

My Early Warning Signs

Know your own signs of strain, and what to do when you spot them

Everyone has a stress signature: a particular set of changes that show up when pressure starts to build. Some people sleep badly, others snap at people, others go quiet. The signs are usually there well before things become difficult, but they are easy to miss in the moment.

Mapping yours while you are feeling well makes them much easier to recognise, and to act on, when you are not.

Once it is filled in, consider sharing it with your manager. It gives them something concrete to look out for, and a way to help that you have chosen.

IF SOMEONE NEEDS HELP NOW

If there is an immediate risk to life, call **999**. Samaritans are available free, 24 hours a day, on **116 123**. In England, NHS 111 (option 2) connects to an urgent mental health service.

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What changes when pressure builds?

	EARLY SIGNS (THINGS ARE STARTING TO BUILD)	LATER SIGNS (I AM STRUGGLING)
Thoughts: what goes through my mind?		
Feelings: what do I feel more of?		
Body: sleep, appetite, tension, energy		
Behaviour: what do I do more, or less, of?		

Prompts if you are stuck: racing or looping thoughts, self-criticism, irritability, tearfulness, numbness, poor sleep, headaches, tight shoulders, skipping meals, working later, cancelling plans, more caffeine or alcohol, avoiding emails, checking things repeatedly.

What others notice, and what helps

EXERCISE

Looking from outside

1. What might colleagues, friends or family notice before I do?

2. What usually triggers the build-up for me?

WHEN I NOTICE...	WHAT HELPS ME	WHAT I COULD ASK FOR AT WORK
Early signs		
Later signs		

EXERCISE

Who I will tell

1. The person I will tell when I notice my early signs:

2. Support I can use, such as an Employee Assistance Programme, my GP or a colleague:
