

Wellbeing events and tips from Health Assured



Movember (1st – 30th November)

“A moustache is nature’s billboard. Use it to start a conversation about men’s health this Movember.”

Movember returns each November to keep the conversation about men’s mental and physical health alive and to remind all men of the importance of early detection and increased awareness of good health and wellbeing.

There is a lack of education surrounding men’s health and this is effecting more and more people in the UK every year. Male suicide is tragically the single biggest cause of death for men under the age of 45 and on average 13 men take their own lives every day in the UK.

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men aged 20 to 35, with nearly 2,000 being diagnosed each year in the UK. To tackle this, it is important to be aware of what feels normal for you. Get to know your body and see your GP if you notice any changes. Fortunately, testicular cancer is one of the most treatable types of cancer as more than 96% of cases will be completely cured during the early stages; but it is important that it is caught quickly.

Sometimes life brings us challenges, like difficulties with work or finances, the breakdown of a relationship, overwhelming family responsibilities, or a significant setback. These challenges can take a serious toll on your mental health, but many men feel the pressure to tough it out and struggle alone. Some signs of poor mental health include feeling irritable, hopeless or worthless and behaviours such as aggression, drinking more than usual and isolating yourself from friends and family.

Establishing and maintaining good relationships, talking about the difficult topics in life and proactively taking action when times are tough are proven ways for men to stay mentally healthy and cope with the stress of everyday life before it builds. Good overall health and wellbeing is linked to not only to better mental health but also reduces the likelihood of suicide.

Mental Health and Suicide

Untreated mental health conditions can carry a high risk of suicide among men. The distress experienced at these times can distort your thinking so

it becomes harder to see possible solutions to problems or to connect with those who can offer support. There are a number of factors that have been linked to an increased risk of suicide, including:

- Ongoing stressful situations such as unemployment, relationship difficulties or health issues
- Previous family or personal history of mental illness
- Harmful drug and alcohol use
- Isolation or loneliness

Some ways to look after your mental health

- Do more of the things that make you feel great and help you to de-stress such as reading a book, going for a walk or going to the gym
- Share what’s going on, especially if you’re feeling overwhelmed
- Spend time with friends and family

If you or someone you know are emotionally distressed or in crisis, the most important first step is to talk. Begin a conversation with a friend, family member, health professional or support service. Advice and effective tools are available. Talking, listening and being there for someone who is having a tough time can be lifesaving. Check in with someone who is going through a difficult time. Ask if they are doing okay and be prepared to listen. If you or someone you know is at risk, Health Assured are available to help, please get in touch through the helpline and we will support you in whatever way we can or visit the health and wellbeing portal for more information www.healthassured.eap.com

So how can you raise awareness and support the movement? The concept is simple, men can take part by growing a moustache for the month of November, all the while posting regular updates on to social media.

If you are interested in joining Movember, or know someone who is, visit <https://uk.movember.com> for more information.



National Stress Awareness Day (1st November)

“National Stress Awareness Day 2016 was one of our most successful yet, with 180,000,000 comments on Twitter and extensive media promotion for ISMA (International Stress Management Association) and this year we’re aiming to do even better, with our special appeal to employers. This year, Stress Awareness Day goes international and I am very excited that countries from around the world will be participating.”

Carole Spiers

ISMA UK Chair, Founder National Stress Awareness Day

You too can get involved in NSAD17 on Wednesday 1st November. This event is great as a means of raising profile, achieving publicity for stress, and promoting the importance of wellbeing for individuals and organisations.

Young royals speak up and speak out!

Just recently, both the princes made startling admissions about the stress they had suffered at the tragic loss of their mother Princess Diana. This was an unprecedented step away from the ‘buttoned up’ dialogue traditionally expected from establishment figures. This demonstrates a new culture of openness about stress and mental health issues, together with a renewed interest in stress management.

Dealing with stress

Stress is your body’s way of responding to any kind of demand or threat. When you feel threatened, your nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones including adrenaline and cortisol, which rouse the body for emergency action. There are lots of way to cope with stress and the issues caused by it, from vitamins and supplements that help relieve the symptoms of stress, to regular exercise and a better diet.

