

Mental Health Awareness Week

18 - 24 May 2020

Encouraging people to talk about their mental health and reduce the stigma that can stop people asking for help.



What is mental health?

Mental health illnesses can relate to what people experience in their mind, but can sometimes involve physical symptoms and emotional wellbeing.

Around one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem every year.

Top five most common illnesses

- **Depression** - Usual symptoms include loss of interest, general sadness, feelings of low self-worth, difficulty falling asleep, eating pattern changes, exhaustion and lack of concentration.
- **Anxiety** - There are many different anxiety-related disorders. They're divided into three categories: anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and trauma.
- **Bipolar Affective Disorder** - Sometimes known as manic depression - a severe mental health condition characterised by significant mood swings including manic highs and depressive lows.
- **Schizophrenia** - Symptoms can include hearing voices and seeing visual hallucinations.
- **Dementia** - The nerve cells in the brain are damaged so messages can't be sent from and to the brain effectively, which prevents the body from functioning normally.



Recognising the signs

Mental health problems usually happen gradually. They often start with slight changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

If you've noticed changes in the way you think or feel which cause problems in your day-to-day life, you may want support.

Five warning signs of mental illness

- Long-lasting sadness or irritability
- Extremely high and low moods
- Excessive fear, worry, or anxiety
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits

Remember, if you're unsure, seek advice from your doctor. Getting help early can speed up recovery.



Taking a holistic approach

Understand the connection between our Mind and Body in a crisis

If we take a holistic approach to our mental wellbeing, it will prepare us for future challenges, especially after the current situation with the pandemic.

Continue to stay strong and be aware

- Notice your appetite, desires and patterns of energy throughout the day
- When you worked in an office, are there any changes to your previous routine?
- What are your moods like at different times of the day?
- When can you build in that time to switch off?
- When can you get some fresh air or exercise daily?
- Who makes you smile and feel happy?
- What creative things or hobbies can you do?
- Who do you need to stay in touch with?



Lighten up at work

Boost productivity and enjoy a more fulfilling work life. It all starts with taking good care of yourself.

How many self-care activities can you tick off this week?



Activity	✓
Change a regular meeting to a walk and talk meeting.	
Do an online fitness class in your lunch break(s).	
Take regular breaks throughout the working days. Grab a virtual coffee with a colleague.	
Meal prep in advance and have healthy food choices throughout the day.	
Plan something you enjoy each day. Like speaking with friends, watching your favourite TV series or listening to music.	
Get an early night.	
Try out a standing desk.	
Drink eight glasses of water while at work.	
Ask for help.	
Keep a mood diary to track your thoughts.	
Use a health app, like Headspace, Pacifica, Happify or Calm.	

Help yourself to sleep

A lack of sleep can have a profound effect on your mental wellbeing. Improve how you drift off and the quality of sleep you get with these top tips.

- Exercise regularly, but at least three hours before you go to bed.
- Cut down on caffeine, especially in the evening.
- Limit alcohol before going to sleep.
- Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day.
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine that lets you unwind and sends a signal to your brain that it's time to sleep.
- Limit screen time an hour before bedtime. Keep phones out of the bedroom if possible.
- Calm your mind. Practice a relaxation technique like yoga, meditation and breathing exercises.
- If you can't sleep, try not to worry. Get up and do something relaxing like listening to music or reading.



Food can affect your mood

Look after your gut

- Sometimes your gut can reflect how you are feeling emotionally.
- If you're stressed or anxious this can make your gut slow down or speed up.
- For healthy digestion you need to have plenty of fibre, fluid and exercise regularly.
- Healthy gut foods include: fruits, vegetables and wholegrains, beans, pulses, live yoghurt and other probiotics.

Improving your diet may help to:

- improve your mood
- give you more energy
- help you think more clearly



Build your mental resilience



**Everybody has the power to
build resilience.**

“Even if we are not feeling
resilient, we are doing
resilient behaviours.”

Ruth Fordyce, The Resilience Centre,
Australia

Build your mental resilience



Physical resilience

Strength
Physical flexibility
Vitality
Endurance



Emotional resilience

Self- regulation
Self-belief
Emotional awareness



Mental resilience

Optimism
Ability to focus
Incorporation of multiple viewpoints

Where can you build your resilience?

Stay strong, Stay aware

- Start to notice your patterns of energy, appetites and desires through the day

Stay strong, Stay mindful

- Take control of your thinking - try mindfulness
- Practise rhythmic breathing when you notice yourself feeling frustrated

Stay strong, Stay positive

- Make a list of all the things you are worrying about. Can you control these?
- How could you reframe the new reality to use the time differently?

Where can you build your resilience?

Stay strong, Stay supportive

- Think of others who need help and support and contribute to the community where you can.
- What can you do to contribute to others wellbeing ? This will actually help you with your mental health, especially when you are constrained being self-isolated to some degree at home.

