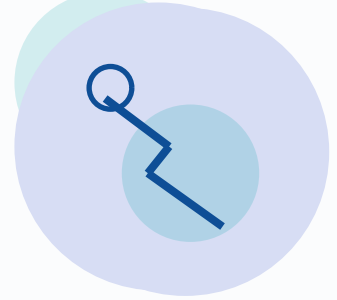


FACT SHEET

Stress

Stress is a normal response to pressure, but it becomes unhelpful when your mind and body stay switched on for too long without enough recovery.



clear, practical, supportive

WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE

- Feeling wound up, irritable, tearful, or emotionally flat
- Headaches, tight shoulders, racing heart, shallow breathing, or stomach upset
- Trouble sleeping, switching off, or concentrating on simple tasks
- Snapping at other people, withdrawing, or losing patience quickly
- Overworking, overthinking, or relying on caffeine, alcohol, or scrolling to cope

WHAT CAN CONTRIBUTE

- High workload, deadlines, conflict, or uncertainty
- Too little rest, recovery time, or predictable routine
- Ongoing caring demands or major life pressures
- Unhelpful self-talk such as “I can’t cope” or “I’m already behind”
- Trying to meet too many expectations without asking for support

Why it matters

- Stress can make small problems feel urgent and reduce your ability to think flexibly.
- When stress stays high, it often affects sleep, appetite, memory, mood, and relationships.
- Performance may dip even when you are trying harder than usual.
- Long-term overload can increase the risk of anxiety, low mood, and burnout.

Helpful reminders

- The goal is not to remove every stressor. It is to lower the load and increase recovery.
- Short reset moments during the day matter more than waiting for a perfect break.
- Support works best when you ask for it early, not only once things feel unmanageable.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Choose the ideas that feel realistic for you. Small consistent changes usually work better than trying to change everything at once.

- Name your main stressors. Write down the top three pressures that are driving your current stress so you can respond to the real problem, not just the feeling.
- Use body-based resets. Slow breathing, shoulder release, stretching, walking, or stepping outside can help your nervous system settle.
- Protect recovery. Build non-negotiable basics into the week: sleep, food, movement, hydration, and short breaks between tasks.
- Reduce open loops. Keep one list for tasks, one place for notes, and one next action for each priority so your brain is not holding everything at once.
- Talk back to pressure thoughts. Replace “I have to do everything now” with “I can do one useful thing next.”
- Set work boundaries. Clarify start and finish times, communicate priorities, and avoid carrying unfinished work into every part of the day.
- Use connection as a regulator. Spending time with safe, supportive people can reduce stress more than trying to cope in isolation.
- Seek support when stress is affecting daily functioning, sleep, relationships, or your use of alcohol, nicotine, or other coping habits.
- Track what makes the problem better or worse. A short note in your phone or diary can reveal patterns you can actually use.
- Aim for steady progress, not perfection. Review what helped this week and keep the plan realistic enough to repeat.



TRY THIS TODAY

Start with one small, achievable step.

- Pause for 60 seconds and slow your breathing out for longer than you breathe in.
- Choose one pressure you can reduce today and one recovery activity you will protect tonight.
- Tell one trusted person what is feeling heavy instead of carrying it alone.

WHEN TO GET EXTRA SUPPORT

- Stress is affecting sleep, health, work, or close relationships.
- You feel constantly overwhelmed even when demands reduce.
- You are relying more on alcohol, drugs, nicotine, or avoidance to cope.
- You want support to build a more sustainable plan.