

## Work on yourself if lockdown is affecting mental health

### IN STRESS AWARENESS MONTH, TIPS ON HOW TO STAY CALM

Burton Mail · 6 Apr 2021 · 6 · By GEORGE BUNN [george.bunn@reachplc.com](mailto:george.bunn@reachplc.com)

AS the coronavirus pandemic passes its one-year anniversary it has taken its toll on our mental health and many have been grappling with the best ways to relieve stress.



Statistics from Yougov and the Mental Health Foundation found that 74% of UK adults have felt so stressed at some point over the last year, they felt unable to cope.

In the education sector, nearly four in five teachers feel their job has adversely affected their mental health during the pandemic, a survey has suggested.

More than one in four (27%) teachers whose jobs have had a negative impact on their mental or physical health over the past year have seen a doctor or medical professional about the issues, the poll found.

April is Stress Awareness Month, and one organisation trying to help is the Stress Management Society.

Neil Shah, one of its founders and “chief-destressing officer”, has been sharing tips on how to properly destress amid the lockdown.

He said: “Stress Awareness Month is an opportunity to properly raise awareness and highlight what action we should be doing.

“Given the last 12 months, it is important to reflect on what has happened. Lots of people have have been feeling a loss of connection, with constant rule changing that can be really damaging.”

Stress Awareness Month was set up in 2003, and Neil believes the current one is the most important yet. He said: “For the first seven to eight months [of the pandemic] it was all Covid but there have been other issues of dealing with mental health, and we are at the point where we cannot ignore it any more.

“There is a fear now of going back to normal life, and we are at a point where we cannot go back. We need to get people prepared to go back into social interactions.

“I am concerned that there will be long-lasting psychological consequences from the lockdown; peoples lives have been changed forever.”

Here are some of his top tips for dealing with pandemic-related stress:

**Set boundaries:** “You have to ask yourself, are you working from home or are you just living at work? You need to set boundaries, Don’t feel like you have to a constant attachment to your work, and try not to work longer than you should.”

**Exercise:** “I would recommend taking exercise both before and after work.

**Consider the present:** “We are only stressed about our past or our future, but we have the power to change the right here, and the right now.

**Get a good sleeping pattern:** “Our sleep needs change at different times of life, but there is nothing better than waking up feeling completely recharged and rested after a good night’s sleep. sadly for many of us this doesn’t actually happen very often.”

**Don’t be enslaved by your email:** “Just because email is instantaneous, it doesn’t mean you have to respond to it instantaneously.

**Think about alternative perspectives:** “Sometimes removing yourself from the situation and taking a step back can help in a crisis.”

**If you need help:**

CALM (0800 58 58 58, [thecalmzone.net](http://thecalmzone.net)) has a helpline for men who are down and who need to talk or find information and support.

Depression Alliance is a charity for people with depression and offers a wide range of useful resources and links to other relevant information. Visit [depressionalliance.org](http://depressionalliance.org).