

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

#FECAVAVetTeamWellbeing



WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a feeling of being under pressure, which is unique to each individual and can come from different aspects of your life.

Everyone experiences stress. Some pressure or feeling out of our comfort zone for a short period can be okay but out of control stress can be harmful. When it starts to affect your mental health and wellbeing it is important to take action to tackle it and look after yourself.

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How to recognise stress in yourself and others

Here are some common signs and symptoms to look out for:

- Feeling overwhelmed, irritable and "wound up"
- Being impatient and snapping at people
- Poor conflict management e.g. shouting, losing your temper
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty relaxing
- Frowning more
- Feeling constantly worried or anxious
- Struggling to sleep
- Feeling overly criticised by others
- Lacking self-esteem and doubting your competence
- Headaches
- GI problems
- Lack of sexual appetite
- Distancing yourself from others
- No initiative to see friends/family

Steps to take if you are feeling stressed

Whilst it is not possible to totally eliminate stress here are some ideas to help manage stress better:

- Eat healthily
- Take time to have a proper break during work
- Take some exercise – even a gentle walk
- Find, learn and use techniques to calm/slow down
- Make an effort, every day, to express gratitude and appreciate the good things in your life. This helps to change the focus from the negative
- Try and have adequate sleep – struggling to sleep can be a common problem when you're stressed
- Share your problems with friends and family
- Connect with people
- Have some "me" time
- Don't rely on alcohol, smoking and caffeine as ways of coping
- Talk to your doctor
- Seek professional help



A practical deep breathing exercise (when you breath deeply it sends a message to your brain to relax) – square breathing

Square breathing (also known as box breathing) can be used to help you relax

BREATH IN FOR 4 SECS,
HOLD FOR 4 SECS AND
BREATH OUT FOR 4 SECS,
WAIT FOR 4 SECS,
BREATH FOR 4 SECS ...

Repeat three times or until you feel calm.

The FECAVA website is working towards providing links to resources to help protect yourself from the adverse effects of stress.