



# Mental health



## Introduction

For this topical info we will look at the area of Mental health. Everyone has mental health and so like physical health we can recognise the benefit of maintaining in good health. Not everyone will experience mental illness, however for some there may be times where our mental health turns into an illness or periods of struggling.

Mental health influences how we think and feel about ourselves, others and how we interpret events. It affects our capacity to learn, to communicate and to form, sustain and end relationships. It also influences our ability to cope with change, transition and life events. Accepting and understanding that mental health is nothing to be ashamed of is the first steps to moving in the right direction



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Please watch the above video. This will provide you will further awareness and context to this learning. Questions related to this can be found below in the attached MS Forms quiz. If watching this video has caused you to feel upset or distressed, please stop and seek appropriate support or feel free to reach out to the Safeguarding team at [safeguarding@qa.com](mailto:safeguarding@qa.com)

MYTH	FACT
Mental health problems are rare	1 in 4 adults in the UK suffer from ill mental health, whilst 1 in 10 children experience ill mental health.
People with poor mental health are not discriminated against because of their health problems	9 out of 10 people with mental health problems will experience stigma and discrimination
People with mental health problems are different from normal people	We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health
People with mental health problems don't want to talk about it, they want to be left alone	Although they may never ask for your help, people who suffer from mental health related issues often feel alone and isolated, therefore keeping in regular contact with them can make all the difference
People with mental illness are usually violent and unpredictable	People with a mental illness are more likely to be a victim of violence.

## What might it look like?

Someone struggling with their mental health may, though not always be:

- 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.

## Here & now

The following excerpts are from an article wrote by Nigel Owens, a world-renowned international rugby referee. Nigel has spoken up about his challenges with his mental health and is constantly empowering others to do the same.

*I've always been honest and open about my struggles with mental health and many people will be battling their own demons.*

*My story is well publicised but it really does hit home with people. It made me realise how important to speak about these issues, particularly during this time.*

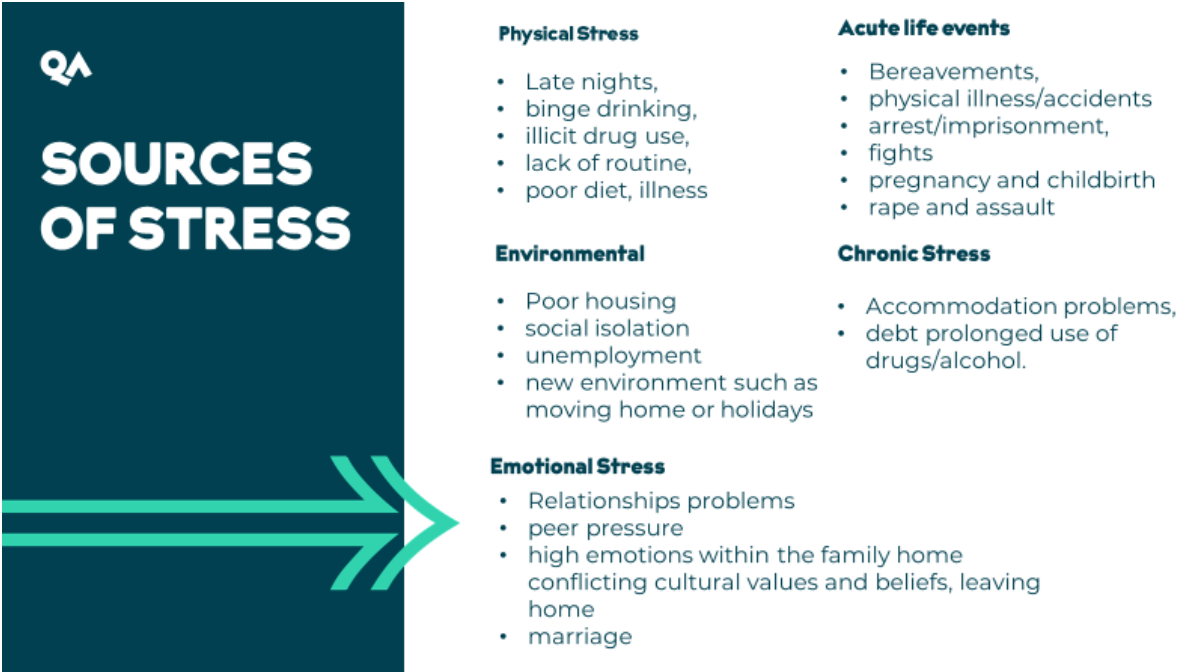
*What I have tried to do, and it's not easy because I'm still affected by my past experiences sometimes, but with things you're worried about and can't control, you have to try and forget them because you can't do anything about it. If you're worrying about something you can control then you can do something about it.*

