



DO WHAT
it takes
CHECK ON
your mates

THE WOODPECKER PROJECT

RESOURCE PACK



STRESS

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is how we react when we feel under pressure or threatened. It usually happens when we are in a situation that we don't feel we can manage or control.

Sometimes, a small amount of stress can help us to complete tasks and feel more energised. But stress can become a problem when it lasts for a long time or is very intense. In some cases, stress can affect our physical and mental health.

Stress is not normally considered a mental health problem. But it is connected to our mental health in several ways and can lead to poor mental health.

CHECK ON your mates

How to check on your mates

Can you see those signs & symptoms in your mates? Do you know what they might be going through? Have you noticed unusual patterns? More drinking? constant headaches? Always tired?

Reaching out could really help.

But what to do next?

> ASK & ASSESS

Are they really ok? Assess the situation, is there any danger? Can we have a safe conversation now somewhere quiet?

> LISTEN

Non judgmentally, let them talk, listen with empathy. Try and let them open up. This is about them now. Can you spot their triggers together?

> GIVE REASSURANCE

Remind them they are not alone, remind them it will pass and that you are there for them whilst they feel like this

> ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Doctors, talking therapy, charities, peer-to-peer support

> ENCOURAGE FAMILY & FRIENDS SUPPORT

Who else are they speaking too? Are they sharing their worries with someone else? Can we as friends do more to help?

DO WHAT it takes

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

If you are stressed, you might feel:

- Irritable, angry, impatient or wound up
- Over-burdened or overwhelmed - Can't cope
- Anxious, nervous or afraid - Depressed

Stress can be physical too:

- Difficulty breathing
- Panic attacks
- Elevated heart rate
- Sweating

CAUSES

There are many factors that may cause someone to feel stressed. It is also essential to understand that everyone has a different level of stress they can manage and what may cause you stress may not affect someone else.

- You feel under pressure
- Big life changes
- Worried about something or multiple things
- Don't feel in control of situations
- Financial worries
- Hate or abuse
- Death of a loved one

Stress outlets

The more things we do in our lives that help us release endorphins, the better we are at releasing stress. It's important to have a network of things we can turn to if we notice our stress levels rising. If going to the gym is your 'coping' mechanism and you get injured, have you got something else ready to support you? What if the gym becomes not enough and no workout can shift how you feel? Going to the gym or exercising is amazing for you, but here is a list of other things that may help:

Read a book | Go for a walk | Spend time with friends | Play sport | Craft hobbies | Listen to music | Go out for dinner | Try something new.

NEED HELP? Its OK to need help

Call - Samaritans - 116 123 (24 hours a day)

Text - SHOUT - to 85258

Not sure where to turn?

 www.thewoodpeckerproject.co.uk

BEREAVEMENT

WHAT IS BEREAVEMENT?

Bereavement is the experience of losing someone important to you. It's characterised by grief, which is the process and the range of emotions we go through when we experience a loss.

There are lots of different ways in which we might grieve, and many factors can affect our grief. These include the relationship we had with the person who died, our previous experience of grief, and the support we have around us.

Losing a loved one can cause us physical symptoms but can also lead to poor mental health.

CHECK ON your mates

How to check on your mates

Did your mate recently lose a loved one? Is it a significant date in the calendar, like Christmas, birthday or the anniversary of their passing?

Reaching out could really help.

But what to do next?

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Are they really OK? Assess the situation, is there any danger? Can we have a safe conversation now somewhere quiet?

> LISTEN

Non judgmentally, let them talk, listen with empathy. Try and let them open up. This is about them now. They might not want to talk much, but they might just want the company

> GIVE REASSURANCE

Remind them you're there for them, be authentic and reflect with them if they wish

> ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

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DO WHAT it takes

BEREAVEMENT & MENTAL HEALTH

Everyone responds to loss differently. Sometimes during grieving, we can experience sadness and depression, and experience suicidal thoughts. It can cause anxiety and loneliness as well as panic attacks. It is important to know that we can feel multiple emotions during grieving like anger and feeling overwhelmed.

If we have lost a loved one, or you know someone that has, understanding some of the above can aid during the grieving process and give us a chance to support more where we can.

Support

There are incredible charities and communities out there who specialise in supporting those struggling with losing a loved one.

If you or your mate are struggling, think about the below.

StrongMen.org | Male bereavement support charity, offering peer to peer support.

cruse.org.uk | UK's leading bereavement charity

uksobs.com | Survivors of bereavement by suicide charity.

If you're not sure about any of these options or who to turn to, please reach out to us. A conversation, a cuppa and we can learn together what might be the right step for you.

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DEPRESSION

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a mental health problem that involves having a low mood or losing interest and enjoyment in things.

