

# AWARE

**OVERCOMING DEPRESSION.  
CHANGING LIVES.**

**LETS TALK  
ABOUT...**

**HELPING YOU  
WITH STRESS  
AT WORK**



# Helping You With Stress at Work

Research shows us that having a job has a positive effect on mental wellbeing. It can give you a sense of purpose and self-worth as well as providing an opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people, whilst providing some financial security.

Certain jobs and working environments can be stressful, and can increase your risk of developing a mental health problem. If you have an existing condition it can make it even worse.



## The Increased Risk Could be caused by:

- Lack of support from your manager or colleagues.
- A heavy workload and challenging deadlines.
- If you work long hours and have a poor work life balance.
- Not being clear on what your role is.
- If you are bullied at work.
- You have little or no opportunity for career progression.

There are so many things apart from your job, like money problems, bad relationships, sickness, and bereavement, that can have a big impact on your wellbeing at work.

## What is Stress?

**'The adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them' (Health and Safety Executive NI) (HSENI).**

Feeling stressed is normal, and experienced by everyone at times, like during a job interview, or if you have an unusually heavy workload with deadlines to meet. A certain amount of it can actually help you. However, when it becomes intense, lasts a long time, and starts to interfere with your life, it can negatively effect on your mental wellbeing.

### Are you at risk?

- Everyone is at risk.
- Almost one in three employees experience a mental ill health problem in any one year.
- 91 million work days are lost each year because of mental ill health at work.
- Stress is the biggest single cause of absenteeism in work after musculoskeletal disorders.



# Look Out For The Signs

Stress can affect you in a variety of ways but the symptoms can usually be grouped under four headings.

## Thoughts

You think things like 'everyone else is coping just fine', 'it's my fault', 'something bad is going to happen', 'I won't be able to cope' or 'I feel bad so it must be bad'.

## Feelings

You're anxious, fearful, worried, nervous, restless, or agitated?

## Behaviour

You're avoiding certain people, places, situations, not going out, only going to places at certain times, only going with someone else, or leaving early. You may also have an increased use of alcohol or drugs.