To read the rest of the article, please follow the link.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/sport/rugby/nigel-owens-column-talking-mental-18322957>

## Coping with stress

In this section we will look at common sources for stress and how this can be managed by yourself. Initially it is possibly worthwhile spending some time on considering what are your sources of stress. Looking at the image below, take some time to consider if any of the following apply to yourself.

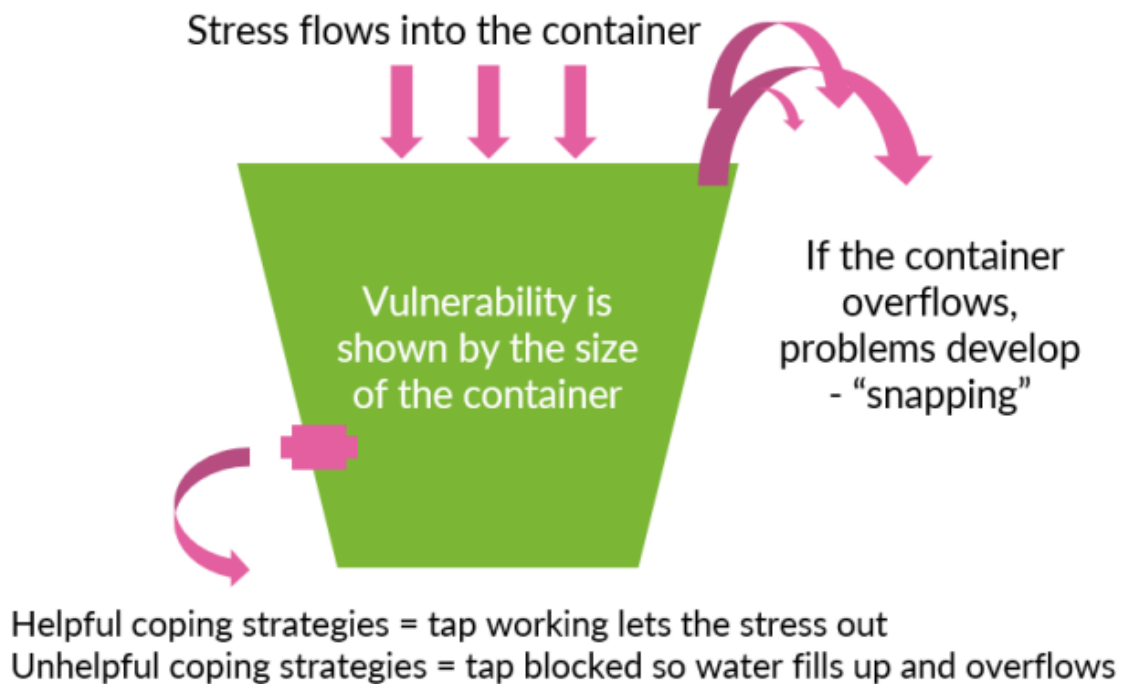


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# SOURCES OF STRESS

- Physical Stress**
  - Late nights,
  - binge drinking,
  - illicit drug use,
  - lack of routine,
  - poor diet, illness
- Environmental**
  - Poor housing
  - social isolation
  - unemployment
  - new environment such as moving home or holidays
- Emotional Stress**
  - Relationships problems
  - peer pressure
  - high emotions within the family home
  - conflicting cultural values and beliefs, leaving home
  - marriage
- Acute life events**
  - Bereavements,
  - physical illness/accidents
  - arrest/imprisonment,
  - fights
  - pregnancy and childbirth
  - rape and assault
- Chronic Stress**
  - Accommodation problems,
  - debt prolonged use of drugs/alcohol.

