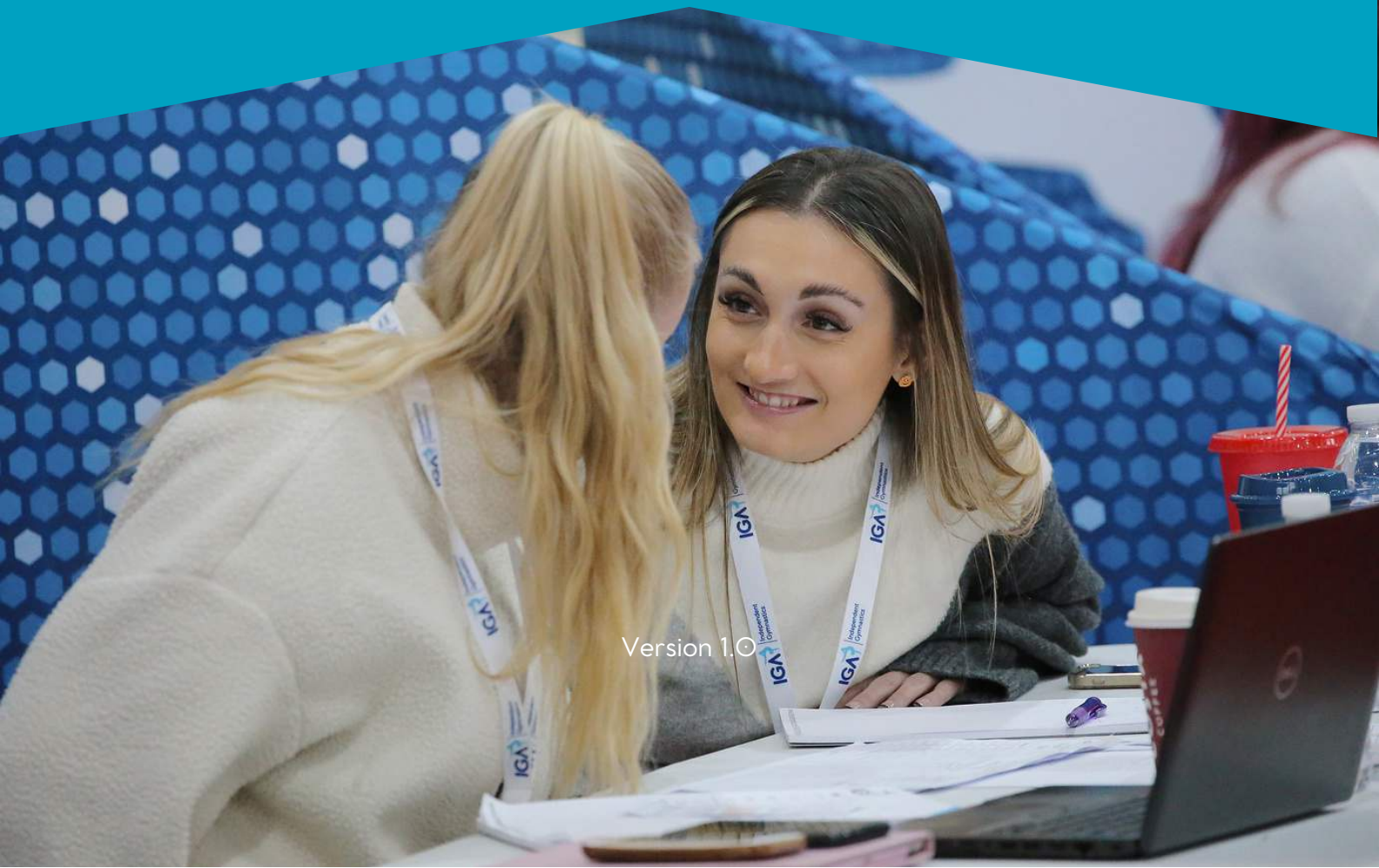




MANAGING STRESS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE



Version 1.0



Introduction

Stress is a part of life that everyone experiences. While the pressure of a busy workload can sometimes motivate us to get things done, there are times when stress can build up to a point where it feels overwhelming and paralyzing.

This guide offers practical tips for managing stress, which you can use for yourself and share with those you manage. You can also use these strategies to support colleagues who may be struggling. Creating a mentally healthy workplace is a shared responsibility. By taking care of your colleagues and yourself, we all contribute to a supportive and resilient work environment.

Building and maintaining a mentally healthy workplace is everyone's responsibility. By fostering open communication, encouraging self-care, and providing support when needed, you help create a resilient work culture where individuals thrive. Taking the time to look after your own mental health and the well-being of your colleagues will lead to a more productive, engaged, and supportive team. Remember, a healthy workplace starts with each of us—taking care of ourselves and one another.

