



THE BURNT CHEF  
PROJECT

Wellness Check In



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## THE BURNT CHEF PROJECT

### Wellness Check In

The health and safety of the hospitality industry, which is the 3rd biggest industry in the UK, is a legal requirement for your employer and a number one importance for us at The Burnt Chef Project. This includes the physical and psychological well-being of all individuals.

We need to be mindful that our working environment which we operate in daily tends to be one of increased stress levels contributed by:

- Hot temperatures
- Long hours
- Poor diet
- High work pressures

Nutrition, regular exercise, restful sleep, mindfulness, staying connected, and getting mental health care can help decrease stress hormones and improve health.

Take a moment to rate yourself on the survey below, there are no right or wrong answers. Use the separate Self Care Playbook as suggestions that may improve any areas that you score low on currently:

#### 1. SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

***Are you taking time to maintain your supportive relationships with those you are at home or working with?***

Turning off media and devices for high-quality time together making art, dancing, cooking or reading? Remaining in touch with mentors, friends, and family by phone or in person?

No	Sometimes				Yes	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### 2. DAILY EXERCISE

***Are you engaging in 60 minutes of physical activity every day?***

It doesn't have to be all at one time. 35 jumping jacks here and there, a short run after work, a trip to the gym, a walk around the block twice, running, bedtime yoga, 10 pushups, the list can go on and on.

Bottom line – are you getting your body moving and your heart rate up to burn off stress?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### 3. HEALTHY SLEEP

#### ***Are you getting sufficient, high-quality sleep?***

This may be particularly hard in our line of work, but things that help are going to sleep and waking up at the same time each day. Turning off electronics at least a half hour before bed. Drinking some warm water or hot tea and read a book after you climb into bed. Avoiding caffeine in the afternoon and evening. Ensuring your place of sleep is cool, quiet and free of distractions and devices.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### 4. NUTRITION

#### ***Are you getting the right level of nutrition?***

This is not about losing weight. This is about ensuring you are getting proper nutrition to help combat stress. Keeping regular mealtimes, so you aren't just snacking all day. Minimising refined carbohydrates, high fat, high sugar foods and reducing your alcohol intake.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### 5. MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORT

#### ***Are you engaging in the mental health care?***

Minimising consumption of news or other media content that feels upsetting. Asking for help or a moment – opening up the communication in your work, house or with friends about times when help is needed. Scheduling and maintaining sessions for existing psychotherapy, CBT care or substance or alcohol use treatment when possible.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### 6. MINDFULNESS, MEDIATION, PRAYER

#### ***Are you actively taking practise in mindful activities?***

Practising mindfulness, such as meditation, yoga, or prayer for 20 minutes, twice a day. Apps like Headspace and Calm are easy, accessible ways to get started. Meditations can be found online, as well.

Mindfulness can help strengthen the brain pathways that actively buffer the stress response.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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**Self Care Playbook**



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### Self Care Playbook

Stress can show up in our bodies, emotions and behaviour in many different ways. For example in our bodies - changes to sleep patterns and appetite, headaches, stomach aches, or bowel changes, and spikes in blood pressure may all be signs of an overactive stress response.

In our emotions and behaviour – we may feel more irritable, experience mood changes, anxiety, depression, increased substance use, or anger.

It's important to know that these changes aren't "just in your head". They may be signs of a biological reaction occurring in our brains and bodies due to the collective stress we are all under.

If you have experienced significant adversity in the past, especially during the critical years of childhood, you may be at higher risk of experiencing health and behavioural problems during times of stress.

**The good news is there are simple things you can do every day, at home, to protect your health. The following guide can help you manage your stress response.**

They may seem simple at first, but they are evidence-based and demonstrated to be effective.

Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships can protect our brains and bodies from the harmful effects of stress and adversity.

Healthy nutrition, regular exercise, restful sleep, practicing mindfulness, staying connected to our social supports, and getting mental health care can help decrease stress hormones and improve health.

Take your time, build a program that works for you and be kind to yourself, as we all move through this challenge together.





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### Take Control & Make a Plan

#### **STEP 1: AWARENESS – HOW IS STRESS SHOWING UP IN OUR OWN BODY**

- First, we must all check-in with ourselves and recognise how stress shows up in our bodies. Changes to your sleep patterns or appetite, headaches or bowel changes, spikes in blood pressure or blood sugar are all signs of an overactive stress response.
- If you have a chronic illness or existing condition, you need to pay particular attention to your condition and ensure you are tracking any significant changes. Stress management is of utmost importance to help manage your condition.

#### **STEP 2: MAKE A PLAN FOR YOU**

- Making a plan that works for you that is realistic about what you can/will do is important.
- Think about what usually works for you when you're feeling stressed and make a list.
- As you make your plan, make sure elements of the six categories of stress management to help regulate your stress response system are included. The six categories are:
  1. Supportive relationships – stay connected to our communities
  2. Exercise – 60 minutes a day (doesn't have to be all at once)
  3. Healthy Sleep – practice good sleep hygiene including going to bed and waking up at the same time each day, and ensuring that your place of sleep is cool, quiet and free of distractions. Avoid caffeine in the afternoon or evening.
  4. Nutrition
  5. Mental and Behavioural Health Support
  6. Mindfulness — like meditation or prayer

**Included in this playbook are “Self-Care Templates” that can help you start building your program.**

#### **STEP 3: WORK YOUR PROGRAM**

- Make sure you're practicing your program every day and twice a day if you need to.
- Check in with yourself regularly to see how you're feeling – emotionally and physically. Ask yourself the questions – how does my chest feel, my stomach, my legs, my head, etc.
- Analyse your program. If you need to change things about it, go ahead and do so. Let your plan evolve to ensure it is working for you. If it's not, change specifics up, but ensure elements from the six categories remain.



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### Sustainers and Drainers

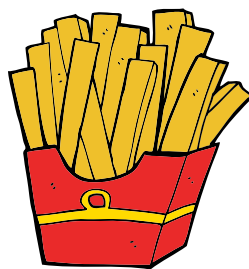
**Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships can protect our brains and bodies from the harmful effects of stress and adversity. Healthy nutrition, regular exercise, restful sleep, practicing mindfulness, staying connected to our social supports, and getting mental health care can help decrease stress hormones and improve health.**

#### THINGS TO LIMIT

**News** – Make sure you give yourself a break from the 24 hour news cycle and news alerts. It really does make a difference for your physical and mental health.

**Substances** – Because our bodies may be creating more stress hormones behind the pass than usual, we are more susceptible to substance dependence. It's important to keep this top of mind and make sure you're actively regulating your substance intake.

**High-sugar/high-fat foods** – An increase in the stress hormone cortisol triggers cravings for high-sugar and high-fat foods. Even if you've previously been a pretty healthy eater, you may find yourself reaching for crisps, cookies, fizzy drinks and other unhealthy snacks. Not only does stress increase our cravings for these types of foods, but stress hormones can also make our bodies more resistant to the hormone insulin, increasing our risk of type 2 diabetes, so try to keep the indulgence on these foods to a minimum.



#### THINGS TO UTILISE MORE OF

**Each other** – our supportive personal connections are scientifically demonstrated to help buffer the impacts of stress on our brains and bodies. Staying in touch with our loved ones and communities virtually or in person, is truly healing. If you see your neighbours' when you're outside say hello and ask how they are. Before or after a shift make an effort to engage in conversation with colleagues you wouldn't usually speak to. When you're at the shops – thank the people working there and engage in conversation. This isn't just important for morale, but staying emotionally connected to one another is biologically crucial for our health.



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### THINGS TO UTILISE MORE OF (cont.)

**Deep breaths** – you don't have to be a meditation guru to know the power of a nice cleansing deep breath. Take them slowly, take them often. In for 5 and out for 5. Deep breaths are also a great time to check in on our bodies and see where and how we are feeling.

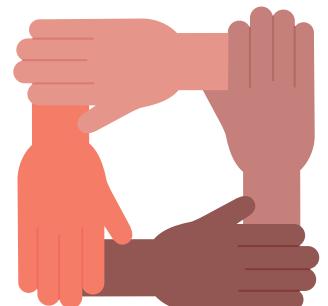
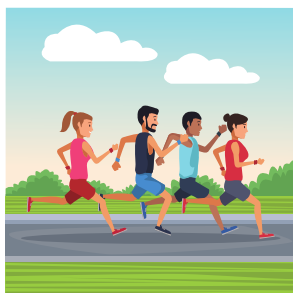
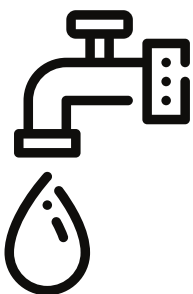
**Stepping outside** – Often working inside, in hot and busy conditions, we often don't make much time to get outside. Being outside and finding green space — even if it's in your garden is incredibly helpful for our well-being. Enjoy feeling the sun on our face, listen to the birds singing and see the flowers blooming.

