

Mental Health

Please note, this is a sensitive topic that impacts many people. If you find that this has caused you any upset or distress, please stop and seek appropriate support or feel free to reach out to the Safeguarding team.

Safeguarding support options

Ways to access support if you are worried for yourself or someone else:

- Email safeguarding@qa.com
- Complete a **Safeguarding Self-Referral Form** if the concern relates to you.
- Complete a **Safeguarding Referral Form** if you are worried about someone else.



Contents

Anxiety	1
Depression	2
Stress.....	3
Support and Guidance	4

What is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It impacts how we think, feel, and behave, and plays a key role in how we cope with stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Mental health is crucial at every stage of life, from childhood through to adulthood.

Anxiety

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense, or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Anxiety is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat. It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.

When does Anxiety become a mental health problem?

Anxiety can become a mental health problem if it impacts your ability to live your life as fully as you want to. For example, it may be a problem if:

- You avoid situations that might cause you to feel anxious
- Your worries feel very distressing or are hard to control
- You regularly experience symptoms of anxiety, which could include panic attacks
- You find it hard to go about your everyday life or do things you enjoy.

Self-care tips:

- Breathing exercises can help you cope and feel more in control. You can find some suggestions on our page on relaxation. The NHS also has some tips [Breathing exercises for stress - NHS](#)
- Try to get enough sleep. Sleep can give you the energy to cope with difficult feelings and experiences. See our page on coping with sleep problems for more information.
- Think about your diet. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can make a difference to your mood and energy levels. See our page on food and mood for more information.
- Try to do some physical activity. Exercise can be helpful for your mental wellbeing. See our pages on physical activity for more information.

Useful Contact info:

MIND Infoline: 0300 123 3393 - Email: info@mind.org.uk

Anxiety Care UK - Helps people with anxiety disorders. 03444 775 774 (helpline), 07537 416 905 (text)

No Panic – Helpline - 0300 7729844. nopanic.org.uk - Provides a helpline, step-by-step programs, and support for people with anxiety disorders.

Depression

Depression is a low mood that lasts for a long time and affects your everyday life. In its mildest form, depression can mean just being in low spirits. It doesn't stop you leading your normal life but makes everything harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe, depression can be life-threatening because it can make you feel suicidal.

Symptoms of Depression

There are many signs and symptoms of depression, but everyone's experience will vary.

How you might feel

- Down, upset, or tearful
- Restless, agitated, or irritable
- Guilty, worthless, and down on yourself

How you might behave

- Avoiding social events and activities you usually enjoy
- Self-harming or suicidal behaviour
- Difficulty speaking, thinking clearly, or making decisions

Self-care tips:

Experiencing depression can be very difficult, but there are steps you can take that might help.

- Keeping a mood diary can help you keep track of any changes in your mood, and you might find that you have more good days than you think. It can also help you notice if any activities, places, or people make you feel better or worse.
- Try new things. Trying something new, like starting a new hobby, learning something new or even trying new food, can help boost your mood and break unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaviour.
- Try to look after your hygiene. When you're experiencing depression, it's easy for hygiene to not feel like a priority. But small things, like taking a shower and getting fully dressed whether you're going out of the house, can make a big difference to how you feel.

Useful Contact info:

Depression UK - [Depression UK • Home](#) - Depression self-help organisation made up of individuals and local groups.

Samaritans - 116 123 (freephone). Email - jo@samaritans.org [Contact Us | Samaritans](#)

Sane - [Home - SANE](#) - Offers emotional support and information for anyone affected by mental health problems.



Stress

Stress is how we react when we feel under pressure or threatened. It usually happens when we are in a situation that we don't feel we can manage or control. When we experience stress, it can be as:

- An individual, for example when you have lots of responsibilities that you are struggling to manage
- Part of a group, for example if your family is going through a difficult time, such as bereavement or financial problems
- Part of your community, for example if you belong to a religious group that is experiencing discrimination
- A member of society, for example during natural disasters or events like the coronavirus pandemic

When is stress a problem?

Sometimes, a small amount of stress can help us to complete tasks and feel more energised. But stress can become a problem when it lasts for a long time or is very intense. In some cases, stress can affect our physical and mental health. You might hear healthcare professionals refer to some types of stress as 'acute' or 'chronic':

- Acute Stress: Short-term and intense; occurs minutes to hours after an upsetting event and lasts less than a few weeks.
- Chronic Stress: Long-term or recurring; caused by ongoing pressure or challenges

Self-care tips:

Taking care of your wellbeing can help you feel more able to manage stress. Different things will work for different people, but these are some ideas you could try:

- Be Kind to Yourself: Take breaks for things you enjoy and practice self-compassion.
- Celebrate Small Wins: Reward yourself for any achievements, no matter how small.
- Relax: Find time to relax, even during stressful situations. Short breaks can help.
- Explore Hobbies: Focus on activities you enjoy. They can help reduce stress and connect you with others.
- Take Care of Your Body: Prioritise sleep, exercise, and a balanced diet. Small changes can make a big difference.

Useful Contact info:

Mind Infoline: - [How to seek help for a mental health problem - Mind](#)

Anxiety UK: - Advice and support for people living with anxiety. - 03444 775 774 (helpline) - [anxietyuk.org.uk](https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Stress Management Society - [The Stress Management Society - From Distress to De-Stress](#)



Support and Guidance

If you or someone you know is struggling, talking about your feelings can be a helpful step. You can start by reaching out to someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, or colleague. While it may feel difficult at first, shifting the conversation to other topics can help reduce any discomfort.

There are many mental health conditions, and 1 in 4 people experience them each year. It's important to stay informed and understand that seeking help is a positive step. We recommend speaking to your GP or contacting specialist organisations that provide support and advice. Our safeguarding team can also refer you to the right resources or offer support if preferred.

Further Resources

Visit our learner portal for Information, advice and activities to help prioritise your wellbeing during your apprenticeship programme, including workload management, handling stress, and external support services. [Apprentice learner's portal](#)

For safeguarding support please contact safeguarding@qa.com for further advice and support or make a referral via these links:

- [Staff/Employer/Peer Referral](#)
- [Learner Self-Referral](#)
- [Low level & Behavioural Concern](#)

