**MODULE 5**

# Stress Management

# &

# Leadership

# INTRODUCTION

Stress is an inevitable part of modern working life, shaped by increasing demands, digital acceleration, and constant change.

For employees aged 55+, stress is often closely linked to responsibility, experience, and long-established work patterns, as well as to new expectations related to technology, flexibility, and availability.

Managing stress effectively is therefore not only a matter of personal well-being, but also a key factor in maintaining motivation, performance, and long-term employability.

This module approaches stress management as a learnable, practical skill rather than a personal weakness. It starts by building awareness of how stress works and how it manifests on physical, emotional, and cognitive levels. circumstances may increase vulnerability to chronic stress, but they also bring advantages: greater experience, emotional maturity.

Participants are invited to reflect on their own stress signals and triggers, distinguishing between stress that can support performance and stress that becomes harmful when prolonged or unmanaged. Understanding these patterns creates the foundation for conscious and proactive stress management.

The module also connects stress management with leadership and influence. Leadership is understood not as a formal position, but as everyday behaviour that shapes team culture and digital well-being.

Participants explore how their own stress management habits, communication styles, and digital behaviours influence others. By leading through example and applying simple leadership principles, participants learn how to contribute to a more stable, supportive, and resilient work environment for themselves and those around them.

# 5 KEY WORDS

1. **STRESS:** The body's natural response to demands and challenges, which can be motivating in moderate amounts but harmful when prolonged.
2. **WORK-LIFE BALANCE (WLB):** A sustainable balance between professional and personal demands, energy, and recovery.
3. **SELF-REGULATION:** The ability to recognise stress reactions and apply techniques to restore balance and focus.
4. **DIGITAL WELL-BEING:** Maintaining a healthy and controlled relationship with digital tools and demands.
5. **LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE:** Influencing others through personal behaviour, habits, and attitudes.

# 5 MAIN GOALS

- Recognise personal stress signals and identify individual stress triggers in everyday work situations.
- Apply practical self-regulation techniques to manage stress and restore focus and balance.
- Strengthen work–life balance by setting boundaries and managing digital demands consciously.
- Build resilience through sustainable habits that support long-term well-being and performance.
- Apply leadership behaviours that positively influence team climate, digital well-being, and collaboration.

**1.STRESS MANAGEMENT**

The unit introduces the distinction between eustress and distress. Understanding this difference is essential. Stress is a natural reaction of the body to demands, change, or perceived pressure. It is not inherently negative. In fact, moderate stress can increase focus, motivation, and performance. Problems arise when stress becomes chronic, unmanaged, or invisible.

A central theoretical concept in this module is stress awareness. By learning to observe physical, emotional, and cognitive stress signals early, participants gain the ability to intervene before stress escalates. Stress is therefore treated as information: a signal that something needs adjustment in workload, communication, expectations, or recovery.

Once stress is recognised, the next step is self-regulation. Self-regulation refers to the ability to influence one's own emotional and physical state in order to restore balance, focus, and clarity. The Genially unit presents self-regulation as a practical skill that can be trained through small, realistic techniques.

Methods such as breathing exercises, micro-breaks, and mindfulness moments are introduced not as relaxation tools, but as functional strategies that support concentration and decision-making. Even short pauses can interrupt stress spirals and prevent cognitive overload.

Closely connected to self-regulation is the concept of work–life balance. Rather than aiming for a perfect separation between work and private life, the module focuses on sustainable balance: managing energy, setting boundaries, and allowing sufficient recovery. This includes recognising personal limits, prioritising tasks, and reducing unnecessary digital availability.

The theoretical foundation here is simple but powerful: recovery is not optional. Without intentional recovery, stress accumulates and performance declines. Sustainable work requires phases of engagement followed by phases of rest.

## 2.LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leadership in this module is not defined by hierarchy or job title. Instead, it is understood as everyday influence: how behaviour, communication, and attitudes affect others.

Participants explore how their own stress management strategies, emotional reactions, and digital habits influence team climate and collaboration. A person who manages stress consciously, communicates clearly, and respects boundaries contributes to a more stable and supportive work environment,  regardless of formal authority.

From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with social learning theory: people observe and mirror behaviours around them. Stress, calmness, overload, and balance are all contagious. Leadership therefore starts with self-leadership: managing one's own reactions, habits, and digital behaviour before attempting to influence others.

The module also touches on intergenerational leadership, highlighting how experience, perspective, and emotional regulation are valuable resources in mixed-age teams. Employees aged 55+ often act as informal stabilisers, mentors, or role models when given the space to do so consciously.

