



Surrey Community Action Mental Health Project

Meeting First Steps

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Agenda



- Who are First Steps?
- What do we offer?
- How can we work with you?
- What is stress?
- How can we reduce stress?

Who is affected by emotional difficulties?



Emotional difficulties and poor 'mental health' knows no boundaries. It will affect all people regardless of:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Religion

First Steps aims to raise awareness of this and make information accessible to all

First Steps



The First Steps Service offers advice and information on:

- Ways of maintaining a healthy mind
- Common emotional difficulties
- Further sources of support

We work with:

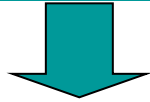
- Individuals
- Communities
- Local services

First Steps Surrey



“Promoting Well-being for the Better Health of Surrey”

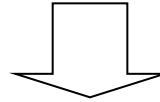
Individuals



The first step towards emotional well-being

- Information on Mental Health
- Emotion Gyms
- Help-line
- Self-help booklets
- Prescribing Social activities
- Advice on sources of support

Communities



Creating communities that support emotional well-being

- Working with employers
- Supporting prison staff
- Contributing to mental health awareness campaigns
- Promoting emotional well-being for:
 - Older persons
 - BME communities
 - Men

Local Services



Enabling best practice in local services

- Supporting health services in raising awareness of emotional well-being
- Creating the link between health and local services

Individuals



- **Phone line 0808 801 0325**
 - » Tuesday 12-4pm
 - » Wednesday 12-4pm
 - » Thursday
 - Staffed by Mental Health Advisors
 - Advice rather than support
 - Discuss options and available services
 - Provide self help information

Website



- www.firststeps-surrey.nhs.uk

– Information and self-help downloads

NHS Surrey
First Steps
Tel: 0808 801 0325
Email: first.steps@nhs.net

Self help for a healthy mind

Emergency Help
Local Events Diary
Useful Contacts
Jargon Buster
Downloads
Feedback

About First Steps
Information on Mental Health Problems
Relationship Problems
Self Help Techniques
Employers Pages
Employees Pages
Success Stories
GP's Pages

Welcome To First Steps

- [How we can help](#)
- [Is First Steps suitable for you?](#)
- [We would like your feedback on this website](#)

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How we can help

First Steps is an NHS-led service offering friendly advice and information on mental health and emotional issues to the public and employers. Our aim is to help people to find their way back to well-being.

Covering the Surrey-wide area, we run a free and confidential helpline and email service staffed by trained mental health advisors. We also offer a range of self-help resources and educational sessions and signpost people to other relevant local services. Our goal is to help people make the best choices in addressing their mental health needs. We also provide calls and enquiries from relatives, friends, carers and employers.

Call: 0808 801 0325 Email: first.steps@nhs.net

You're not alone

One in four people experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives. There are a number of [people out there who can help](#). There's also a lot you can do to [help yourself](#) on the road to recovery.

First Steps offers:

- Effective self-help booklets and recommended reading [to download](#).
- Information on how to access useful [local and national organisations](#) such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, which offers help with employment, harassment, debt problems and benefits.
- 'Emotion Gyms' to help you understand and cope with common emotional issues (anxiety and anger, low mood and relationship problems). Emotion Gyms are run by trained mental health advisors and experienced counsellors/trainers, with the counsellors providing background.

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Search

Search First Steps

Search Web

Accessibility

Best of Health 2006

NHS South East Coast



Emotion Gyms



- Free 2 hour workshops on ways to maintain and improve emotional wellbeing
 - Open to all. No registration needed or personal information obtained
-
- Anger
 - Low Mood
 - Anxiety
 - Work/ general stress
 - Communication and assertiveness
 - Confidence/self esteem

Anger

Farnham	Mon Feb 21st	6:30 - 8:30pm
Guildford	Thurs Feb 24th	6:30 - 8:30pm

- Recognise and understand feelings of anger and how to manage them

Low Mood

Farnham	Mon Feb 28th	6:30 - 8:30pm
Guildford	Thurs Mar 3rd	6:30 - 8:30pm

- Learn about the causes of low mood and how to cope with these emotions

Anxiety

Farnham	Mon Mar 7th	6:30 - 8:30pm
Guildford	Thurs Mar 10th	6:30 - 8:30pm

- Recognise signs of anxiety and learn ways to manage and reduce the symptoms

Work-Related / General Stress

Farnham	Mon Mar 14th	6:30 - 8:30pm
Guildford	Thurs Mar 17th	6:30 - 8:30pm

- Recognise signs of stress and learn ways to manage and reduce it

Self-Esteem

Farnham	Mon Mar 21st	6:30 - 8:30pm
Guildford	Thurs Mar 24th	6:30 - 8:30pm

- Learn ways to increase your confidence and self-esteem

Communication / Assertiveness

Farnham	Mon Mar 28th	6:30 - 8:30pm
Guildford	Thurs Mar 31st	6:30 - 8:30pm

- Learn how to communicate and express your feelings more effectively

Venues:

