



Mental Health Awareness

Please note, this is a sensitive topic that impacts many people. If you find that this has caused you any upset or distress, please stop and seek appropriate support or feel free to reach out to the Safeguarding team at safeguarding@qa.com



Anxiety

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense, or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Anxiety is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat. It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.

When does Anxiety become a mental health problem?

Anxiety can become a mental health problem if it impacts your ability to live your life as fully as you want to. For example, it may be a problem if:

- You avoid situations that might cause you to feel anxious
- Your worries feel very distressing or are hard to control
- You regularly experience symptoms of anxiety, which could include panic attacks
- You find it hard to go about your everyday life or do things you enjoy.

Self-care tips:

- Breathing exercises can help you cope and feel more in control. You can find some suggestions on our page on relaxation. The NHS also has some tips on breathing exercises for stress. - <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/selfhelp/guides-tools-and-activities/breathingexercises-for-stress/>
- Try to get enough sleep. Sleep can give you the energy to cope with difficult feelings and experiences. See our page on coping with sleep problems for more information.
- Think about your diet. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can make a difference to your mood and energy levels. See our page on food and mood for more information.
- Try to do some physical activity. Exercise can be really helpful for your mental wellbeing. See our pages on physical activity for more information.



Useful Contact info:

MIND Infoline: 0300 123 3393 - Email: info@mind.org.uk

Anxiety Care UK - Helps people with anxiety disorders. 03444 775 774 (helpline), 07537 416 905 (text)

No Panic – Helpline - 0300 7729844. nopanic.org.uk - Provides a helpline, step-by-step programs, and support for people with anxiety disorders.

Depression

What is Depression?

Depression is a low mood that lasts for a long time and affects your everyday life. In its mildest form, depression can mean just being in low spirits. It doesn't stop you leading your normal life but makes everything harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe, depression can be life-threatening because it can make you feel suicidal.

Symptoms of Depression?

There are many signs and symptoms of depression, but everyone's experience will vary.

How you might feel

- Down, upset, or tearful
- Restless, agitated, or irritable
- Guilty, worthless, and down on yourself

How you might behave

- Avoiding social events and activities you usually enjoy
- Self-harming or suicidal behaviour
- Difficulty speaking, thinking clearly, or making decisions

Self-care tips:

Experiencing depression can be very difficult, but there are steps you can take that might help.

- Keeping a mood diary can help you keep track of any changes in your mood, and you might find that you have more good days than you think. It can also help you notice if any activities, places, or people make you feel better or worse.
- Try new things. Trying something new, like starting a new hobby, learning something new or even trying new food, can help boost your mood and break unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaviour.
- Try to look after your hygiene. When you're experiencing depression, it's easy for hygiene to not feel like a priority. But small things, like taking a shower and getting fully dressed whether you're going out of the house, can make a big difference to how you feel.

Useful Contact info:

Depression UK - depressionuk.org - Depression self-help organisation made up of individuals and local groups.

Samaritans - 116 123 (freephone). Email - jo@samaritans.org

Sane - sane.org.uk - Offers emotional support and information for anyone affected by mental health problems.



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. When we experience stress, it can be as:

- An individual, for example when you have lots of responsibilities that you are struggling to manage
- Part of a group, for example if your family is going through a difficult time, such as bereavement or financial problems
- Part of your community, for example if you belong to a religious group that is experiencing discrimination
- A member of society, for example during natural disasters or events like the coronavirus pandemic

When is stress a problem?

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.

You might hear healthcare professionals refer to some types of stress as 'acute' or 'chronic':

- Acute stress happens within a few minutes to a few hours of an event. It lasts for a short period of time, usually less than a few weeks, and is very intense. It can happen after an upsetting or unexpected event. For example, this could be a sudden bereavement, assault, or natural disaster.
- Chronic stress lasts for a long period of time or keeps coming back. You might experience this if you are under lots of pressure a lot of the time. You might also feel chronic stress if your day-to-day life is difficult, for example if you are a carer or if you live in poverty.

Self-care tips:

Taking care of your wellbeing can help you feel more able to manage stress. Different things will work for different people, but these are some ideas you could try:

- Be kind to yourself. Learning to be kinder to yourself can help with how you feel in different situations. Try to take breaks in your day for things you enjoy. And reward yourself for your achievements, even if they seem small.
- Try to find time to relax. This might feel hard if you can't do anything to stop a situation that is making you stressed. But if you can allow yourself a short break, this can help with how you feel. See our pages on relaxation for some tips and exercises.

- Develop your interests and hobbies. Spending time on things you enjoy could help distract you from a stressful situation. If stress is making you feel lonely or isolated, shared hobbies can also be a good way to meet new people.
- Look after your physical health. Getting enough sleep, staying physically active and eating a balanced diet can make stress easier to manage. Stress can sometimes make these things difficult to look after. But even small changes can make a big difference. *For more information visit:*
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/managingstress-and-building-resilience/>

Useful Contact info:

Mind Infoline: - Provide information and support by phone.

- 0300 123 3393

Anxiety UK: - Advice and support for people living with anxiety. - 03444 775 774 (helpline) - anxietyuk.org.uk

Stress Management Society - Information about stress and tips on how to cope. - stress.org.uk





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