



Let's Get
Healthy

activate employee performance

HEADSMART[®]

Your mental health toolkit

Who and what is the toolkit for?

Use this toolkit to:

- Grow your understanding of the most common mental health problems
- Learn top tips to have supportive conversations around mental health
- Help anybody who may showing signs of a mental health problem
- Understand and know where to find help

The topics covered include:

- 03 What is poor mental health and what should I be looking for?
- 05 Spot the signs and indicators of stress, anxiety & depression
- 08 How to have a confident conversation
- 10 Finding support

Any information sourced from the NHS website is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0” and, where possible, for more information please visit their website [Open Government Licence](#).



What is poor mental health?



Mental health can affect our thinking, emotions and behaviour and can disrupt our ability to work, carry out simple daily tasks and engage in relationships.

We recognise that just like physical health, there is good and poor mental health and this can be different for all of us.

There are also different types of mental health problems, some of which are common, such as depression, stress and anxiety disorders, and some which are not common, such as bipolar or schizophrenia.

We have simplified this information to help guide you through spotting signs and symptoms and know where to signpost to support.

When you're experiencing a mental health problem, knowing that support is available can be life changing.



What should I be looking for?



We all need good mental health and simple changes can make a big difference.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has updates and information about Mental Health.

[Click here to visit the website.](#)



Mental health issues affect the way people think, feel and act. The most common issues are stress, depression and anxiety.

You may notice a change in yourself or someone you work with. This change in behaviour could be a sign of a mental health problem.

Here are some signs to watch out for.

- Experiencing mood swings
- Having a lack of confidence
- Feeling sad or down
- Difficulty in sleeping
- Crying for no apparent reason
- Getting no pleasure in things you normally enjoy
- Having tense muscles and headaches
- Feeling worried or anxious
- Having difficulty focusing or remembering
- Drinking / smoking more
- Erratic behaviour
- Confusion
- Losing weight
- Self-harm
- Poor personal hygiene
- Looking tired
- Work performance drops

What is stress?

Stress can be defined as 'The feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure'.⁽¹⁾

The external signs of stress can be evidenced through our body, our emotional reactions and our behaviour as well as how we think.

Here are some of the common signs of stress. They are things to be aware of in yourself and others.

Emotional

- Negative or depressive feeling
- Disappointment with yourself
- Increased emotional reactions - more tearful or sensitive or aggressive
- Loneliness, withdrawn
- Loss of motivation, commitment and confidence

Psychological

- Confusion, indecision
- Can't concentrate
- Poor memory
- Mood swings

Behavioural

- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking, drinking or drug taking 'to cope'
- Mood swings affecting your behaviour
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Twitchy, nervous behaviour
- Changes in attendance such as arriving later or taking more time off

Watch this video:

What you can do for stress

Professor Anna Whittaker, psychologist and professor of behavioural medicine, says: "Taking control of the situation when you're feeling stressed is really empowering."



TOP TIPS



What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, worry or fear, which everyone feels at some point in their life, but for some people it can be an ongoing problem.

Listen to this audio guide: Anxiety control training
In this audio guide, a doctor explains how you can take control of anxiety.



There are different levels to anxiety, mild anxiety is vague and unsettling, whilst severe anxiety can be extremely debilitating and have a serious effect on being able to function in daily life.

Here are some of the common physical, psychological and behavioural signs of anxiety. They are things to be aware of in yourself and others.

Physical

- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Tense muscles and headaches
- Pins and needles
- Feeling light headed or dizzy
- Faster breathing
- Sweating or hot flushes
- A fast, thumping or irregular heart beat
- Raised blood pressure
- Difficulty sleeping
- Needing the toilet more frequently, or less frequently
- Churning in the pit of your stomach
- Experiencing panic attacks

Psychological

- Mind is really busy with thoughts
- Dwelling on negative experiences, or thinking over a situation again and again (this is called rumination)
- Feeling overwhelmed

Behavioural

- Feeling tense, nervous and on edge, having a sense of dread, or fearing the worst
- Feeling like the world is speeding up or slowing down
- Feeling like other people can see your symptoms
- Feeling restless
- Feeling numb

What is depression?

Depression is more than feeling unhappy or fed up for a few days.

Most people go through periods of feeling down, but depression is different, you can feel persistently sad for weeks or months.