## 3.WELL-BEING IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Digitalisation has changed not only how work is done, but also how stress is generated and maintained. Constant connectivity, notifications, and blurred boundaries between work and private life can create permanent low-level stress.

That is the reason why the unit introduced the concept of digital well-being, which refers to a healthy, intentional relationship with digital tools. This includes managing notifications, setting availability boundaries, structuring digital communication, and avoiding constant multitasking. A key insight is that digital stress is rarely caused by technology itself, but by unclear rules and habits around its use.

# E-LEARNING

## ACCESS THE GENIALLY LEARNING UNIT

**SCAN ME**

**CLICK HERE**
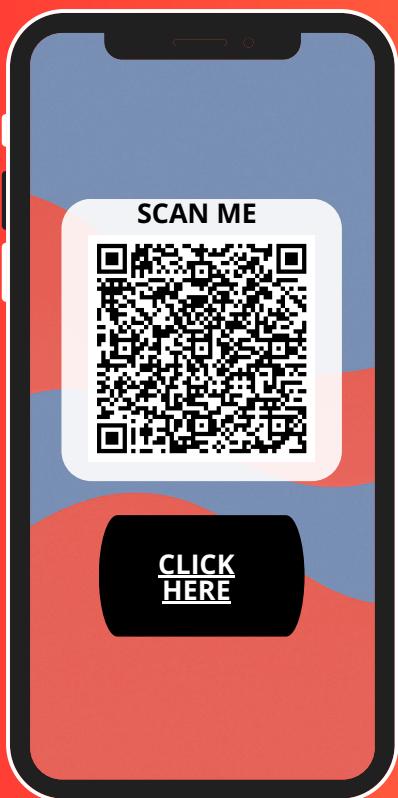
### DESCRIPTION

This module helps employees aged 55+ understand and manage stress through practical techniques, self-assessment tools, and short exercises. It addresses their specific challenges while building on their strengths, guiding them to improve resilience, well-being, and long-term work performance.

### KEY TOPICS

- Recognizing stress signals and applying practical self-regulation and relaxation techniques
- Building resilience and maintaining sustainable work–life balance
- Leadership influence and intergenerational collaboration
- Improving digital Well being

" *"How we manage stress shapes how we lead ourselves and others."* "

## USER GUIDE

Navigate through the e-learning module at your own pace. Each section includes short explanations, interactive activities, and practical examples. Click on icons and buttons to explore additional content, videos, or quizzes.

Use the module step by step - start with short introductions, then continue to tasks and self-check questions. You can repeat any section as many times as you like.

Take notes, reflect on your own experience, and apply what you learn to your daily life or work situation.

# WORKSHOP CONCEPT

## PART 1: Stress Management



### DURATION

1 hour and 30 minutes

### MATERIALS

Genially Presentation, paper, post-its, pens, relaxing music.

### AGENDA

**15 min – Arrival & Framing**
Short group exchange on how stress shows up in daily work and life.

**15 min – Understanding Stress**
Trainer presents what stress is and how it affects the body, thoughts, and behaviour through the Genially presentation.

**15 min – Personal Diary**
Participants individually identify and write down for themselves:
- situations that cause stress
- how stress shows up (body, emotions, thoughts)

**5 min – Letting go Stress**
Each participant chooses one stressful issue and writes it in a blank paper. All participants throw their "stress papers" into a black box.

**10 min – Relaxing excercise**
The trainer guides a short breathing/meditation technique with support of music, while reading the papers as a metaphor of letting that stress go.

### OBJECTIVE

To help employees aged 55+ manage stress effectively, develop healthy digital habits, and use technology to support their well-being.

### DEBRIEFING

**30 mins - Mindmap**

Participants share three final post-its, which will be hanged on the common wall:

- **RED**: one insight about their stress
- **GREEN**: one technique they use and want to keep
- **YELLOW**: one small change they feel confident to try

Trainer closes by reinforcing that small, consistent actions matter more than big plans.

# WORKSHOP CONCEPT

## PART 2: Leadership

### DURATION

1 hour and 30 minutes

### MATERIALS

Genially presentation, leadership situations (to be created and printed out).

### OBJECTIVE

Help participants understand leadership as everyday influence, reflect on how their behaviour affects others, and commit to one leadership habit they want to strengthen.

### DEBRIEFING

**15 min – Guiding Quesitons:**

How do my behaviour affect others in my work and personal life?

What leadership strengths do I have?

What leadership habit could I improve at work (communication, calmness, boundaries)?

### AGENDA

**10 min – Introduction**
The trainer explains leadership as behaviour and influence, not position.

**10 min – Groups & Instructions**
Participants are divided into two or three groups. Each group receives one leadership situation to analyse and solve.

