

# Stress

## *A Step In The Right Direction*

Stress is a feeling you may experience when responding to demand or pressure. In many cases stress is a healthy reaction as it drives performance and helps us to cope with the challenges of life. However, prolonged or excessive stress can be overwhelming and can have a negative impact on health, wellbeing, relationships, work and mental health.

When our bodies react under pressure or stress we activate the nervous system, commonly known as the fight or flight response. This releases hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol which increase our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure and muscle tension. If stress is persistent then we are unable to settle these physiological changes.



### The following can be stress related symptoms:

#### Behavior and Physical

- Lack of motivation and concentration
- Fluctuating moods
- Inability to cope with responsibility or demands
- Increased substance use (drugs, alcohol)
- Sleep disturbance
- Digestive upset
- Increase in blood pressure
- Weakened immune function

#### Feelings & Thoughts

- Lack of confidence
- Feeling that everything is out of your control
- Anger or irritability

### Where Can You Go For Help?

**Employee Assistance Program:** is a confidential, short term assistance program provided by qualified professionals. This service is available to all employees, for both work-related and personal problems where you may need assistance, support or guidance.

**General Practitioner:** Your GP can discuss medical or other support options with you. If you don't already have a local GP you can search for clinics in your area via Health Engine <https://healthengine.com.au>

**Skilled Health Professional:** Talk to your trusted health professional about your experience with stress, or you can find additional information on seeking help via:

**BlackDog Institute:** <http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/gettinghelp/overview.cfm>

**BeyondBlue:** 1300 22 4636 (24hrs, 7 days) OR <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/find-a-professional>

**TIP:** Ask the receptionist to schedule a double appointment time with your health professional so that there is plenty of time to discuss the situation without feeling rushed.

**Inner Circle:** Alternatively, you can also speak with your manager, a supportive family member, close friend or colleague for support.

**Conversation Starters:** If you are having trouble finding the words to open a discussion about your feelings try some of these conversation openers.

*"I've been pretending things are going okay, but I'm actually feeling out of control...."*

*"I'm not coping, and I need help figuring out what to do about it...."*

*"I don't need solutions at the moment. I just need someone to listen...."*

*"I am falling behind on my work and don't know how to catch up...."*