

THE SKILLS YOU NEED GUIDE TO

# STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT



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# 1

## AN INTRODUCTION TO STRESS

Negative stress, tension and anxiety are extremely common problems in modern life. Most people will suffer from potentially dangerous or debilitating symptoms of stress and stress-related issues at some point in their lives.

Unfortunately, the pressures of living in and around a global pandemic have only made this more likely for many people. There is much talk about the potential impact of lockdowns, uncertainty, home-schooling and lack of contact with friends. Some commentators have suggested that this may have knock-on effects on our mental health over many years.

**Effectively coping with stress, managing stress and finding ways to reduce unnecessary or unhealthy levels of stress are important life skills, and skills that everybody needs.**

**This book is designed to help you to develop strategies to cope with negative stress, and hopefully to avoid too much impact on your mental health.**

This chapter provides an introduction or overview to negative stress, together with some of the most common causes of stress and the consequences of inappropriate levels of stress.

# WHAT IS STRESS?



## DEFINING STRESS

The dictionary definition of stress includes *hardship, strain, physical, emotional or mental pressure*.

It is, therefore, a response to pressure, and particularly an inappropriately high level of pressure.

Stress can be described as the distress that is caused as a result of demands placed on physical or mental energy. Stress often affects behaviour, but can also result in physical signs and symptoms (these are discussed more in Chapter 2). This means that stress in one person is likely to put stress on those around them, whether family, friends or colleagues.

You may find that you experience personal stress from a number of sources including:

- The nature of your work;
- The behaviour of those around you at work or at home;
- Changes in your life;
- Personal problems; or
- Other external environmental factors that may restrict your life, or cause you concern.

You may also encounter stress in family or friends, or among your colleagues, which in turn may affect you.

Different people find different things stressful, and can also cope with different levels of pressure before becoming stressed.

For example, some people find it very stressful to be among large numbers of people and avoid crowds. Others like nothing better than the idea of a music festival, with thousands of people close together for a few days. Some people find too much work stressful, while many others would say that it is stressful not to have enough to do.

**It is therefore important to remember that stress is personal, and not judge others by your standards of stressfulness.**

# 2

## RECOGNISING STRESS AND STRESS TRIGGERS

The first step in reducing stress is to recognise it. After all, it is very hard to act on something when you do not know it exists! However, it is equally hard to act when you have reached a point of near-breakdown. The key is early recognition—and then action.

This chapter discusses how you can recognise when you may be becoming stressed, and also identify which situations cause you stress.

**The full eBook  
is available at**

**[www.skillsyouneed.com](http://www.skillsyouneed.com)**