Here are some of the common emotional and behavioural signs of depression. They are things to be aware of in yourself and others.

Emotional

- Down, upset or tearful
- Restless, agitated or irritable
- Guilty, worthless and down on yourself, empty and numb
- Isolated and unable to relate to other people
- Finding no pleasure in life or things you usually enjoy
- A sense of unreality
- No self-confidence or self-esteem
- Hopeless and despairing
- Suicidal
- Confusion, indecision
- Can't concentrate
- Poor memory

Behavioural

- Avoiding social events & activities you usually enjoy
- Self-harming or suicidal behaviour
- Finding it difficult to speak or think clearly
- Losing interest in sex
- Difficulty remembering or concentrating on things
- Using more tobacco, alcohol or other drugs than usual
- Difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Feeling tired all the time
- No appetite and losing weight, or eating too much and gaining weight
- Physical aches and pains with no obvious physical cause
- Moving very slowly, or being restless and agitated

Read this helpful fact sheet from the WHO about depression.

Click here to visit the website.



How to have a conversation

Having a conversation with somebody about mental health should be as easy as chatting to someone who has broken their arm, had flu or any other illness.



With one in four people likely to suffer a mental health issue this year,⁽²⁾ the chances are you already know someone who may need your support. It's important to recognise that some people find it easier to talk about their mental health than others.

There is often a stigma around mental health and people don't like to talk about how they are feeling. One great way to overcome this is by acknowledging the importance of your own mental health and talking about your own problems.

Understanding things from your colleagues' perspective is really important in making sure you can offer the right support. Sometimes it can feel like you're asking some personal questions, which can feel uncomfortable. But, without understanding it's not possible to signpost to the right support.

If it's the first time you've dealt with something like this, just try to stay calm and consider how hard it might be for that person to open up to you. You're not expected to have all the answers, just there to help them find support.



Talking openly and honestly



Get to know them and listen

Show you're interested, make time for them, let them finish their sentences and complete thoughts without interrupting. Only respond after they've finished.

Let them know you understand

If you've gone through something similar, tell them. It helps a lot for someone to know they're not alone. Make sure you focus on their needs rather than switching the topic of conversation to yourself.

Let them know 'it's ok not to be ok'

We all feel stressed from time to time, it's not unusual and certainly nothing to be ashamed of.

Take them seriously

Try not to respond with statements that might belittle how they might feel. Avoid comments such as, 'You're just having a bad week', or 'I'm sure it's nothing'. Acknowledge that it's clearly a difficult time for them.

Make yourself available to talk again if needed

Whilst it can be a big relief for someone to share something they've been bottling-up, it might not be solved in one conversation. Let the person who's spoken with you know that you are there and if they're having a tough time, they can reach out to you again.

Don't use what you've been told as gossip

If someone is talking to you about how they are feeling, it was probably really hard for them to work up the courage to do so. If they're not in a good place it could shatter them to hear people talking about them.

Never share what they tell you with others

Unless you've been asked to do so, let them share confidentially on their own terms. However, if you do have serious concerns about their wellbeing, you should speak to a line manager.

Seek support

We would urge you to build a social network of support whether you have identified signs of mental health or are reading this toolkit to help others.



The following organisations provide more supportive information about mental health problems. Many of the sites have downloadable fact sheets and take-away information, which will support the use of this toolkit.

- **World Health Organisation (WHO)** -To learn more about other mental health disorders
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>
- **Mental Health** - This UK's leading mental health research, policy and service improvement charity
www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- **Samaritans have charities across Europe** - Most provide a 24-hour support by phone, text or email for anybody that needs somebody to talk. Examples include;
 - UK - www.samaritans.org
- **Preventing suicide** - The WHO provides helpful facts sheets
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>
- **Zero Suicide Alliance** - This online training takes around 20 minutes and will lead you through the skills you might need to help someone who may be considering suicide, tackling stigma and promoting open communication.
<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>
- **Global Crisis lines** - Many mental health organisations promote global crisis lines;
 - <https://www.oml.world/needhelpnow>
 - <https://findahelpline.com/>



UK NHS support

The NHS provides lots of support, of all kinds, for those who suffer mental health problems.



