changes early in the change lifecycle, where possible |  |  |
| Provide information on the reasons for change |  |  |
| Ensure the impact of any change to job roles are made clear to employees |  |  |
| Make support available during periods of significant organisational or team change. |  |  |
| Provide opportunities for employees to input into the proposed changes |  |  |

| **Pressure area** | **Potential adjustment** | **Select those that apply** | **Proposed action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Job Conditions** | Review how supportive the current working environment is and look for opportunities to increase levels of support as required |  |  |
| Ensure everyone in the team know where to find information, policies and procedures relevant to their roles |  |  |
| Improve onboarding and induction process within team (or, if relevant to role, across teams) |  |  |
| Check workspace and environment is set up to support productive working |  |  |
| Assess job roles within team to ensure adequate variety and |  |  |
| Team members are encouraged to take regular breaks – when working in the office or remotely |  |  |
| **Other actions** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |