

Toolbox Talk: Stress Awareness Week

STRESS: Why we're talking about this??

This week is **Stress Awareness Week**, (3rd to 7th November 2025) and is a reminder that stress affects everyone at some point — at work, at home, or both. Managing stress is essential for our health, safety, and wellbeing.

Unmanaged stress can lead to **fatigue, poor concentration, mistakes**, and even **accidents**. Recognising and addressing stress early helps keep us all safe and productive.

In 2023/24, 776,000 workers reported stress, depression or anxiety, accounting for nearly half of all self-reported work-related ill health and contributing to **16.4 million** working days lost. (Source: HSE)

What is Stress?

Stress is our body's response to pressure or challenges.

A small amount can be motivating — but too much, for too long, becomes harmful.

Common causes include:

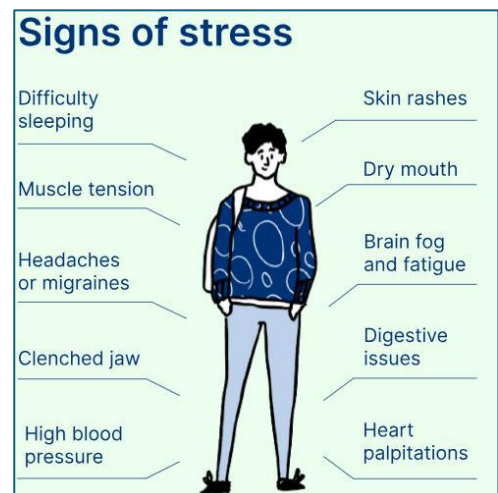
- High workload or tight deadlines
- Long hours or shift work
- Conflict or poor communication
- Personal or financial worries
- Unclear job roles or expectations



Signs of Stress

Be alert to the signs in yourself and others:

- Feeling irritable, anxious, or withdrawn
- Struggling to concentrate or make decisions
- Trouble sleeping or feeling constantly tired
- Headaches, stomach issues, or muscle tension
- Increased use of caffeine, alcohol, or smoking



If you notice these symptoms in yourself or a colleague, it's time to act.

Managing Stress

Here are some simple ways to reduce and manage stress:

✔ At Work:

- **Prioritise tasks** – focus on what’s most important first
- **Take breaks** – step away, breathe, and reset
- **Talk early** – if workload feels unmanageable, speak with your line manager
- **Support each other** – look out for colleagues showing signs of stress
- **Use available support** – Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), wellbeing champions, HR, or occupational health

✔ Outside Work:

- **Exercise and stay active** – even a short walk helps
 - **Eat and sleep well** – maintain good routines
 - **Stay connected** – talk to friends, family, or someone you trust
 - **Do something you enjoy** – hobbies, relaxation, or mindfulness
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Remember

Stress isn’t a sign of **weakness** — it’s a sign you’ve been **strong** for too long.

Speaking up and seeking support early is the best way to protect your health and safety.

Discussion Points

Have a chat with colleagues, friends or family, maybe over a coffee or beer and talk about stress

- What are some common stress triggers in our work environment?
 - How can we support each other better?
 - Who can you speak to if you’re feeling stressed?
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Takeaway Message

We can’t always remove stress, but we *can* manage it.
Let’s make time this week — *and every week* — to check in with ourselves and each other.

Your well-being matters.