

# National Stress Awareness Day

2nd November 2023

## What is stress?

Stress is a natural emotional response to the challenges and demands in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree and whilst it is a normal part of life, too much stress can impact on us both physically and mentally. People have different ways of reacting to stress, so a situation that feels stressful to one person may be motivating to someone else.



Stress is not an illness but can cause illness if not addressed and managed in a healthy way.

## What can cause stress?



Many of life's demands can cause stress, particularly work, exams, relationships and money problems. When you feel stressed, it can get in the way of sorting out these demands, or can even affect everything you do. The cost of living crisis is putting individuals, families and communities under enormous pressure leading to increasing stress levels.

## Symptoms of Stress

Sleep Problems

Anxiety

Irritability and Anger

Difficulty Concentrating

Low Self-esteem

Sleep Problems



Headaches

Palpitations

Dizziness

Loss of Appetite

Unhealthy coping strategies

Muscle Pain or Tension

# Steps to Managing Stress

“ Early intervention is key to managing stress before it becomes a problem. ”



The first step is to identify the cause(s) of your stress. Not taking control of the situation and doing nothing can make the problem worse. There are lots of supports out there for financial advice, bereavement, relationships and families affected by imprisonment.



Speak to a trusted friend, colleague or family member about how you are feeling. Don't suffer in silence.



Take care of your physical and emotional needs; practice good sleep hygiene, learn breathing exercises, eat well, exercise, get outside and prioritise time to do the things you enjoy.



If you've exhausted all self-help techniques and they aren't working, you should go to see your GP. They may suggest other coping techniques for you to try or recommend some form of counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy.

## Financial Resources and Supports

*Click on images to download information*



Help during the cost of living crisis. Check out what help you can get with debt and money advice.



If you're struggling to pay your bills, help is available. To access this, it's vital to contact the right source of support for what you need.



**Mental Health & Money Advice**

Helping you understand, manage & improve your mental health and money issues.



Call **0808 808 4000**,  
Mon to Fri 9am-8pm  
and Sat 9:30am- 1pm.

**Gam-Anon:** Call **0370 050 8881**,  
24-hour helpline. Provides info,  
advice and support for anyone  
affected by problem gambling.



## Mental Health APPS

*Click on images to download information*

Learn proven and techniques to face difficult emotions, and be more present.



An online sleep improvement programme which delivers tailored and engaging advice, 24/7.





If you're feeling anxious, stressed, or low, or having problems sleeping or dealing with grief – find out how you can improve your mental wellbeing by hearing what others have found helpful.

What to do if you are struggling with stress. Provides a wealth of information on what is stress, triggers and breathing and relaxation exercises.



The causes of stress, the signs of stress, the affects of stress, and help that is available.



Money and Mental Health: a guide for young people

## Mental Health Helplines

**NHS24 Mental Health Hub** Telephone advice and support on healthcare can be obtained from NHS24 by phoning **111**; open 24/7.



A free helpline for individuals experiencing symptoms of low mood, depression, or anxiety, and offers free and confidential advice for individuals over the age of 16. Contact on **0800 83 85 87**, 6pm to 2am Monday to Thursday; and from 6pm Friday throughout the weekend to 6am Monday.



A free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope. Text SHOUT to **85258**.

Provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Free by phoning **116 123** or via email on [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)



## And finally.....Surviving Christmas

Yes there is no doubt about it, Christmas can be a really stressful time and for those who may already be struggling with stress, this time of year can be overwhelming and exhausting. Financial and time pressures, family tensions, expectations, saying no to social engagements, the list goes on, so how can we survive Christmas and look after our mental health? Here are some Top Tips from the [Mental Health Foundation](https://www.mentalhealthfoundation.org) to help.

