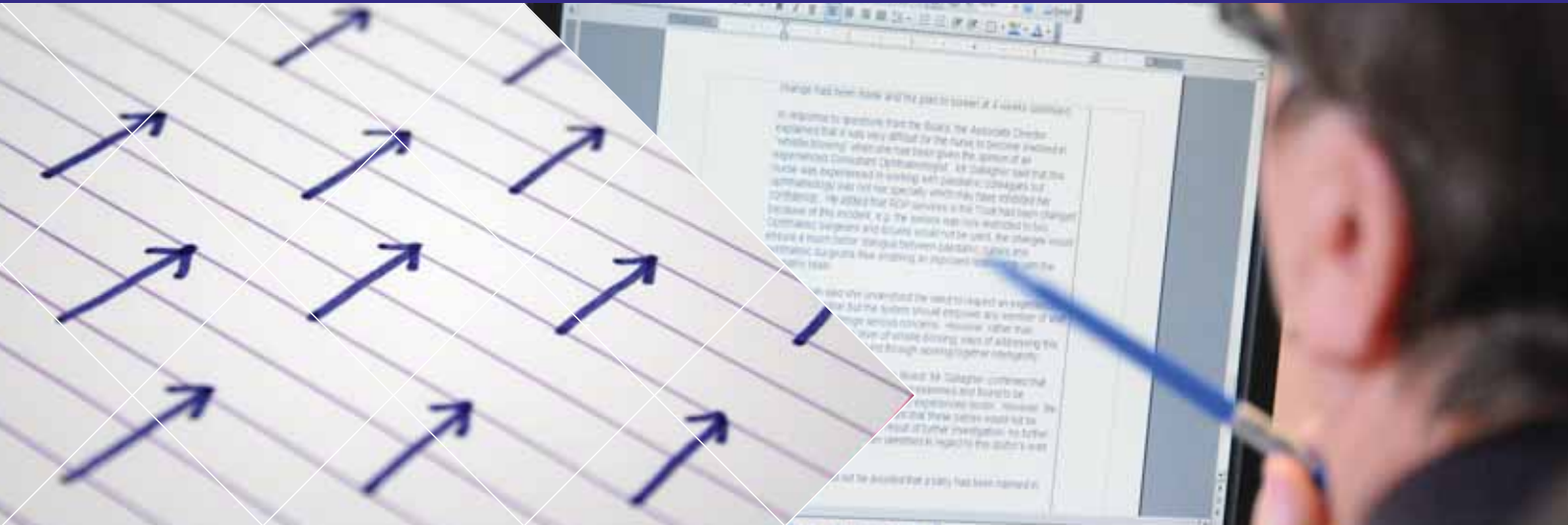


Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management

The Productive Leader
Releasing time to lead™



Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management



Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management: introduction

'Anyone can become angry – that's easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way – this isn't easy.'

Aristotle

Emotional intelligence is now recognised as a key leadership skill. The ability to recognise, understand and choose how we think, feel and act shapes our interactions with others and our understanding of ourselves. It allows us to set priorities and drives our daily actions.

Pressure is a part of everyday life and can be motivating. However, when pressure builds up to the point where an individual feels and perceives that they can no longer cope, the result is stress.

In the NHS environment, there are many factors that can cause stress. These can impact on behaviour and productivity in a way that influences others beyond your team. It is therefore important to develop solutions to identify and manage stress within your team. It is also important to harness the power of emotions so as to motivate those you are leading.

This module is based on cognitive behavioural methodology, which provides some practical models that can be applied easily in a working environment. They can be used to align team energy towards agreed goals.

Your objectives

To get the most from this module, it is helpful to focus on some key personal objectives.

List three things you would like to gain from this programme:

1

2

3

In what ways do you think this programme could help you enhance your team leadership skills?

In what ways do you think this programme could benefit your organisation as a whole?

How would you need to think, feel and act in order to achieve these objectives?

Think

Feel

Act

This module is divided into three topics

1. Recognising stress

2. How to identify, acknowledge and manage emotions in yourself and others

3. Planning to manage difficult situations more confidently and positively

Recognising stress

- Recognising the physical and behavioural symptoms of stress
- The fight or flight response
- The stress response



Recognising stress

The way you manage stress impacts on others and can generate either a positive or negative culture within the working environment. This section will help you to understand:

- the situations that cause you stress
- the physical and behavioural symptoms of stress
- how to take preventative action as soon as you become aware of stress factors.

The effectiveness of positive psychology

Psychologists originally looked at the problem areas of mental performance such as psychosis and neurosis. Positive psychology helps people train their mind to focus and bring out the best in themselves and their teams.

Psychologists including Dr Martin Seligman, Albert Ellis, Daniel Goleman, Robert Holden and Dr Stephen Palmer have developed practical methods to enable people to overcome stressful or negative thinking patterns and develop the ability to handle work and life challenges with greater resilience.



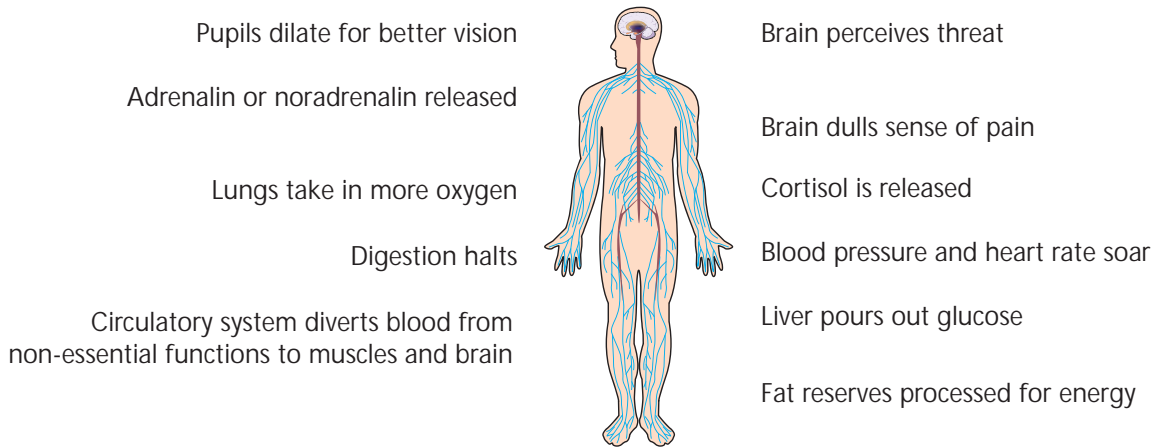
The impact of stress

Stress can affect your:

- health and wellbeing
- communication
- relationships
- creativity
- performance and productivity
- clarity of thought
- motivation
- sense of control.

Physical symptoms – the fight or flight response

When you experience stress your body undergoes physiological changes which can impact on your health and behaviour.



Everything that happens in your body is designed to give you physical strength or speed. It does not help you with difficult demands, decisions, phone calls or meetings. Control your stress as it makes you less productive.

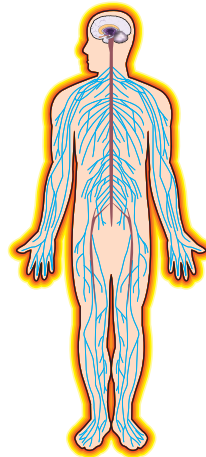
The effects of long-term stress

The stress response is excellent for a physical emergency where you need strength and speed immediately. However, long-term stress can have serious, adverse health effects.

Cortisol becomes toxic, damaging brain cells, reducing mental ability causing memory loss

High levels of glucose can affect blood sugar level, leading to diabetes

Low blood flow in intestines can cause ulcers



Long-term high cortisol levels reduces immune system

High heart rate and blood coagulation increases blood clotting

Fats form plaques in blood vessels, leading to heart disease or stroke

Recognising the behavioural symptoms of stress

As stress hormones remain in your system they have an impact on behaviour. The effects can become more extreme as the stress continues. There are three stages of behaviour change. As you read through you may notice some patterns of behaviour that apply to you or your colleagues.

Stage one:

- loss of sense of humour
- not eating properly
- time pressures; less sociable
- foot tapping
- making mistakes, missing deadlines
- increased alcohol consumption.



Stage two:

- memory loss; poor concentration
- anxious; demoralized
- lack of confidence; low esteem
- overworking; long hours
- difficulty sleeping; waking early
- impatient; intolerant.



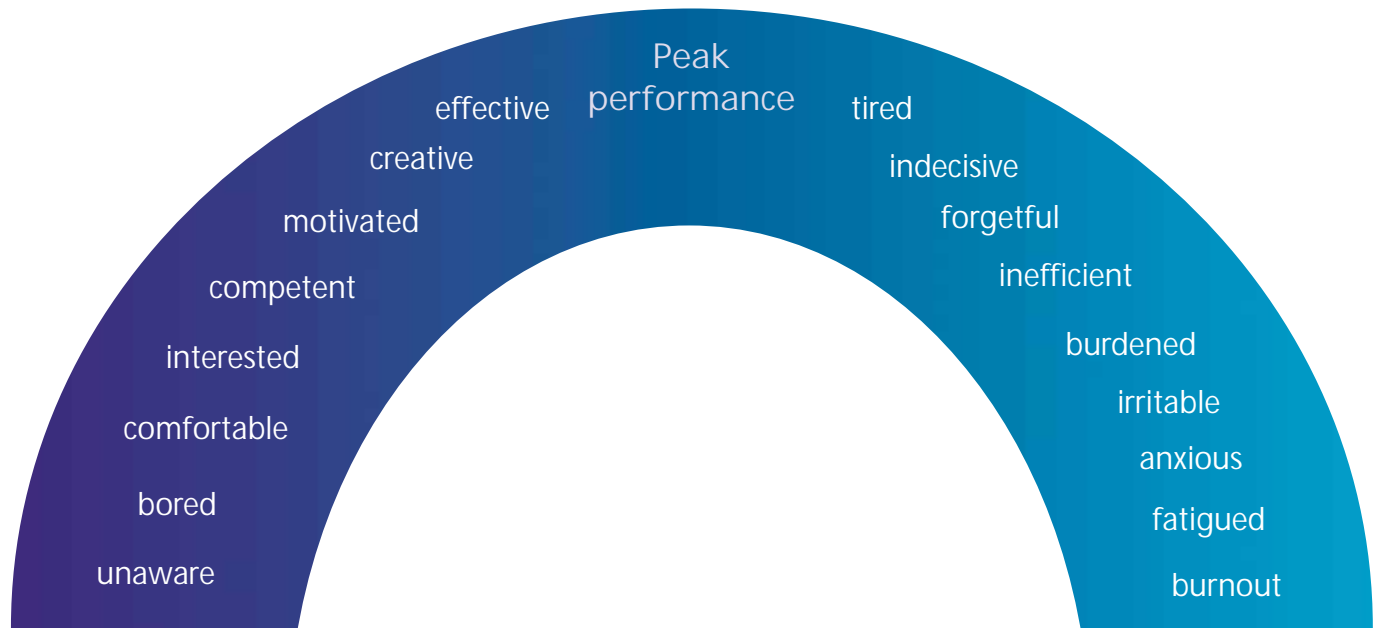
Stage three:

- constantly tired; loss of energy
- difficulty making decisions
- tearful; unable to cope
- burnout; sick leave
- clinical depression.

Take action early to prevent the build-up of stress in yourself and your team.



Stress performance curve



Some stress is good for us but too much and the brain stops functioning well and the immune system becomes depleted.

