

## Unit-6

# Dealing with Anxiety and Stress

## Introduction

Stress and anxiety are two major facets of life. They are natural physiological and psychological reactions that occur within everyone. Stress results from an imbalance between demands and resources. In simple words, stress arises when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well-being. It occurs when pressure exceeds your perceived ability to cope. Stress comes in many forms and affects people of all ages and all walks of life. Stress often leads to physical and psychological discomforts in Security Personnel. These discomforts could be short or long term.

The short-term physical symptoms include tense muscles, rapid breathing, increased sweating, inability to make good decisions, diversion of mental energy to frustration, anxiety and bad temperament. The long term physical symptoms are fatigue, headaches, back pains, digestive problems and sexual disorders. Some people have less anxiety and stress than others. The degree of stress is highly dependent upon individual factors such as our physical health, the quality of our interpersonal relationships, the number of commitments and responsibilities we carry, the degree of others' dependence upon us, expectations of us, the amount of support we receive from others, and the number of changes or traumatic events that have recently occurred in our lives. Anxiety is a normal human emotion that everyone experiences at times. Many people feel anxious or nervous, when faced with a problem at work. For example you must have gone through anxiety before taking a test or making an important decision.

In this Unit, we will try to understand the various facets of stress and anxiety and learn how to deal with them.



# Session-1

## Recognising Causes of Anxiety and Job Stress

### Relevant Knowledge

The leading source of stress is the workplace. The workplace and the type of work hold a number of anxiety producers or stressors. Anxiety is defined as a state of uneasiness and apprehension about future uncertainties. It usually occurs after the onset of stress and is a lot like fear. Stressors are upsetting bad events and problems of life. Bad events are one-shot tragic events, which suddenly upset us a great deal. Work related stress comes from numerous factors, such as too many task demands, role conflicts, job boredom, ethical dilemmas or inter-personal problems. Employers and employees should be able to recognise the signs of anxiety and stress in the workplace so that productivity is not impaired and the quality of life remains high. Employers need to look closely at the hours their staff are working and how their work and home lives are balanced.



Anxiety is a generalised mood that can occur without an identifiable triggering stimulus. As such, it is distinguished from fear, which is a response to a perceived threat. Sometimes anxiety will cause panic attacks, which is characterized as intense feelings of fear. When anxiety becomes excessive, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety disorder.

### Anxiety Disorder:

For most people, anxiety is a temporary reaction to stress. It becomes an illness only when it persists and prevents you from leading a normal life. An anxiety disorder is a serious mental illness. For people with anxiety disorders, worry and fear are constant and overwhelming. The exact cause of anxiety disorders is unknown.

As scientists continue their research on mental illness, it is becoming clear that many of these disorders are caused by a combination of factors, including changes in the brain, hormonal changes in the body and environmental stress. Studies have shown that severe or long-lasting stress can change the balance of chemicals in the brain that control mood. Some studies have also shown that anxiety disorders run in families, which means that they can be inherited from one or both parents, just like hair or eye colour.

## Stress

Stress is the psychological, physiological and behavioural response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which, over a period of time leads to ill-health.

### Job Stress:

Every job has its own challenges, hazards, and stress. The concept of job stress is often confused with challenges at work, but they are different concepts. Challenges propel individuals to work and perform. Challenges motivate us to learn and acquire new skills, become competent for doing task, and gain experience.

Job stress on the other hand poses significant threat to employee's health, and consequently affects their performance and achievements. In general, stress is related to both external and internal factors. External factors include the physical environment, including job, relationship with others, home, challenges, difficulties, and expectations that you are confronted with on a daily basis. Internal factors determine your body's ability to respond to, and deal with external stress-inducing factors. Internal factors which influence your ability to handle stress include your nutritional status, overall health and fitness levels, emotional well-being, and the amount of sleep and rest you get.

