

April 2026

## HOT TOPIC OF THE MONTH: Stress Awareness

*Understanding stress, taking action, and “Being the Change” in our wellbeing*

### What is stress, and why does it matter?

Every April since 1992, the UK has recognised **Stress Awareness Month**, dedicated to increasing public understanding of stress—its causes, its impacts, and how we can manage it effectively. The **2026 theme, “Be the Change,”** draws inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi’s well-known message about personal responsibility. This theme encourages us not to wait for circumstances or workplaces to change before we look after our wellbeing—but instead to take **purposeful, proactive steps** to build resilience, strengthen supportive relationships, and reduce the impact of stress in our daily lives.

Stress is the body’s **natural response to pressure or perceived threat**. In short bursts, stress can sharpen focus and motivation. But prolonged, unmanaged stress can affect our mental and physical health, relationships, decision-making, and engagement with work or study.

**If stress affects all of us, why do we sometimes wait until we reach breaking point before doing something about it?**

Many of our learners juggle work, training, and personal responsibilities. Recognising stress early and taking positive, practical steps can make a huge difference—not only in learning success but also in overall wellbeing. *On this edition we have added some supportive CPD links to learn more.*

### Understanding stress: what it looks like

Stress affects people differently, but here are some common signs:

#### Physical signs

- Tiredness or trouble sleeping
- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Upset stomach or discomfort

#### Mental & emotional signs

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Low motivation
- Irritability

#### Behavioural signs

- Avoiding tasks
- Withdrawing from others
- Forgetfulness
- Changes in eating habits

Recognising these early signals is the first step to *being the change* in your own wellbeing.

**Stress Awareness CPD opportunities: Explore on Blossom** Recognise signs and symptoms of stress

- *Wellbeing Essentials* → [Dealing with stress](#)
- *Mindfulness* → [Stress, fear and panic](#)

**Understanding Stress CPD opportunities: Explore on Blossom.** Recognise and understand emotions

- *Emotional Intelligence* → [Self-awareness](#)
- *Wellbeing Essentials* → [Understanding Emotions](#)

## Health & Safety

Stress is a workplace hazard, and employers must consider it as part of their duty of care.

### Examples:

- Excessive workloads or unclear expectations
- Poor communication or lack of support
- Remote work risks: eye strain, poor posture, isolation

### Tutor prompts:

- *What part of your workload or training causes you the most stress?*
- *What reasonable adjustments could reduce this?*
- *How do you protect your physical health during online work or study?*

**Health & Safety CPD opportunities: Explore on Blossom.** Support your physical and mental wellbeing

- *Workplace Safety Essentials* → [Workstation Ergonomics](#)
- *Wellbeing Essentials* → [The Importance of Work/Life Balance](#)

## Equality & Diversity

People experience and express stress differently. Inclusive environments acknowledge that culture, disability, neurodiversity, mental health needs and personal circumstances influence stress.

### Examples:

- Providing flexible or differentiated support
- Making online systems accessible
- Understanding cultural views around mental wellbeing

### Tutor prompts:

- *Do you feel confident asking for help when stressed?*
- *How can we make learning more accessible for you?*
- *What environment helps you feel calm and focused?*

**Equality & Diversity CPD opportunities: Explore on Blossom** Develop inclusive practice

- *Diversity & Inclusion* → [Becoming an Inclusive Leader](#)
- *Neurodiversity* → [Neurodiversity Awareness](#)

## Safeguarding

Stress, if left unaddressed, can make individuals more vulnerable to harm. It may contribute to:

- Emotional distress
- Withdrawal
- Unsafe coping strategies
- Mental health concerns

Staff recognising changes in behaviour is vital to early intervention.

## Examples:

- A learner suddenly disengages or stops attending
- Someone mentions feeling overwhelmed or hopeless
- Noticeable changes in behaviour or communication

## Tutor prompts:

- *Is anything outside of training affecting how you're feeling?*
- *Who supports you when things become stressful?*
- *Do you know how to access safeguarding support?*

## Safeguarding CPD opportunities: Explore on Blossom. Strengthen your safeguarding awareness

- *Safeguarding* → *Safeguarding & Mental Health in Young People (UK)*
- *Mental Health Awareness* → *Introduction to Psychological Safety*

## Prevent Duty & British Values

Stress and vulnerability can increase susceptibility to harmful influences or misinformation. Supporting critical thinking, respect and a sense of belonging helps keep learners safe.

## Examples:

- Reinforcing respectful communication during disagreements
- Encouraging learners to check information sources when overwhelmed
- Creating inclusive online communities where learners feel valued

## Tutor prompts:

- *How do you stay safe online when feeling stressed?*
- *Why is respectful discussion important, especially when emotions run high?*
- *How can strong community values protect us when we feel vulnerable?*

## 🧠 Taking action: How to “Be the Change” this April

This year's campaign challenges us to take small steps that collectively make a big impact:

### ✓ Prioritise regular breaks

Your brain needs downtime—especially during online work.

### ✓ Move your body

Stretching, short walks, or desk-based exercises reduce tension.

### ✓ Set achievable goals

Break tasks into smaller steps to avoid overload.

### ✓ Stay connected

Talk to colleagues, tutors or friends—connection reduces stress.

### ✓ Practise calming techniques

Mindfulness, deep breathing or grounding exercises help restore focus.

### ✓ Maintain healthy habits

Hydration, sleep and balanced nutrition all support mental clarity.

### ✓ Ask for support early

Speaking up is a proactive, positive action—not a weakness.

By making these small changes, each of us can “**Be the Change**” that improves our wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around us.

## Tutor Discussion Questions

Use these to encourage reflection in sessions:

- *What signs tell you that you're becoming stressed?*
- *What could you change in your routine to reduce stress?*
- *What support would help you manage stress better?*
- *What does "Be the Change" mean to you personally?*
- *How can we support each other as a learning community?*