**Template and guidance for   
Mental Health Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment is a way to identify the risks associated with poor mental health.   
While stress is not classified as a mental health condition in itself, stress can and does   
lead to the onset of mental health conditions including anxiety disorders and depression.

By considering which risks there may be in your production, and putting together an action plan,   
you can help to prevent stress and burnout, and keep the crew safe and motivated.

Completing a stress and mental health risk assessment is a good way to identify any risks and decide   
which elements of the Whole Picture Toolkit may help your specific production to address them.

Remember: all productions have a legal duty of care to prevent stress and mental health issues   
in their workers, and to make an assessment of the risk. The points below will guide you through   
the main causes of stress on a production.

**3 things to consider**

**Here are three things that can help you to identify the types of risks and   
causes of poor mental health:**

**1) Film and TV-specific causes of stress and mental health issues**

**Context**

**There are many different ways that the context of a shoot may act as a trigger or contribute   
to the stress or anxiety felt by the crew. The issues may be complex, but some general   
examples are listed below.**

Think about the following for both un-scripted and scripted productions:

*  Location – could this be triggering e.g. abattoir, prison or a specific place associated with harrowing events, country with a different culture
* Remote working where cast/crew cut off from friends, family or normal life for periods of time
* Filming in COVID bubbles or bio-secure environments
* Loneliness - Are crew working alone or even from home?
* Wider world events – Covid, the global Black Lives Matter protests, political unrest etc. These events   
  could have a personal impact on team members and could trigger strong memories and/or emotions
* Is the schedule particularly tight due to the availability of talent or other factors?
* Previous experience of a production can highlight areas where further support is needed.

**ACTION:** Consider how the context of a shoot may impact the cast and crew and communicate with   
them to determine any potential triggers and the support that can be put in place for them.

**Content**

What we film (both scripted and un-scripted) could cause stress or trigger a mental health condition:

* Any harrowing content whether scripted or un-scripted
  + Disasters, military conflict, sexual abuse, torture, physical abuse, health issues, crime, terrorism, racism, harassment, mental health, suicide
  + Emotional distress, relationship breakdown, bereavement, illness

**ACTION**: Consider the impact these elements could have on the cast and crew especially   
if they have already experienced one of these issues themselves.

**Contributors**

Working with vulnerable contributors can place extra pressure on production workers’ mental health. The relationships that are formed between members of the production team and anyone front-of-camera can be stressful to manage.

Vulnerable contributors is a term that refers to members of the public who are vulnerable due to their   
own health or circumstances (e.g. participants in documentaries about a disease or families of those killed   
by terrorism), though it can include those who may be at risk of harm as a result of taking part a programme   
(e.g. reality show participants who are vilified by social media or ostracised by family members).

Issues to consider:

* Training – about managing vulnerable contributors, managing boundaries, safeguarding
* Producers may need to be equipped and supported to manage relationships with contributors,   
  after shooting has finished, until TX
* Think about all the people on the team who have regular or significant personal contact with the contributors – including hair and make-up artists, runners
* It can sometimes be challenging to work with actors or presenters who are experiencing stress themselves
* Ofcom has [guidance](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/24713/section7.pdf) on working with contributors who are vulnerable or may become vulnerable   
  and how they should be treated – consider the impact on crew in light of these.

**2) Workplace causes of stress**

There are a number of frameworks for reducing stress and mental health issues in the workplace,   
including the Health and Safety Executive Management standards, the Mental Health at Work Commitment standards and global standard ISO 45003.

The HSE Management Standards are summarised below and group the main causes of stress and mental health issues relevant to all workplaces into six categories. Many of these issues, especially demands and long hours, are endemic in the industry. These could be termed the ‘hazards’ for the purpose of a risk assessment.

Our [Looking Glass report](https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Looking-Glass-Final-Report-Final.pdf) and [BECTU’s Eyes Half Shut](https://bectu.org.uk/get-involved/eyes-half-shut/) campaign highlight the main workplace stressors   
in the film and TV industry. These can all be traced back to categories in the HSE Management Standards.

