

Title: **Stress management in the construction sector**

Sub-Title **An investigation into the effects of stress in the construction sector
and possible coping techniques for graduates**

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Purpose: The purpose of this dissertation is to research the subject of stress and coping with stress, with the aim of producing a document that may improve understanding of the subject and that may benefit the construction industry and future graduates.

Methodology: A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to research the current literature surrounding stress, stress management and coping techniques as well as literature that links these subjects to the construction industry. As there was very little knowledge that directly links the aforementioned issues to the construction industry, primary research was undertaken to establish the facts surrounding stress management in the construction industry. The methodology used in sourcing primary data was through the use of expert interviews with a stress management expert, a nutritional therapist and two experienced construction professionals. A case study involving two graduates and an online questionnaire involving recent third level graduates was also carried out to further validate the data acquired during the interviews.

Findings: The research found that stress is a major issue for the construction industry, and is further damaging an already poor image that the industry has. The industry has high level of stress and there is very little being done to reduce it. Stress is a complex and misunderstood subject with the majority of the participants not fully understanding stress and the negative impact it can have on the human body. Stress had many causes, but the research has identified a number of ways in which it can be controlled. These include time management, reflection, crisis management, having an outlet for stress relief and taking breaks. The main finding of the research is that the key to managing stress is to understand how stress affects the body. This involves a real understanding of the fight or flight response and how to turn it off. Recommendations included the need to educate and train graduates in stress management as they are the future industry leaders and researching further into the coping techniques that are used in the industry to establish if there are more effective ways to deal with stress.

Keywords: **Stress, Stress Management, coping, graduates, nutrition and fight or flight.**