

When is it a problem?

Too much in-the-moment pressure makes people misread situations and react inappropriately, which can have consequences that last well beyond the moment. Repeated often enough, in-the-moment pressure also becomes a health risk.

People's reactions to pressure vary, but here are some typical early signs. Learning to recognise these early signs is one of the most important stages in developing resilience. It enables you to take action before the threat becomes overwhelming.

Physical	Digestive problems, nausea, light headedness, dry mouth, heart pounding, rashes or flushing
Emotional	Immediate emotional judgement, short temper, feeling overwhelmed, paranoia
Behavioural	Procrastinating, neglecting responsibilities, nervous habits such as pacing, nail biting
Thinking	Inability to concentrate, seeing only the negative, constant worrying, self-blame, poor judgement

Task: What are our early signs?

Take a moment to think about what your early signs are.

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Task: How are you coping at the moment?

Develop your self-awareness with this widely used self-assessment test*.

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Techniques to manage our thoughts and emotions

Step out of the stressful situation - Literally walk away and give your attention to something else, even if only for a moment.

Talk to a colleague - Putting things into words to another person gives you distance and helps you calm down.

Notice what you're feeling - Take a step back, become aware of your feelings; accepting them puts you back in charge and lets you move on.

Break the cycle - When you have negative thoughts, deliberately turn your attention to something positive. This is a great distraction technique that takes you to a place that reaffirms the good things in your life.

Know our limits and when to seek help

Being resilient is not about being self-sufficient. Resilience is about thriving under pressure and sourcing help when you need it.

Task: What are our limits?

Use this exercise to become more aware of your limits. If possible, do the exercise with a colleague. Observe yourself over the course of a week. Notice when you feel pushed beyond your limits. At the end of each day, reflect on what happened.

Think through:

- the situation – what happened, what led up to it, who else was involved and how did you feel at the time
- how it affected you – what buttons it pushed, the thoughts that went through your head, the feelings you experienced and how you reacted physically
- the demand – what was actually being asked of you
- how you responded – what options you felt you had at that moment, how you chose to respond and what prompted you to respond that way
- what the result was – for you and for others
- what other ways you could have responded
- what you can learn from the experience about your limits and how to respect them.

Jot down your answers in bullet form. At the end of the week, get together with a colleague or friend and explain to each other what you've learned about recognising and respecting your limits.

Download the full guide [‘Building our own resilience, health and wellbeing’](#) for more information, ideas and tips.