Stay strong, Stay Purposeful

- We need to have courage, to step outside ourselves, accept the uncertainty, embrace it as a new reality and not look backwards to the past we have now lost.
- This is our moment to be the best version of ourselves. Challenge yourself.

Build your resilient work habits

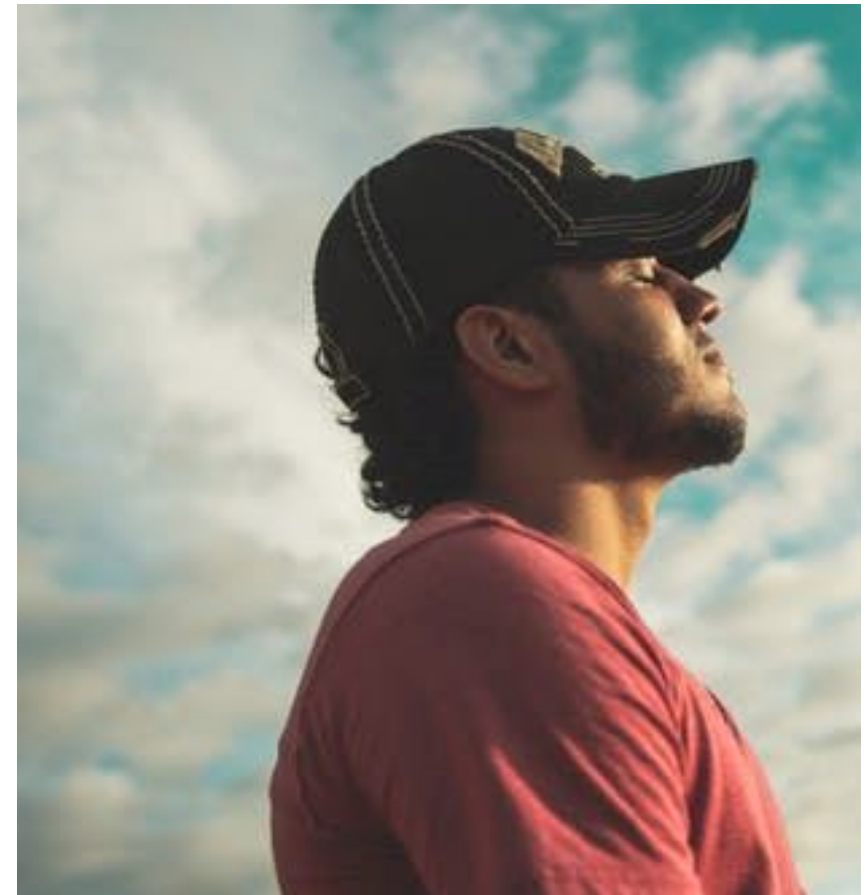
Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities; it comes from creating ordinary everyday magic.

- Set up a dedicated space to work
- Somewhere comfortable with limited distractions
- Create a morning and evening routine to mark the beginning and end of the working day
- Agree with your manager a work schedule / workload to follow through the working day
- Change postures and positions every half hour
- Keep hydrated, take breaks and keep routines



Be mindful NOW

- Breathe in, breathe out. Feel the flow
- Pay attention to all your senses
- Empty the mind - take a few moments to be still
- As soon as your mind wanders, bring it back to your breath
- Be aware of every daily activity you do
- Go outdoors and listen to nature
- Forgive yourself for negative thoughts
- Be grateful, say thank you
- Go easy on yourself



Be kind to your mind

Everyone knows it's essential to look after our physical health. But it's just as important to take care of our mental and emotional health too.

Whether you have a mental health diagnosis or not, we can all benefit from increasing our resilience to the stress life throws at us.

The best ways to improve mental health

- Get plenty of sleep
- Eat a healthy diet
- Be active
- Talk about your feelings
- Avoid alcohol, smoking and drugs
- Get outside
- Help others
- Ask for help



Giving back

Evidence shows that helping others is beneficial for your own mental health and wellbeing. It can help reduce stress, improve your emotional wellbeing and even benefit your physical health.

Get inspiration from our list of fundraising ideas and acts of kindness. Don't forget to order your [green ribbon pin](#) and donate to The Mental Health Foundation.

For further ideas and inspiration visit the [Mental Health Foundation](#)



- Virtual office bake off
- Donate to Foodbanks
- Virtual Pub quiz
- Support a vulnerable neighbour
- Send someone a takeaway meal
- Donate money you would normally spend on a morning coffee
- Offer to share a skill with a friend
- Lend your ear and call a colleague

Reach out for support

FREE, CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE IS AVAILABLE TO ALL GROCERY COLLEAGUES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS

THE 24/7 HELPLINE OFFERS INDEPENDENT ADVICE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AND PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

TELEPHONE INTERPRETING SERVICE AVAILABLE

