

# Leader Toolkit

## Recognise the signs of stress

We are **RESPONSIBLE** and **COLLABORATIVE** leaders.

We care for our people. We build trust, communicate and support each other.

### Why use this tool

There is a difference between feeling outside of one's comfort zone and feeling overwhelmed. Both may feel "stressful". The first is positive, as you are most likely to be learning something new. The latter, however, is not OK.

### When to use this tool

If you think you or a team member is finding things too stressful, you can use this checklist to alert you to the negative effects it is having and target solutions to help.

### How to use this tool

We all experience stress differently in different situations.

Sometimes you might be able to tell right away when you or a team mate is feeling under stress, but other times you might keep going without recognising the signs. Stress can affect people both emotionally and physically, and it can affect the way you or they behave.

Review the signs of stress listed in the tool and make a point of having a conversation to talk through what you can do to get help or support someone who is experiencing stress.

### Tips

- **Speak regularly with team members** to check how they're doing and to reflect on what might be causing them stress.
- **Poor communication can be a significant cause of stress.** Where communication is clear, open, effective, manageable and responsive, staff will be able to access all the information they need to do their job while avoiding overload.
- **Encourage team members** to:
  - work sensible hours
  - take full lunch breaks
  - rest and recuperate after busy periods
  - take their full annual leave entitlement.

# Recognise the signs of stress



Work performance	Emotional behaviour	Physical signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ declining/inconsistent performance</li> <li>▪ uncharacteristic errors</li> <li>▪ loss of control over work</li> <li>▪ loss of motivation/commitment</li> <li>▪ indecision</li> <li>▪ lapses in memory</li> <li>▪ increased time at work</li> <li>▪ lack of holiday planning/usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ crying</li> <li>▪ arguments</li> <li>▪ undue sensitivity</li> <li>▪ irritability/moodiness</li> <li>▪ over-reaction to problems</li> <li>▪ personality clashes</li> <li>▪ sulking</li> <li>▪ immature behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ nervous stumbling speech</li> <li>▪ sweating</li> <li>▪ tiredness/lethargy</li> <li>▪ upset stomach/flatulence</li> <li>▪ tension headaches</li> <li>▪ hand tremor</li> <li>▪ rapid weight gain or loss</li> <li>▪ constantly feeling cold</li> </ul>
Withdrawal	Aggressive behaviour	Other behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ arriving late to work</li> <li>▪ leaving early</li> <li>▪ extended lunches</li> <li>▪ absenteeism</li> <li>▪ resigned attitude</li> <li>▪ reduced social contact</li> <li>▪ elusiveness/evasiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ malicious gossip</li> <li>▪ criticism of others</li> <li>▪ vandalism</li> <li>▪ shouting</li> <li>▪ bullying or harassment</li> <li>▪ poor employee relations</li> <li>▪ temper outbursts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ out of character behaviour</li> <li>▪ difficulty in relaxing</li> <li>▪ increased consumption of alcohol</li> <li>▪ lack of interest in appearance/hygiene</li> <li>▪ accidents at home or work</li> <li>▪ reckless driving</li> <li>▪ unnecessary risk taking</li> </ul>