**25 min – Solving the Situation**
Each group discusses its situation and thinks of an action plan to solve it.

**20 min – Presentation & Exchange**
Each group presents:
- The situation
- Their proposed response
- Reasoing why they act in that way

Other participants and the trainer ask questions or suggest alternatives.

# EVALUATION

**1. According to the module, why is stress not always negative?**

a) Because stress disappears once experience increases

b) Because moderate stress can improve focus and performance ✓

c) Because stress only affects people with low resilience

**2. Which situation best illustrates the difference between eustress and distress?**

a) Stress that motivates action versus stress that overwhelms and exhausts ✓

b) Stress caused by digital tools versus stress caused by people

c) Stress at work versus stress in private life

**3. What is the main purpose of recognising personal stress signals early?**

a) To avoid all stressful situations

b) To intervene before stress becomes chronic and harmful ✓

c) To explain stress to others more effectively

**4. Why does the module emphasise short self-regulation techniques (1–5 minutes)?**

a) Because longer techniques are ineffective

b) Because short techniques are easier to integrate into daily routines ✓

c) Because stress only lasts a few minutes

**5. How does the module define sustainable work–life balance?**

a) A strict separation between work and private life

b) A perfect balance achieved once and maintained permanently

c) An ongoing adjustment of energy, boundaries, and recovery ✓

# EVALUATION

**6. Why is leadership described as "everyday influence" in this module?**

a) Because leadership depends mainly on personal charisma

b) Because leadership is expressed through daily behaviour, not job titles ✔

c) Because leadership only matters in team situations

**7. Which behaviour best reflects leadership by example in stressful situations?**

a) Working longer hours to compensate for others

b) Staying calm, communicating clearly, and respecting boundaries ✔

c) Avoiding discussions about stress to maintain professionalism

**8. According to the Genially unit, why is digital well-being a leadership issue?**

a) Because leaders control all digital tools

b) Because digital habits influence team culture and stress levels ✔

c) Because digital tools automatically increase stress

**9. What is the main risk of constant digital availability highlighted in the module?**

a) Reduced technical competence

b) Increased long-term stress and mental fatigue ✔

c) Slower communication within teams

**10. Why does the module focus on small commitments instead of major changes?**

a) Because major changes are unnecessary

b) Because small, realistic actions are more likely to be sustained ✔

c) Because stress cannot be reduced significantly
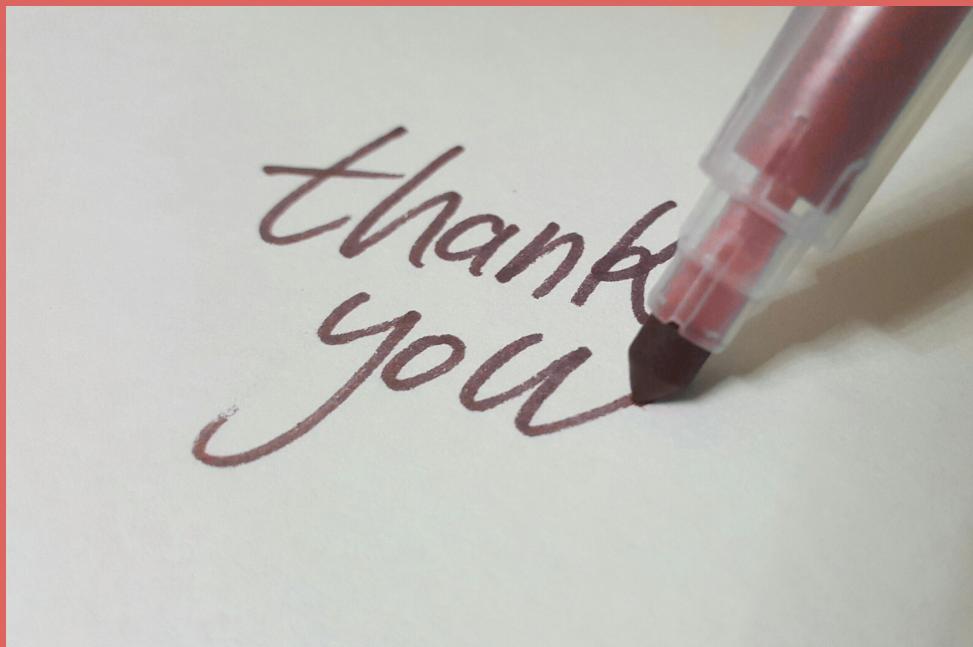
Small moments of awareness and simple adjustments can make everyday stress more manageable.