Employer responsibilities

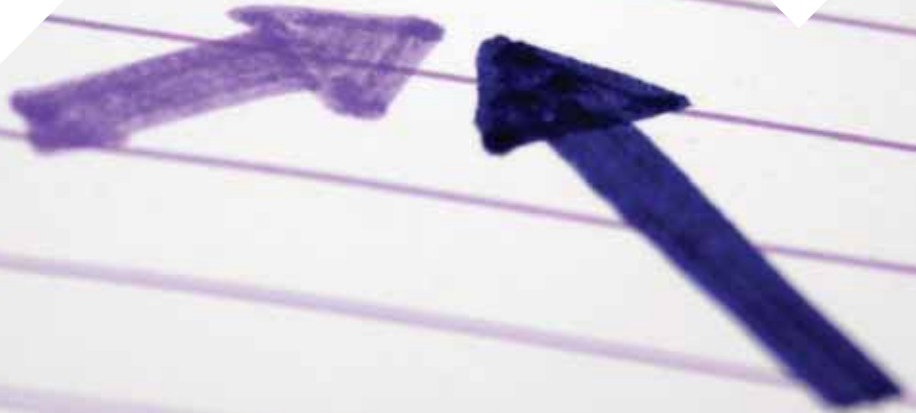
Managers have certain responsibilities to their staff under health and safety regulations. They have a duty of care under UK law to protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees while at work.

The Health and Safety Executive has identified six key areas or risk factors that can be causes of work-related stress. These are:

- the demands of your job
- your control over your work
- the support you receive from managers and colleagues
- your relationships at work
- your role in the organisation
- change and how it is managed.

'Stress is often a symptom of poor employment relations and can seriously affect productivity. Organisations who talk regularly with their employees and have sound systems and procedures in place for dealing with issues like absence and discipline are much more likely to avoid work-related stress and be able to deal with potentially stressful situations when they arise.'

Advisory, conciliation and arbitration service (ACAS), 2008.

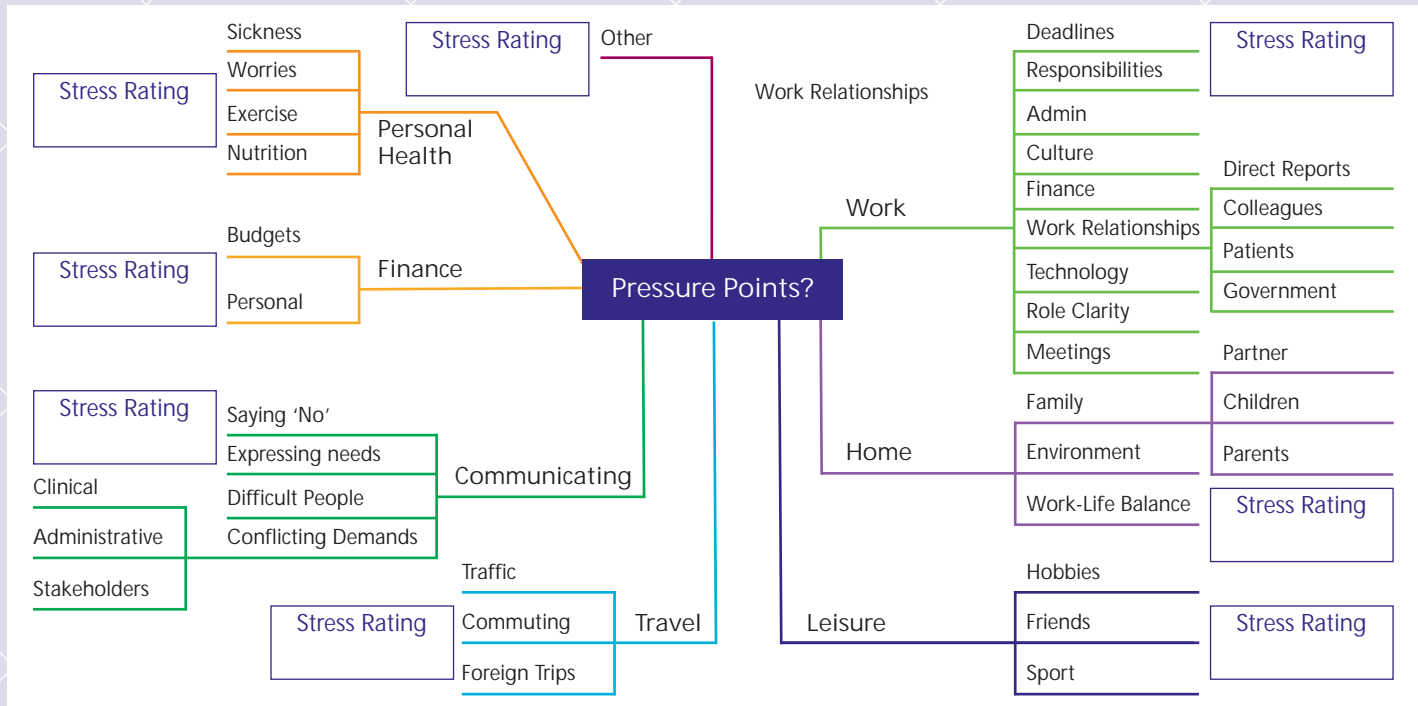


Recognising stress: exercises



Exercise 1: identifying the causes of stress

Take a few minutes to look at the table below. Score each factor with a rating from 0–10, with 10 being high stress and 0 being low stress. This will help you to identify the major factors of stress in your life and take action to manage them. Each factor that causes you stress is a problem to be managed or solved.



Exercise 2: three As – a problem solving model

Stress is just a series of problems to be solved. No doubt you are an excellent problem solver. Frequently it helps to apply some creative and lateral thinking to stressful situations in order to manage them better. Look at the causes of stress you identified on the previous page and ask yourself what can you:

- Alter
- Avoid
- Accept?

Look back at your pressure points map and consider what situations you can:

- **Alter** – this could be altering the situation itself or it could be altering your attitude towards the situation.
- **Avoid** – what situations might you be able to avoid in future?
- **Accept** – what situations do you need to accept?

There is no point being frustrated by situations you cannot change. For example, there are certain aspects of working within the NHS that you cannot alter so it may be more helpful for you to find a way to think positively about them. Each time you are stressed, you deplete your own immune system and give power to external events to influence your own mood.

Make action notes on the pressure points table.

Exercise 3: recognising symptoms of stress

Headaches, Susceptibility to colds and flu,
Nervous twitching, nail biting, Dizziness, Breathless,
Insomnia, Neck, shoulder pain, Fainting,
Indigestion, heartburn and stomach problems,
Palpitations and chest pain, Sweating, Loss of libido,
Psoriasis and skin problems, High blood pressure

Listen to your body

Your body is intelligent – it gives you messages:

- make sure you listen to them and take action before you become ill
- recognising physical and behavioural symptoms of stress in yourself and others enables you to prevent problems building up
- as soon as you notice yourself or a colleague becoming stressed, stop and explore the causes, then problem-solve what can be done to resolve the situation
- if you feel physically exhausted or stressed, take time out and relax – five minutes makes a difference.



Four ways to manage stress

As the chemistry of stress builds up in your body, there are four major ways in which you can release it.

Take exercise

Your body is designed to release stress chemistry through physical activity (fight or flight). This may not be possible in a busy day but if you are aware of stress, take a walk around the block or, if you have access to a gym, take time out during a break to get some physical exercise.

Breathe

You can release the chemistry of stress through breathing and relaxing your body. The 7/11 breathing exercise has been proven to reduce blood pressure so take in a breath now and count in for seven. Release the breath more slowly, for 11 counts. Repeat three times.

Physical relaxation

Notice where your body is holding stress, often in the neck and shoulders. Gradually take your attention down through your body and relax each part in turn. This can refresh and re-energise you in the middle of a busy day.

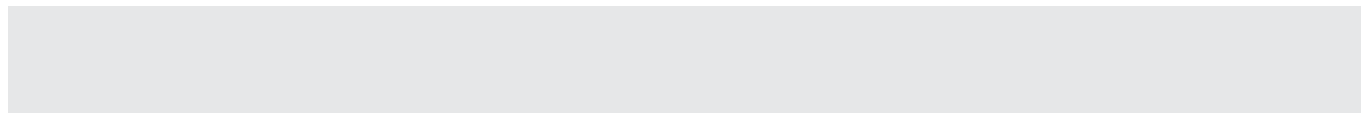
Positive thinking

You can think yourself into stress, eg *'I'll never get this done'* or *'there's too much to do in too little time'*. This simply reduces your ability to think clearly, reduces your immune system and is ineffective. Alternatively, you can switch your thinking to, *'I can break this task down and do it step-by-step'*, or *'I can keep calm and do my best and I will do a better job'*, or *'I'd prefer it if I had the ideal time and resources but I can manage it anyway'*.

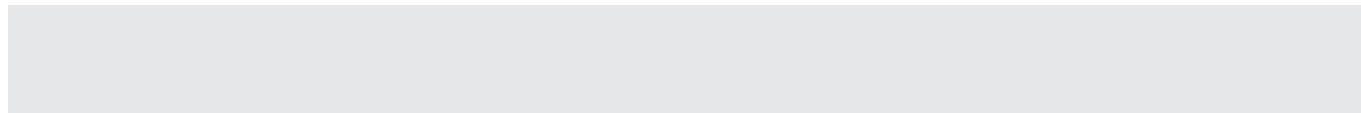
Reflection and actions

Use this page to record your observations.

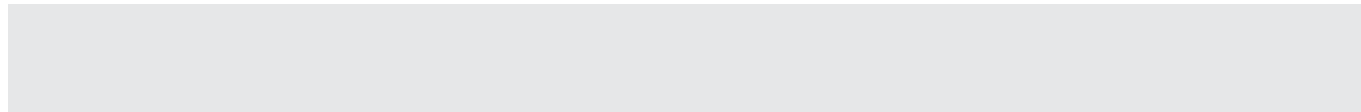
What are your physical and behavioural triggers?



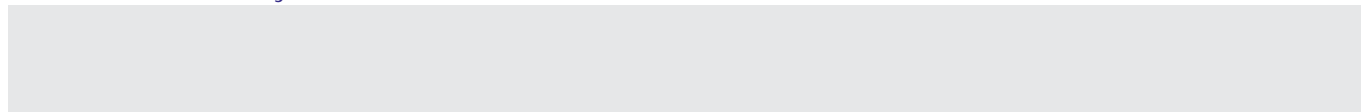
What symptoms of stress have you noticed in your colleagues?



How does your own stress impact on others?



Are there any actions or solutions you could introduce to help you and your colleagues manage stress more effectively in future?



Tips on recognising stress

Become aware of situations in which you feel stressed and plan how to manage your emotions.

Apply the three As model to decide what you can alter or avoid and what you need to accept.

Listen to your body. If you find yourself getting physical symptoms then it is likely that you are stressed. Take time out to rest and refresh your mind and immune system. Even five minutes can make a difference.

Observe yourself and identify the trigger behaviours that will notify you that you are stressed.

Take action to prevent stressful situations through better planning and problem solving.

What is stressful for one person can be an opportunity for another. Realise that you have a choice in how you respond to difficult situations. You do not always have to follow the same route to a solution. Identify as many optional responses as you can to give yourself a feeling of control.

'Individuals are disturbed not by things or events but by the views they take of those events.'

Epictetus

Identifying and managing emotions in yourself and others



Recognising and managing emotions in others

Leading teams of people is a complex activity. Human beings can be unpredictable and confusing. To develop emotional intelligence it helps to understand what is important in managing relationships with the people you work with, including detecting any underlying emotional issues they may have.