Think about the following hazards for all productions:

* **Demands**
  + High workload
  + Conflicting priorities
  + Tight deadlines
  + High pressure
  + Remote locations/working
* **Relationships   
  (How are these dealt with?)**
  + Setting the culture
  + Bullying
  + Harassment
  + Conflict
* **Support (What is provided   
  by the production?)**
  + When there are difficulties at work or home?
  + Existing illness
  + Harrowing or difficult content
  + Respect
  + Feedback
  + Praise
* **Control**
  + Poor work patterns
  + Lack of breaks
  + Fast work speed
  + Poor method
  + Lack of flexibility
* **Role**
  + Clarity
  + Strategy (What is the production trying to achieve?)
  + Stepping up to a higher grade
* **Change**
  + Communication
  + Consultation with the team
  + Management of change

**ACTION:** Consider how the factors in the workplace may impact the levels of stress and the mental health of the crew and cast. Are there times when these may become even more severe? Decide which resources and support could be put in place to help alleviate issues.

**3) Individual considerations of stress**

Some crew members may already have a pre-existing mental health condition or predisposition to feel experience stress when exposed to certain triggers. It’s important to remember that you have a duty of   
care for your workers and that support should be provided for them to enable them to work effectively.

Regardless of the intentions of a production and the feeling that home life should be kept away from work, we are whole people and supporting someone through a difficult time at home *can* and *does* help them at work.

It’s important to consider vulnerable people, including those who have an existing illness or might be more susceptible to stress at work.

**Tip:** A great way to start is to share the [Working Well With Me template](https://wholepicturetoolkit.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/02/Working-well-with-me-Template.docx) within this Toolkit. This asks what   
help and support a worker may need. Any reasonable adjustments that are put in place can be added to   
the risk assessment as control measures, for example, someone may need to leave work early to deal with childcare or a disabled relative. Or, if a worker lives with autism, they may need a quiet space occasionally.

A crew member may also need time to deal with a bereavement or simply need a day to recover from   
a highly stressful situation.

**ACTION:** Think about what support a person may need on the production. Be clear that you are open   
to discussing reasonable adjustments and that people do not need to worry about sharing personal   
information with you.

**HELPFUL EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED RISK ASSESSMENT**

To give you a helping hand, this example has been based on several actual productions to give a flavour of the potential control measures that can be implemented. It’s structured using the HSE Management Standards, taking film and TV-specific and workers’ individual needs into consideration. It’s not a comprehensive template, as stressors are unique to each production.

The Red, Amber, Green (RAG) colour coding relates to the probability of an issue occurring, and the severity of issue. ‘Controls’ are measures taken to control or reduce the risk of an issue occurring. It’s good practice to give RAG ratings for the level of risk you think would exist on your production, both with and without controls.

Overwork in the production office is common and can lead to hospitalisation due to stress, burnout and potentially the onset of a diagnosable mental health condition, including anxiety disorders or depression.   
So in this example, it’s been assigned a Red rating.

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| Risks can be categorised using the chart, to produce a simple, but understandable result, as follows: | | |
| A | Significant risk | Situation too dangerous or unsafe. Stop the activity! |
| B | Significant risk | Activity can continue providing controlling factors are reliable. |
| C | Risk is insignificant | No action necessary. |

Any concern which has a residual Amber rating (i.e. even with controls in place) will need to be monitored throughout the production, to check that the controls are effective. This could be achieved by regular communication and can also be informed by exit interviews or sickness questionnaires.

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**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**DEMANDS – Including issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action Number | Issues Identified | RAG – No Controls | Proposed Control Measures and Actions | RAG - with Controls | Person Responsible | Date Completed |
| 1 | High Volume of Work e.g. in production department |  | * Consider additional resource for peak times * Ensure priorities are communicated and  reviewed regularly * Consider staggering work times some people in early others later * Re-assign tasks to less busy crew * Have defined support routes for anyone struggling with pressure e.g. FTVC helpline, on-set presence, HR, Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) etc. * Training for stress management techniques * Approachable management and ‘no blame’ culture * Lead by example, take breaks and avoid excessive hours (e.g. can the call sheet be issued from someone who has gone home?) |  | Production Manager/Line Producer |  |
| 2 | Remote Working Location |  | * Restrict hours of work * Regular crew check in plan by defined people * Have defined support routes for anyone struggling with pressure e.g. FTVC helpline, on-set presence like a trained counsellor, or a WellBeing Facilitator, Production HR, MHFA etc. * Activity plan and timetable * Mental health awareness training including making a personal plan for resilience * Provide peer network * Ensure best communication methods are open  to crew e.g. provide high speed internet  where possible * Rota crew to reduce time spent away * Encourage communication or visits from  friends or family * Use ‘[Working Well with Me’](https://wholepicturetoolkit.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/02/Working-well-with-me-Template.docx) template to prewarn of any existing issues and tailor support accordingly * Make sure healthy food is available * Access to healthy leisure activities on rest days, e.g. gym, sports, movie nights |  | Producers |  |
| 3 | Issues with physical working environment (temperature, light, ventilation etc.) |  | * Make physical adjustments where  necessary- enable staff to adjust lighting, temperature, ventilation * Ensure hazards are controlled * Encourage rest/lunch breaks |  | Producers/UM/LM |  |
| 4 | Problems with psychological working environment (verbal abuse, threat of violence, poor management etc.) |  | * Have a bullying, racism and harassment policy * Encourage all staff to report issues to  designated person * Fully investigate complaints * Ensure support is signposted adequately * Consider training for managers in how to  handle complaints |  | Producers |  |

**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**RELATIONSHIPS – Including issues such as bullying and harassment, conflict and management style.**

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| Action Number | Issues Identified | RAG – No Controls | Proposed Control Measures and Actions | RAG - with Controls | Person Responsible | Date Completed |
| 1 | Low morale |  | * Promote a positive culture of trust * Find ways to celebrate success  (rewards, bonus, crew lunches, coffee truck,  ice cream van) * Ensure HoDs know how to praise crew * Pass on praise from senior management |  | Producers |  |
| 2 | Crew feel bullied, harassed or excluded |  | * Ensure all crew members feel empowered to speak up and raise concerns, and know that action will be taken * Check all managers know how and  when to attempt to resolve complaints themselves or escalate them * Use a bullying, racism & harassment policy, communicate it to all teams and stick to it * Investigate and act upon any or all reports  of bullying and harassment, including asking  the target what their needs are and meeting those needs where possible * Include bullying and harassment policy  in deal memo * Consider training e.g. diversity &  equality, active bystander, mediation  and safeguarding |  | Producers |  |
| 3 | Lack of support or fear about raising issues |  | * Encourage positive and constructive conversation at all levels * Create a procedure for crew to raise issues * Investigate all issues and take appropriate  action as soon as possible * Share information about the Bullying  Advice Service * Consider employing a WellBeing Facilitator  as an independent 3rd party to help address issues raised |  | Producers/UM/LM |  |
| 4 | Poor relationships/ongoing grievances between team members |  | * Discuss problems openly with individuals  at an early stage * Check skills of management or provide management coaching * Ensure grievance policies include a process  that can be followed and have defined personnel to deal with issues such as a producer * Consider mediation training for managers |  | Producers |  |

**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**SUPPORT – Including the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by industry bodies, commissioners, production, line management and colleagues.**

