

Mental Health Awareness Week

15 -21 May 2023

Police
Mutual

Mental health problems can affect anyone, any time of the year, but mental health awareness week is a great time to show your support for better mental health and looking after your own wellbeing.

Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, the theme for **Mental Health Awareness Week**, this year is 'Anxiety'.

The purpose of the week is to increase people's awareness and understanding of anxiety by providing information on the things that can help prevent it from becoming a problem. For more details of the week click [here](#).

The Week is an opportunity for people to talk about all aspects of mental health, with a focus on providing help and support.

Anxiety is a feeling of stress, panic, worry or fear, which can be mild or severe. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life, you may feel worried and anxious about having a medical test or moving house. During times like these, feeling anxious is perfectly normal.

Some people find it hard to control their worries. If your feelings of anxiety are affecting your daily life, then it's important to talk to your GP and get help.

There are many symptoms of anxiety including, a faster heartbeat, headaches, chest pains, sweating, feeling tearful, insomnia, and compulsive behaviour.



Taking care of your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health.

Mental health problems affect around one in four people in any given year*. They range from common problems, such as [depression](#) and [anxiety](#), to rarer problems such as [schizophrenia](#) and [bipolar disorder](#).



Coping with Anxiety

If you are feeling anxious, the following strategies may help you reduce your anxiety:

Breathing exercises - stop and take a breath, try breathing techniques like box breathing or baby breath.

Talk - friends and family can help support you through how you are feeling. You may also want to consider talking to a professional counsellor.

Keep active - deal with your problems more calmly. Go outside to exercise, as fresh air and spending time in nature can really help. Exercise can help clear your head.

Sleep - will give you the energy to cope with difficult feelings and experiences.

Nutrition - eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can make a difference to your mood and energy levels.

Do something you enjoy - spending time doing something you enjoy will take your mind off how you are feeling, this could be as simple as having a bath or reading a book.

Keep a diary - write down your worries and concerns. This may help process your thoughts and emotions.

Be kind to yourself - don't be too hard on yourself, look for positives in your life and make time for self-care.

Music - can have a powerful effect on your mood. Happy or relaxing music can directly impact the way you feel.

Mindfulness - can help reduce anxiety; it can also give you the space to respond calmly under pressure.

Try alternative therapies - there are many types that you can try, these include yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, reflexology, and acupuncture.



Research has shown that emergency services workers are twice as likely as the public to identify problems at work as the main cause of their mental health problems, but they are also significantly less likely to seek help. So it's even more important to look after your own mental health when working on the frontline.

Here are some tips:

Think about your purpose: Be clear about why you are doing this job.

Be clear on expectations: Make sure you know what is expected of you and whether it is realistic.

Keep your boundaries: Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life, don't take work home with you.

Talk to colleagues: Make time to talk to your colleagues about your experiences and share fears and concerns.

Value your own family and relationships: While work is important, your family and relationships need to be valued.

Exercise: Regular exercise can boost your self esteem, can help you concentrate, relax and increase your overall wellbeing.

Get plenty of sleep: Sleep helps regulate the chemicals in our brain that transmit information. These chemicals are important in managing our moods and

emotions and an imbalance in those chemicals can result in us becoming depressed or anxious. Read our sleep guide [here](#).

Eat well: A balanced diet that is good for your physical wellbeing is also good for your mental wellbeing. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well.

Avoid alcohol: The numbing effects of drinking are only temporary and can often lead to mental health issues. It's advised that if you do drink, that you stay within the governing bodies recommended unit guidelines.

Keep in touch: It's good for you to catch up with friends and family face to face or over the phone.

Take a break: A change of scenery or pace is good for you.

Do something you're good at: Enjoying yourself can help beat stress

Care for others: Supporting others uplifts you as well as them.

Ask for help: If at times, life gets too much for you, it's important that you speak to someone, this may be a family member or trusted friend, your GP or a professional organisation, see the list at the end of this guide for details.

Making positive change is more important than ever, but it's difficult to know where to start. Do one thing today, whether it's going for a walk, learning a new skill or doing something creative, taking the first steps to getting support for yourself, or reaching out to someone else, take the opportunity to do one thing during **Mental Health Awareness Week.**



Whatever you've been through this year, **Mental Health Awareness Week** is a chance to make a positive change for your mental health.

Useful links:

[NHS](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Mind](#)

[AnxietyUK](#)

[Mental Health Foundation](#)

Police Mutual Services

We've teamed up with **PayPlan****, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call **PayPlan**** on **0800 197 8433**.

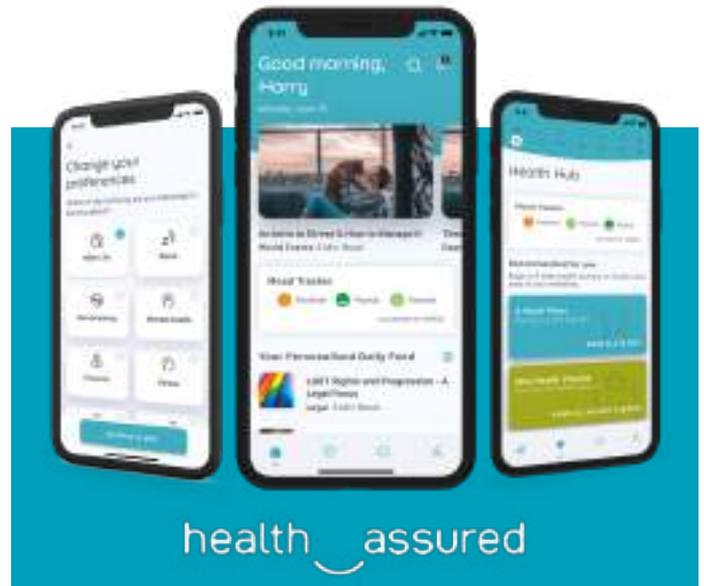
Our **Care Line** Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support. Take a look at the e-portal or download the APP.

Health & Wellbeing e-portal:

<https://healthassured.eap.co.uk>

Username: **policemutual**

Password: **careline**



Download the **Health Assured App** and register today - your code is **MHA107477**

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To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at our Wellbeing Hub [here](#).

Call us **01543 441630**
Visit **policemutual.co.uk**

We're open from
9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

* Time to Change. Attitudes to Mental Illness 2014 Research Report

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