It is easy to take words at face value
I'm FINE

and ignore the underlying messages
Fed-up
Insecure
Neurotic
Exhausted

This section will introduce you to models and techniques to help you understand emotions in yourself and others.

What is emotional intelligence?

The six steps to developing emotional intelligence:

1. Knowing what you feel

2. Knowing why you feel it

3. Acknowledging the emotion and knowing how to manage it

4. Knowing how to motivate yourself and make yourself feel better

5. Recognising the emotions of other people and developing empathy

6. Expressing your feelings appropriately while managing your relationships.

The importance of the whole brain approach

Many organisations focus attention on left-brain factors such as...

...and forget that humans and service provision is also driven by...



Organisations need all four approaches to be successful. However, the focus on the left brain frequently results in a lack of acknowledgement of emotional issues until an issue escalates to the extent that it demands attention.

Emotional intelligence means that these factors are seamlessly integrated into every project plan, appraisal, team meeting and strategic decision.

Identifying and managing emotions in yourself and others: exercises



Exercise 1: giving time to concerns and emotions at work

Make time in your day to consider the following:

- what are the primary emotions you currently observe in those around you?
- what are the consequences of these emotions to productivity, morale, teamwork?
- how can you create a safe space for people to share their concerns and aspirations in your organisation?
- what action can you take to harness the emotions you see; what will have a positive effect on performance and motivation?

Other comments or notes:

Exercise 2: Johari's Window model – four views

Johari's Window helps you think about yourself and others. It is designed to help you understand how some information is seen and shared and other information is private. Think about yourself and those around you. Note down any thoughts you have about how you display your stress and emotions and what might be hidden from view.

Use this model as a catalyst to adapting your behaviour where this will result in speedier progress towards your objectives. It can be helpful to understand how you come across and whether this hinders you achieving your goals. By identifying how you act in certain situations you will be able to see what is positive and what is negative and adapt your behaviour if necessary.

Other comments or notes:

Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management: exercise

View one: what I know about me and you also know about me. Write down any thoughts you have about what emotions you share with your colleagues:

View two: what I know about me but you do not know about me. Write down any thoughts you have about what emotions you do not share with your colleagues:

View three: what you know about me but I do not know about me. Write down any thoughts you have about what emotions others might see in you that you are not aware of*:

View four: what nobody knows about me yet. My hidden potential. Consider what emotions might be hidden from your own and other people's viewpoints:

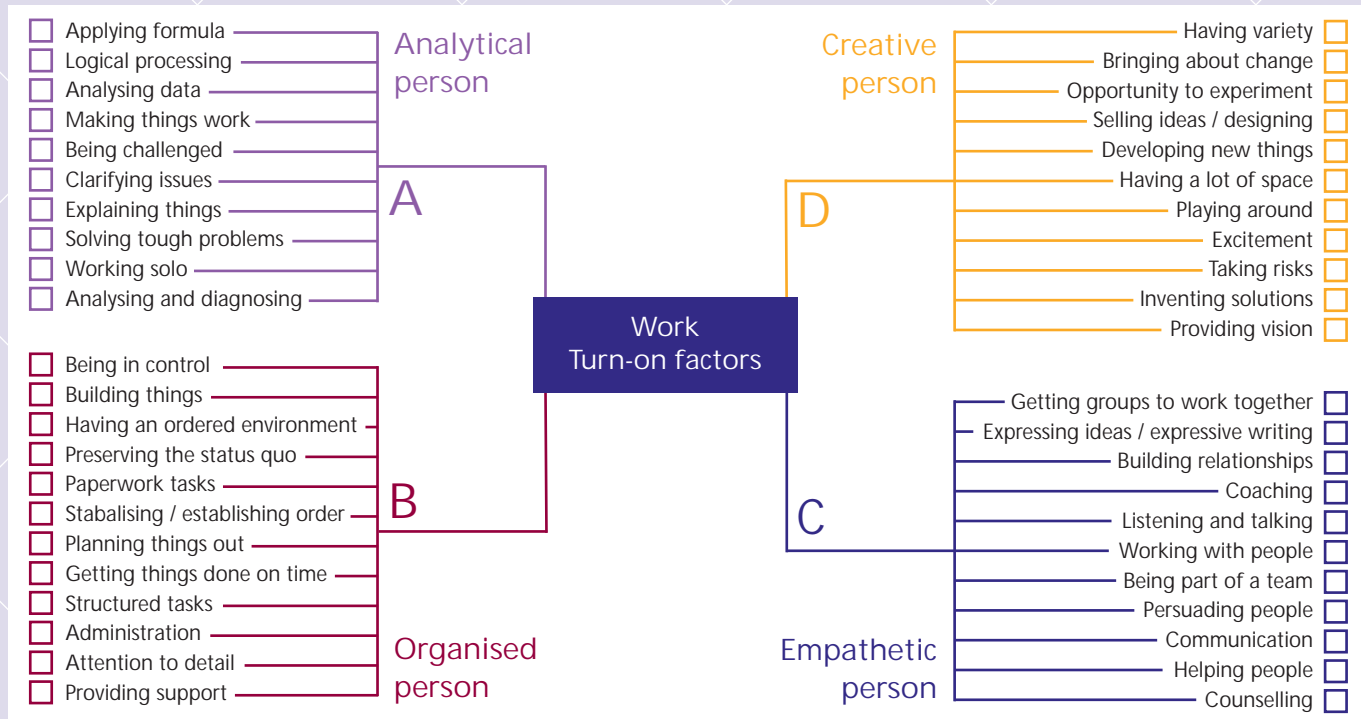
Think about your work team and consider how this might relate to what is shared and what is hidden in your own work environment.

