

A woman with long brown hair is sitting at a desk, looking stressed. She has a wide-eyed, open-mouthed expression, suggesting frustration or anxiety. In front of her is a silver laptop with a black keyboard. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or classroom setting with other people and desks. The overall lighting is somewhat dim, with a blue tint, emphasizing the stressful atmosphere.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

6 things you can do right now to reduce stress!



TLP
Training. Learning. Progress.

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What is stress?

Stress is your body and mind's way of telling you that something isn't right. The symptoms of stress can range from mild feelings of unease to sweating, vomiting and even fainting. Left unchecked, the symptoms of stress can lead to more serious physical and mental damage.

Stress is a result of what is often referred to as our "flight or fight" mechanism. The correct phrase for this is flight, fight or freeze. In days gone by our cave dwelling ancestors would encounter dangers such as carnivorous predators and they would either fight, run away (flight) or freeze on the spot.

Fortunately, today we don't usually have the same dangers facing us, but modern life is full of modern threats that can cause us to feel stressed. Sometimes these threats are real and sometimes they are perceived, for example people who suffer with phobias often have an over exaggerated perception of a threat such as flying or spiders.

Stress is different for each of us. Some people seem to get stressed easily, whereas others seem to be able to cope with a lot more pressure before they begin to feel or show signs of stress. The important thing is to recognise when you are feeling stressed and deal with your feelings whether they are emotional or physical or both as quickly as possible.

**For more details of our stress management workshops or for individual help call/write now.
enquiries@tlpdelivers.com
08002922450**

There are many causes of stress, but the symptoms are quite common and normally easy to recognise, such as;

- Feeling uneasy or “out of sorts”
- Quick, shallow breathing
- Sweaty palms
- Stomach upsets
- Loss of appetite
- Increased appetite
- Drinking or smoking more
- Disturbed sleep
- Irritability
- Feeling overwhelmed or out of control
- Loss of enthusiasm
- Loss of libido
- Feeling worried or nervous but not understanding why
- Lethargy
- Lacking confidence

It is important that as soon as you recognise these in yourself or others, such as a colleague, you take action. This may involve seeking medical attention but there are several techniques you can use to help manage your stress levels to prevent them becoming a real problem and before you have to seek medical attention. That said:

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU NEED HELP TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS, REACH OUT AND ASK FOR IT. IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE APPROACHING YOUR DOCTOR THERE ARE NUMEROUS INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN HELP!

Why managing your stress is important

Managing your stress is important for the benefit of your short term and long term health. Of course, today life is even more stressful due to the significant changes we have all had to make to our lifestyles as a result of the corona virus pandemic that is affecting our planet.

When your body is stressed several things happen. You begin to release “stress” hormones that prepare you for flight or flight. These stress hormones include adrenaline and cortisol which affect our bodies in different ways.

Some of their main effects are to speed up our breathing and heart rate, divert blood to areas where it is needed most (in a fight or flight situation) such as our limbs, increase the production of glucose (blood sugar) to give us an energy boost, increase the secretion of stomach acid and tense our muscles to be able to respond quickly and either fight or run.

In a real stress situation, all of these responses would be appropriate and necessary. However, when the threat or danger is not real, such responses are unhealthy in the short term and can cause serious physical and mental damage in the long term.

One very undesirable effect in the long term is that our immune systems become weakened as a result of stress. This is certainly undesirable at present for obvious reasons.



Don't be afraid to ask for help!

Managing Stress

The following tips are all tried and tested in dealing with stress. You can try all of them or some of them, it's up to you. The important thing is to acknowledge that you are feeling stressed and do something about it. As already mentioned, if you feel like your stress is out of control, reach out for help!

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

This may seem like common sense, but many people worry and stress about things that are completely outside of their control.

In his world-famous book “The seven habits of highly effective people” author Stephen Covey talks about circles of control and acceptance. This model has subsequently been expanded by other authors to include the circle of influence.

In diagram 1. the red circles represent all of the things that might concern you currently. These might be personal or professional concerns or both.

Covey demonstrated through extensive research that the most productive and relaxed people focused on what they could control (the inner circle).

Outside of this there may be issues, situations or even people that you can influence. Normally this will depend on the nature of your relationships with people within your circle of influence.

Finally, there is everything else in the outer circle or circle of acceptance.

These are the things over which we have no control and we cannot influence, so we have to accept them. This may not be easy, there may be things in this circle that we feel strongly about, but we just have to accept them.