Farnham - Potters Gate Children's Centre, Potters Gate, Farnham, GU9 7BB (Entrance from Beavers Road)

Guildford - Guildford Community Centre, Leapale Lane, Guildford, GU1 4LY Parking charges may apply

Each session provides a helpful summary sheet with phone numbers, websites and books.

Self-Help Material

- Strategies and skills that can be learnt to improve emotional well-being
- An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure
- Booklets available:
 - Anger
 - Bereavement
 - Depression
 - Obsessions and Compulsions
 - Panic
 - PTSD
 - Shyness and Social Anxiety
 - Sleeplessness
 - Stress and Anxiety
 - Understanding Voices and Disturbing Beliefs
 - Work Related Stress

Communities



Opportunities include:

- Emotional well-being training tailored to suit the communities need
- Information and guidance
- Anti stigma campaigns
- Raising awareness of emotional well-being in all communities

Local services



- Emotional well-being training
- Work stress training
- Providing information
- Providing guidance

How can we work with you?



Stress

What is stress

“The adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them”

- Everyone experiences stress at certain times in their lives and few of us manage to keep it under control all the time

Stress jug

As humans, we only have a certain capacity for managing stress. Imagine that all of your stress was in a jug. The fuller your jug is, the greater the symptoms of stress will be. Once the jug is full, your ability to manage any situation that arises is greatly compromised which is why you may feel less able to cope with matters that would normally have no effect on you such as having a lot of emails or a final bill notice



What causes stress?



It can come from both inside or outside of ourselves

- **Inside** – feelings and attitudes
- **Outside** – stressful events



Stress

Cognitive Symptoms	Emotional Symptoms
<p>Memory problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Indecisiveness•Inability to concentrate <p>Trouble thinking clearly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Poor judgment•Seeing only the negative•Anxious or racing thoughts•Constant worrying•Loss of objectivity•Fearful anticipation	<p>Moodiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Agitation•Restlessness•Short temper•Irritability, impatience•Inability to relax•Feeling tense and “on edge”•Feeling overwhelmed•Sense of loneliness and isolation•Depression or general unhappiness
Physical Symptoms	Behavioural Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Headaches/ backaches•Muscle tension/ stiffness•Diarrhoea/ constipation•Nausea/ dizziness•Insomnia•Chest pain/ rapid heartbeat•Weight gain/ weight loss•Skin breakouts (hives, eczema)•Loss of sex drive•Frequent colds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Eating more or eating less•Sleeping too much or too little•Isolating yourself from others•Procrastination, neglecting responsibilities•Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax•Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing) <p>Teeth grinding or jaw clenching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Overdoing activities (e.g. exercising, shopping) <p>Overreacting to unexpected problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Picking fights with others

People perceive situations differently



- In many cases, the high levels of stress that we experience are not entirely caused by the stressful event or situation. Sometimes, the way that we react to, and feel about the situation increases the intensity of the stress we experience
- This does not mean that the person experiencing the stress is inadequate or to blame, but rather offers hope that strategies can be learnt to reduce the amount of stress we receive
- Personality type and self confidence play a large part in the way we perceive an event and will vary with different situations and times

Isn't some stress helpful?



- “Stress is not necessarily something bad – it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental.” (Hans Selye, 1956)
- In short, stress is what we feel when we think we have lost control of events
- Pressure can increase performance. Some people find that working under pressure heightens motivation and drive. Adrenalin can play a key part in this
- Stress has a negative impact on performance. The adrenalin in this circumstance produces negative symptoms including poor concentration, lack of motivation and feeling unwell

Effects of stress on home life include

- Physical illness
- Recurrent minor illnesses, e.g. colds
- Psychological illness
- Strain on relationships/family
- Disengaging with friends
- Loss of motivation in leisure interests
- Difficulty maintaining the home
- Financial difficulties: loss of overtime, sick pay, etc.
- Loss of self-confidence and esteem



