

The background of the page is a warm, blurred photograph of two people sitting at a wooden table. In the foreground, a red coffee cup and a blue coffee cup are visible on their respective saucers. The overall atmosphere is calm and supportive.

# **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GUIDE**

## Let's talk about mental health

Mental health concerns each and every one of us. We all have times when we might feel down or stressed out but most of the time, those feelings pass harmlessly. In some cases, those feelings can develop into serious problems, negatively influencing the way we think, interact with others, or view the world around us.

Most people experience stress and anxiety during their lives and this is completely normal. Many things can lower our moods and make us feel depressed, such as relationship issues, bereavement, stress or illness. Sometimes we can just feel down or anxious with no real reason for feeling that way.

### The symptoms

There are differences between having a low mood and having a mental health problem. Typical symptoms of a low mood can include sadness, feeling anxious, worry, tiredness, low self-esteem, frustration and anger.

Low moods will tend to improve over time, normally following changes to lifestyle or getting more sleep. If a low mood persists, it could be a sign of depression. Symptoms of depression can include continuous low mood or sadness, feeling hopeless or helpless, having low self-esteem, feeling tearful or guilt-ridden, feeling irritable and intolerant, low motivation, difficulty in making decisions, not getting enjoyment out of life, having suicidal thoughts, having thoughts of harming yourself and feeling anxious or worried.

If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms on a persistent basis for a period of two weeks, you should consider approaching your GP.

### Work/life balance

Working can have a positive impact on your mental wellbeing. However, work-related stress accounts for approximately 11.7 million working days lost each year. Symptoms of work-related stress can include palpitations, a dry mouth, odd aches and pains, a loss of appetite, anxious or negative thoughts, being more emotional than normal and having a disturbed sleeping pattern. If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, you should look for help and ways of reducing stress before the problem gets worse.

### Staying mentally well

According to the mental health charity MIND, you have good mental wellbeing (or good mental health), if you are able to:

- Feel relatively confident in yourself and judge yourself on realistic and reasonable standards
- Feel and express a range of emotions
- Feel engaged with the world around you, build and maintain positive relationships with others and feel you can contribute to the community you live in
- Live and work productively
- Cope with the stresses of daily life and manage times of change and uncertainty

If you aren't able to do one or more of the above, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have a mental health problem. Try some of the steps detailed opposite, or speak to somebody about how you feel.

## How can you help yourself?

There are many ways to prevent and combat stress, the key to good stress management is building emotional strength, being in control of your situation, having a good social network and adopting a positive outlook. Below are five tips that may help:

1. **Exercise.** This will reduce some of the emotional intensity, clear your thoughts and help you deal with any problems calmly. Set yourself a challenge that you think you can achieve and go for it! Setting yourself goals and challenges, such as learning a new language or a new sport, helps to build confidence.
2. **Connect with people.** The activities we do with friends and family help us relax. Talking with someone you trust can also help you see things in a different, perhaps more positive light. Talk to someone close to you about how you feel. Even if they can't offer any practical advice, sometimes just talking about your feelings can help you to feel better.
3. **Avoid unhealthy habits.** Do not rely on alcohol, smoking or caffeine to solve your problems. These will not help and can only create new problems for you to deal with. Make sure you're getting enough sleep. Eat healthily and avoid bad habits such as smoking and drinking alcohol. Stay physically active and do some exercise.
4. **Help other people.** Volunteering can give an enormous sense of self satisfaction. If working with others in a worse situation than our own, this can help put your problems in perspective. Doing things for other people, such as a relative or a charity, can make you feel good and have a positive impact on your mental well-being.
5. **Accept what you cannot change.** Changing a difficult situation isn't always possible. Try to concentrate on what you do have control over and focus on this. Whether it's cooking, going to the cinema, or being creative, making time to do the things you enjoy helps you to deal with negative feelings in a positive way.

## Getting Help

Sometimes, we simply can't deal with stress or mental illness on our own. The best thing you can do is to get help in this situation. On the back page are some website links and contact details for services that can help you.

## Do you need urgent help now?

If you've had thoughts of self-harming or are feeling suicidal, contact someone immediately such as your GP, a friend, a relative or someone you can trust.

If you don't need urgent medical help, try calling one of the following help lines, which can offer advice and support for people struggling with mental health:

### Samaritans

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Call free 116 123  
(24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

**SAMARITANS**

### Mind

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Call 0300 123 3393  
(Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm,  
except for bank holidays)

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)



## What can Ellacotts do to help?



### **Croner Taxwise**

Ellacotts is a member of Croner Taxwise and as such the whole practice gains exclusive access to their EAP programme which provides advice and support on health and wellbeing for employees. The HR support helpline is **0844 892 2807** or visit the website: <https://www.cronertaxwise.com/hr-support/employee-assistance-programme/>

The advice and support service provides you with access to a 24/7 confidential helpline where calls are answered by a qualified and experienced BACP registered counsellor who can offer help and support in a non-judgemental manner on a range of issues such as mental health issues, emotional support, family issues, trauma, relationship issues, stress-related conditions, financial & debt support, drugs & alcohol, bereavement and stress.



### **For those covered by our Private Medical Insurance with Healthshield**

Mywellness provides you with online tools and information to help you proactively manage your health and wellbeing. Included are services such as a virtual GP surgery, private prescriptions, 24/7 counselling and support helpline, physio triage helpline, home assistance cover, online health assessments and cancer screening. Simply log on at: [www.healthshield.co.uk/members](http://www.healthshield.co.uk/members).

A 24/7 Counselling and Support Helpline is available offering practical information and emotional support for issues such as: family issues, bereavement, trauma, relationship issues, stress-related issues, personal legal information, tax information, medical information, money management, alcohol/drugs and debt support. If you want to speak to a qualified counsellor or legal advisor, please call **0800 028 1963** and quote Ellacotts.



### **For all ICAEW members**

You have a 24 hour helpline through [www.caba.org.uk](http://www.caba.org.uk) which includes Emotional Support as well as wellbeing and debt advice.

### **Useful Websites**

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) - Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems and learning disabilities.

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) - Support and advice for people living with mental illness.

[www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk) - Charity offering support and carrying out research into mental illness.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression) - The National Health Service website, offering help and support on mental health issues.