

WELLBEING

International Stress Awareness Week

2nd – 6th November 2020



New research from the Mental Health Foundation and collaborating universities has revealed that more than eight in ten adults have experienced stress because of the pandemic.

Celebrated in the first week of November, International Stress Awareness Week is an awareness event that aims to shine a light on stress and mental health problems, as well as raise awareness and promote support services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought uncertainty and challenges into our lives that we have never faced before. As a result, many of us will have experienced heightened levels of stress, which given the circumstances, is completely natural.

What is stress?

Stress is the body's natural response to pressure. This response can produce physical and emotional responses and can be caused by a host of different situations or life events. Even positive life changes such as a promotion, purchasing a new house, or the birth of a child can produce stress.

Symptoms of stress

Some of the most common symptoms of stress can be split into four areas: psychological, emotional, physical and behavioural. Symptoms of stress will often

accumulate until you are forced to take notice of them, such as; increased reliance on alcohol, smoking and caffeine, drug use, aggressive outbursts, dizziness or palpitations, panic attacks and nausea.

Reducing stress in COVID

At the time of writing, the physical and mental health impact of the coronavirus outbreak is still very much present in our daily lives. Here, we have listed a few suggestions on how to reduce any unwanted stress during these challenging times...

Get moving: Physical exercise can help relieve tension and relax your mind. Engaging in physical activity every day—whether it's a socially distanced walk or an online fitness class at home—will benefit your mind as well as your body.

Stay connected: We all enjoy the feeling of being connected with our loved ones. If possible, catching up with a friend or family member at a safe distance and discussing your feelings can ease your mind. Make sure that you keep up to date with the latest government guidelines in your area. If meeting in person is not possible, you can stay in touch by phone, video calls or social media.

Be kind to others: Supporting and helping others allows us to take a break from our hectic schedules. This can help us gain some perspective and better equip us to handle stressful situations. Also, carrying out acts of kindness will boost endorphins, resulting in you receiving a 'helpers high' - the uplifting feeling you feel after helping someone.

Self-care: When we feel stressed, the things that bring us happiness often get side-lined. Make sure that you schedule some time for you to relax and partake in your favourite hobbies, for instance, reading a good book, a countryside walk or an online pub quiz with your friends. As a result, if you feel stressed or overwhelmed, you have something to look forward to and help you shift to a more positive mindset.

Relax your mind: Mindfulness practises and breathing techniques can help you stop worrying about the future and allow you to focus on the present. There are a variety of wellbeing apps, online videos and tutorials that can help you deal with difficult emotions and relax your mind.

This International Stress Awareness Week, think about the role that stress plays in your life. If you feel that you experience stress regularly, spend some time researching ways that can help reduce your stress, such as the tips suggested in this guidance.

If you need to access our services to discuss any wellbeing concerns you may have, our [confidential helpline](#) is available 24/7, 365.

Alternatively, if you have access to the [My Healthy Advantage](#) app (iOS & Android), you can view a variety of wellbeing resources including articles, videos, mini health checks and 4-week programmes, all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing.

TOPICAL

Movember 2020



According to research from the Movember Foundation, 70% of men say their friends can rely on them for support, but only 48% say that they rely on their friends.

Hosted every year in November, Movember is an annual awareness event that asks men to abstain from shaving for a whole month to raise awareness of men's health issues—specifically prostate and testicular cancer, male mental health and suicide prevention.

Here, we have broken down the three key areas of men's health that Movember focuses on and the signs to look out for in either yourself or the men in your life...

1. Mental health & suicide prevention

Research carried out by the Movember Foundation charity has shown that 83% of men find it helpful to be asked if they are having a difficult time - but 46% said no one had done so during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Movember campaign encourages individuals across the globe to have conversations with the men in their lives who might be struggling with their mental health.

Spotting the signs: Suicidal behaviours

can vary from person to person. While a very difficult task, the most effective method of suicide prevention is to recognise these warning signs and know the appropriate responses. Behavioural signs include the individual talking about death or suicide, saying that they are a burden, losing interest in their favourite activities, giving away possessions and saying goodbye to family and friends.