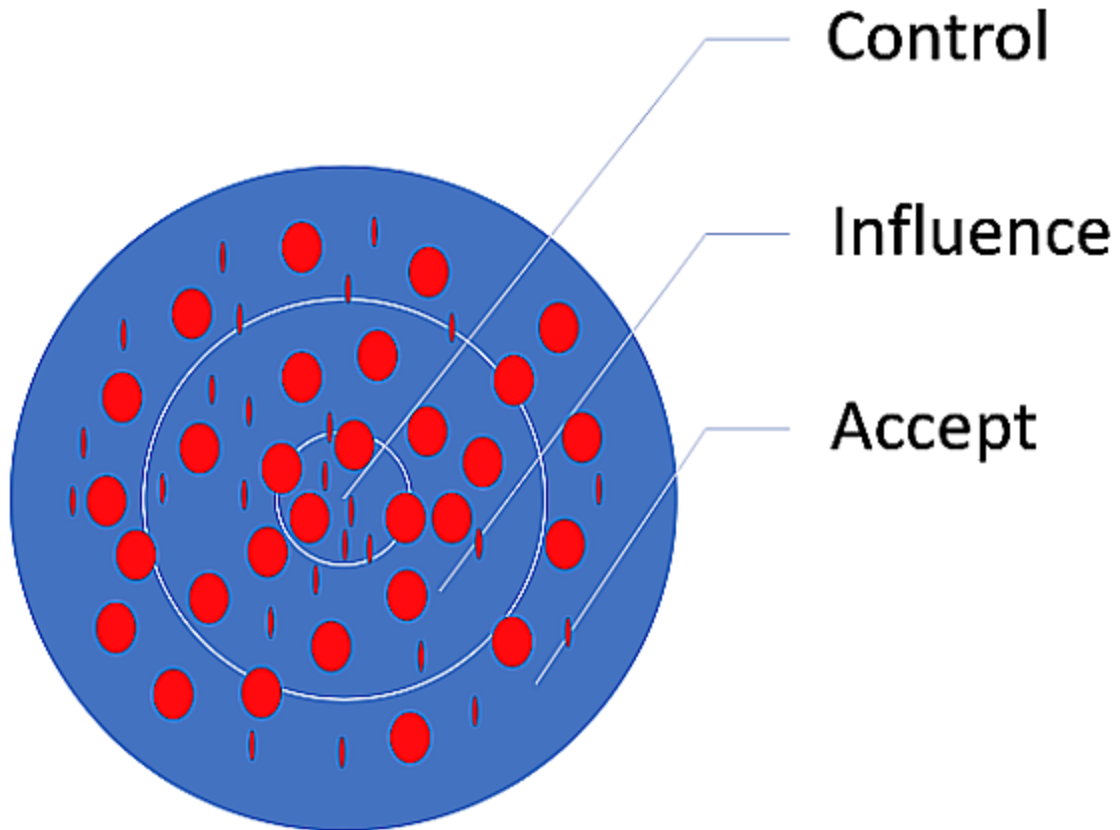


Diagram 1.

In this space write down all of the things that are concerning you right now. Be as honest as you can. No one will see this unless you choose to share it with them. If you need more space, use the notes page at the back of this workbook.

Now look at the list concerns that you have written down and transfer them to the following columns. As you do this, keep asking yourself;

1. Can I control this?
2. If I can't control it, can I influence it?

If you can't control it and you can't influence it, you need to accept it. We will discuss techniques for this, later in this workbook.

CONTROL	INFLUENCE	ACCEPT

Once you have identified the things you can control, this is where you should be spending your time and energy whether that is physical or mental or both.

With regards to the things that you can influence it is a good idea to identify who can help you to influence these. Take each item in the influence column in turn and list the people that could help you to influence that item. In some cases, it may be a group of people or an organisation that can help you to influence it.

Finally, everything else that falls into your accept column needs to be accepted. This isn't always easy, but there are techniques that you can use to stop yourself from thinking and worrying about these issues. We will consider one of these in the next section.

Pattern Interrupt: Tell that nagging inner voice to "SHUT THE F**K UP"

It is inevitable that our thoughts will stray and start to focus on things that we can't control but that cause us stress. When this happens, we need a "Pattern Interrupt" to take our focus away from stressful thoughts and back to more productive thoughts, focusing on things we can control or influence.