**Common causes of job stress:** Various issues that can pose as a potential stressor or stress factor in the life of security personnel include but not limited to the following:

- (i) **Poor Working Condition:** This includes the physical surroundings, inadequate operational equipment, poor hygienic conditions at home and workplace, inadequate food, etc.
- (ii) **Poor Mental Health:** Stress leads to serious impairment of brain tissues, which can lead to big mistakes and serious injuries. It is directly related to unpleasant working condition, the necessity to work fast, to expend a lot of physical efforts and inconvenient work schedule, which is also experienced by security personnel.
- (iii) **Exposure to Environmental Hazards:** Security personnel are sometimes exposed to environmental hazards, like poisonous gases. Exposure to hazardous chemicals or situations may also lead to stress and anxiety.
- (iv) **Shift Work:** Security job has demanding work schedules. The scheduling system of work, imposes excessive physical and psychological costs to the Security Personnel. Shift work has been found to affect blood pressure, metabolic rate, blood sugar levels, mental efficiency, work motivation, sleep patterns, family and social life.

- (v) **Long Working Hours:** Security business is one that involves personnel to work round the clock. The resulting adrenalin rush, respiration changes and muscle tension are potential threats to health of security personnel.
- (vi) **New Technology:** The introduction of new technology into work setting has required all workers to adapt to new equipment, systems and ways of working. Growth in information and communication technology and globalization have enhanced workplace productivity, but at the same time increases stress on employee.
- (vii) **Routine Work:** The repetitive nature of work and boring routine schedules may add to the anxiety and ill health of the security personnel.
- (viii) **Role Ambiguity:** When the job or role is poorly defined, there is uncertainty about job expectations and the supervisory staff has different expectations of an employee's responsibilities.
- (ix) **Role Conflict:** When an individual is torn by conflicting role demands or by doing things that he/ she does not really want to do, or things, which he/ she does not believe are part of the job, then he/she passes through stress. The stress is aggravated if he/she is not able to share his grievances with others, who could be his/her friends or relatives.
- (x) **Relationship with Subordinates:** The manner of supervision of work of subordinates by superiors could be a source of stress to him or her.
- (xi) **Relationship with Colleagues or Peers:** The relationship among co-workers can provide valuable support or cause high stress levels to the workers.
- (xii) **Career Development:** Lack of opportunity for growth or advancement or promotion are causes of worry about future. Job insecurity, fear of redundancy, obsolescence and retirement are some other factors that cause fear and stress among security personnel.
- (xiii) **Financial Stress:** With less money in the budget, people who are already under financial stress tend to cut corners in areas like health care to pay for basic necessities like food. This also leads to more stress.
- (xiv) **Sleep Disorders:** Security personnel often experience trouble sleeping, which can add up to a sleep deficit, impairing immune functioning and cognitive abilities. To deal with anxiety and sleep disorder they may indulge in smoking, drinking alcohol, overeating and practicing other unhealthy coping behaviour.

**Exercise**

**A. Assignment**

**Read the paragraph carefully and answer the questions that follow:**



A Security Officer is a worker who is responsible for the protection of people and property against crime, violence and other hazards, and for securing classified information. They may suffer serious bodily injury through acts of crime or violence, firearm accidents, or unsafe handling of dogs. Security Officer may be exposed to hazards of harsh weather or solar radiation. He/she may suffer injuries when attempting to overpower criminals or other violent persons. Exposure to ambient environmental factors (low or high air temperature, rain, snow, wind) may result in acute (common cold, heat stroke) or chronic (rheumatism) diseases. Problems and conflicts resulting from lack of cooperation with coworkers, and clashes of authority are the major sources of anxiety and stress. Strained family relations and burnout due to shift-work, night work, overtime work, emergency calls at irregular hours, and feeling of heavy responsibility are other sources of stress.

**Questions**

1. List the sources of hazards to security officer.

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2. List the sources of anxiety and stress to security officer.

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3. State the preventive measure (s) for any two types of hazards that a Security Officer encounters at workplace.

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4. State the steps that a Security Officer should take to prevent problems related to conflict at workplace.

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### **B. Case Based Problem**

#### **Scenario**

Two colleagues Mr. A and Mr. B get on with each other and work well together. Suddenly the employer Mr. X notices that their relations seem frosty and work is suffering. Their relationship is also affecting the morale and efficiency of the team in which they work.

**Answer the following questions based on the above scenario:**

1. What is the problem that Mr. X noted?

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2. Why Mr. X is concerned about the problem?

