

Mental Health Awareness Week

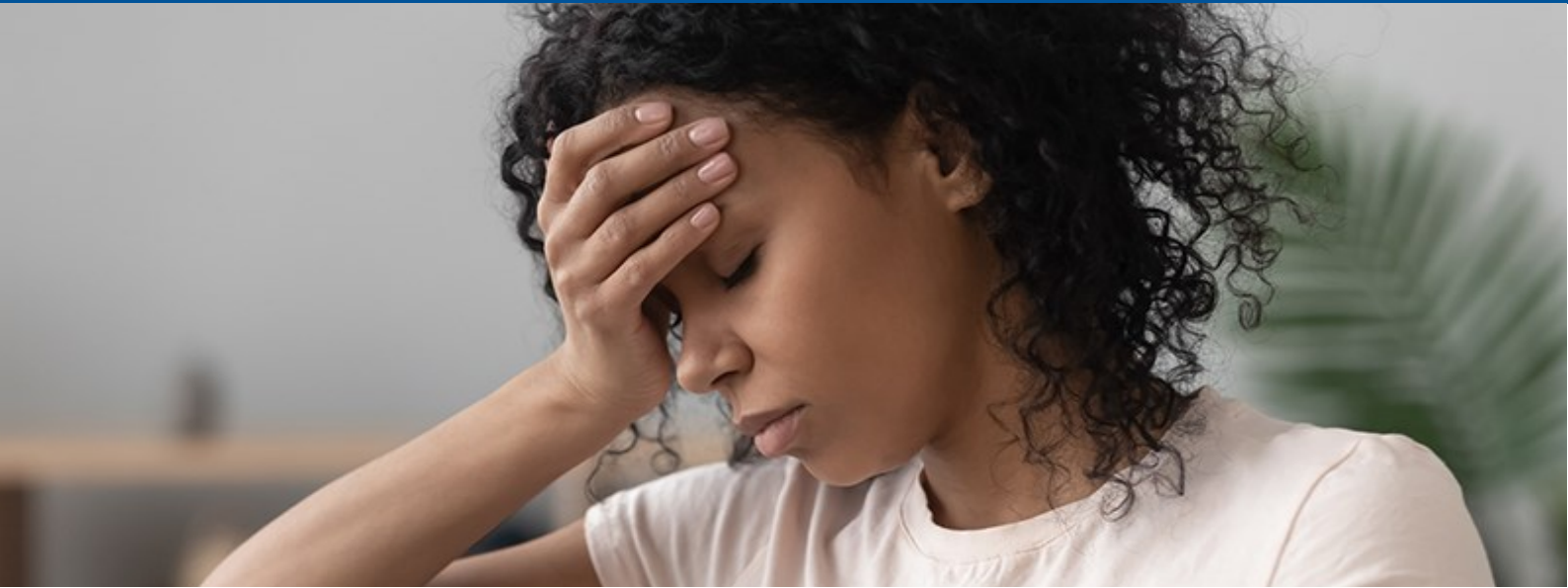
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NJC Newsletter

Mental Health & Wellbeing

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What is Stress?

Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives.

How can Stress Impact our Lives?

A little bit of stress is good and can help us perform daily activities. Too much stress can cause physical and mental health problems. Learning how to cope with stress can help us feel less overwhelmed and support our mental and physical wellbeing.

Stress is something that affects all of us at some point in our lives. Whether it is work related, personal, or financial, stress can take a toll on our health. With the ongoing cost of living crisis and the various challenges that we face on a daily basis, it is more important than ever to take care of our wellbeing and manage stress effectively.

Signs of Stress

Stress can manifest itself in many different ways, and the signs of stress can vary from person to person. However, here are some common signs to look out for:

- Increased irritability or mood swings
- Trouble sleeping or insomnia
- Lack of energy or motivation
- Headaches or muscle tension
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- Feeling overwhelmed or anxious
- Finding it hard to relax

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is important to take a step back and assess your stress levels. Most of us manage stress well and continue to function. If we have difficulties coping with stress, we should seek help from a trusted health-care provider or from another trusted person in the community. This newsletter will provide you guidance and tips to help with stress, anxiety and other mental health problems.

Why do men not talk about mental health?

The Mental Health Foundation states society's expectations and traditional gender roles play a role in why men are less likely to discuss or seek help for their mental health problems. Men are often expected to be the breadwinners and to be strong, dominant and in control. While these aren't inherently bad things, they can make it harder for men to reach out for help and open up.

Some research also suggests men may be less able to recognise symptoms of mental health problems in themselves and therefore less likely to reach out for support. In addition, they may also be more likely to use potentially harmful coping methods such as drugs or alcohol and less likely to talk to family or friends about their mental health.

Suicide and men

- In 2017, nearly 6000 suicides were recorded in Great Britain
- 75% were men
- Suicide is the largest cause of death for men under 50
- Higher rates of suicide are also found in minority communities, including gay men, war veterans, men from BAME backgrounds, and those with low incomes

What can you do if you are worried about your mental health?