There are a couple of ways to do this.

1. When you become aware of negative, stressful thoughts identify where about they originate in your head. This may sound strange, but does the

voice that you associate with these thoughts originate in the middle of your head? Is it to one side? Is it at the back or front?



2. Once you have identified where that voice originates, direct your attention at it and firmly tell it to go away! If you want to, you can shout at it and even swear, but remember to do this inside your head!

3. If necessary, keep telling the voice to go away until it has gone. I will, quite literally, repeat to myself over and over the phrase “Shut the f**k up, Shut the f**k up, Shut the f**k up, Shut the f**k up, Shut the f**k up, Shut the f**k up” until it sounds almost like a train running over tracks in my head, becoming a rhythmic chant until the voice and thoughts go away or until I laugh at the silliness of the situation. (Humour is another powerful tool in beating stress and we will talk about this later!)

Another way to deal with that nagging inner voice is as follows.

1. Locate the voice as before.
2. Change the way the voice sounds inside your head. Make it sound like a comedy character from a cartoon such as Donald Duck or Goofy. Notice how it is already getting harder to take this voice seriously.
3. Imagine moving the voice, still sounding comedic, to your shoulder. Left or right, it doesn't matter. Notice how as the voice moves out of your head and onto your shoulder, it starts to become quieter and harder to hear.
4. Now move the voice from your shoulder to the bend in your arm. Notice how it still sounds funny, but it is getting quieter and seems further away from your head.
5. Now move the voice into the palm of your hand. By now it has become so quiet that it is almost impossible to hear.
6. Finally, make a fist around the slight remaining trace of the voice and crush it. As you crush it notice how it fades away totally and can't be heard any more. And as you crush the voice for once and for all, throw it away into the distance. Literally take your hand and throw whatever remains of that voice as far away as you can. Notice how your thoughts are now calm and at peace. Once again think about something you can control and focus on that or just clear your head and think about nothing in particular for a moment or 2 or 3 or as long as you want.

Reframing

Reframing is a powerful technique that allows us to look at a situation differently when we can't change the situation itself.

For example; Have you ever been stuck in a traffic jam when you were on your way to work or an important meeting or event? If you have your thought processes might have been like this:



Nooooo!

Why now? Why me?

My boss will go mad at me for being late!

I can't believe this is happening!

My husband/wife/partner/friends will be so disappointed that I'm late!

This always happens to me!

Not surprisingly, if we start to have these thoughts we will inevitably begin to feel stressed and start to act or behave in a way that is unproductive. In this particular case you might get road rage and start beeping your horn at every driver around you, or worse still have an accident because you are not thinking straight.

Alternatively we could stop and think the following thoughts:

This is unexpected, but it's not a complete disaster.

I'll use the time to make some calls (hands free of course) - call your boss/husband/wife/partner/friends etc. first to let them know you'll be late.

I can use this an opportunity to relax and listen to some music that I enjoy.

I can use this an opportunity to learn and listen to that audiobook I downloaded recently.

When we think like this, we are far more likely to remain calm and relaxed. We end up using the time and our internal resources to much better effect and actually achieve something productive rather than spiralling down into a pit of stress.

Next time something happens that might stress you out, reframe that situation. Use your pattern interrupt (from the previous chapter) and focus on helpful or productive thoughts. How can you turn the situation to your advantage? What are the positives in it?

Come to your senses

Our 5 senses can be really helpful in managing stress.

Our senses allow us to interpret the external world and then we make an internal representation of that external world based on our senses, so sometimes our senses are referred to as representational systems.

We can use our senses to help us deal with stress as follow



Sight:

- Look at a picture of a loved one or a favourite holiday spot.
- Look at a short video that you find relaxing or inspirational (Don't spend ages watching YouTube videos to Netflix series if you are meant to be working. This will ultimately lead to more stress).
- Get up from your desk and look out of the window, especially if you have a nice view.

Sound:

- Call someone you love or just a friend to hear their voice.
- Listen to a piece of relaxing music.
- Listen to an audiobook.

Touch:

- Hug someone (remember social distancing laws at present!)
- Walk barefoot around your garden or home.
- Wear your favourite item of clothing.
- Exercise.

Taste

- Eat or drink something you enjoy. Remember to do this in **moderation!** The last thing anyone wants is to pile on the pounds. This will only make you feel more stressed in the long run.
- Change your diet to a healthier choice.
- Reduce or eliminate the amount of caffeine and alcohol you consume.

Smell

- Wake up and smell the coffee, or the roses or whatever it is that you like to smell.
- Use scented candles or essential oils.
- Go outside and get some fresh air.
- Breathe (more on this later).

Write

For many people, writing is a very calming and cathartic process whenever they are feeling stressed. Many of us keep diaries or journals. In these we can be as honest and as explicit as we want about situations and/or people that are stressing us out.

As well as journals and diaries there are more structured ways of writing that relate directly to stress management.

The ABC model

The ABC model comes from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and is a well-used tool by many psychiatrists, psychotherapists and counsellors. There are several versions and we prefer the one we have demonstrated here.

A = Activation. What was the trigger that made (or makes) you stressed? This could be an event, a situation or a person.

B = Beliefs and Behaviour. What were your beliefs or thoughts and behaviours in relation to the activating trigger? Did you think “this is terrible” or “why me?”. How did you behave? Did you get angry, sad, upset? Did you shut down, avoiding contact with others?

C = Consequences and Change. What were the consequences of your thoughts, beliefs and actions? You have obviously ended up feeling stressed. Did you also get angry and possibly shout at someone? Did you get upset and hide yourself away from others? Did you spend time dwelling on the situation and stewing in anger or resentment of self-pity? These responses are understandable, but not helpful. Therefore, we need to “change” the way we think and feel, especially if we are likely to encounter the trigger (situation or person) again in the future. What could you do differently if the same trigger happens again?

Use the chart on the following page to work through the ABC model when you want to.

ACTIVATING EVENT	BELIEFS/THOUGHTS
BEHAVIOURS	CONSEQUENCE(S)
CHANGE?	

Ask for help

This final piece of advice is critical.

If you feel like your stress is getting too much to handle on your own PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE ASK FOR HELP! There are numerous sources of this, such as:

1. Your manager
2. Your HR or Occupational Health department.
3. A colleague.
4. A family member or friend.
5. Your G.P. or pharmacist.

and below is a list of organisations that can also help, with hyperlinks to their websites.

1. The Samaritans. <https://www.samaritans.org>
2. Every Mind Matters (from the NHS). <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/>
3. MIND. <https://www.mind.org.uk>

REMEMBER IT IS O.K. TO ASK FOR HELP. EVEN THE MOST RESILIENT OF US NEEDS A HELPING HAND FROM TIME TO TIME!



Don't be afraid to ask for help!

About Tom Phillips and TLP

Tom Phillips is a highly sought after coach, trainer and entrepreneur.

After an extremely successful career in pharmaceuticals where he held senior roles in sales, marketing and training, Tom launched his first training company, Training, Learning and Progress Ltd. in 2008.



TLP specialise in 3 areas.

- Leadership and management training and coaching.
- Sales training and coaching
- Mental health and wellbeing for individuals and organisations.

Originally working with the pharmaceutical industry, TLP then started to work with the NHS either directly or on behalf of our pharmaceutical clients. In 2015 Tom launched his 2nd company Your Training Inhouse Ltd. which works directly with the NHS, providing both bespoke and open access programmes for healthcare professionals of all disciplines.

A huge fan of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), Tom launched a new division of TLP, NLP by TLP in 2018. NLP by TLP provides training and coaching in NLP to professionals from all walks of life and from all over the planet. Tom has been personally trained and mentored by the co-creator of NLP, Dr. Richard Bandler and Tom now regularly works as part of Dr. Bandler's international training team at seminars in the U.K. and U.S. Tom has also been trained by the world's leading Clinical Hypnotist, Paul McKenna and Tom also assists Paul as part of his training team at Paul's seminars in the U.K.

Tom's love of NLP and clinical hypnosis lead him to become qualified as a clinical hypnotist in 2019 and in January 2020 he launched his own private clinical hypnotherapy practice based in Liverpool's prestigious Rodney Street.

Tom is certified in the following:

1. Clinical hypnotherapy - The International College of Clinical Hypnotherapy (ICCH)
2. Advanced coaching and mentoring - The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)
3. Trainer of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) - The Society for NLP
4. Master Practitioner of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) - The Society for NLP
5. Business Practitioner of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) - The Society for NLP
6. Practitioner of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) - The Society for NLP
7. Neuro Hypnotic Repatterning - The Society for NLP
8. Situational Leadership - The Ken Blanchard Organisation
9. Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) - The Myers Briggs Organisation
10. Personal Profile Assessment (PPA/DISC) - Thomas International
11. Social Styles - Tracom Ltd.
12. Mental Health First Aid - Mental Health First Aid England

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Or

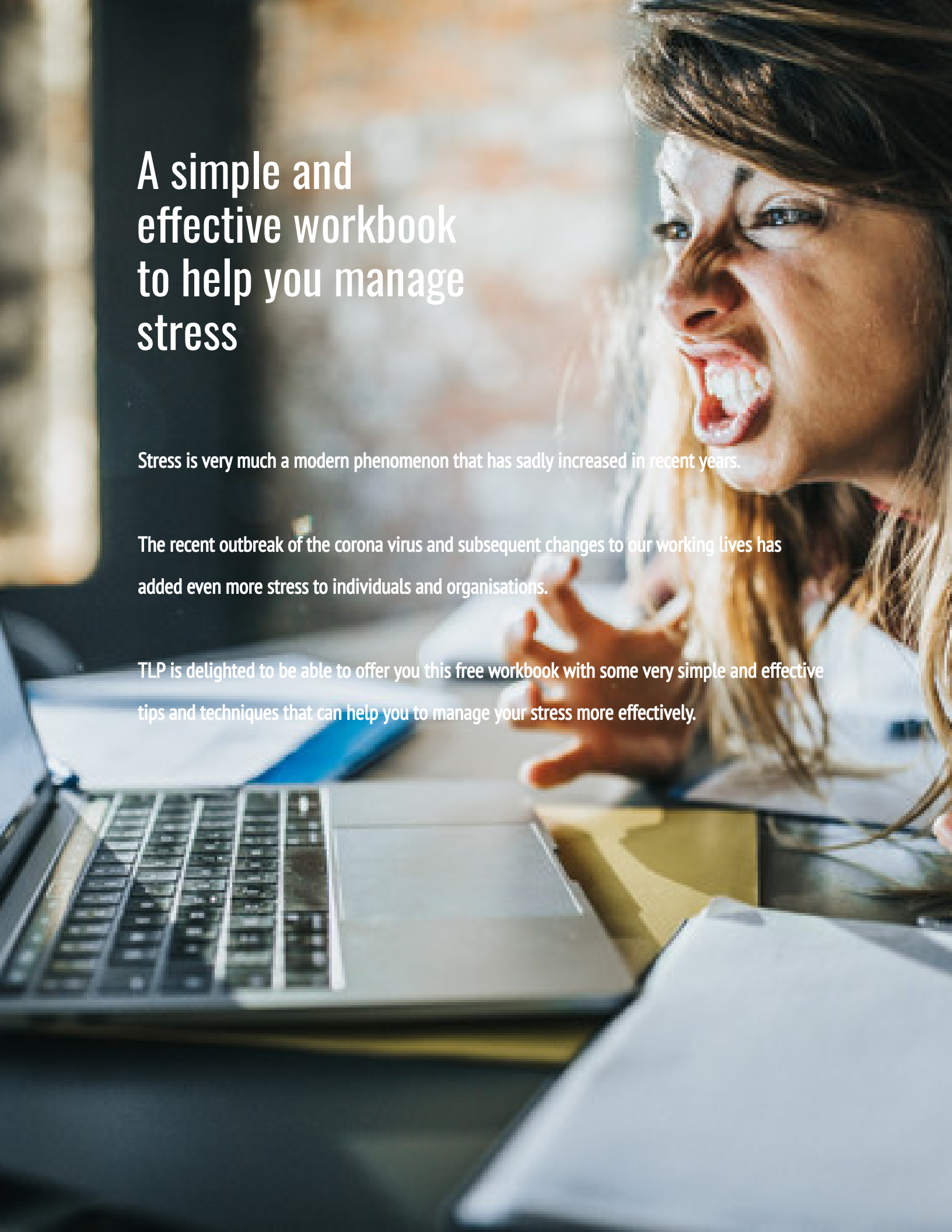
Email: enquiries@tlpdelivers.com



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Notes

Notes



A simple and effective workbook to help you manage stress

Stress is very much a modern phenomenon that has sadly increased in recent years.

The recent outbreak of the corona virus and subsequent changes to our working lives has added even more stress to individuals and organisations.

TLP is delighted to be able to offer you this free workbook with some very simple and effective tips and techniques that can help you to manage your stress more effectively.