# What's in your Stress Container?



Do you have too much in your stress container? What can you do to overcome this?

## 1. Realise when it is causing you a problem

Try to make the connection between feeling tired or ill and the pressures you are faced with

Look out for physical warnings such as tense muscles, over-tiredness, headaches or migraines

## 2. Identify the causes

Try to identify the underlying causes

Sort the possible reasons for your stress into three categories 1) those with a practical solution 2) those that will get better given time and 3) those you can't do anything about

Try to release the worry of those in the second and third groups and let them go

### **3. Review your lifestyle**

Could you be taking on too much?

Are there things you are doing which could be handed over to someone else?

Can you do things in a more leisurely way?

To act on the answer to these questions, you may need to prioritise things you are trying to achieve and re-organise your life

This will help to release pressure that can come from trying to do everything at once

## **Hope & support**

Most recent figures available report that over 50 percent of people who complete IAPT treatment for anxiety or depression recovered from their condition. Statistics also tell us that Up to 90% of children and young people recover from depression within the first year

Establishing that you need support is the first step to managing your mental health and ensuring that you are well. Taking these first steps can be difficult and daunting, but you must remember that you are not alone, and you are worthy of support and recovery. There are several ways to begin accessing support depending on what you feel most comfortable with.

### **Family, Friends and Carers**

If you are experiencing mental health related issues it may help you to discuss how you are feeling with a trusted family member, a close friend or a carer. Aside from being able to listen they may be able to help you in terms of seeking further support and going through those options with you. Allowing the people around you to be aware of what you are going through enables them to support you in the day to day activities, they will also be able to motivate you and encourage you when you find this difficult to do on your own.

### **Speaking to your GP**

Speaking to your GP about your mental health may be the best place to start, they will be able to listen and assess you based on the information you provide. Your GP will also be able to refer you to secondary support if they feel this is something you would benefit from. Although speaking to a GP comes naturally when we are experiencing symptoms of ill physical health, people often overlook their mental health when discussing concerns with their GP. If you would like to contact your GP regarding your mental health you can book an appointment and have a conversation regarding your concerns and symptoms.

## **Trained Professionals (Counsellors & Therapists)**

If you feel that you would like to talk through your feelings and concerns without consulting your GP, you may find it beneficial to speak with trained professionals such as counsellors and therapists. There are many benefits to speaking with trained professionals, there will more detail on this in the Talking Therapies part of this document. If you would like to arrange this support privately you can access the Counselling Directory which has professionals who are accredited through the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

## **Charity Organisations**

Gaining support or advice regarding your mental health can be a daunting process, accessing this support in person can often add further pressure and stress to the individual. Throughout the United Kingdom we are fortunate to have national and local charity organisations that specialise in supporting those who are experiencing ill mental health:

- Anxiety UK - Charity providing information and support for people experiencing anxiety disorders. ·
- B-eat - Offers information on eating disorders and runs a supportive online community.
- CALM (Campaign against living miserably) - Provides listening services, information and support for men at risk of suicide.
- OCD-UK - A charity run by people with OCD who campaign and can help with local support group information
- Papyrus HOPEline - Provides information and support for anyone under 35 who is struggling with suicidal feelings and self-harm.
- Rethink Mental Illness - Charity providing information and support for people experiencing a mental health problem, including an online directory of local support services. ·
- Samaritans – 24 hour emotional support for anyone struggling to cope.
- SANE - Runs SANELine helpline offering practical information and support. Also runs an online a support community called Black Dog Tribe.