

# Employee Health and Wellbeing

## Stress Awareness - April 2022

### What is stress?

Stress is the body's natural reaction to perceived threats or pressure. Pressures are a normal part of life and can be a useful motivator to help us pursue our goals and meet the demands of everyday life. However, when perceived pressure on us becomes too great, we may experience stress. Stress is very common but, long-term, can damage our physical health and mental wellbeing.

### What are the signs of stress?

If you are stressed you may notice physical and emotional symptoms, as well as behavioural changes. These could include:

#### Physical:

Aches and pains  
Stomach problems  
Dizziness  
Headaches  
Chest pain  
Heart palpitations

#### Emotional:

Difficulty concentrating  
Impaired memory  
Feeling less decisive or confident  
Mood swings  
Constant worrying

#### Behavioural:

Irritability or restlessness  
Over or under-eating  
Difficulty sleeping  
Changes in work attendance (arriving later or staying on later)  
Using alcohol, smoking or drugs to cope



## **How can we manage stress?**

### **Self-compassion**

Self-compassion is even more important when we're under pressure, and learning to be kinder to ourselves when we get overwhelmed can help with stress. If showing yourself compassion is something that you currently find difficult, you might like to sign up for our wellbeing workshop 'Introduction to compassion and self-care' this month. Alternatively, you can visit [self-compassion.org](https://self-compassion.org).

### **Self-awareness**

Being able to recognise how you experience stress and what your triggers are can be a helpful first step to managing your stress.

Mindfulness can help us develop this awareness. You may wish to try the [Headspace](#) mindfulness app.

### **Lifestyle**

Prolonged stress can have a big impact on our bodies. Getting enough exercise, sleep, and eating a balanced diet can help counteract some of these effects and help us feel more energised.

You may like to try 'Doing our bit', an exercise platform accessible to NHS workers. Simply visit [doingourbit.org.uk](https://doingourbit.org.uk).

## **Connect with others**

**Taking regular breaks to connect with those around us can be a great way to relax. As we look forward to the lighter and warmer days of Spring, you might like to connect with colleagues, friends and family by going for a walk or catching up over coffee.**

## **Challenge your thoughts**

**The way we think affects the way we feel. Learning to challenge negative thoughts can help us cope when we feel overwhelmed. You may find it useful to access the online platform Silvercloud; their 'Space from Stress' programme has tools and techniques to help manage stress.**

**If you notice that you're experiencing a prolonged period of stress or it's beginning to negatively impact areas of daily life, you might like to ask your manager about completing a Stress Risk Assessment form together.**



**EMPLOYEE HEALTH &  
WELLBEING SERVICE**

Occupational Health  
Occupational Physiotherapy  
Employee Wellbeing

# April Wellbeing Workshops

**Introduction to Assertiveness**  
**1 - 3pm, Friday 1 April**



**Stress Risk Assessment for Managers**  
**9:30 - 11:30am, Wednesday 6 April**



**Menopause Awareness**  
**1 - 3pm, Wednesday 6 April**



**Wellbeing Champion Training**  
**12 - 4pm, Tuesday 19 April**



# April Wellbeing Workshops

**Stress Management Session**  
**9:30 - 10:30am, Wednesday 20 April**



**Wellbeing Q & A Session for  
Managers**  
**1:30 - 3pm, Wednesday 20 April**



**Menopause Café**  
**1- 2pm, Wednesday 27 April**



**Introduction to Compassion and Self-Care**  
**1 - 3pm, Friday 29 April**



## Further support for everyone

The Employee Wellbeing Service can provide support through counselling, guided self-help and signposting to other resources or services. Contact the Employee Wellbeing Service on 02921 844465 or email [employee.wellbeing@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:employee.wellbeing@wales.nhs.uk).

Health for Health Professionals Wales provide free mental health support to all Health Professionals and Healthcare Students working in NHS Wales.

Samaritans offer a free, confidential telephone helpline where you can talk to someone about anything that is troubling you. The helpline is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call: 116 123

C.A.L.L is a mental health helpline, offering a confidential listening service. The service is open 24 hours a day, 365 days year. You can call 0800 132 737 or text help to 81066.

## Coming up in May

Next month's theme is Mental Health Awareness. Throughout May we will be running a variety of wellbeing workshops that explore common mental health difficulties, and we will highlight practical steps you can take to strengthen your mental wellbeing.

**If you are in crisis and do not feel you can keep yourself safe, contact your GP or the emergency services on 999 or 111.**



**EMPLOYEE HEALTH &  
WELLBEING SERVICE**  
Occupational Health  
Occupational Physiotherapy  
Employee Wellbeing



**GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES**

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Caerdydd a'r Fro  
Cardiff and Vale  
University Health Board