2. Prostate cancer

Prostate cancer occurs when some of the cells in the prostate reproduce far more rapidly than normal, resulting in a tumour. In the UK, a man dies from prostate cancer every 45 minutes, while in Ireland, prostate cancer accounts for 23% of all new cancers in men.

Spotting the signs: Symptoms of prostate cancer do not usually appear until the prostate is large enough to affect the tube that carries urine from the bladder. These symptoms include needing to urinate more often, straining whilst you urinate, feeling that your bladder has not fully emptied.

3. Testicular cancer

Testicular cancer is considered as a relatively rare type of cancer, however it's still the most common cancer in young men aged between 15 and 34.

Spotting the signs: Testicular cancer is one of the most treatable types of cancer and over 90% of cases can be cured during its early stages, but it must be treated quickly. Signs to look out for

include painless swelling or lump in one of the testicles and a change in shape or texture of the testicles.

How can I get involved?

Moustaches in Movember: Help raise awareness for men's health by growing your moustache for November. You can raise funds by getting yourself sponsored by your friends, family and colleagues.

Take the MOVE challenge: MOVE is a 30-day physical fitness challenge organised by the Movember Foundation. It encourages people to run or walk 60km—for the 60 men we lose to suicide each hour, every hour across the world—over the course of November. Sign up [here!](#)

Host a Mo-ment: Host a group fundraising event in your community to gather funds for life-changing research to help stop men from dying prematurely. For example, a virtual 'shave down' party - a group shave-off of facial hair at the beginning or end of November.

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LEGAL

Carers rights and support available



A carer refers to any person that is providing a family member or friend support with daily activities such as washing and food preparation.

This may be due to a physical impairment, or mental health concern. Being a carer for another person can be extremely stressful, especially whilst balancing other life challenges such as maintaining school, college, or work expectations.

Carers Assessment

A carer's assessment is provided by local authorities to identify any current, ongoing, or future support a carer may need. Part 1, section 10 of The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to complete the assessment for any adult caring for another adult family member or friend. The assessment aims to understand how providing care has, is or will affect your wellbeing, physical health, mental health, and work abilities.

Applications can be made through your local social services who will contact you to arrange an appointment. The local authority will use the assessment to identify if there are any temporary or long-term support that they can provide to help alleviate any stress or pressure you may be feeling. These can include offering temporary or long-term respite, financial advice, and access to local support groups.

Young carers

A person is a young carer if they are providing daily support for a family member or friend and they are under the age of 18. The care and support

(Children's carer's) Regulations 2015 gives rights to young carers and their families to access support through their local authority. Young carers can access this support through their local social services department within the council. It is vital that young carers support demands do not have a detrimental effect on their emotional, psychological, and physical needs.

Support from College or School

A young carer will be attending an educational institute whilst providing support at home which can cause increased stress if they are not aware of the situation. Reaching out to a trusted teacher can allow you to access any support that may be available. This can include a safe space to talk, extra time to complete tasks or accessing young carers groups.

Further Support and Financial Advice

As a carer, you may be entitled to access various benefits and allowances available through the local government. These can include Carers Credit which is available for any person caring for another for 20 hours or more or Carers allowance. More information about benefits entitlement can be found through Turn2us who offer free benefits advice. You can visit their [webpage](#) or contact them on 0808 802 2000.

Additional information about the support that may be available be ascertained through Carers Direct who offer free advice on their helpline 0300 123 1053.

Scotland

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 aims to provide more consistent and long term sustainable support for carers and young carers by making Adult Carer

Support Plans accessible through the local council. These plans assess the ongoing support needs of the carer, assist with the creation of emergency plans, and can arrange respite from regular caring. More information about support available can be accessed through the [Care Information Services](#) on 0800 011 3200.

Northern Ireland

The Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 gives carers the right have their needs assessed by Health and Social Services through an 'assessment of needs'. This should identify any relevant services available, support needed and any potential risks if support is not provided. More information about this assessment can be accessed through [indirect](#).

Republic of Ireland

The Health Service Executive (HSE) recognises the importance of providing support for both adult and young carers and have created accessible resources for support in your local area. You can access respite services, medical equipment, or caring aids through your Local Health Office. More information about accessing these services can be found through the HSE [webpage](#).

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