Stress 'First Aid' for individuals

Basic principles

- Equip yourself with a set of ‘useful tools’ to use in times of high stress
- Control what you can control and let go of what you can’t
- Try to think rationally. What would you say to a friend or colleague in a similar situation?
- Try not to take the situation personally
- Ask for clarity or support from friends or colleagues
- Establish the route of the problem and tackle this rather than the consequences (if possible)

Breathing control

- Taking a deep breath at times of difficulty gives you time to recompose yourself and gather your thoughts, whilst reducing your physical symptoms
- Irregular or erratic breathing is one of the first responses to severe stress. Unfortunately this may make you feel more panicky, as you feel the need to gasp for air, which in turn makes you more anxious. However, your breathing is easy to control
- Your stomach muscles should rise and fall as you breathe
 - As you inhale your stomach moves out slightly
 - As you exhale your stomach moves in slightly
- It will help to count as you breathe. Concentrate on the number three. Breathe in for three counts and out for three counts
- Maintain a steady comfortable rhythm and try to avoid holding your breath in between each count

Distraction

Taking a few minutes out of the stressful situation will allow you time to think clearly and rationally. Removing yourself from a situation is not always possible or practical. At this time, distraction techniques may be useful. Anything that makes you focus your concentration away from the stressful thoughts will help.

Try using one of the following:

1. Focusing on something else
2. Mind games
3. Physical activity
4. Imagining a 'pleasant' place
5. Deep breathing exercises

Longer term strategies



Ideas for change

At home



Maintain a healthy work/life balance



- Make time to have fun with your family and friends
- Make time for the things that are important to you
- Do not regularly exceed your work hours
- Do not regularly take work home

Individually

- Look after yourself: diet, exercise, sleep, etc.
- Empty a little from your stress jug daily
- Avoid taking on more than you know you can cope with
- Plan and organise your time
- Be aware of how your personality and values affect how you feel
- Talk to family, friends or colleagues, sharing your thoughts and fears will increase their awareness and they may have helpful suggestions
- Learn to be more assertive and how to say 'no' if communication is difficult
- Reflect on positives, not dwell on negatives
- Channel your energy into the things you can control, not stressing over the things you cannot

Encourage open communication



- Make time for discussing difficulties and ideas for change
- Encourage an environment where people can say no
- Enable people to be able to say how they feel
- Reflect on positives not just difficulties
- Put your efforts into the things you can control

Exercise regularly

- Exercise does not have to be at a gym or sports club. Take the stairs instead of the lift or walk to the shops, etc. Physical activity is an important means of reducing stress levels and preventing some of its damaging effects on the body
- Exercise uses up the adrenalin and other hormones that the body produces under stress and relaxes the muscles
- It will help to strengthen the heart and improve blood circulation
- Exercise lifts your mood through the release of endorphins

Eat a healthy balanced diet



- **Supplements and herbal teas:** They don't work for everyone, but for some people, some supplements and herbal teas can have a positive effect
- **Cut down on caffeine** as it can increase symptoms of anxiety and interfere with sleep
- The effects of **excess salt, sugar and caffeine** can mimic stress responses
- **Eat foods with a low glycaemic index** which release sugars very slowly and therefore are helpful in combating stress, e.g. wholegrain bread, vegetables, beans and oatmeal
- **Eat nuts, fruit and fish** as they are rich in Vitamin B, Selenium, omega-3 fatty acids and taurine
- **Eat comforting foods**, e.g. home made soup, porridge, etc., rather than indulging in comfort eating
- Do not use alcohol, drugs or cigarettes to cope

Tips to help you sleep

- Establish a regular routine
- Check your sleeping environment
- Learn to de-stress before bed
- Do not eat late
- Get enough exercise
- Try out complementary remedies
- Keep a sleep diary to monitor sleep patterns
- Use sleep strategies
- Interrupt unwanted thoughts
- Talk to your GP

(National Sleep Foundation web:
www.sleepfoundation.org)

At work



Encourage a healthy work team culture



- Do not encourage late working or taking work home
- Do not encourage skipping breaks or eating lunch at the desk or steering wheel!
- Give people control of their day
- Encourage team spirit
- Encourage a good work/life balance
- Time management
- Environment

Useful resources



- First Steps www.firststeps-surrey.nhs.uk
- HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/stress
- NHS Choices
 - Workplace Stress self assessment tool and information
 - <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/workplacehealth/pages/reducestress.aspx>