Every mind matters - An excellent tool provided by the NHS. Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more. The link below takes you to expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters>

NHS choices - All of your health and wellbeing questions answered online with good support resources available - www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx

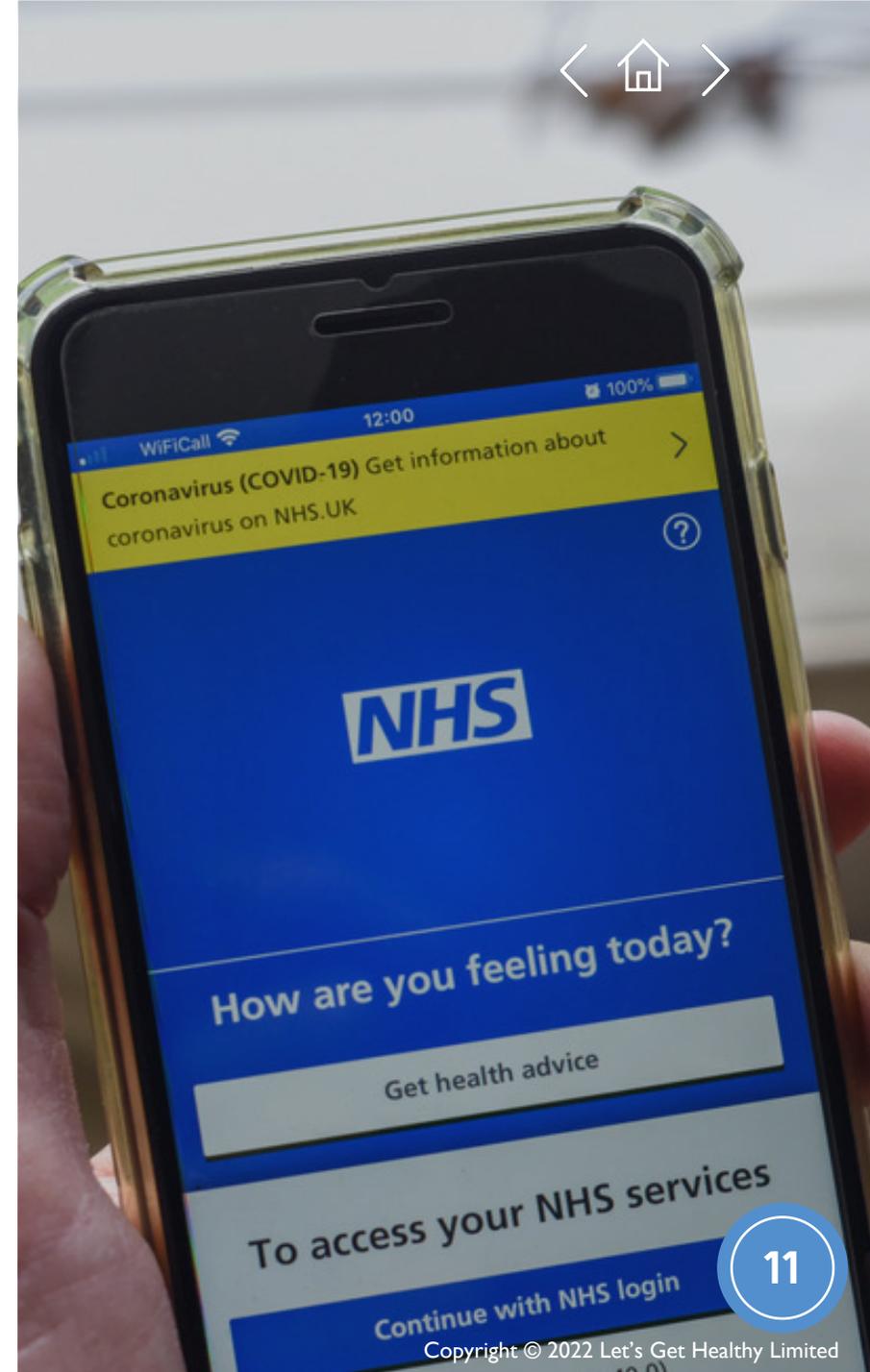
GP - To find a local GP - <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-GP>

Psychological therapies – You can refer yourself directly to a psychological therapies service (IAPT) without seeing your GP. (England only)

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-psychological-therapies-service>

