

# LIFE OUT OF CONTROL?

A little stress is healthy but too much is too much. When life feels out of control, it's not unusual to feel down or have suicidal feelings – many of us do. What matters is not letting it drag on.

## Stuff happens

We can't control what happens to us in life.

You just need to look at the news headlines to know that.

But we can control how we react to it.

That means recognising when you're feeling out of control and doing something about it.

This card will show you how. Keep it with you.

## Why it matters

As well as making you miserable, long-term overload will increase your risk of serious disease including cancer, heart disease and high-blood pressure.

It will lead to poor decisions which will make you less effective at work and at home and will even follow you into bed, disrupting sleep.

**SAVE THIS CARD**  
It might save a life

## GET BACK IN BALANCE



We all think we know people who never seem to lose control. But the truth is those people don't exist.

The reason they seem to take it all in their stride is that they know how to react,

how to get back in balance, get a decent night's sleep and go again the next day.

Odds on they're using some of the ideas on the other side of this card. (If you're feeling wired right now, try

the three minute time-out opposite.)

Suicide kills nearly 6,000 people a year in the UK which proves just how serious not dealing with this stuff can be.

## 3 minute time-out

This will lower heart-rate and blood-pressure and help put you in control.

**Minute 1.** Deliberately refocus attention. Change position or stop moving. Perhaps close your eyes. Ask yourself: what is happening to me right now?

**2.** Now you're aware of what's going on and how you feel, focus on your breath. Follow the air in and out of your body.

**3.** Move awareness back out again like the lens of a camera getting wider. Slowly take in the world.

Get on with your life. You'll make a far better decision now than before the time-out.

## NEED SUPPORT?

Samaritans – call 116 123 free, for everyone, 24/7

CALM - 0800 585858 free, for men, 5pm-midnight

PAPYRUS - 0800 068 4141 free, for young people, 24/7

NHS non emergency: England/Scotland – call 111  
Wales – call 0845 46 47

Contact your GP

We all need to look after our mental wellbeing as well as our physical health.

The National Suicide Prevention Alliance is a coalition of organisations working together to reduce suicide and improve the support for those affected by suicide.

For more on the NSPA, further information and support visit: [NSPA.org.uk](http://NSPA.org.uk)

The Stay Alive app could support you. Download from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

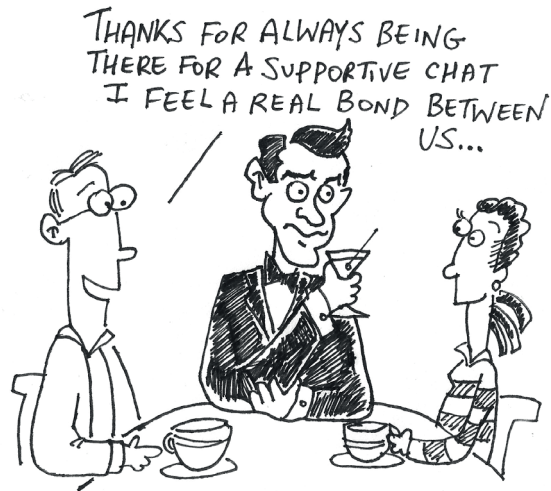


## GET OUT OF YOURSELF

You can do this physically by taking **exercise**. Just a walk if you can't do anything more active. This gets the feel-good hormones buzzing round your body.

Or **change what is happening in your head**. Read. Play. Write. Study. Learn something new - a new skill or language.

The quickest way is just to **take notice** of your surroundings. Perhaps go outside, look up, look around.



## CONNECT WITH OTHERS

The greatest human gift is our ability to **communicate**. We're lucky to have it.

Connect by **meeting** a friend, **helping** someone, **joining** something, **volunteering**, playing sport or a game.

And **laugh** – it's an instant connection.

## REACT SMART: talk, listen, take control

Talking and listening always help because when we talk we see solutions we would probably never find through thinking alone. (After all, that's why humans have always lived and worked in groups and not alone.) Often you don't need any special skills for this. You can listen to a friend. A friend can listen to you.

But there's no shame in asking for expert support when you need it – from your GP, from a helpline. Sometimes that's the smart thing to do.

Since you can't control what happens to you in life, only what you do about it, sometimes asking for support is the best way to take back control.

There are many places where you can find what you need. See the back of this card.



## GET SOME REST

When you're overloaded **sleep** might feel like the last thing you need. But it's probably the thing you need most.

Get a bed routine that works for you. (Use the bed for sleeping. No screens. Read or listen to the radio to wind down.)

Drink, drugs and caffeine will interfere with sleep – and may lead to poor decision-making – so best to avoid them.



## HOW TO LOOK OUT FOR A FRIEND

We're all different but the **warning signs** are much the same for everyone: tiredness, disrupted sleep, irritability, addictive or dangerous behaviour and/or losing interest in work, sex, food or anything else that's usually enjoyable.

**Keep an eye out** for your friends. If you're concerned, keep in touch. Perhaps do something together and have a chat. It's OK to talk about difficult stuff, even suicide. That's how we get through it.