* Ask for feedback from those around you as to how they perceive you, whether in a particular situation, your body language or tone of voice present a different picture of yourself than you want to project. You can then modify your behaviour so you are more approachable to staff, if for instance, they think of you as reserved or disinterested.

Exercise 3: recognising diverse work motivators

Look at the graphic below:

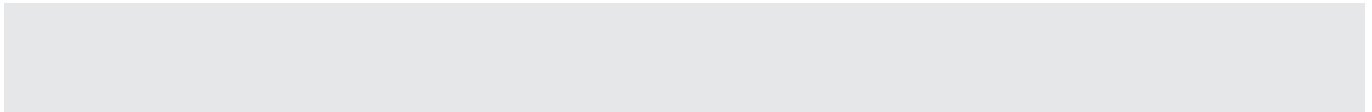
1. Tick those areas that motivate you.
2. Identify what activities motivate key team members.
3. Consider whether you are harnessing people's emotions for peak motivation.



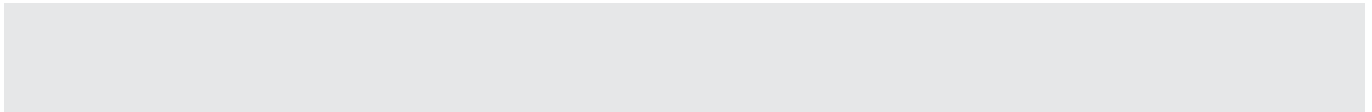
Reflection and actions

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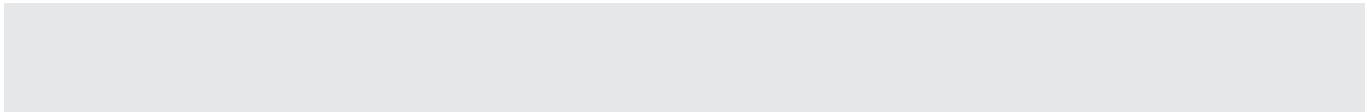
What impact do your own emotions have on your performance?



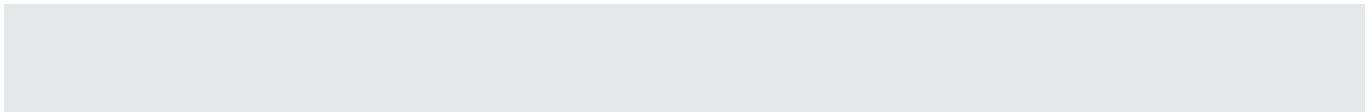
What impact do your emotions have on others?



What impact do the emotions of others have on you?



How can you apply this information to enhance working performance and relationships in your own environment?