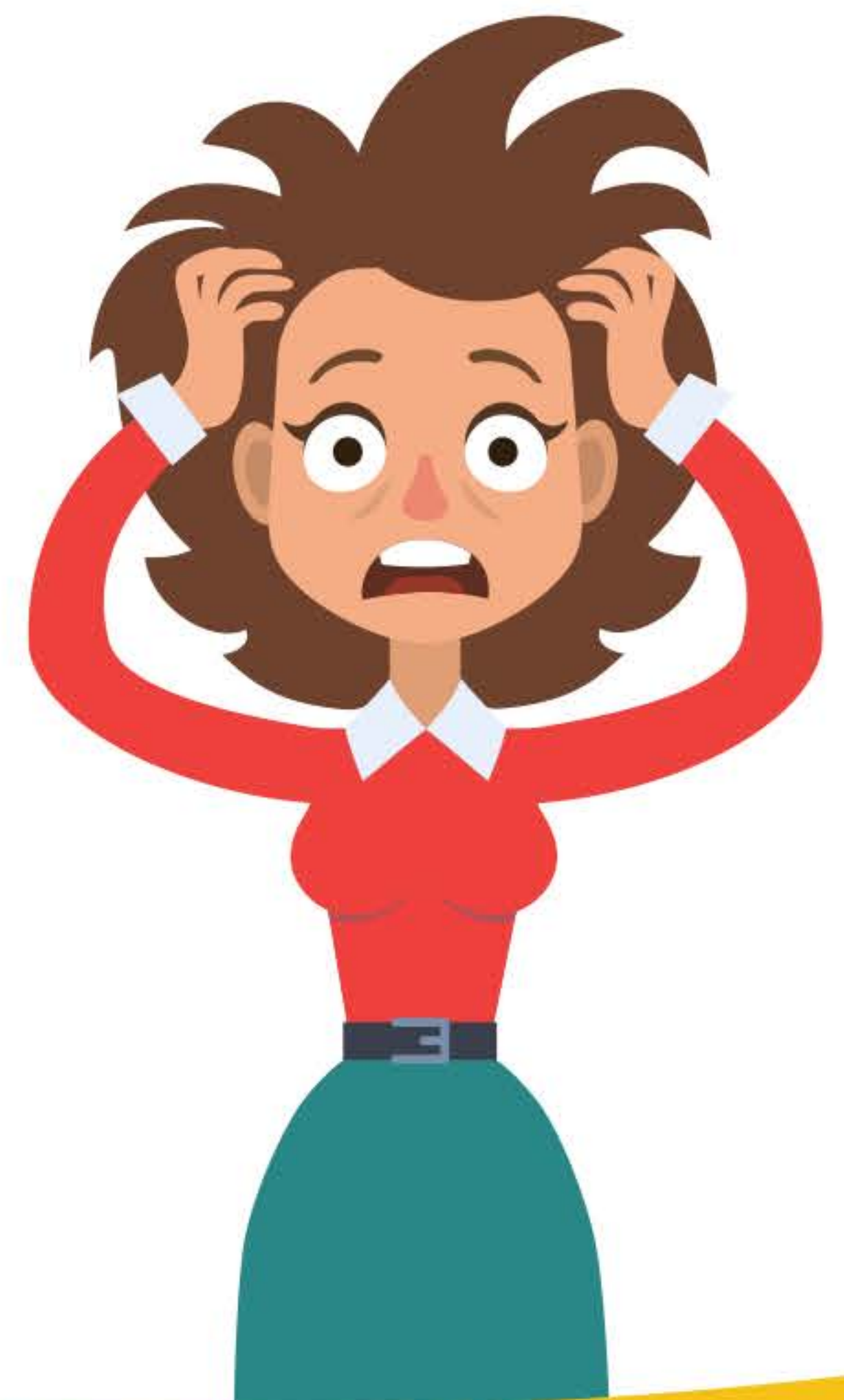
## Physical symptoms

You get headaches, muscles and/or chest pain, sweating, tingling, numbness, shaking, dizziness, rapid or shallow breathing, rapid heartbeat or palpitations, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting and or diarrhoea.

## How Does Stress Affect You At Work?

If you're stressed at work you may experience...

- Lack of productivity
- Difficulty concentrating
- Inability to meet deadlines
- Poor timekeeping
- Taking time off
- Being irritable with colleagues or even having angry outbursts.
- Loss of interest in your work or colleagues
- Inability to say "No"
- Working longer hours
- Taking on more and more, even though you are already under pressure







## Self-Help Strategies At Work

**You can help yourself by doing one or more of the following:**

- Get organised – make a daily 'to do list' and work through it
- Be realistic in what you can achieve
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Deal with problems as they arise and don't let them mount up
- Give yourself credit for what you do
- Be assertive – sometimes it's ok to say "No"
- Take time out for regular breaks
- Be prepared - every job comes with challenges, so be as ready as you can for them

## How To Have A Good Work Life Balance

**Be mindful of the balance between work and home life. What you do both in and outside of work are equally important when it comes to how they affect your mental health.**





# The 5 most evidenced based steps to improving your mental health are:



**1. Be Active** - Exercise acts as an antidepressant. Research has shown that 50 minutes of brisk walking 4 times a week significantly reduces depression.

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**2. Take Notice** - Savour the moment, be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

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**3. Give** - Do something nice for a friend or stranger. Smile. Volunteer your time, or consider joining a community group.

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**4. Connect** - With the people around you - family, friends or neighbours. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

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**5. Keep learning** - Do not be afraid to try something new. Rediscover an old hobby or interest or simply set a challenge you will enjoy.

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## Do One Thing

Sometimes you may feel overwhelmed when taking steps to help yourself. But remember to focus on doing just one thing at a time. It will help you to reach the goals you set, and get a real sense of achievement.



# Who to contact for support



## Lifeline

Lifeline is a telephone help and counselling service for anyone in distress or despair. It is available 24/7 and is free to call from your mobile phone.

They can give you immediate support, offer you a face-to-face appointment, or give you information about other services in your area. **Call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000.**

You could also

- **See your doctor**
- **Call the out-of-hours GP service**
- **Go to the A&E department**
- **Call emergency services on 999**
- **Call Samaritans on their freephone helpline 116 123.**

**This is a confidential service that provides a listening ear to those in distress.**

You can read our other guides for more information on help with depression, and looking after your mental health.

Find out how we can help and support you.  
Please visit our website or contact us:

Visit: [www.aware-ni.org.uk](http://www.aware-ni.org.uk)

Email: [info@aware-ni.org](mailto:info@aware-ni.org)

Call us: Belfast 028 9035 7820

Derry/L'Derry 028 7126 0602



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