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| Action Number | Issues Identified | RAG – No Controls | Proposed Control Measures and Actions | RAG - with Controls | Person Responsible | Date Completed |
| 1 | Crew feel unable to raise issues/concerns |  | * Set the tone early in the production,  be open and destigmatise mental  health problems * Ensure all crew know how to raise concerns and who to raise them with * Hold a senior team wellbeing briefing  and agree your production values * Consider employing a WellBeing facilitator as third party to help |  | Producers |  |
| 2 | Crew feel unsupported in the workplace |  | * Ensure all crew know who they can discuss issues with if their HoD or supervisor cannot  or will not help * Ensure all external support agencies are communicated to crew for example,  The Film and TV Charity Support Line, Bectu, MHFAs/counsellors any HR function * Freelancer Wellbeing Hub * Use the call sheet to re-iterate support routes, include Employee Assistance Programme details if you have one or provide access to  a therapist or psychologist * Provide training early for crew who wish  to support other crew either mental health awareness, MHFA, i-act etc |  | Producers |  |
| 3 | Lack of support for those with disabilities or mental ill health |  | * Use ‘[Working Well with Me template’](https://wholepicturetoolkit.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/02/Working-well-with-me-Template.docx) to  see what specific support is required for  a crew member * Seek advice from FTVC, HR, Occupational Health, Health & Safety Officer * Support/inductions for those returning to work after long absence * Regular check ins with those most at risk * Provide access to a trained counsellor |  | Producers/UM/LM |  |
| 4 | Harrowing Content and vulnerable contributors could cause triggers |  | * Allow opt-out for certain scenes * Communicate trigger warning on call sheet * Provide onset counselling or clinical support * Communicate early with crew about the content and how it will be portrayed * Debrief with crew after the scene or production * Consider training for those (including hair and make-up, runners) who are in direct contact with contributors/front of camera, e.g. vulnerable contributors, boundaries training * Check in with crew for a period to ensure they are supported |  | Producers |  |

**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**ROLE – Whether crew understand their role on the production and how the production supports them.**

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| Action Number | Issues Identified | RAG – No Controls | Proposed Control Measures and Actions | RAG - with Controls | Person Responsible | Date Completed |
| 1 | Crew Stepping Up |  | * Consider having a mentor available * Consider a management coach for stepping  up crew * Make sure the culture is not one of blame * Regular check-ins for stepping up crew * Ensure support routes are defined and communicated for crew that are stepping up |  | Producers |  |
| 2 | Lack of clarity over line management |  | * Ensure reporting lines are outlined * Provide a clear production structure/hierarchy |  | Producers |  |
| 3 | A culture that views stress as a sign of weakness |  | * Approachable producers * Keep communication open between crew * and HoDs * Create some values for the production * Foster a psychologically safe environment, where mistakes are treated as learning experiences * Consider qualified mental health first aid or equivalent trained staff on the ground |  | Producers/UM/LM |  |
| 4 | Lack of management expertise/experience |  | * Provide support to HoDs with coaching * Consider management/leadership training early in Prep * Regular check-ins |  | Producers |  |

**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**CONTROL – How much control crew have in the way they do their work.**

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| Action Number | Issues Identified | RAG – No Controls | Proposed Control Measures and Actions | RAG - with Controls | Person Responsible | Date Completed |
| 1 | Inability of crew to maintain work/life balance |  | * Consider crew when scheduling * Consider use of dailies to relieve crew at appropriate times e.g. family events * Encourage HoDs to lead by example |  | Producers/ADs |  |
| 2 | Rigid work patterns |  | * Consider varying working conditions (e.g. flexible working, compressed hours, working from home), Job sharing if possible * Prioritise tasks and outline deadlines |  | Producers/HoDs |  |
| 3 | Individual considerations |  | * Working Well With Me template * Encourage open dialogue with direct reports |  |  |  |

**CHANGE**

**How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated on the production**

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| Action Number | Issues Identified | RAG – No Controls | Proposed Control Measures and Actions | RAG - with Controls | Person Responsible | Date Completed |
| 1 | Crew feel unsure about changes happening in  the department/ production -  and how they  may be affected |  | * Keep good communication throughout period of change to prevents gossip * Consult with crew at an early stage of transition, explaining what will happen  and when * Give crew have the opportunity to raise their concerns/views * Regular check-ins, even when there are no updates, so that crew don’t assume the worst |  | Producers/HoDs |  |

**CHOOSING YOUR COLOURS**

Remember: the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) colour coding is a way to estimate the probability of an issue occurring,   
and its severity. There is no right or wrong — just use your judgement.

**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**DEMANDS including issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment**

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**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**RELATIONSHIPS including issues such as bullying and harassment, conflict and management style**

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**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**SUPPORT including the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the industry, production, line management and colleagues**

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**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**ROLE – Whether crew understand their role on the production and how the production supports them**

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**RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

**CONTROL – How much control crew have in the way they do their work**

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**CHANGE – How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated on the production**

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