

# Module 7: Managing Stress - Doing Things Differently

## REACT online Toolkit info sheet

1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** Managing Stress (Doing Things Differently) 8 9 10 11 12

### Ways to Manage Stress

You may want to try some new strategies to add to those you are already doing. Below are some common strategies that have worked for other relatives:

#### 1. Focus on the Positives

What is going well? Sometimes, we focus only on the things that are going wrong, and forget about what is going well. Write a list of things that are going well for you.

#### 2. Have Support Networks

Make a list of people you can talk to. They might be family, friends, healthcare staff, local support groups, local churches or any other groups who may offer what you need.

#### 3. Work or Have Hobbies

Make sure you keep doing the things you enjoy. List the activities you do for yourself and what you get out of them.

#### 4. Have a Break

You are only human and we all need a break sometimes. Write down the practical arrangements you would need to make to have a break/holiday. Find out about carer's breaks using the resource section of this toolkit.

#### 5. Set Boundaries You Can Live With

You can't change other people's behaviour, but you can set some boundaries about what you are willing to tolerate. This isn't always easy and is a task that will require persistence – make sure your boundaries are realistic and that you are prepared to stick to them.

Visit the REACT NHS website, ([www.reactnhs.uk](http://www.reactnhs.uk)), to find more Ways to Manage Stress and share what works for you on the relatives group forum



Your Early Intervention team can make sure you get access to the REACT online toolkit



[www.reactnhs.uk](http://www.reactnhs.uk)

Department of Health Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed therein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the HTA, NIHR, NHS or the Department of Health.

Funding Acknowledgement:

This project was funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment (HTA), 14/49/34.

Copyright:

Intellectual Copyright Property of Lancaster University 2016 REACT

## Know Your 'Triggers' (Things That Make You Feel Stressed)

Common examples of stress triggers for relatives of people with psychosis or bipolar include the following:

- Having too many tasks to complete in a day
- Questions from friends who don't understand mental health problems
- Not being able to get hold of clinical or support staff when you need to
- Not knowing how to manage difficult behaviour
- Arguing about taking medication
- Thinking about all the things that all the family have lost as a result of the psychosis

## Recognise Your Early Warning Signs (EWS)

For most people stress builds up gradually over time. Your ability to cope with situations feels like it is getting less and less. Being able to spot the very early warning signs that you are getting stressed means that you can do something to try and stop it getting worse.

As with the triggers, these are very individual and likely to be different for everyone.

Early Warning Signs (EWS) for stress might include:

- Being more irritable than usual
- Trouble getting off to sleep
- Not being able to concentrate
- Changes in your appetite
- Not going out to social events as much