

# Inspiration Point Factsheet: Stress & Burnout



Balancing all the elements of life can lead to stress and burnout. When you're juggling family stuff, work and relationships, you can begin to feel worried and strained. It's important to remember that there's a difference between stress and burnout.

**Stress** comes in many shapes and sizes. It can affect anyone and happens when we can struggle to cope with the pressures placed on us. Stress isn't always a negative thing. In certain circumstances, it can motivate us and power our ability to get stuff done. Higher levels of stress, however, can be more serious. Whether good or bad, stress affects our behaviour and how we feel physically and mentally.

**Burnout**, on the other hand, happens when we feel emotionally drained, overwhelmed, and unable to meet constant demands. It occurs over a longer period and tends to make us feel unproductive and lacking in energy, leading us to feel disengaged from our life goals, our jobs and even our families.

## There are some fairly easy steps you can take to avoid burnout:

### Watch for the signs

Lots of people have bad days but that doesn't mean they're about to burn out. The warning signals we all need to watch out for are: avoiding tasks or work altogether; feeling tired, empty and detached; muscle pain and poor sleep patterns. Your body and mind tell you a lot about what's going on inside and it's always good to listen to what they're saying.

### Make time for yourself

There's never a bad time to look out for your own wellbeing, whether in work, at home or in school/college. You should always try and make time for you. Also, remember to put down the phone and disconnect from e-mails, texts and social media.

### Connect with others

We look after ourselves with positive, healthy connections to those around us. This creates a sense of belonging and self-worth. We should always make time to speak with family, friends and loved ones. Something as simple as a phone call or a text is worth doing.

## Prioritise your health

To clear your mind and reduce stress, get out into the open air and go jogging, ride a bike or take a stroll around the park. If you can't exercise, you can get a lot of emotional and physical benefits out of other activities, like volunteering. You should also do your best to stay away from sugary snacks and processed food, which ultimately leave you feeling tired. Alcohol, too, might seem like a good idea when you're stressed but, in the longer term, too much drink can make you feel worse than you did before.

## Reach out for support

Covid Wellbeing NI is home to lots of really helpful resources around this topic. Check out the various fact sheets in the website's [stress section](#), as well as its range of excellent [self-help toolkits](#).

If you are concerned about any of the issues referenced above, reach out and speak to your **GP or call Inspire's Infoline on 0808 189 0036** for information and signposting support.

If you are in crisis, you can call **Lifeline on 0808 808 8000**. Calls to Lifeline are **free** to people living in Northern Ireland who are calling from UK landlines and mobiles.

Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to listen and help, **in confidence**.

# Inspiration Point



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