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3. What will you do in such as situation if you are Mr. X?

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**Assessment**



**A. Fill in the Blanks**

1. We should be able to recognise the \_\_\_\_\_ of anxiety and stress in the workplace so that productivity is not hurt and the quality of life remains high.
2. Employers need to look closely at the hours their staff are \_\_\_\_\_ and how their work and home lives are balanced.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is defined as a state of uneasiness and apprehension about future uncertainties.
4. Anxiety usually occurs after the onset of \_\_\_\_\_ and is a lot like fear.
5. Sometimes anxiety will cause \_\_\_\_\_ attacks, which is characterized as intense feelings of fear.
6. When anxiety becomes excessive, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Stress is the psychological, physiological and \_\_\_\_\_ response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which, over a period of time, leads to ill-health.
8. For most people, anxiety is a \_\_\_\_\_ reaction to stress.
9. Every job has its own \_\_\_\_\_, hazards, and stress.
10. Challenges propel individuals to work and \_\_\_\_\_.
11. In general, stress is related to both \_\_\_\_\_ and internal factors.

**B. Short Answer Questions**

1. What is anxiety?

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2. What is stress?

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### Checklist For Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you have met all the requirements for assessment activity.

#### Part A

- (a) Differentiated between anxiety and stress.
- (b) Differentiated between internal and external sources of anxiety and stress.

#### Part B

Discussed in class the following:

- (a) What is job stress?
- (b) What are the factors that can trigger stress among security personnel?

#### Part C

#### Performance Standards

The Performance Standards may include, but not limited to:

| Performance Standard                              | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Establish the cause of stress in a given scenario |     |    |
| List the common causes of job stress.             |     |    |

## Session-2

# Identifying Signs of Anxiety and Job Stress

### Relevant Knowledge

In this session we will learn about the various stages and signs of anxiety and stress.

### Stages in Stress

There are three stages of stress that a person may pass through when he/she faces emotional or physical problems in life. These are as follows:

- (i) **Alarm Stage:** Any physical, emotional, or mental problem will cause an instantaneous reaction by the body to combat the stressor. This physical response is known as the “fight-or-flight” reaction. The “fight or flight” reaction sends a tremendous burst of adrenaline to all parts of the body i.e., the blood vessels, heart, stomach, kidneys, lungs, eyes, muscles, etc. If the stress is short-term, the person quickly recovers without any detrimental effect to the body. If the stress is chronic or long-term, the body’s resistance is affected, making the person susceptible to illness or diseases.
- (ii) **Resistance Stage:** It is the phase where the individual’s defense mechanism becomes active. At this stage, the body tries to become balanced (a process called homeostasis). As the stress continues, the person may suffer from fatigue, sleep problems, and an overall malaise.
- (iii) **Exhaustion Stage:** It involves the collapse of adaptive mechanisms which results in physical and psychological discomforts. After combating stress for days to weeks, the body shuts down completely. Chronic or long-term stress depletes the supply of water, oxygen, and vitamin C to tissues, as well as increases hormone, histamines, and sebum production.

Internal damage from chronic stress include skin symptoms, such as bumps, excess oil, breakouts, acne, pimples, etc.

### Signs of Anxiety and Stress:

Excess stress can manifest itself in a variety of emotional, behavioural, and even physical symptoms, and the symptoms of stress vary enormously among different individuals. Thus, the signs of anxiety could be categorised into psychological, emotional, behavioural and physical.

## **Psychological Signs**

- (i) Inability to concentrate or make simple decisions
- (ii) Memory lapses
- (iii) Easily distracted
- (iv) Less creative
- (v) Worrying
- (vi) Negative thinking
- (vii) Depression and anxiety

## **Emotional Signs**

- (i) Tearful
- (ii) Irritable
- (iii) Mood swings
- (iv) Extra sensitive to criticism
- (v) Defensive
- (vi) Feeling out of control
- (vii) Lack of motivation
- (viii) Angry
- (ix) Frustrated
- (x) Lack of confidence
- (xi) Lack of self-esteem

## **Behavioural Signs**

Stress also has effects on behaviour and these include the following:

- (i) Bad moods
- (ii) Reduced personal effectiveness
- (iii) Increased absenteeism

- (iv) No time for relaxation or pleasurable activities
- (v) Prone to accidents
- (vi) Increased reliance on alcohol, smoking, caffeine or illegal drugs
- (vii) Becoming workaholic.
- (viii) Poor time management and/or poor standards of work
- (ix) Self neglect
- (x) Social withdrawal
- (xi) Relationship problems
- (xii) Insomnia or waking tired
- (xiii) Reckless
- (xiv) Aggressive/anger outbursts
- (xv) Nervous
- (xvi) Uncharacteristically lying

### **Physical Signs**

- (i) Aches/pains and muscle tension
- (ii) Grinding teeth
- (iii) Frequent colds/Infections
- (iv) Allergies/Rashes/Skin irritations
- (v) Constipation/Diarrhoea
- (vi) Indigestion/Heartburn/Ulcers
- (vii) Hyperventilating/Lump in the throat
- (viii) Dizziness/Palpitations
- (ix) Panic attacks
- (x) Physical tiredness
- (xi) Sexual problems

(xii) High blood pressure

(xiii) Weight loss or gain

## Exercise

### Group Discussion

#### Topic: Impact of Stressors on Employees and Employers

Stress in the workplace can have many origins or come from one single event. It includes job redundancy, excessive workload, lack of autonomy, conflicting job demands, layoffs due to an uncertain economy, and increased demands for overtime. All these factors act as negative stressor. They can have negative impact on both employees and employers alike.

**Organise a group discussion on the impact of stressors on employees and employers with your classmates.**

- ◆ At the end of the session, ask the group to list top 10 causes of stress that a person might face in an occupation/workplace.
- ◆ Categorise the signs or symptoms of stress into physical, psychosocial, and behavioural.

## Assessment



### Fill in the Blanks

1. The three stages of stress that a person may pass through when he/she faces emotional or physical problems in life are alarm stage, resistance stage and \_\_\_\_\_ stage.
2. At the \_\_\_\_\_ stage, the physical response is as the “fight-or-flight” reaction.
3. At the \_\_\_\_\_ stage, the individual’s defense mechanism becomes active.
4. Excess stress can manifest itself in a variety of \_\_\_\_\_, behavioural, and physical symptoms.
5. The inability to concentrate or make simple decisions is a \_\_\_\_\_ sign of stress.

6. Becoming tearful, while watching the actors crying on television is a \_\_\_\_\_ sign of stress.
7. Lack of confidence is a \_\_\_\_\_ sign of stress.
8. Increased absenteeism is a \_\_\_\_\_ sign of stress.
9. Panic attack is a \_\_\_\_\_ sign of stress.

### Checklist For Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you have met all the requirements for assessment activity.

#### Part A

- (a) Differentiated between stages of stress.
- (b) Differentiated between psychological and emotional signs.

#### Part B

Discussed in class the following:

- (a) What are the three stages of stress?
- (b) What are the psychological, emotional and behavioural signs of stress?

#### Part C

#### Performance Standards

The Performance Standards may include, but not limited to:

| Performance Standard           | Yes | No |
|--------------------------------|-----|----|
| Recognize the signs of stress. |     |    |

## Session-3

# Managing Stress and Anxiety

### Relevant Knowledge

#### Managing stress

means leading a wisdom-based lifestyle, which prevents or minimizes the occurrence of stressors. Employers should make sure that they educate their employees about how to handle stress.

Security organizations can help their employees to resist the effects of stress by providing on-site space for physical exercise and on-site massage therapist. Programmes that can teach security employee or other workers about the nature and sources of stress, the effects of stress on health, and personal skills to reduce stress should be conducted regularly. Stress management training may rapidly reduce stress symptoms such as anxiety and sleep disturbances. The employers should



1. Identify the problem as early as possible
2. Specify the problem accurately
3. List the pros and cons of each solution
4. Choose the best solution or combination of solutions
5. Draft an action plan to implement the solution
6. Act on the solution
7. Review the problem-solving process, and consider what you could do differently another time.

