

Stress Awareness; *spotting the signs*

Millions of people in the UK experience high levels of stress, which can affect both mental and physical health. Stress has been linked to heart disease, weakened immunity, insomnia and digestive problems. However, stress is a normal response and is not always harmful. The well-known fight or flight response is the body's natural way of preparing for danger. When we feel threatened, chemical changes occur that increase heart rate, breathing, muscle tension and blood pressure, helping us either fight or escape the threat.

While stress can be beneficial in short bursts, such as helping you react quickly to avoid a car accident, long-term stress can negatively affect health and wellbeing. One of the best ways to manage stress is to recognise the signs and symptoms. However, this can be difficult, as many people become so accustomed to stress that they do not realise how affected they are until they reach a breaking point.



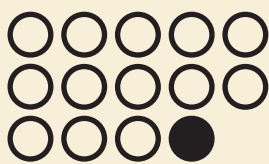
79% of UK adults feel stressed at least one day a month



On average a typical UK adult feels stressed more than twice a week



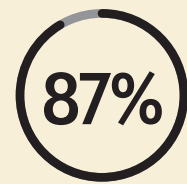
49% of UK adults admit to feeling stressed five or more days each month



One in every 14 people in the UK say they feel stressed every single day

18 ↔ 24

18–24-year-olds feel stressed for more days a month than any other age group (9.82 days in a typical month on average)



Plymouth has the highest proportion of people in the UK who say they feel stressed at least once a month (87%)

Signs of stress

When you're under a great deal of stress, you may find that you're more emotional than usual, or get angry at the smallest things.

Here are some signs of stress to look out for in yourself (and others):

- Anxiety or nervousness
- Anger or irritability
- Difficulty concentrating or forgetfulness
- Depression or low mood
- Fatigue
- Withdrawn mood
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulty sleeping
- Tearfulness
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of motivation
- A change in eating habits or appetite
- An increase in alcohol or drug use

Stress hormones also have an effect on your body too. Look out for some of these physical signs too:

- Muscular tension
- Headache

When you're under a great deal of stress, you may find that you're more emotional than usual, or get angry at the smallest things. Here are some signs of stress to look out for in yourself (and others):

- Tense jaw
- Teeth grinding
- Increased perspiration
- Stomach ache
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Increased sweating
- Dry mouth
- Heart palpitations
- More prone to infection
- Skin rashes
- Constipation
- Broken sleep