NHS advice - Lots of links to helpful support on stress

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/stress>



Support at Havebury



- 24/7 telephone access to GP services; all GPs are registered with the General Medical Council
- Employee assistance programme; advice and counselling provided, with structured counselling of up to six sessions available either face-to-face or over the phone
- Expert health information; on treatments and conditions, lifestyle management and travel information
- Lifestyle benefits and discounts; variety of discounts including gym memberships, sports equipment and family days out
- Health evaluation tools; including discounted health screening from Nuffield, the Denplan dental health check and online risk assessments for the whole family

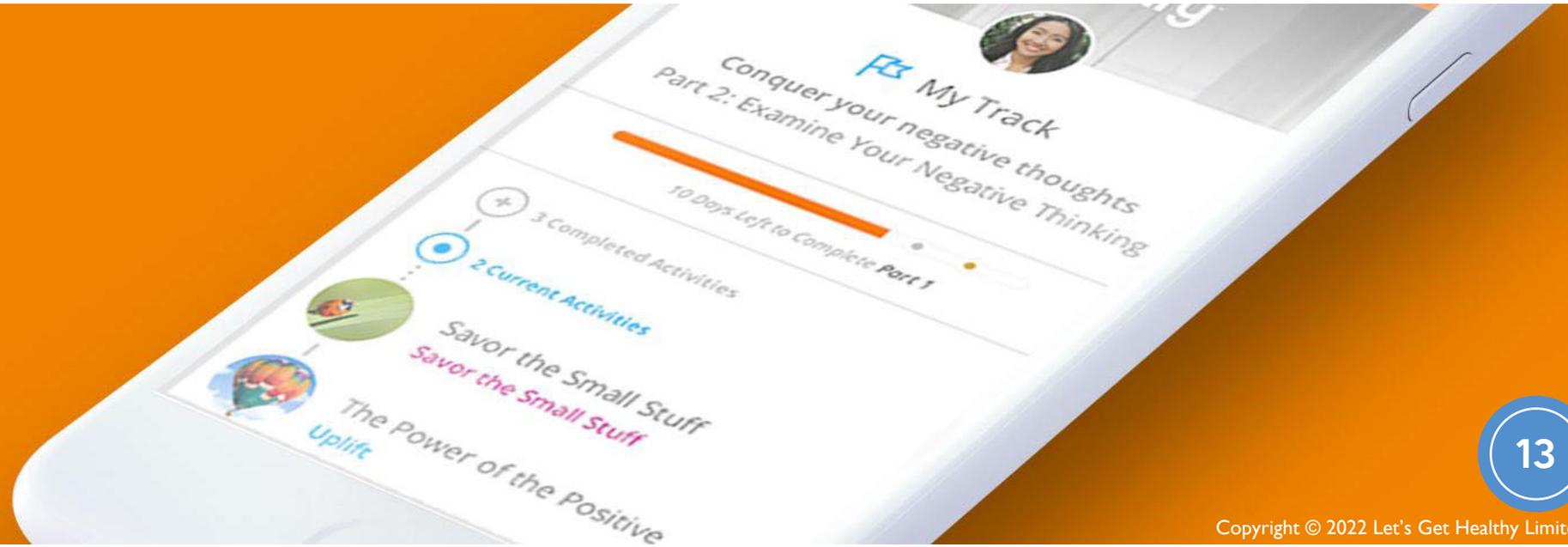
Call: 0800 975 3347
[simplyhealth.co.uk/login](https://www.simplyhealth.co.uk/login)



Top 10 Apps for mental health



- 1 Calm
- 2 Moodness
- 3 Moodpath
- 4 Pacifica
- 5 SuperBetter
- 6 7 Cups
- 7 Hypnobox
- 8 Happify
- 9 Talkspace
- 10 Moodnotes



Confidentiality & sources

This document contains confidential and proprietary information and is supplied to allow an evaluation of Let's Get Healthy's proposal to provide Health and Wellbeing services. Any content is provided on a license only basis and for such period as appropriate to determine whether the recipient will engage Let's Get Healthy Limited for such health and wellbeing services.

No part of this publication can be disclosed, transferred, reproduced, or transmitted in any form outside your organisation without written permission of Let's Get Healthy, an application for which should be addressed to the author.

Any queries concerning this document should be addressed to:

Maria Bourke
Managing Director
Let's Get Healthy Limited
Millennium House
49a High Street
Yarm
TS15 9BH

Copyright © 2022 Let's Get Healthy Limited

Sources

- (1) The Mental Health Foundation
- (2) Mind.org.uk



activate employee performance