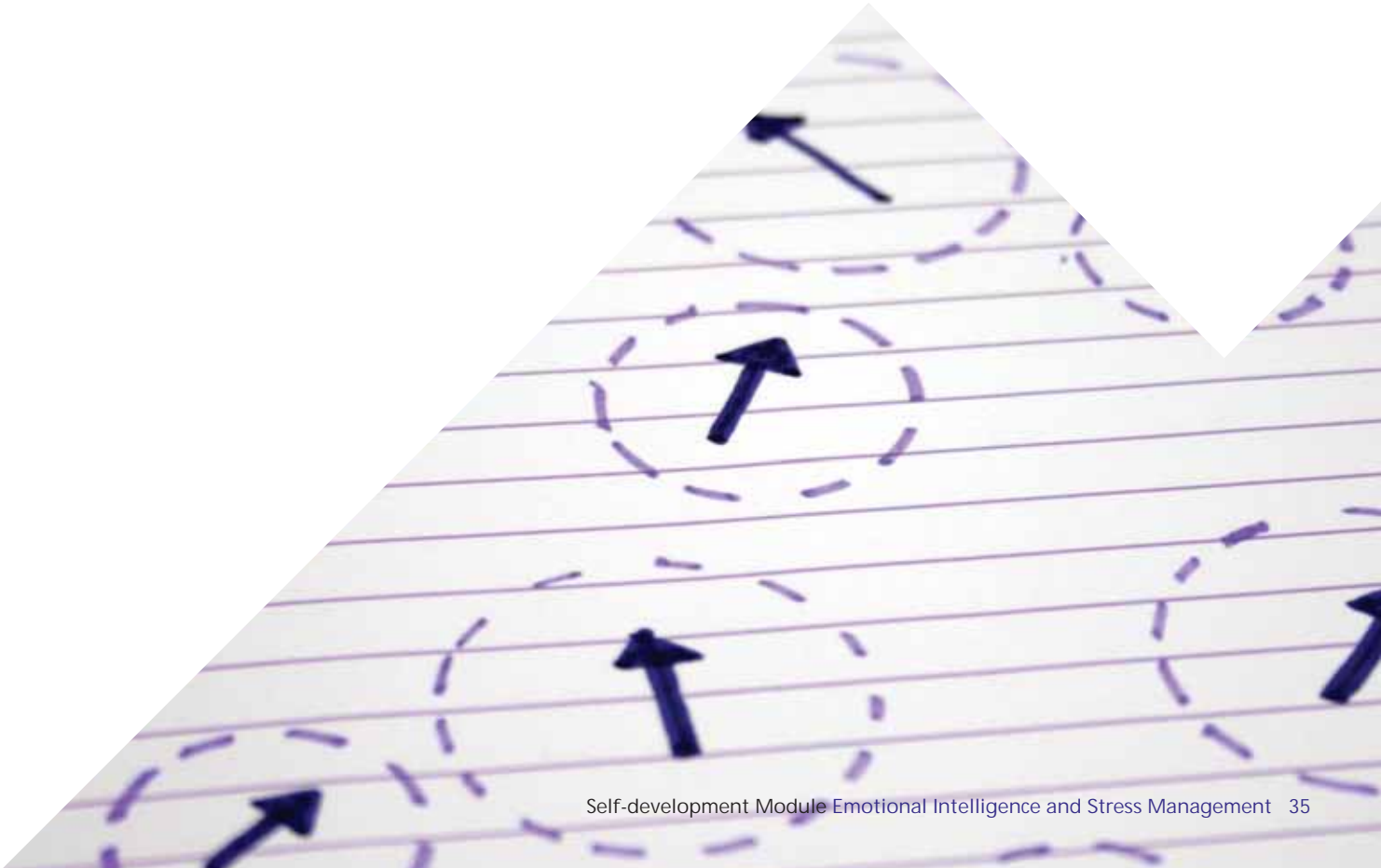




Tips for acknowledging and managing emotions

- Understand that all human beings are driven by emotions and that these emotions come from personal needs and expectations.
- Acknowledge that some people express emotions more easily than others but it does not necessarily mean that one person feels more emotion than another. It may mean that one person is more connected to their emotional state than another.
- Observe what feelings are shared and what feelings are hidden. Work out why this may be happening and whether it is healthy or not.
- Observe how the organisational and departmental culture impacts on people's emotional state.
- Realise that you can control your emotions – read the next section to learn more about this.

Emotional intelligence can be learned.



Planning to manage difficult situations



Planning to manage difficult situations

People are good at planning meetings, milestones and presentations but do not always realise that they can also plan the emotional state they want to be in when they approach these situations.

This section will provide models to help you apply right brain thinking in order to meet everyday challenges in a positive and confident state.



The continuous improvement process

As we grow up we adopt various beliefs, attitudes and expectations from those around us.

It is important to review these frequently and update them to be relevant to the situations we face today. Going through all the self-development modules will enable you to develop some insight into yourself; how you prefer to work, how others perceive you and the behaviours you need to change to more successfully meet your objectives.

This is an ongoing process so it is important to ask for feedback and look at the success of any behaviour changes, as well as continuing to adapt where required. It is helpful to continually review whether you are achieving beneficial changes in yourself and those around you.

Actions	▶	Alter
Behaviours	▶	Change
Emotions	▶	Manage
Thoughts and expectations	▶	Upgrade
Beliefs and values	▶	Update

Thoughts and expectations impact on emotions and behaviour

Underlying every emotion is a belief, thought or expectation about the situation you are facing. Identifying and disputing the thinking that drives the emotion can help you manage a situation more effectively in future.

Example

David, an NHS leader, is angry at a new government initiative for cost-cutting in his PCT. He thinks, *'this should not be happening. It is making my life difficult and I feel I cannot cope'*.

- Likely emotional response – frustration and disempowerment.
- Likely behavioural response – less effective completion of the task.

In the context of the three As model he cannot alter the situation, he needs to accept the initiative and find ways to alter his attitude and behaviour so that he feels less frustrated, and more empowered. This will help him manage his emotions and become more effective.

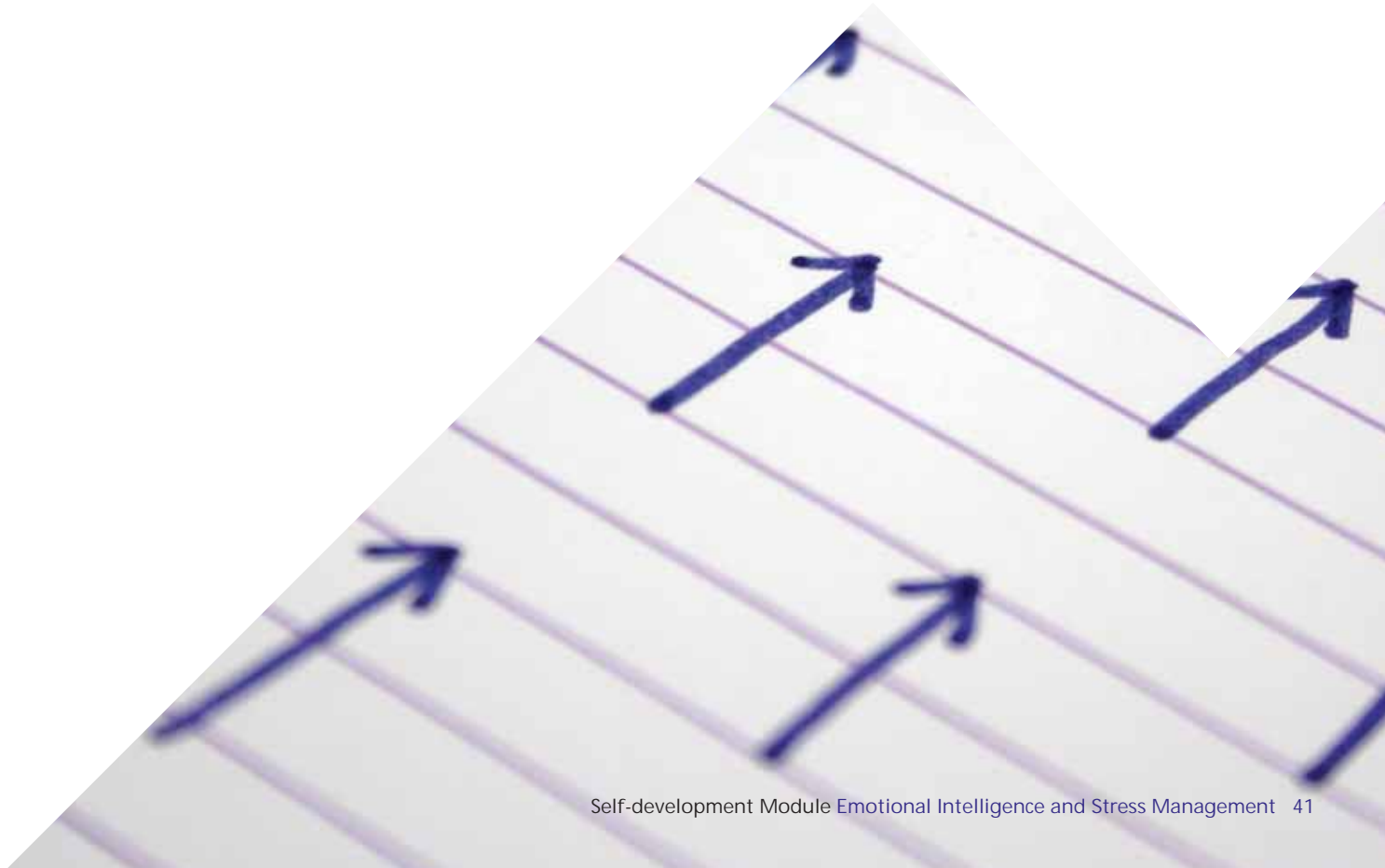
Exchange unhelpful thoughts – what would be supportive thoughts?