#### Stress Management Strategies:

The first stress strategy management is to avoid stressful events. If it is not possible, then thorough planning and preparation should be made to manage time and completing

the tasks. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and daily responsibilities.

The other strategies may include developing social network, and support, participating in social gatherings and functions, listening to music, eating healthy food, doing regular exercise, time management and relaxation exercise. Let us look at some of those aspects.

- (i) **Social Support:** People with adequate social support networks report less stress and overall improved mental health in comparison to those without adequate social support.
- (ii) **Nourishment:** People who are poorly nourished, who get inadequate sleep, or who are physically unwell also have reduced capacity to handle pressures and stresses of everyday life and may report higher stress levels.
- (iii) **Physical Exercise:** An important step in stress management is exercise. Exercise on a regular basis helps to turn down the production of stress hormones and associated neuro-chemicals. Thus, exercise can help to avoid the damage to our health. Breathing exercises are an excellent way of preventing prolonged stress. Blowing balloons, for example, is a good stress relieving exercise. In fact, studies have found that exercise is a potent antidepressant, anxiolytic (combats anxiety), and sleeping aid for many people. Besides relaxation routines, spend at least 20 or 30 minutes a day walking, cycling, or at the gymnasium to keep yourself healthy and fit.
- (iv) **Time Management:** Managing your time meticulously can help to manage multiple demands that are often placed upon in both work and non- work settings. Even 10-15 minutes of managing time can make a difference. Do not add to your stress levels by running late. Make a list of tasks you have to do, and tackle them in order of importance. Do the high-priority items first.
- (v) **Developing Stress Resilience:** This strategy helps employee to develop physical and psychological stamina against potentially harmful stressors, and the most widely recommended strategy include physical exercise, proper diet, and weight control. A balanced diet which is low in sodium and saturated fats help to keep blood pressure and serum cholesterol to the optimum. Meditation, generally known as focused awareness in healthy ways also helps in relaxation and rejuvenation from distress. Spending even a few minutes in meditation can restore your calm and inner peace.
- (vi) **Relaxation Exercises:** Relaxation is a process that decreases the effects of stress on your mind and body. You can do this by practicing relaxation techniques including deep breathing, visualization, meditation and yoga, or by performing rhythmic exercise, such as running, cycling, or mindful walking. Relaxation exercises can help you to cope with everyday stress and with stress related to various health

problems. Yoga, meditation and massage all have proven benefits in reducing stress and promoting relaxation. Yoga involves a series of both moving and stationary poses, combined with deep breathing. Yoga can also improve flexibility, strength, balance, and stamina. If practiced regularly, it can also strengthen the relaxation response in your daily life. Since injuries can happen when yoga is practiced incorrectly, it is best to learn by attending group classes, hiring a private teacher, or at least following video instructions.

Relaxation techniques can reduce stress by:

- ◆ Slowing the heart rate.
- ◆ Lowering blood pressure.
- ◆ Slowing your breathing rate.
- ◆ Increasing blood flow to major muscles.
- ◆ Reducing muscle tension and chronic pain.
- ◆ Improving concentration.
- ◆ Reducing anger and frustration.

(vii) **Sleeping Well and on Time:** The old adage “early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy wealthy and wise” is true. If you are tired, worries can get blown out of proportion, therefore, sleep on time and sleep well to prepare yourself for the next day.

Excess of watching television and erratic routines affect your sleep. If you have been finding it difficult to get to sleep, try cutting down on stimulants (tea and coffee, for instance) and make sure you have time to unwind before bed. A warm bath before you go to bed can help in muscle relaxation.

## Exercise

### Practice Session

#### Yoga Exercises

**Anulom Vilom Pranayama:** In this breathing technique, you inhale from one nostril at one time and release the breath through the other nostril. You alternate between the two nostril at a regular comfortable pace. It is said to have benefitted people with heart ailments, high blood pressure, heart blockages, depression, migraine pain, asthma, sinus, and allergy.

