HANDOUT 19.1 SOURCES OF STRESS

Internal:

**Care workers’ individual characteristics**

* Unrealistic work-related expectations
* Excessive identification with clients
* Need for complete control over a situation
* Excessive commitment to work
* Complete identification with work
* Substitution of work for private and social life
* Failure to delegate
* Excessive persistence in reaching a goal
* Poor time management
* Lack of work priorities
* Feeling of professional incompetence

External:

**Stressors related to working conditions**

* Inadequate working space and equipment
* Inadequate microclimatic conditions
* Crowded conditions
* Lack of privacy and constant exposure to clients

**Stressors related to the organization of work**

* Too many hours of direct contact with clients
* Pressure of schedules, not enough time
* Excessive responsibility
* Responsibility without power
* Excessive expectations of the organization
* No daily breaks
* Poorly defined organizational structure
* Unclear tasks and expectations of care workers
* Unclear division of responsibilities
* Undefined rules on rewards
* Lack of a professional training system
* Unclear rules about replacing care workers
* No debriefing after critical incidents

**Stressors related to relationships within the organization**

* Poor psychosocial climate
* Rigid decision-making and management style
* Lack of a clear mission philosophy
* Lack of feedback on achievements
* No flow of external information
* Lack of professional and personal support
* Lack of group spirit and team commitment
* Lack of clear and fair criteria for promotion

**Stressors related to the type of relief work and characteristics of clients**

* Too many clients requiring intensive help
* Too many clients with complicated problems
* Emotional exhaustion and indirect traumatization because of clients’ needs
* Uniformity of problems of client population
* Risk of being physically attacked by clients
* Similarity between care worker’s experiences and clients’ trauma (counter transference)

Adapted from *Prevention of Professional Burn-out with Care Workers: Self-Care and Organizational Care,* Admira, 2005