Making simple changes such as talking about your feelings, keeping active and eating well can you feel better. If you are concerned about your mental health, talk to your GP. It can be daunting, but most people find that speaking to their GP and getting help and support can make a big difference in their lives.

If you are in distress and need immediate help or are feeling like ending your life, please call 999 or go to A&E and ask for the contact of the nearest crisis team. These are teams of mental health care professionals who work with people in severe distress.



Anxiety Management

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety can affect both your body and mind. It is normal to feel anxious sometimes and it is not always a bad thing as it is how we respond to feeling threatened, under pressure or stressed and can motivate us to solve problems or make us aware to risks. However, anxiety is a problem if it starts to affect your life and makes you feel like it is out of proportion to the situation, or if it feels ongoing or hard to control. This could be a sign of mental health problem. Help is available in many forms to assist you with different severities of anxiety.

Symptoms on your mind include:

- A feeling of dread or fearing the worst
- Feeling on edge or panicky
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Feeling detached

It can also affect your behaviour.

Symptoms on your body include:

- Restlessness
- Feeling dizzy or light headed
- Wobbly legs or pins and needles in your hands and feet
- Shortness of breath and hyperventilating
- Heart palpitations
- Nausea
- Needing the toilet more or less often
- Sweating
- Sleep problems
- Panic attacks
- A feeling in your chest or another part of your body

If you recognise any of these symptoms and believe you are struggling with anxiety, please continue reading for further guidance on self-help tips and how to get medical support.



Cost of Living Crisis



Money and Mental Health

Cost of Living Crisis

The cost of living has been rising a lot lately which has affected people's mental health. Certain situations might trigger feelings of anxiety and panic, like opening bills or attending a benefits assessment. You may find worrying about money can lead to sleep problems or can make you feel lonely and isolated, which can affect your social life, as you may feel you can't afford to do the things you want to do. You also might not be able to afford the things you need to stay well such as housing, food, water, heating, or treatments like medication and therapy.

This means you may have negative feelings associated with money. This could be:

- You might feel **guilty** for spending money, even if you know you can afford it.
- You might be **afraid** of looking at your bank balance or speaking to the bank.
- You might feel **ashamed** for needing support.
- You might feel **stressed**, if you're under a lot of pressure to support yourself and others.
- You might feel **tired** or worn down, if you've been struggling with money problems.

How NJC can help with your financial problems.

NJC have a Financial Wellbeing guide that provides guidance on: Financial Literacy, Food and budget, Debt and Talking to your family and friends for help.

NJC also has the NJC hardship fund scheme. This Scheme is designed to help our NJC employees with the current cost-of-living crisis. This scheme gifts £100 of ASDA vouchers to support staff with daily living costs. You do not need to pay the company back.

If you would like a copy of the Financial Wellbeing Guide, wish to apply for ASDA vouchers, or are concerned about yours or a colleagues financial wellbeing, please contact Human Resources.



Mental Health

Management



Practice self-care

Self-care is crucial for our mental and physical health. Take some time to pamper yourself, whether it is by taking a relaxing bath, reading a book, or some meditation. Make sure to prioritise your self-care routine and do something that makes you happy and you enjoy.

Exercise

Exercise is a great way to reduce stress levels and improve your overall health. Even if you're not a fitness enthusiast, incorporating some form of physical activity into your daily routine can make a big difference. Try going for a walk, jog, a yoga class, or even dancing to your favourite music.

Get enough sleep

Getting enough sleep is essential so make sure to prioritise your sleep and create a bedtime routine that works for you. Avoid using electronic devices before bed, and try to create a relaxing environment to help you fall asleep faster.

Connect with others

Connecting with others is an excellent way to reduce stress levels and improve your mood. Whether it is through a phone call, video call, or social media, make sure to stay connected with your loved ones. Talking to someone you trust about your feelings and concerns can help you feel better and more supported.

Help and support

If you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed, it is okay to seek professional help. A GP, therapist or counsellor can help you manage your stress levels and develop healthy coping mechanisms.



Boosting our Wellbeing

Nature and Wellbeing

Interacting with nature is not only an enjoyable experience, but also beneficial to our mental health and wellbeing, aspects of our health that are particularly important to look after. No matter where we live, we can find nature wherever we are, from forests and rivers, to parks and gardens, to window boxes or even house plants.

Multiple studies have shown that access to a green space has a positive impact on our mental health by improving mood, lowering mental health problems, increasing life satisfaction, reducing stress and allowing physical activity leading to better physical health.



Relaxation and Mindfulness

Taking time to reflect on our natural surroundings can be positive for mental health and wellbeing. Practicing mindfulness, which is a way of directing non-judgemental awareness towards our thoughts, feeling, environment and body, has been found to reduce stress.

