

STRESS DOWN DAY

During July Lifeline holds 'Stress Down Day'. Lifeline encourages people to participate in stress reducing fun activities. Sometimes stress can become such a normal part of life that we forget that doing something silly or spontaneous can have such a positive impact on our mental health.

These types of events offer a great opportunity to do a stress self-check and decide what can be done if we are feeling the strain.



What is stress?

Stress tends to manifest from life events that we perceive as negative or challenging – either those that occur suddenly or from general worries and pressures that slowly build up over time. When you're stressed, you can feel pressured or overwhelmed, as if you do not have the resources to meet the demands.

Feeling stressed can also begin due to other factors you might not consider, such as an illness, pain, change in diet or ongoing lack of sleep. We can also experience stress when we go through positive experiences such as moving into our newly built house, starting a new job or planning a long holiday we've been looking forward to. Any major change to our routines might induce some feelings of stress.

What to do if you are feeling stressed

1. Exercise

Take 5 or 10 minutes every day to be physically active. Take a walk in the sunshine with a friend. Make sure you take all your designated breaks and have some time away from your job to relax and unwind.

2. Socialise

Spend time socialising with your colleagues and friends inside and outside of work.

3. Organise

Write a to-do-list and break your tasks up into smaller sections.

4. Communicate

Have a talk with your direct manager about any concerns. This can lead to a better working relationship. If you feel like you can't speak to anyone at work, talk to your friends, family or a professional such as a counsellor. Sometimes voicing our concerns can make us feel better and more able to find a solution.

5. Health

Make healthy food choices. Eating regularly and healthy meals help keep your energy and focus up and can help you get through a stressful work day.



Here are some tips from our staff on how they manage their stress levels.

- “My tip for managing stress would be breathing 4 x 4, in and out, and changing my self-talk to, I have got this.”
- “I get productive by actively problem solving around the stress and the causes.”
- “I have a hot bath with candles and bubbles and watch ‘rubbish’ TV on my iPad!”
- “I take a slow walk with my dogs and just watch them play and sniff.”
- “I drive the long way home.”
- “I listen to podcasts and Ted talks about anything but stress.”
- “I write lists, lots of lists! It helps to get everything out of my head, then I take great pleasure in crossing it off.”
- “I make sure I go to yoga and also meditate.”
- “I focus on breathing more slowly, releasing tension in my body.”
- “I have a playlist of my favourite music on Spotify and I listen to that.”
- “I delegate. This is because my stress is often caused by taking on too much.”
- “I tidy up. An uncluttered physical space helps me keep my head clear of stress.”

How management can help reduce job stress

- Make sure you celebrate your team’s achievements when they perform well. Too often we only hear something when things go wrong, rather than when they go right and we are performing our job well. This helps lift team morale and leaves us feeling positive. Having a positive culture helps improve our mental wellbeing.
- Ensure everyone is adequately trained and has the appropriate skills and tools to be able to carry out their job. Clear communication is the key to ensuring there is no confusion over job roles or tasks.
- Involve your employees in decisions that will affect them and listen to their opinion. This encourages a closer bond of cooperation and trust between management and the general workforce.
- Make sure mental health resources are available to employees. This can be as simple as providing leaflets or information pages from organisations like Act-Belong-Commit or Beyond Blue on how to stay mentally healthy. Providing access to counselling can also be extremely beneficial, giving employees a chance to have their concerns heard in a confidential and non-judgmental environment.