

Apr  
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# mental health awareness



## Roadmap to Normality

It is safe to say that the UK's vaccination programme has been a resounding success. With the government having set out a clear roadmap for a post-COVID Britain, we now all have concrete dates to look forward to as we start to emerge from the crisis. However, the mental health shockwave caused by the pandemic is yet to be seen, and we should all be vigilant of one another's wellbeing.

We remain fully equipped to deal with all the challenges of the latest lockdown, as well as the mental health effects of the pandemic in general. We are aware that this is a particularly tough time, and our counsellors, 24/7 helpline and online resources for employers are, as always, here to help.

Steven Stanbury Managing Director – Wellbeing Solutions



## Boosting Happiness

The Office for National Statistics have recently revealed that the average ratings of happiness dropped by 1.1% last year. Here are some ways to help establish a happier state of mind.

- ✓ People who nurture **positive relationships** are usually happier, healthier and live longer. Close relationships with friends, family members or colleagues often provide strong feelings of love and support, which means that our sense of self-worth is strengthened.
- ✓ **Doing things for others**, without the expectation of anything in return, is fundamental to our happiness. Helping someone in need is not only good for those less fortunate than us, but helps to improve our self-worth and build stronger and more meaningful relationships.

## What's going on this month?



### 1st – 30th April | Stress Awareness Month

A month dedicated to raising awareness of the causes and cures of our modern stress epidemic.



### 7th April | World Health Day

A day to shine a light on the vital contribution that healthcare workers provide all around the world.



### 29th April | On Your Feet Britain

A day dedicated to getting desk-based workers up and moving to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

## Dates for The Diary

Here are some significant dates to look forward to as lockdown begins to ease:

- ✓ **12th April:** Opening of non-essential retail in England, such as hairdressers and outdoor restaurants and beer gardens.
- ✓ **21st June:** Freedom Day! All legal limits on social contact lifted, and a significant return to normality for us all.

For key dates in other parts of the UK:

Scotland: gov.scot

Wales: southwalesargus.co.uk

Northern Ireland: nidirect.gov



## Coping with Stress This Spring

April is Stress Awareness Month, a month dedicated to a conversation around the causes and cures of stress. While stress is one of the most common forms of mental unease, it is often overlooked. Although stress is an effective, and necessary, motivator, 74% of UK adults have felt so stressed at some point over the last year that they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope.

The pandemic has certainly been a major factor in this, but it is important to recognise that stress can come from a variety of sources. Whether it is a particularly busy time at work, problems in the family, or simply being spread too thin, stress can develop at any time or anywhere. Furthermore, with stress being so widespread, there is a certain stigma that prevents us from being open about our worries.

That is why it is important that we are open when it comes to talking about stress. While it is something that everyone deals with in some form, establishing supportive spaces lessens the negative effects of stress. If you have effective coping mechanisms, share them with your friends, family and colleagues. It might benefit someone you care about, and in the meantime it might help you take the focus off of your own challenges.

As we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel, it is important that we continue to look after one another's wellbeing. If the challenges of the pandemic continue to negatively impact your mental health, remember that we are ready and able to offer advice through our 24/7 helpline and new online resources.

## Anti-Stress Tips and Tricks

As lockdown begins to ease and the days become longer and brighter, it is important that we take the time to look after ourselves. Here are some self-care tips to help deal with stress

- ✓ Try and exercise regularly
- ✓ Try something creative
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep
- ✓ Establish a space specifically for relaxing
- ✓ Engage in self-care, meditation and mindfulness
- ✓ Avoid unhealthy coping mechanisms, like smoking and drinking

## employee assistance

Your Employee Assistance Helpline provides you and your family with counselling and advice, covering a variety of personal or workplace issues.

Whatever our age, background or role in life, we all have problems from time to time. Talking to a counsellor or advisor about a problem can help us find a way forward.

This service is paid for by your employer and is provided by an independent company, Wellbeing Solutions Management. There is no cost to you and all calls are confidential.

**24/7 freephone: 0800 328 1437**

Visit: [employeeassistance.org.uk](https://employeeassistance.org.uk)



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