

Managing Stress



What is stress?

- There is no universally agreed medical definition of stress. At its most simple, stress is your body's physical response to mental or emotional pressure. Our jobs, relationships, family life or money can all add to our levels of stress. When you're stressed, your body believes it's under attack and switches to what's known as 'fight or flight' mode. As a result, a mix of hormones and chemicals are released into your body so that you prepare for physical action. Blood might also be diverted to muscles, causing you to lose concentration or become less able to digest food. When the threat passes, your body usually returns to normal, but if you're continually under pressure this might not be the case
- You can take control. Take the time to understand what stress is, identify the common causes and take positive steps to reduce your own stress or if you're a manager, stress in your team



What causes stress?

- Stress can be triggered by a number of factors





Spotting the signs of stress

There's no one single cause of stress but there are signs to watch out for – either in yourself or someone you know

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Behavioural
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased absence or turnover
- Sweating
- Addictive Behaviour (e.g. gambling, drug use)
- Forgetfulness
- Loss of appetite
- Tiredness
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Heavy smoking or drinking
- Digestive disorders
- Prone to errors
- Anger
- Shoulder or back pain
- Low morale and enthusiasm
- Frustration
- Depression or anxiety
- Irritable
- Difficulty in sleeping



How stressed are you?

Online tools can help you understand how stressed you are and the causes of the stress. These are free and easily available to you.

Use the following links to access resources on managing stress

- [How to tackle stress](#)
- [Stress diary](#)
- [Stress Relieving Apps](#)



What resources are available?

Managing Stress

Understanding and approaching stress



Building Resilience

Simple lifestyle changes to become more resilient



Toolkit for Stress

Resources and guides to help deal with stress



Mental Health at Work gateway

Resources and toolkits for managing your mental health at work



Let's talk Mental Health

Guidance on who to talk to about mental health





How can I help my team reduce stress?

There are resources to support you if you're a line manager and to help reduce stress in your team. Think about:

1

Identifying early signs of stress and speak regularly to your team members. Keep a note of what the issues are and what you both agree are the next steps. You could also speak with your HR team, who can offer advice on dealing with the situation.

2

Communicating regularly and clearly with your team. Regular one to one meetings give you both the opportunity to have an open and honest discussion, and perhaps identify when workload is becoming too much.

3

Creating a comfortable work environment – stress can be exacerbated by noise, temperature, hygiene and you. Remember, your mood sets the tone of your team.

4

Demands – are the workloads of your team manageable? Encourage people to speak to you if they're feeling overwhelmed or need your support.

5

Training – make sure your team are equipped to do their job and if not, offer training and support.

6

Resilience – having resilient people in your team will help them deal with issues as they arise and bounce back from unexpected events.



Resources and support for managers

Use the following links to understand more about what you can do as a manager

- [Supporting a colleague with a mental health problem](#)
- [Managers guide to managing stress in the workplace](#)
- [Extended guide to supporting employees with mental health problems](#)
- [Ways to support employees who may be overloaded or under stress](#)
- [Tips for managing employee workload](#)



Useful Resources and Contacts

If you feel things are getting on top of you, speak to your line manager or to a trusted colleague about how you are feeling. Alternatively, you can use the resources below:

Support Line Telephone Helpline:

01708 765200

Samaritans: 116 123 (UK),
116 123 (ROI)

Mind: 0300 123 3393



Visit Online:

[Mind](#)

[Anxiety UK](#)

