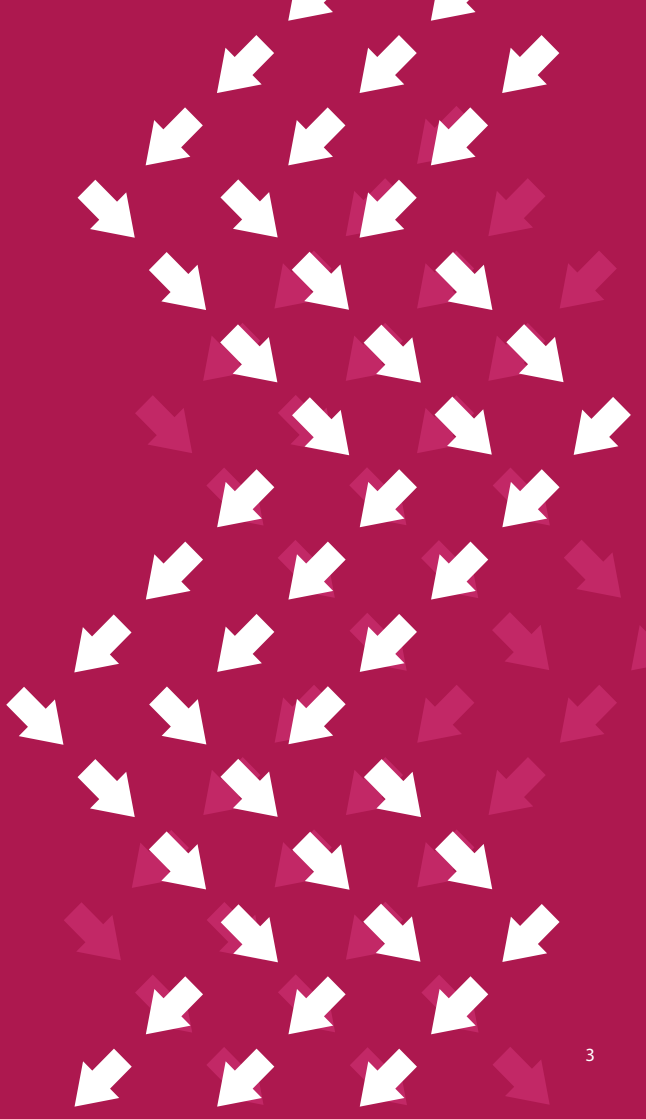


WHAT IS STRESS?



Stress is tension which builds up in the body and mind in response to something happening in our lives.

Some stress can be good for us, helping us to work harder and become more focused. After a difficulty passes, the feelings of stress usually fade. However if you are constantly stressed, your body and mind will stay on 'high alert' and you might develop symptoms which are hard to live with.



Signs & symptoms

Stress can affect us in many different ways:



EMOTIONALLY

Feeling irritable
Feeling anxious
Low self-esteem



BEHAVIOURALLY

Drinking and
smoking more
Biting your nails
Snapping at people



MENTALLY

Worrying
Loss of focus
Finding it hard to
make decisions



PHYSICALLY

Headaches
Aches and pains
Dizziness
Difficulty sleeping

What causes stress?

Stress may be related to:

- ➔ A physical health condition
- ➔ A stressful job or unemployment
- ➔ Financial difficulties
- ➔ Family or relationship issues such as bereavement or divorce
- ➔ Living somewhere you don't feel safe
- ➔ New job or moving house

It's good to tackle the cause of stress as avoiding problems can make things worse. Sometimes, however, you cannot change the circumstances and instead will have to focus on looking after yourself through the stressful situation.

How to tackle stress

There are lots of things you can do to manage stress better. You could:



Do more exercise



Take control of the stressful situation



Talk to friends and family



Make time for self-care



Avoid unhealthy habits eg. relying on alcohol or caffeine

If none of these things are working, see your GP. There are lots of other options open to you, such as guided self-help or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Some GPs in Bristol offer social prescribing for stress, which involves access to art, exercise, cooking and other health-related programmes at a location near you.

You may be able to attend a stress management course. Ask your GP or self-refer to VitaMinds (details on back page).



Local support

Bristol Mental Health

www.bristolmentalhealth.org

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

- VitaMinds, part of Vita Health

0333 200 1893 | refer.BNSSG@nhs.net

Bristol City Council Mental Health Links

www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/mental-health-services

Samaritans

call 0117 983 1000 or text 07725 90 90 90

Community Access Support Service (CASS)

Works with community, equality and faith groups to improve access to mental health support.

0117 304 1400 | info@cassbristol.org

www.cassbristol.org

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