'This initiative will take place whether I personally like it or not so how can I make the best of the situation?'
'I would prefer it if I did not have to take on this initiative but I can manage it anyway.'



Tips for managing other people's emotions

- People are often not upset because a situation goes wrong, but that they are unprepared to deal with it.
- Choose your response.
- Pace yourself and breathe.
- Comment on the behaviour not the person.
- Take time out if necessary.
- Prevent emotional hijack.



Planning to manage difficult situations: exercises



Exercise 1: the ABCDE model

This model helps you to analyse your emotional state.

A – Situation	B – Expectation	C – Consequence	D – Dispute	E – Exchange
For example: bad appraisal	What is your thought or goal about the situation? <i>'It is not fair if they do not see how hard my job is'</i>	What emotion did you feel? <i>'I was angry'</i>	Your thinking: was it helping you achieve your goal? <i>'No, it put me in a defensive mood as I walked in'</i>	What would be a more helpful thought if you face this situation again? <i>'They are entitled to their view and I can express mine in the meeting'</i>

Plan a positive and constructive approach to a difficult situation.

	Positive outcome Constructive thought about yourself	What emotion do you want to feel to best manage yourself in the situation?	Your thinking: Will this thought support you achieving your positive outcome?	What is the most positive thought to help you manage this situation?
--	---	--	--	--

Exercise 2: developing an emotionally intelligent culture

Write down three actions to develop an emotionally intelligent culture that supports wellbeing and performance. For example, allow time to think about people's emotional state and listen to personal concerns.

1

2

3

Exercise 3: anchoring a positive state

You can use this model to help you feel confident and positive at any time.

What thoughts will help?

What do you look like?

What do you feel like?

What sounds might help?

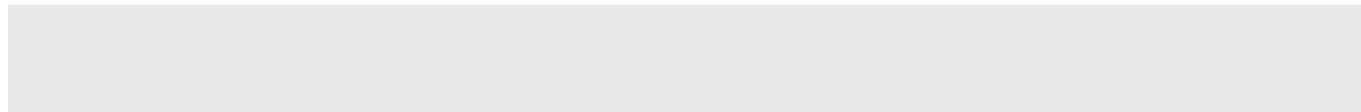
Take a moment to feel confident and positive. Adopt the physical posture that helps you feel confident. Develop a caption word or short phrase that will help you to feel confident anywhere you like in the future.

Caption:

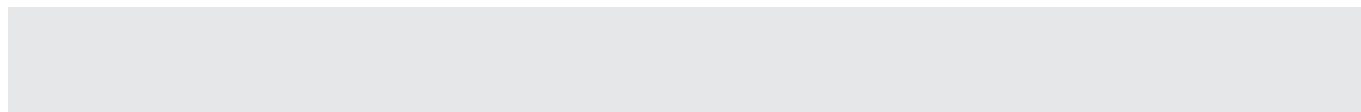
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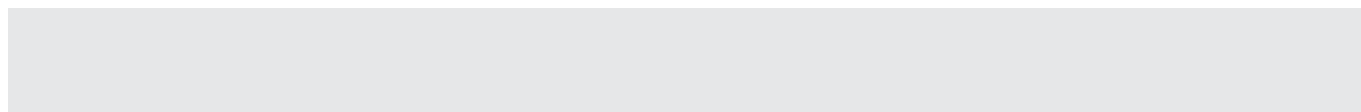
What situations do you think you would have managed differently if you had planned your emotional response?



What situations do you have coming up where you could plan your emotional state in advance so as to be able to behave in a whole brain way, eg applying left brain facts, figures, details, organisation with right brain ideas, vision, empathy, emotional resilience?



How can you apply this knowledge to your team projects? For example, ensuring not only are the milestones set but emotions are also engaged to motivate people to perform and complete tasks?





Tips for managing your emotions

- Identify how you would like to think and feel.
- Remember and visualise what this feels like.
- Create thoughts which help you manage your emotions.
- Create a video and see yourself feeling good.
- Be in the moment – only worry about what is essential now.
- Acknowledge that other people may not have the same response to a situation as you do.
- Be aware that you do not have to be negatively affected by the emotions of others.

Decision time: make three decisions now

Decide three changes to help you communicate more effectively in your team.
Commit to doing these three things next week.

My decisions are:

1

2

3

See your success

Visualisation has been proven to support the successful achievement of goals. It is a technique used by many athletes, actors and professionals.

Close your eyes for a moment and visualise your success; see yourself achieving your goals, step-by-step:

- what barriers will you manage to get past?
- what will you be doing?
- what will you look like?
- how will you feel?
- how will other people know?

Make the images clear, positive and colourful. Imagine yourself in the picture and notice what it feels like to achieve your goals.



Further information

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Acknowledgements

These modules have been developed by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement in co-production with colleagues from:

- Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust
- Ealing Primary Care Trust
- Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Sheffield Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Stockport Foundation NHS Trust.

We would also like to acknowledge the support given by Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust.