

HOW TO MINIMISE POTENTIAL STRESS

While there may be common signs/symptoms, the way people experience mental health problems can be very different.

1. BE ORGANISED

Plan your journey, leave on time, pack the right kit – don't leave anything until the last minute.

2. HAVE A PLANNED PRE-MATCH ROUTINE

Visualise particular situations e.g. meeting the coaches pre-match, dealing with players wearing incorrect kit and even plan key timings before the game.

3. HAVE A 'WHAT IF' PLAN TO HELP DEAL WITH POTENTIAL STRESSORS

Plan what you're going to say and do if you are verbally abused by a parent, or how you might deal with dissent from a coach.

4. LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Eat the right food, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, breathing exercises.

5. DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Rather than focusing all your energies on refereeing, do something different and distracting, e.g. spend time with friends/family, engage in different activities.

6. 'CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLES'

Accept that there are some things you can't change/influence and try not to worry about them e.g. a low mark from an Observer or a club.

7. POSTPONE YOUR WORRIES

Rather than thinking constantly about things that are worrying you, write them down (in a 'Worry Diary') and deal with them at one point only for a fixed time period (e.g. for 15 minutes each evening).

8. GET SUPPORT FOR YOUR REFEREEING FROM YOUR FAMILY

to reduce any worry about being away from them.

9. PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

For most referees, it's a hobby. Also, don't be afraid to say 'no'. If you really feel like refereeing will make you feel worse, don't do it.



10. **'SELF-TALK'**

Have a set phrase or set of words to help you through potentially stressful situations in a match and to help you remain positive – could be something as simple as “come on Jimmy/ Jane” or even counting to 10.

11. **USE ASSOCIATION**

If you feel down or anxious pre-match, listen to some music that you associate with happiness to boost your mood.

12. **TURN OFF SOCIAL MEDIA**

What are you really going to gain from knowing what clubs think post-match?

There's also lots more tips on managing stress on the Mind website:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/what-is-stress/#.Xh8vl8j7SUK>

To take it one step further, there's also a template for a bespoke Wellness Action Plan you can download from the Mind website, to help keep your mental health on track:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/>