

Taking the long view: tackling the causes of stress and anxiety

Here are a few things you can do as a small business leader to help tackle the causes of stress and anxiety...

Ensure regular communication, with the aim of watching one another's backs for the greater good.

Set and accept realistic targets.

Know when to say "no" – or at least "not right now" or "not in that way".

Don't over-stretch people.

Establish contingency plans:

...so that when someone does speak out, you can address their problems with practical, pressure-relieving changes.

If no one within your business could step in, find someone you could turn to in another organisation, who you'd trust to do the right thing by your clients if you needed to take time off.

Role model the behaviours you want:

- Manage your own workload realistically and collaboratively.
- Acknowledge when you need help.

Create a culture where people can – and do – speak out if they're struggling. Let them know they don't need to reach crisis point before they do.

Understand how much and what type of work each team member can reasonably take – this will be different for everyone and change with time.

No one should be dismissed as "lightweight" or "difficult" for admitting they're overwhelmed.