

Mental Health: Taking steps to combat stress



October marks the beginning of Mental Health Month in Australia – a time for all communities across the country to come together in support of better mental health for all.

Mental Health Month encourages us to pause, reflect, and recognise the small, meaningful actions we can take to support our own mental health – especially during challenging times.

Taking a step – no matter how big or small – towards better mental health can be empowering. Whether you're just beginning your wellbeing path or have already taken some steps toward wellbeing and positive mental health, every effort counts. A forward step, a sidestep, or even a setback – are all part of the process and contribute to personal growth, resilience and emotional strength.

A diagnosis of NETs can be both physically and emotionally challenging. Feelings of stress, uncertainty, and emotional fatigue are common and valid. Developing regular ways to manage stress can help regain a sense of control and maintain inner balance



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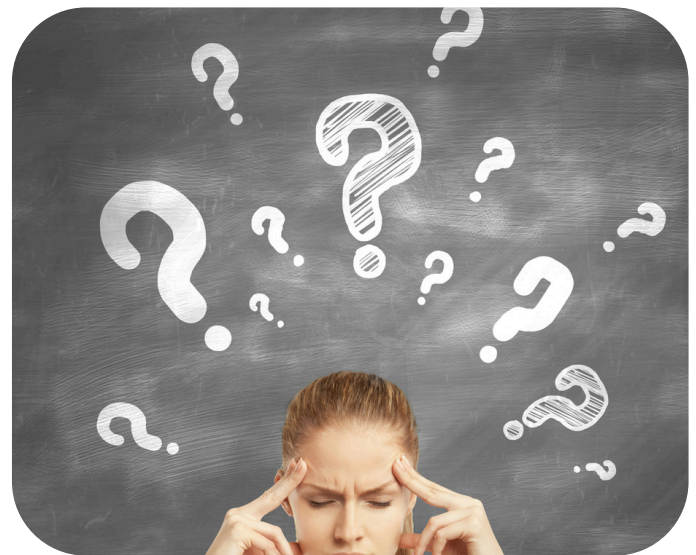


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Here are some practical steps to help manage stress and support your wellbeing.

These suggestions are intended as a general guide – adapt them in a way that suits your own unique experience and needs:



1. Develop self-awareness

The first step in managing stress often starts with noticing that something feels "off" or different from your usual self.

Becoming aware of changes in your mood, thoughts, or physical state is key to taking a step early.

2. Practice realistic thinking

Our thoughts can influence how we feel. When we're stressed, it's common to think in extremes – such as imagining the worst-case scenario or solely focusing on the negative.

Realistic thinking means gently challenging these thoughts and replacing them with more balanced perspectives.



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3. Make time for daily relaxation

Chronic stress can take a toll on the body. Finding a relaxation technique that works for you – whether it's deep breathing, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, or gentle movement – can be a powerful tool.

For example, progressive muscle relaxation involves focusing on one area of the body at a time, tensing and then relaxing the muscles, while visualising the tension leaving your body.

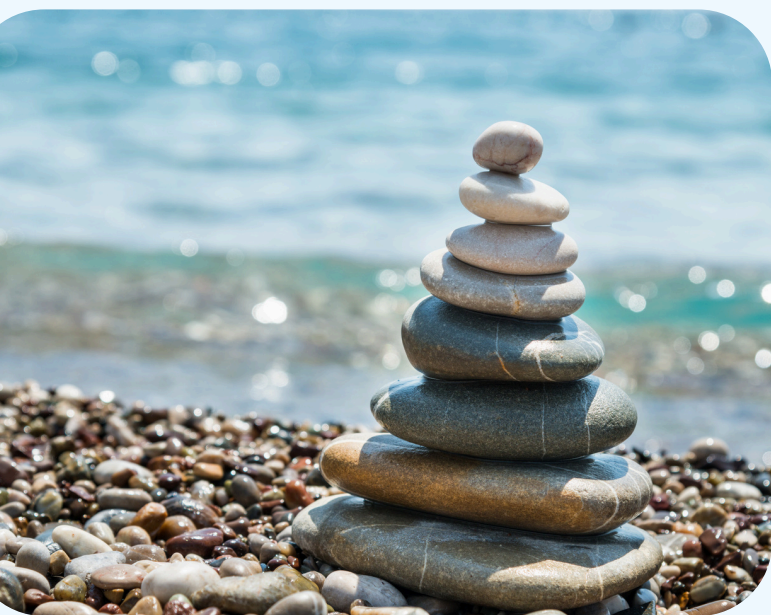
The key is consistency: making relaxation a daily priority and building on what works for you.



4. Understand the difference between good and bad stress

Not all stress is harmful. Eustress – or positive stress – can motivate us, help us learn, and push us toward goals.

Distress or chronic stress, on the other hand, can feel all-consuming and may lead to symptoms like headaches, anxiety, insomnia, pain, or high blood pressure. Learning to identify and manage distress starts with self-awareness and may require professional support.



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5. Use time and energy wisely

Time and energy are limited resources that need daily replenishment. Focusing on what is within your control and letting go of what isn't, can ease the mental load. Try setting small, achievable priorities for the day – and don't forget to include time to rest, slow down, and reset. Seek help and support from those around you if you are unsure how to start or speak to your healthcare team.

Whatever step you choose to take today, know that you don't have to do it alone.

Talking about how you're feeling and seeking support is a sign of strength.

Every small step contributes to a path toward wellbeing and resilience.



If you, or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 000.

If you are experiencing distress or are seeking additional mental health support, please contact one of the following services:

- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au
- **Beyond Blue:** 1300 22 46 36 or beyondblue.org.au
- **13YARN:** 13 92 76 (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au
- **Headspace:** 1800 650 850 or headspace.org.au
- **ReachOut:** reachout.com
- **SANE Australia:** 1800 18 SANE (1800 187 263) or sane.org
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467
- **Medicare Mental Health:** 1800 595 212 or medicarementalhealth.gov.au



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