Remember, a healthy workplace starts with each of us—taking care of ourselves and one another. By cultivating a supportive, open, and resilient work culture, we can ensure that stress is managed effectively and that everyone has the tools and resources they need to thrive both personally and professionally.



1

Starting a New Job

Tips for Employees

Starting a new role is a great opportunity to reflect on how you physically or emotionally respond to stress. Pay attention to the signs that indicate you're feeling stressed—this awareness can help you manage stress more effectively and reduce its impact early on. If possible, consider having a conversation with your manager about potential stress triggers and how you both can stay mindful of them. One key strategy in a new role is to avoid falling into unhealthy habits, such as working late to make a good impression. Setting clear boundaries from the start can help prevent burnout and create a healthier work-life balance.

Starting a new job can be both exciting and challenging, and it's normal to experience stress as you settle into a new role. It's important to recognise how stress manifests in your body and mind, so you can address it early on. By being proactive about understanding your stress triggers and seeking support when needed, you can manage stress more effectively and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Set clear boundaries, practice self-care, and don't hesitate to reach out to colleagues or your manager if you need guidance.

Taking care of your mental and physical wellbeing from the start will help you adjust more smoothly and build resilience as you grow in your new role. Remember, taking small steps to manage your stress not only benefits your own health but also enables you to perform at your best in the workplace.

Tips for Managers

During your induction meetings with new staff, it's essential to take the opportunity to highlight the physical and mental wellbeing support that you offer. By addressing this early on, you're setting the tone for a culture that prioritises employee well-being.

Make sure to inform your new team members about any resources available to them, such as counselling services, mental health workshops, or support groups. If your organisation has an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), be sure to share details about how it works, what services it provides, and how employees can access it confidentially.



2

Increasing Resilience

Tips for Employees

Resilience is the ability to bounce back quickly from setbacks. What is your tipping point? When stress starts to build up, it's important not to neglect the things you do to look after yourself. One effective strategy is to practice the 4 D's when you're feeling overwhelmed: Ditch, Defer, Delegate, and Do.

- Ditch tasks that aren't essential.
- Defer things that can be postponed.
- Delegate tasks that others can take on.
- Do the tasks that must be done now.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, try this exercise with a colleague or your manager to help you prioritise and manage your workload more effectively.

Tips for Managers

Encourage your team to prioritise their own wellbeing and take proactive steps to manage stress. One helpful tool to introduce is the "Stress Bucket." This exercise allows individuals to reflect on their personal stress thresholds and understand how they can prevent stress from building up.

By discussing the "Stress Bucket," you can guide your team in recognising their own limits and taking action to build resilience before stress becomes overwhelming. Encourage open conversations about how to manage stress and remind them of the importance of regular self-care. You can find more information on the "Stress Bucket" on GymMinds.

Building resilience is key to managing stress, especially in a busy or challenging work environment. By practising the 4 D's—Ditch, Defer, Delegate, and Do—you can better prioritise your tasks and avoid becoming overwhelmed. It's essential to recognise when stress is building up and take proactive steps to manage it, ensuring you maintain your wellbeing. Don't be afraid to ask for support from a colleague or manager if needed. Remember, looking after yourself is a vital part of being able to perform your best at work.



3

Creating a Positive Workplace Culture

Tips for Employees

Encourage yourself and your colleagues to spend time outdoors. Suggest taking lunch breaks outside, going for a walk, or even holding some meetings outside the office. These simple activities can help refresh your mind, offer a new perspective on tasks, and improve your overall sense of well-being.

Tips for Managers

Look out for the wellbeing of your team. Everyone plays a role in fostering a supportive and mentally healthy workplace, and leadership has a significant impact. Encourage senior managers and board members to actively promote the importance of mental health. For inspiration, explore the personal stories shared by Rethink Mental Illness and Mind at time-to-change.org.uk/personal-stories.

Whether you're an employee or a manager, fostering a supportive environment for mental and physical wellbeing is key to a thriving workplace. Encouraging outdoor activities and taking breaks helps refresh minds and boost productivity, while leaders who prioritise mental health can create a culture of openness and support. By looking after your own wellbeing and supporting others, you help build a resilient and connected team. Together, we can create a workplace where everyone feels empowered, valued, and capable of managing stress effectively.

Ultimately, the responsibility for creating a mentally healthy workplace rests with everyone. By actively prioritising wellbeing, whether through small daily actions or larger organisational efforts, we can cultivate resilience, reduce stress, and enhance performance. When employees and managers work together to promote a balanced, supportive environment, it leads to stronger team cohesion, greater job satisfaction, and a more engaged workforce.



4

Supervision and Support

Tips for Employees

Ensure you have regular 1:1 meetings with your manager to discuss any challenges you're facing and the support you may need. Be proactive in identifying potential solutions to any issues and bring them up during these meetings. If you're feeling unsure about how to initiate a conversation about your mental health, try using some suggested conversation starters. It's also important to find a quiet space and set aside enough time to have an open, honest discussion about what you're going through. Taking the initiative to speak up can help you get the support you need.