Start living, stop stressing: 10 key steps to stress-free living

1. START TO PUT YOURSELF FIRST

If you eat & drink healthily, schedule regular physical activity that you enjoy & manage your time effectively, you’ll be in a better position to help others.

2. START TO PRIORITISE TASKS

There are only so many things we can do well during each day, so choose your top 3 most urgent tasks each morning and make them your priority. Reschedule, renegotiate your commitments or delegate – you can make it happen!

3. START TO MAKE TIME TO RELAX & MENTALLY UNWIND

Relaxation, breathing & meditation exercises have been proven to be effective in reducing stress & anxiety, they are ideal ways to switch off AND they boost your immune system. Just a few minutes a day will pay huge dividends.

4. START TO EMPATHISE WITH OTHERS

There are many different behaviour styles that affect how we communicate with each other. Beaware that different people can perceive your words & actions in a way you didn’t always intend. Take time to listen to others & look for solutions.

5. START TO LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL

Bring some fun into your life & spend a few minutes each day appreciating the good things you have in your life. This will help you to see opportunities for growth and learning, even from the most challenging situations.

6. STOP IGNORING YOUR NEEDS

Know what is expected of you and what is reasonable. Take short breaks throughout the day & know when and how to say ‘No’ both at work & home.

7. STOP GETTING DISTRACTED

If you’re experiencing too much pressure or just have a lot going on in your life, staying focused isn’t easy. It may help to ask for support from colleagues or friends & prioritise urgent, important & non-urgent tasks.

8. STOP ALLOWING OTHERS TO MAKE YOU FEEL INFERIOR

The key to stress-free living is to accept yourself for exactly who you are today, including past mistakes and things you might not be so proud of. Work on your self-belief and confidence and just go for it!

9. STOP BEING JUDGEMENTAL

Try to adopt a more flexible thinking style which will improve your mental well-being, whilst reducing unnecessary pressure for both you and those around you. Practice being objective and understanding.

10. STOP AVOIDING THE THINGS YOU LEAST WANT TO DO

We often put off tasks that can become a recipe for worry. Take control & promise yourself a reward when you get it done.



Remembrance Day

This is also known as Armistice Day and is on the 11th November in Commonwealth Countries.

Remembrance Day marks the day that World War One ended which was in 1918 at 11:00am on the 11th day of the 11th Month.

Since the 11th November 1919 the nation has taken part in a two minute silence which is a chance for everyone to take a moment to remember those people who gave their lives during World War One. This was first initiated on the 7th November 1919 by King George V who stated that on;

“The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month - there may be for the brief space of two minutes a complete suspension of all our normal activities... so that in perfect stillness the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead”

Why do we wear a Poppy?

Poppies grew in great numbers across the battlefields of Belgium and Northern France. After the death of his friend in 1915 Lieutenant Colonel, John McCrae described the battlefield in a famous poem called In Flanders Fields. John McCrae described the devastation of the battle destroying the land whilst the poppies remained.

Since then the poppy has become the symbol of remembrance and is worn by millions of people leading up to the 11th November to show support whilst also being used in various ceremonies throughout the day and Remembrance Sunday. The Royal British Legion now sells poppies to raise money for people who served during the war and their families.

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Day is followed by Remembrance Sunday which falls on the second Sunday of November. This year it falls on Sunday 12th November 2017 and is a chance for ceremonies to take place in honour of the fallen soldiers and their families. Members of the Royal Family, retired soldiers and some members of parliament are led by the queen in the Cenotaph Commemorations in London.

Get Involved:

A special Silence in Trafalgar Square event takes place every year on 11th November

- o Open to the public

The Cenotaph Commemorations take place in London on the 12th November 2017

- o Requires a ticket to be allocated

National Memorial Arboretum hold an outdoor Remembrance service on the 12th November

- o Open to the general public throughout the day from 8:00am until dusk

For more ceremonies on and around Remembrance Day visit the Royal British Legion website.