Staying Active

Spending time outside doing physical activity seems to enhance our mood when done in a natural environment, rather than indoors, leading to a reduction in fatigue, anger, and sadness.

Interacting with Wildlife

Wildlife can also have a positive impact on our wellbeing. Observing and interacting with wildlife in their natural habitat, such as watching birds in the garden, can improve our wellbeing by making us feel relaxed and connected to nature.

Sunshine

Natural sunlight can also reduce symptoms of SAD, seasonal affective disorder, and helps boost endorphins, which will improve our overall state of wellbeing.

Exercise



Improving Mental Health



Exercise and Mental Health

Exercise can have a positive impact on our mental health. Individuals suffering from mental health problems are advised to try being physically active, which means moving our bodies more. This does not mean you need to sign up for the next marathon! It simply means, getting involved in an activity which gets you active.

Activity Ideas

- Running, jogging or walking
- Swimming
- Going to the gym
- Dancing
- Yoga or stretching, etc

How can physical activity help mental health?

Research has shown physical activity can improve:

- Sleeping—as you feel more tired at the end of the day from burning energy
- Moods—as it can release feel good hormones that make you feel better in yourself and give you more energy
- Stress and anxiety—as doing some physical releases cortisol which helps us manage stress, and focusses the brain on something which can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.

Anything but exercise!

If exercise is really not for you, a small walk is still advised to get you in touch with nature and your surroundings, but otherwise why not try baking, listening to music, socialising with friends, colouring, painting or another activity to support your mental health. Try and pick something that you enjoy!

Raising Awareness



How to show your support

Mental Health Foundation and NJC

Please donate to our NJC Mental Health Awareness page to raise money for the Mental Health Foundation, one of our selected ESG charities since 2017, to champion 'good mental health for all' at: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/njc-limited-1683733419430>

Alternatively, go to our LinkedIn to access the donation page. All proceeds fund the Mental Health Foundations' life changing work as a UK charity dedicated to mental health.

You are more than welcome to organise your own event to raise money for charity, or to raise awareness. If you organise a fundraising event for the Mental Health Foundation, please direct donators to our NJC just giving page.

NJC is supporting the green ribbon, an international symbol for mental health awareness. Wearing a green ribbon pin raises awareness on the subject and demonstrates your support to the cause. You can obtain a pin at our NJC Head Office and by donating to our just giving page.



You can also purchase green ribbons on the Mental Health Foundation website.

Another way to show your support is to wear an item of green clothing on Monday 15 April 2023 and donating £2 to the Mental Health Foundation through our giving page.

If you are required to still wear your uniform on site, please discuss this with your manager and see what other creative ways you can show your support.

Thank you for your involvement!

NJC's EAP

Employee Assistance Programme



What is it?

An employee assistance helpline that provides **free confidential** counselling and legal information, that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to NJC employees.

How can professional counsellors support you?

The counsellor can help with a wide range of problems at any time of the day or night. The counsellor will ensure that you have the time to talk through your concerns and feelings, helping you to clarify the practical and emotional issues and providing information when appropriate.

You can also receive guidance about issues concerning the law which may be causing you distress, personal matters such as:

- Domestic problems
- Personal injury claims
- Motor related disputes
- Property worries
- Consumer rights
- Employment matters

Employees are also entitled to 6 free face to face counselling sessions per topic.

If you are struggling with your mental health, talking really makes a difference.

NJC and you...

NJC cares about your wellbeing and the EAP has been implemented to support our employees through difficult times.

Please call NJC Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): **0333 400 0545**

Quote: Not Just Cleaning or 77148 , or go to njc.hapi.benefits.com

If an employee would like help arranging the EAP, speak to your manager who can organise this with HR. Managers can refer an employee to the EAP if they are concerned about an employee and gain consent from the employee for HR to raise the referral. HR will not require the context of the referral.

We strongly reiterate that this is a **confidential** service, NJC will not know the contents of your calls if you want to be referred by HR. If you call the above telephone line yourself, NJC will not be provided any information on who has used this service or why.





Wellbeing is high on the agenda at NJC and is a key part of our sustainability strategy. This not only includes vital steps to protect our workforce, but valuable solutions for customers to support their ESG wellbeing commitments.

Supporting our customers and others with wellbeing is fundamental. A great example of this is our detailed WELL policy. This means being able to meet the WELL standard for our customers in terms of cleaning practices.

We also support local communities through our social values to promote good mental health for all, and continue to fundraise for the Mental Health Foundation, one of our valued ESG charities since 2017.

NJC is nothing without our employees. Employees are at the heart of the NJC DNA and are imperative to the success of the business. It is imperative that all employees come to work healthy and happy.

We challenge those reading to share and discuss the contents of this NJC newsletter with friends, family and colleagues to continue to raise awareness on mental health. We hope this newsletter will help people both internally and externally with their mental health and wellbeing.

