

Stress

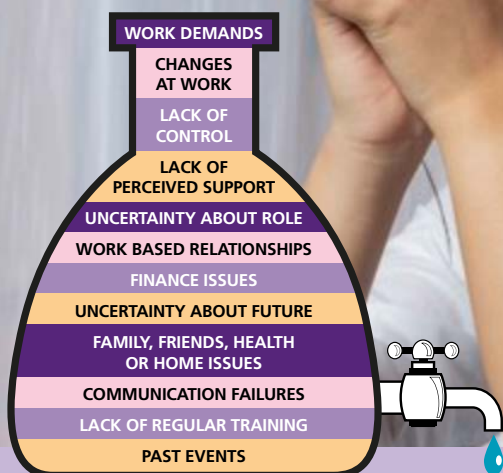
How to recognise and manage

What is Stress?

It is simply the body's reaction to feeling threatened or being put under pressure. Everyone reacts differently to stress. Too much stress over a longer period of time can affect our body physically and mentally, leading to **'BURNOUT'**.



Graphic adapted from SFH
Physical Health Psychology Service



Common causes of stress at work

The stress bottle is a useful way to help you consider all the stresses that can occur in the workplace. As the bottle fills up there may be no space for everyday stresses. Even the smallest amount of stress added to a full bottle can cause a bottle eruption, where common stress symptoms may be experienced. Using coping strategies can make room in the stress bottle to help cope with everyday stress.

How do I recognise signs of stress in myself or others?

Stress hormones cause a flight or fight response preparing the body to flee or fight. The liver increases the amount of blood sugar available to fuel the body for action. Changes to physical or emotional behaviours may be an indication of stress.

Physical symptoms can include

Increased heart rate or Palpitations

Increased muscle tension – a reflex reaction to guard against injury. Common sites are tension headaches, jaw clenching and chronic muscle tension of the neck, shoulders, back and upper limbs.

Increased breathing rate, hyperventilation or panic attacks

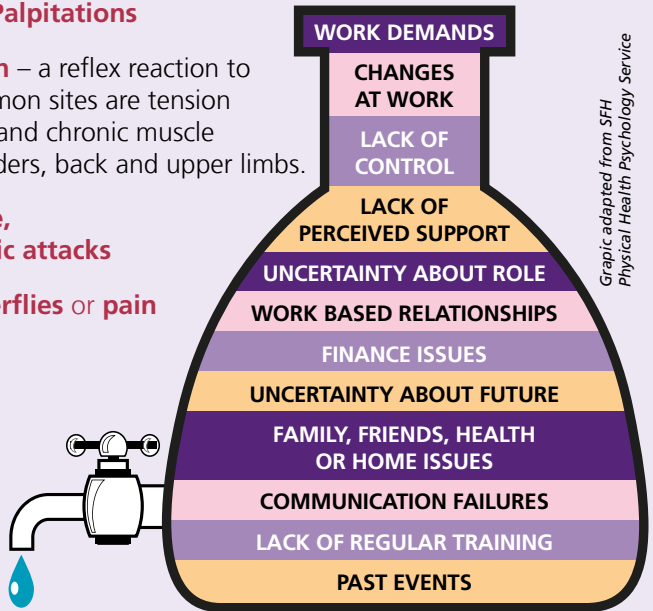
Stomach bloating, butterflies or pain

Skin irritations

Weight changes

Indigestion

High blood pressure



Cognitive & emotional symptoms can include

Unable to concentrate or memory lapses

Feeling demotivated

Irritability or anger

Tearful or mood swings

Becoming **withdrawn or avoiding social interaction**

Lack of self confidence

Changes to appetite

Feeling overwhelmed, worried, scared or anxious

Increased addiction
to alcohol, nicotine or other substance

Difficulty falling to sleep or staying asleep

Changes to timekeeping – Working too much or regularly being late

Self-Neglect

What can I do to manage symptoms of stress?

Workplace adjustments – Consider if your stress is impacting you at work or how your role may be contributing to your symptoms. For help and support read the guidelines for the management of stress in the workplace which can be found on the SFH staff intranet or discuss with your manager, occupational health or Freedom to speak up guardian.

Share – Talk to someone you trust such as a colleague, counsellor (Vivup), discuss with your line manager, Chaplaincy or a Freedom to speak up guardian.

Rest and relaxation – Try to plan ahead your rest breaks and stick to them. Take some time out of your day for you to relax, find a quiet space and take some deep breaths. This will help to reduce your heart and breathing rate as well as lowering your blood pressure and promote muscle relaxation. Remember to remain hydrated throughout your shift.

Sleep – Maintain a regular bedtime routine, avoid the use of phones and electronic devices (ipads etc) in the last hour before sleeping. Make time to relax before bed. Avoid caffeinated or alcoholic drinks before bedtime.

Be Active – Exercise moderately for 150 minutes or vigorously for 75 minutes per week. Being active aids as a distraction and acts as an outlet to release tension, endorphins are released which improve mood. Examples of moderate exercise are taking a brisk walk or using the stairs at work.

Stop smoking – Nicotine increases levels of stress and anxiety. Ask for help and support and use nicotine replacement products to cut down.

Avoid alcohol – Cut down on alcohol levels as low mood can be exacerbated and sleep is disturbed by regular use.

Who should I contact?

Line manager – If you feel your stress symptoms are affecting you at work or you would like to discuss workplace adjustments or any aspects of stress at work, please look at the SFH guidelines for the management of stress in the workplace and contact your line manager.

Occupational health department – If you feel your stress symptoms are affecting you at work or you would like to discuss workplace adjustments or any aspects of stress at work, please contact your line manager and ask for a manager referral to Occupational health.

Your GP – Contact your GP surgery if you are struggling with stress symptoms or would like advice about medication or other treatment options.

Further information:

Occupational health service	Extension 3780/3781 Sfh-tr.occupational.health@nhs.net
SFH Support Guidelines for the management of stress in the workplace	Policy, procedures and guidance section of SFH trust intranet hs-wrs04-management-of-work-related-stress-policy-mar-19.pdf (sfh-tr.nhs.uk)
Flexible working policy	Sherwood Forest Hospitals (sfh-tr.nhs.uk)
Freedom to Speak up guardians	Sherwood Forest Hospitals (sfh-tr.nhs.uk) kerry.bosworth@nhs.net 07788 224490
Department of spiritual and pastoral care	
Schwartz rounds	
VIVUP employee assistance programme, for help and support with any pressures at work or home. Available 24/7, 365 days a year.	03303 800658 Employee Assistance Programme (tercltd.co.uk)
For acute distress or immediate mental health care needs please contact North Nottinghamshire staff support line	
Stress at work E-learning module	0808 196 8886 notts.staffsupport@nhs.net
HSE Talking toolkit guidelines	Talking Toolkit: Preventing work-related stress (hse.gov.uk)
NHS Choices www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/free-fitness-ideas/ Depression and anxiety self-assessment quiz – NHS (www.nhs.uk) www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/	www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/stress https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/tips-to-reduce-stress/
External links	
Mind – Mental health charity	www.mind.org.uk
Samaritans For URGENT support if at risk of self harm or suicide Text SHOUT 85258 24/7 Or dial 999	www.Samaritans.org Samaritans Free phone 116123