If you experience milder depression, you might have low mood but still be able to carry on with your daily life. But things may feel harder and less worthwhile.

If you have more severe depression, you might find day-to-day life much more difficult. You may also experience suicidal feelings.

There are many types of depression, caused by many things, each require their own care, guidance and support

CHECK ON your mates

How to check on your mates

Has your mate gone quiet? Have you noticed a drop in their energy level or mood? Have they been through a difficult time lately? Have they started ignoring you for no reason?

But what to do next?

> ASK & ASSESS

Are they really OK? Assess the situation, is there any danger? Can we have a safe conversation now somewhere quiet?

> LISTEN

Non judgmentally, let them talk, listen with empathy. Try and let them open up. This is about them now. Can you spot their triggers together?

> GIVE REASSURANCE

Remind them they are not alone, that this will pass and that you are there for them whilst they feel like this

> ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

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> ENCOURAGE FAMILY & FRIENDS SUPPORT

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DO WHAT it takes

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

You might feel:

- Down, upset or tearful, empty or numb
- Guilty, worthless and down on yourself
- No self-confidence or self-esteem
- Tired and feeling hopeless
- Isolated and unable to relate to anyone

You might:

- Avoid social events and activities you usually enjoy
- No appetite and losing weight, or eating more than usual and gaining weight
- Difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Moving very slowly, or being restless and agitated
- Self-harming or suicidal behaviour

CAUSES

The causes can vary a lot between different people. For some, a combination of different factors may cause our depression. Or we may find that we become depressed without an obvious cause or trigger.

- Childhood experiences or family history
- Life events
- Other mental health problems
- Physical health problems like injury or illness
- Medication
- Recreational drugs and alcohol

Care and treatments

Understanding the severity and the causes can really help with knowing what we can do for ourselves or our friends living with depression. Some self care might be:

Attending peer-to-peer | Keeping a mood diary | Write a journal | Talk to someone you trust

Treatments for depression can include talking therapies:

CBT | Counselling | Problem Solving Therapy.

Medication for depression may be recommended but always consult with a Medical GP for the best course of action.

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SUICIDE AWARENESS

WHAT IS SUICIDE AWARENESS?

Suicide awareness is a proactive effort to raise awareness around suicidal behaviours.

The more we talk about the subject, the more we may help someone consciously or sub-consciously.

We might share a relevant bit of information that could change how someone feels or might stop someone feeling alone. It could help someone feel relatable.

**It could stop someone dying from suicide.
It could save a life.**

CHECK ON your mates

How to check on your mates

Has your mate ever said something like? "This place would be better off without me", "I just want this pain to stop" or "I'd be better off ending it all now"

Sometimes our mates might make a comment that isn't this obvious, but will have a suicidal message within it. **ALL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SUICIDE ARE IMPORTANT**

But what to do next?

> ASK & ASSESS

Are they really OK? Assess the situation, is there any danger? Have they planned it or are they just thinking about it? Are they talking about it now or they planning something? **Guide them to help, use resources for support.**

Are they threatening to take their own life now? **IF SO CALL 999 - STRAIGHT AWAY**

IF SOMEONE TALKS TO YOU ABOUT FEELING SUICIDAL, YOU HAVE TO BE BRAVE.

> LISTEN

Non judgmentally, let them talk, listen with empathy. Try and let them open up and be understanding

> GIVE REASSURANCE

Remind them they are not alone, Support is out there and a full and healthy recovery this is possible and probable

> ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Doctors, talking therapy, charities, peer-to-peer support
In EMERGENCIES CALL 999 STRAIGHT AWAY

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DO WHAT it takes

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

If someone is feeling suicidal, they might be feeling scared or confused. They may find the feelings overwhelming, but they are not alone. Many people think about suicide at some point in their lifetime.

They might feel:

- Hopeless, like there is no point in living
- Desperate, as if they have no other choice
- Like everyone would be better off without you
- Tearful and overwhelmed by negative thoughts
- Unbearable pain that you can't imagine ending
- Urges to self harm, low self-esteem, wanting to avoid others.

People don't suddenly recover from depression, so this kind of behaviour is likely to indicate that someone has made up their mind about suicide. Are they giving away sentimental things? Have they told people they are going away?

CAUSES

There are many factors that may cause someone to feel suicidal. As friends, we need to make sure the person gets the right support.

- Have they been living with depression, anxiety or stress of a period of time?
- Has a loved one passed away recently?
- Have they been through a traumatic life experience or struggled with an important life change?

Suicide prevention

EMERGENCY - CALL 999

Any conversation around suicide is important, never consider this as a 'cry for attention'. Below are some important resources.

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Its OK to speak to your GP.

papyrus-uk.org | Prevention of young suicide

Support for someone in need or if you need to find support for you friends.

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