

Employee Health and Wellbeing

Stress Awareness - November 2021

What is stress?

Stress is the body's reaction to perceived threats or pressure. Stress is very common and can help motivate us to pursue our goals and meet the demands of everyday life. However, too much stress can impact our mental health and physical health. In light of stress awareness day, Wednesday 3rd November, we will cover ways that we can manage stress.

Lifestyle Factors

Taking care of ourselves physically can have a major impact on our mental wellbeing.

Getting enough sleep is important for our wellbeing. [See tips for managing your sleep on the NHS Live Well website](#)

[Couch to 5K](#) is a running app that can help you build up to run 5km

Eating a balanced, varied diet can contribute to wellbeing. If you're struggling with dietary issues, you can refer yourself to the [staff dietetic service](#)

Exercise can help us to feel more connected to our bodies and lift our mood.

[Joyn](#) is an online exercise platform which provides free, body-neutral, inclusive workouts.

Connecting with others is also key to managing stress and pressure – it can be a good time to share, support each other and enhance your sense of belonging.

[Doing Our Bit](#) is an online exercise platform that is free for NHS staff

The Stress bucket

One way to think about how to manage the buildup of stress in our lives is the stress bucket metaphor.

Imagine you have a bucket that you carry round with you which gradually fills up when you experience different types of stress. If you are experiencing a high amount of stress, the bucket will soon fill up. The size of the bucket varies from person to person and can change on a day-to-day basis. Some days, you might feel overwhelmed by everything, and on other days you may feel more able to cope. Sources of stress can include finances, work, relationships, and life events.

As you can see from the diagram below, the stress bucket has several taps at its base. The taps are different ways we can let stress out of the bucket so that the bucket doesn't overflow. The taps represent the activities you can do to help to relieve your stress, for example, meditation, exercise and connecting with others.



Stress risk assessment

If you feel your stress is work-related, you may wish to ask your manager to conduct a stress risk assessment with you. A stress risk assessment is an opportunity to discuss possible ways to reduce your risk of stress in work. If you are a manager who would like to learn more about conducting a Stress Risk Assessment, you can attend one of our stress risk assessment for managers workshops.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment and can be a helpful way to manage stress.

The Headspace mindfulness app is currently free for NHS staff and is a great place to start for beginners

Insight Timer is a free app with mindfulness meditations, yoga classes and online live talks.

The Palouse Mindfulness website provides a free, online mindfulness-based stress reduction course.

Grounding exercises are things you can do to bring yourself into contact with the present moment – the here and now:

- 5,4,3,2,1: Notice five things you can see, four things you can hear, three things you can smell, two things you can touch and one thing you can taste.
- Pick a colour. Then, look around the room you are in and find all the objects in the room that are that colour.
- Remind yourself of who you are now. Say your name. Say your age now. Say where you are now. Say what you have done today. Say what you will do next.

Self-compassion

Learning to develop self-compassion can be a helpful way to soothe ourselves when we are stressed.

Self-compassion.org resources provide self-compassion practices and meditations.

The Employee Wellbeing Service deliver monthly 'Introduction to Compassion and Self-care' workshops.

The Centre for Clinical Interventions has a very helpful workbook to develop self-compassion.

You can watch our stress management workshop on YouTube or attend our online workshop on Friday 26th November, 1pm - 2pm

This Baker's Dozen handbook is an excellent resource for managing stress

October Wellbeing Workshops

Stress Risk Assessment for Managers

9.30am - 11.30am
Tuesday 2 November

Menopause Awareness Session

1pm - 2.30pm
Monday 8 November

Introduction to Compassion and Self-Care

1pm - 3pm
Friday 12 November

Introduction to Assertiveness

9.30am - 11.30am
Tuesday 16 November

Menopause Cafe

1pm - 2pm
Thursday 25 November

Stress Management

1pm - 2pm
Friday 26 November

Further support for everyone

The Employee Wellbeing Service can provide support through counselling, guided self-help and signposting to other resources or services. In addition to telephone appointments, we are now offering video call appointments using the 'Attend Anywhere' platform. Call 02921 844465 or email employee.wellbeing@wales.nhs.uk to refer yourself.

Health for Health Professionals Wales are providing 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.

If you are in crisis an emergency, if a person needs urgent mental health assistance, their GP, out-of-hours GP or NHS Direct 111 should be contacted. If you feel that you or another person are in immediate danger, contact the emergency services.

Next month...

We'll be focusing on staying well over the winter period.

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.



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