Tips for Managers

Mental health issues are the leading cause of lost workdays in the UK, making it essential to address wellbeing in the workplace. Begin every 1:1 meeting by asking how the person is feeling that day and listen carefully to their response. If a team member opens up about their mental health, remember that you don't need to take on the role of a therapist. The key is to listen with empathy and without judgment. You don't need to have all the answers, but you can help by directing them to the appropriate support services if needed. Visit [mentalhealth-uk.org/get-help](https://www.mentalhealth-uk.org/get-help) for resources and support options.

Effective supervision and support are crucial in creating a workplace where employees feel valued, understood, and empowered to succeed. For employees, taking the initiative to engage in regular one-on-one meetings with your manager, openly discussing challenges, and seeking proactive solutions can significantly enhance both personal well-being and job performance. Meanwhile, for managers, providing consistent, compassionate support and creating a safe space for employees to share concerns builds trust and fosters a sense of security. By offering supervision that is both attentive and empathetic, managers can guide their teams toward the resources and support they need. Prioritising these practices of supervision and support helps cultivate a positive and resilient workplace, where everyone is equipped to manage challenges and work towards success.



5

Sickness and Returning to Work

Tips for Employees

Remember that both physical and mental health are protected under the same workplace legislation. If you're unwell, don't feel pressured to return to work before you're ready. When you do return, consider whether adjustments to your work routine could support your wellbeing. You have the right to discuss options with your employer, such as increased homeworking, flexible hours, a quieter workspace, or a phased return after an extended absence. Don't hesitate to raise these requests – making these changes can help ease your transition back into work and support your health.

Tips for Managers

If a team member has been absent due to stress or another mental health issue, take a proactive approach in considering how you can support their return to work. Offer different working arrangements that will help them perform their job effectively while also supporting their wellbeing. Don't wait for them to ask – initiate the conversation and be open to suggesting adjustments, such as flexible hours, lighter workloads, or homeworking options. For guidance on reasonable adjustments, refer to rethink.org/whats-reasonable to ensure you are providing the right support.

When employees are unwell, whether due to physical or mental health reasons, it's essential for both individuals and managers to approach the situation with empathy and understanding. Employees should feel confident in taking the time they need to recover without feeling pressured to return before they are ready. Upon returning, discussing possible adjustments, such as flexible hours or a phased return, can make the transition smoother and support their continued wellbeing. Managers play a crucial role in proactively offering support and suggesting reasonable adjustments to help employees re-engage with their work in a way that promotes both their health and productivity.

By fostering a supportive environment during sickness and the return-to-work process, employers can ensure that their teams feel valued, respected, and equipped to succeed in a sustainable way.



5

Training

Tips for Employees

Take the lead in promoting mental health within your workplace. Consider starting a network or initiative that organises discussions, speaker events, or workshops on mental health. You can also help raise awareness by directing colleagues to external support resources and providing information on where they can seek help. By championing mental health, you contribute to creating a more open and supportive work environment.

Promoting mental health in the workplace is a shared responsibility that requires both employees and managers to actively engage. As an employee, taking the initiative to champion mental health by starting networks or organising events can help raise awareness and foster a supportive environment.

Similarly, as a manager, seeking guidance and accessing mental health training equips you with the skills to support your team effectively. By prioritising mental health and seeking the right resources, you contribute to a healthier, more resilient workplace where everyone can thrive.

Tips for Managers

Seek support from your employer on how to effectively manage your team's mental health. It's important for all managers to have access to mental health training to better support their teams. Explore available resources in Gym Minds to enhance your understanding and equip yourself with the tools needed to foster a mentally healthy workplace.



Maintain your work/life balance

Tips for Employees

Taking care of your physical and mental health is a collective responsibility. Prioritise sleep, maintain a balanced diet, and stay active to support your overall wellbeing. For additional tips, visit [Gym Minds](#), remember to take your full holiday entitlement – don't skip it because you feel obligated to work. Time off is essential for recharging and maintaining good mental health.

Tips for Managers

Acknowledge the extra hours your team puts in by offering time off in lieu and encourage them to plan and book their holidays in advance. Additionally, it's crucial for managers to prioritise their own wellbeing. By setting a positive example and taking care of yourself, you promote a healthy work-life balance for your team and help create a supportive work environment.

Prioritising wellbeing in the workplace is essential for both employees and managers. Employees should focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle by getting enough sleep, eating well, and staying active, while also making sure to take their holiday entitlement to recharge. Managers, in turn, play a key role in setting the tone for work-life balance, recognising the extra efforts of their teams, and encouraging time off to prevent burnout. By looking after both individual and team wellbeing, we create a more productive, resilient, and supportive work environment for everyone.