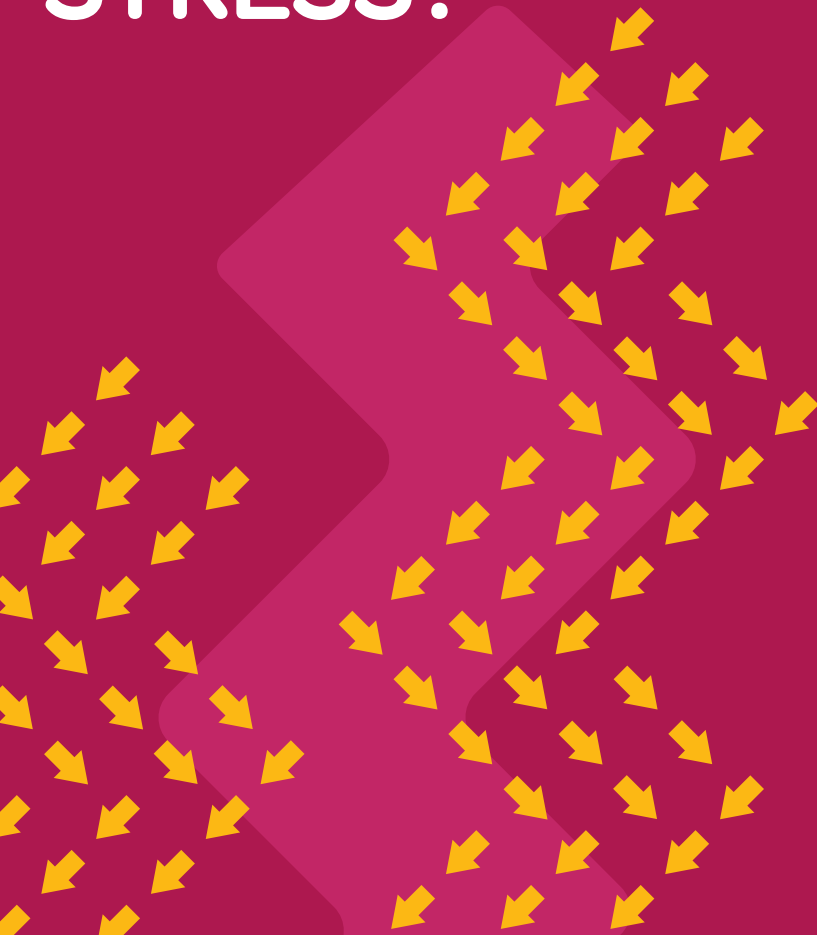
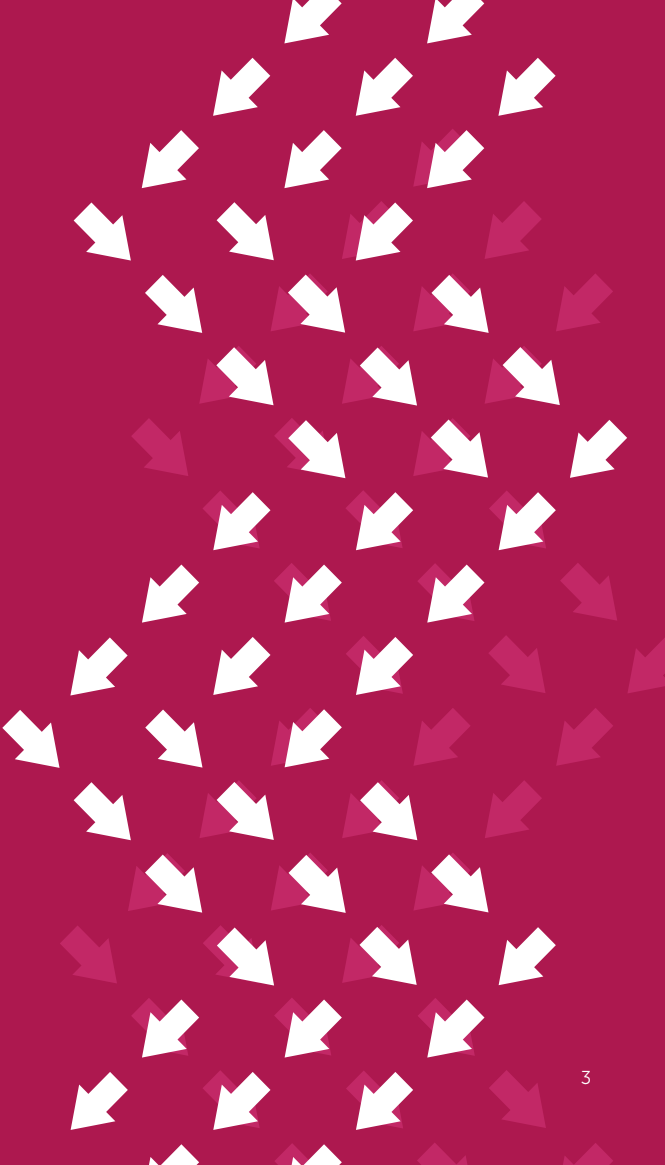


# WHAT IS STRESS?



# 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 Bristol Wellbeing Therapies.



# Local support

## **Bristol Mental Health**

[www.bristolmentalhealth.org](http://www.bristolmentalhealth.org)

## **Bristol Wellbeing Therapies**

0117 982 3209 | <https://iapt-bristol.awp.nhs.uk>

## **Bristol City Council Mental Health Links**

[www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/mental-health-services](http://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](mailto:info@cassbristol.org)**

**[www.cassbristol.org](http://www.cassbristol.org)**

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