

## Brain Fog anyone?

As we find ourselves in week 9 of lockdown, we are hearing lots of people talking about not feeling completely with it, feeling drained, disorganised and tired. So we thought we'd bring forward the idea of something called '**brain fog**' as it feels like a good topic to explore in this week's content.

This picture gives a great image of what brain fog is all about and most of us will probably be able to relate to at least one (if not many) of the words in it.



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Brain fog is a real thing. The neuroscientific name for it is **allostatic load**. (Get that into your next zoom quiz!!)

It can be caused by some underlying medical conditions, but in the context of this article, we want to link it to brains that are under pressure.

Think of allostatic load, as the general wear and tear in your brain that comes as a result of stress.

Our bodies are designed to self-regulate and deal with any threats that we feel we are facing, in these situations we release chemicals like adrenaline and cortisol. These help to pump blood around our bodies faster, increase our lung capacity for getting more air into our systems and give us a rush of energy to deal with threat (think back to cavemen being chased by predators like sabre-toothed tigers). Right now, we are all living in the shadow of this global pandemic, and this is a great source of anxiety and worry (i.e. stress).

The sting in the tail of our bodies doing this is that when we are experiencing stress (even when no sabre-toothed tigers are involved), we are producing these hormones and flooding our systems with

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<sup>1</sup> Image taken from <https://images.app.goo.gl/t66gCYeUSeN6tJ5f6>

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them. Without a viable escape route to release these effectively, they store up in our body and can make us feel unwell and stressed out.

The up-side is that much like physical wear and tear on your body, there are actions you can take to help manage this and therefore try and reduce the brain fog you may be experiencing.



**Normalise** - it is appropriate and normal to feel stressed and muddled right now; be kind to yourself in accepting this and move away from negative self-talk



**Exercise** - physical activity helps to flush adrenaline and cortisol out of your system. It releases endorphines too which help you feel good (it doesn't have to be high impact - yoga & walking are good options too)



**Sleep** - it's hard to get solid, quality rest with busy households, busy heads and minds. Try to get good sleep habits by switching off devices early & having relax time before bed, warm baths etc



**Eat well** - a balanced diet helps maintain blood sugar levels, gives good nutrition and in-take of vitamins and minerals. Treats are important too! Nourish yourself well from inside out



**Hydration** - this is super important to a well functioning brain. Try to drink pure water, but if this is difficult, supplement your liquid intake with other drinks so you can get 2 litres in a day

We hope you find this helpful. Keep safe and well. Tash, Catherine, Rach, Frankie and Sarah x