**Hydration** – stay hydrated. Drink 6-10 glasses of water a day.

**Play** – Finding ways to play and laugh is super important for our mental and physical health. Turn off the news and watch a silly movie,. Call a friend and talk about the times you laughed the hardest, figure out what impressions you can do, pretend the floor is hot lava. The work environment is often serious at times, but you can lighten the mood at the right time and increase the teams feel good feeling.

**Asking for help or a moment** – open up the communication in your team or house about times when we need help. Whether you have a special code word or just the reminder to yourself. If you need a moment, communicate it and take the moment.

**If you are having a really hard time, feeling unsafe at home or thinking of harming yourself or someone else please contact the free services on our website by clicking [here](#).**







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## Self Care Template

**Here are some goals you can set to support your health.**

***[Check the goals that you are choosing for yourself or write in others that will work for you in each category]***

**Self Care Planning.** I've set a goal of...

- Building my stress busting routine
- Limiting screen/news time to less than hours per day
- Making a plan for what to do when I'm feeling stressed out, angry, or overwhelmed
- Planning with my partner, friends, or family to get support when I need it
- Identifying my strengths and learning more about building resilience
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Supportive Relationships.** I've set a goal of...

- Spending more high quality time together with loved ones on days off
- Having regular meals together with my household or virtually with those outside my household.
- Volunteering my time to help the vulnerable members of the community
- Having regular "no electronics" time to talk and connect with each other
- Making time to call or video chat with friends and family to maintain a healthy support system for myself
- Connecting regularly with members of my community to build social connections
- Asking for help if I feel physically or emotionally unsafe in myself or my relationships

***Call Samaritans on 116 123 - Free 24/7***

***Text SHOUT to 85258 - Free 24/7***

***Call Refuge (for help with domestic violence) 0808 2000 247***

- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise.** I've set a goal of...

- Limiting screen time to less than \_\_\_\_ hours per day
- Walking at least 30 minutes every day
- Finding a type of exercise that I enjoy and doing it regularly
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_



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### Self Care Template

**Nutrition.** I've set a goal of...

- Eating a healthy breakfast daily (with protein, whole grains, and/or fruit)
- Drinking water instead of juice or fizzy drinks
- Limiting my alcohol consumption
- Limiting high sugar and/or high fat foods
- Eating at least 5 vegetables and/or fruits every day
- Choosing whole wheat bread and brown rice instead of white bread or rice
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sleep.** I've set a goal of...

- Being consistent about going to bed at the same time every night
- Creating a cool, calm, and quiet place for sleep, and a relaxing bedtime routine
- Using mindfulness or other stress reduction tools if worry is keeping me up at night
- Turning off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mindfulness.** I've set a goal of...

- Taking moments throughout the day to notice how I'm feeling, both physically and emotionally
- Practising mindful breathing or other calming technique(s) during stressful situations
- Writing a list of five or more things I am grateful for each day
- Creating a regular routine of prayer, meditation, and/or yoga
- Downloading a mindfulness app and doing a mindfulness practice 20 minutes per day
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mental Health.** I've set a goal of...

- Learning more about mental health and/or substance use services (e. counselling, groups, medications)
- Identifying a local mental health professional or support group.
- Scheduling an appointment with a mental health professional
- If I am feeling like I am in crisis, I will get help by following the links **HERE**
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_



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**If you or someone you know are feeling emotionally distressed, the following organisations offer advice and support.**

**Samaritans** is available for anyone struggling to cope and provide a safe place to talk 24 hours a day.

**Phone:** 116 123

**Email:** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

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**Shout** is a 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone struggling to cope and in need of immediate help.

**Text** SHOUT to 85258

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**HOPELineUK** offer support, practical advice and information to young people considering suicide and can also offer help and advice if you're concerned about someone you know.

**Phone:** 0800 068 41 41

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**CALM** the campaign against living miserably aims to prevent male suicide in the UK and offers anonymous, confidential listening, information and signposting.

**Phone:** 0800 58 58 58 (daily 5pm-midnight)