

## More bad days than good? Take action - use our checklist

Sometimes one of the greatest challenges in taking control of our emotional health is recognising the changes in our feelings and behaviours.

In an environment like the NHS, we are constantly putting others' needs before our own and this can mean that at some point, we start to think that feeling frustrated, anxious, overwhelmed or disconnected is just 'part of the day job' or that we can't do anything to influence how we or others feel.

These checklists will help you think about your situation and can also be used as the basis of a conversation with a staff member or colleague who seems to be having more bad days than good, but doesn't seem to be aware that this isn't okay.

It can be a good way to help people realise their behaviour and quality of work is suffering because of their emotional health.

If more negative areas have been circled, it's likely to indicate someone is feeling 'on go slow' or 'on the edge'.

If this is the case, you can use:

- [the action planning sheet to understand what is causing this](#)
- [the 'holding a conversation with your manager' document to guide your discussion.](#)

# How are you feeling?

## Do you need to think about how you are coping?

Extended periods of experiencing negative emotions can have a negative effect on our physical health, as well as our ability to think clearly and the behaviours we adopt. Sometimes we become disconnected from our emotional state and don't always recognise the extent to

which our emotions may be having an impact on us. These are symptoms described by NHS staff who are experiencing more bad days than good at work. Review the list and consider the extent to which you experience any of these.

Physical symptoms	
• dizziness	• racing heart
• general aches and pains	• stooped posture
• grinding teeth	• shoulder and back pain
• clenched jaws	• sweaty palms
• headaches	• exhaustion
• indigestion	• trembling
• muscle tension	• upset stomach
• difficulty sleeping	• more frequent illness

Thinking-based symptoms
• constant worry
• forgetfulness
• difficulty making decisions
• inability to concentrate
• lack of creativity
• loss of sense of humour
• lack of openness to new approaches
• difficulty in learning new things

Emotional symptoms
• anxiety
• anger
• feeling powerless
• frequent mood swings
• irritability
• frustration
• nervousness
• sadness

## If you have identified that you have recently experienced a number of these symptoms – don't panic – take action.

Identifying symptoms can increase awareness to allow you to identify ways to seek support and advice on how to increase your emotional health. Displaying a number of the symptoms associated with negative emotions suggests that your emotional health is affecting your energy

levels, motivation and ultimately your effectiveness at work. Speak to your manager about what is affecting your emotional health at work and use this resource to support you to build your emotional health.

# How are you behaving?

Some people find it easier to think about their behaviour at work rather than focusing on their emotions or physical symptoms.

These are some of the types of behaviours your colleagues see in each other when they are experiencing positive or negative emotional health.

## Which behaviours do you recognise in yourself?

	Patient care	Interaction with patients	Interactions with colleagues	General performance
<b>Behaviours associated with positive emotional health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>find answers to problems</li> <li>adaptable/flexible – overcome barriers</li> <li>builds trust in patients by being confident and assured</li> <li>passionate, caring, empathetic, great at listening</li> <li>proactive and thorough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>warm and inviting</li> <li>positive and cheerful</li> <li>build rapport easily</li> <li>treat each patient as an individual</li> <li>demonstrate empathy</li> <li>motivate and empower patients' emotional control when delivering bad news</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage and motivate others</li> <li>support colleagues who need it</li> <li>share ideas and seek effective solutions</li> <li>give and ask for feedback</li> <li>impart knowledge and develop others</li> <li>seem open to others</li> <li>more likely to challenge bad practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>productive and efficient</li> <li>highly engaged and focused on the task at hand</li> <li>seek and act on feedback</li> <li>seek out opportunities to learn and develop</li> <li>open to changes</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviours associated with negative emotional health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rushed, with no time talking to patients</li> <li>easily distracted</li> <li>tentative</li> <li>only do the minimum required</li> <li>don't tend to patient worries/fears</li> <li>let others' poor performance/behaviours go unchallenged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>very brief interactions</li> <li>short/curt/rude/dismissive</li> <li>reduced eye contact</li> <li>task or procedure rather than patient focused</li> <li>appear disinterested and 'cold' or</li> <li>display too much emotion – get 'too attached'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>short-tempered, rude, impatient</li> <li>cause or carry on conflict</li> <li>less supportive and tolerant of others</li> <li>defensive in reaction to feedback, preference to work in isolation</li> <li>inappropriate responses and poor communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>poor concentration and focus</li> <li>disengaged, demotivated, lethargic</li> <li>reduced productivity and efficiency</li> <li>leave more work for others or</li> <li>over-compensate and try to do too much</li> </ul>

Displaying the behaviours associated with negative emotions suggests that your emotional health is affecting your energy levels, motivation and ultimately your effectiveness at work.

These resources can help you think this through and talk to others to get help and advice in thinking of ways you can change this.

Consider what might be the cause of these behaviours:

- Have there been recent changes that could have made you feel more negative?
- What is in your power to influence your wellbeing?
- What can you do to have more good days?