### Here is How You Do It:

**Step 1:** Close your eyes and relax. Sit in this position for a couple of minutes till you settle down.

**Step 2:** Close your right nostril with your right thumb.

**Step 3:** Breath in from your left nostril. Hold the breath for a couple of seconds.

**Step 4:** Open right nostril and close left nostril with middle and ring finger.

**Step 5:** Breath out from right nostril.

**Step 6:** Breathe in from right nostril, close the right nostril.

**Step 7:** Open left nostril and breathe out.

Repeat again, steps 1 through 7. You can practice this pranayama for bout 5-6 minutes per day.

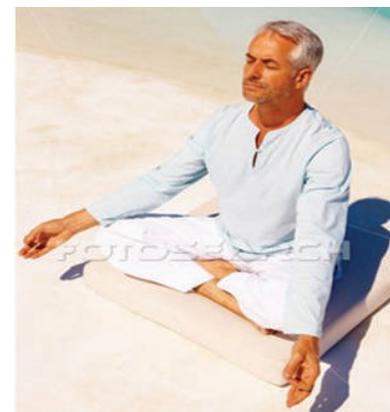
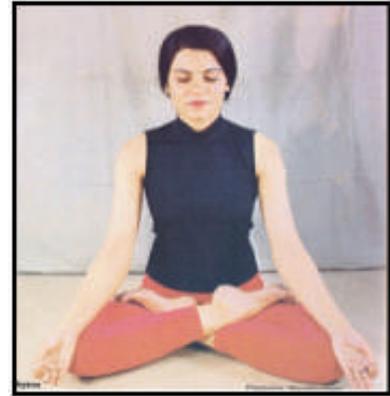
**Kapalbhathi Pranayama** is a type of breathing exercise that helps you rid of various ailments over a period of time. “Kapal” means “forehead” and “bhathi” means shining. Eventually, Kapabhati bring about a glow on the face of the practitioner.

Kapalabhati is done in a sitting posture. Kapalbhathi pranayama steps are usually very straightforward. However, it is important to ensure that you perform it properly or you may end up hurting yourself. You will also need to exercise some precautions when you perform it. Detailed step by step instructions on the technique are as follows:

**Step 1:** Sit straight with your spine erect and cross your legs in front of you.

**Step 2:** Take in a deep breath and exhale quickly and suddenly, making a puffing sound while you do it. Focus on exhaling forcefully and not on the inhalation.

**Step 3:** When you exhale, draw your abdominal muscles inward simultaneously. Your abdomen should rise when



you inhale and fold when you exhale.

**Step 4:** Continue for 10 breaths and then take a break. Perform two more similar sets.

You are advised to practice these methods and in the same manner learn more techniques of yoga and meditation and practice them.

## Assessment



### Fill in the Blanks

1. Managing stress helps in minimizing the occurrence of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The first strategy that you should adopt to get away with the stress is to \_\_\_\_\_ stressful events.
3. You should find a balance between \_\_\_\_\_ and family life, social activities and daily responsibilities to avoid unnecessary stress.
4. Developing social network, participating in social gatherings and functions, listening to music, eating healthy food, doing regular exercise, time \_\_\_\_\_ and relaxation exercises are some of the strategies that work well in stress management.
5. People who are poorly nourished, who get inadequate sleep, or who are physically unwell also have a reduced capacity to handle pressures and \_\_\_\_\_ of everyday life and may report higher stress levels.
6. Exercise on a regular basis helps to turn down the production of stress \_\_\_\_\_ and associated neurochemicals.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ diet which is low in sodium and saturated fats help keep blood pressure and serum cholesterol to the optimum.
8. Relaxation techniques can reduce stress symptoms by slowing the heart \_\_\_\_\_ and lowering blood \_\_\_\_\_.

## Checklist For Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you have met all the requirements for assessment activity.

### Part A

- (a) Differentiated between various stress management strategies.

**Part B**

Discussed in class the following:

- (a) What is stress management?
- (b) How social networking and gathering helps in reducing stress?
- (c) Why is it important to manage time?
- (d) What are the various relaxation techniques?

**Part C****Performance Standards**

The Performance Standards may include, but not limited to:

| <b>Performance Standard</b>           | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Perform stress relaxation techniques. |            |           |
| Perform Anulom vilom.                 |            |           |
| Perform Kapal Bhati.                  |            |           |

