

CHANGES THAT CAN OCCUR IN YOUR LIFE AND THE STRESS THEY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO CREATE FOR YOU

Stress is all around you and can never be completely avoided. It can arise from positive or negative experiences, from major or trivial events, and from external situations or your own internal thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and expectations. Essentially, stress can be defined as the rate of “wear and tear” on you which comes about as a result of how you perceive and react to the occurrences of change in your life. You can never eliminate the stress in your life, but you do, in fact, play an important role in how you are actually affected by the stressors that you do experience. The first step to handling stress more effectively is to be aware of the potential stressors you face and to become more aware of how you view and handle them when they arise. The way to manage your stress and feel better is to slow down, recognize the changes that have the potential to trigger stress in you, and learn to effectively intervene in the process as early as possible.

The following list identifies some examples of changes in your life that have the potential to trigger stress or that can indicate to you that stress may need to be addressed in your life. Check off the changes you have experienced in the past year and think about how they have affected or may currently be affecting your physical and mental health. Also think about other changes that are not mentioned here that may be affecting you and how you are living your life.

1) CHANGES ON THE JOB:

- Dissatisfaction with your work
- Being demoted, laid-off, or fired
- Changing shifts or work hours
- Having to look for work
- Going on or returning from vacation
- Starting or losing your own business
- Accomplishing a significant personal achievement at work
- Being promoted or getting a new job
- Conflict with co-workers or supervisors
- Making a career change (e.g. starting a new type of work)
- Company readjustment (e.g. layoffs, a merger, or reorganization)
- Retiring

2) CHANGES IN YOUR SLEEPING HABITS:

- Sleeping more or fewer hours at night
- Waking up more frequently at night
- Taking more naps during the day

3) CHANGES IN YOUR EATING HABITS:

- Eating more or less food than usual
- Eating at different times during the day
- Eating with different people or in different surroundings
- Eating alone more frequently

4) CHANGES IN HEALTH (IN YOU OR IN OTHERS AROUND YOU):

- Illness
- Injury
- Becoming pregnant
- Going to the doctor/dentist/chiropractor
- Being in the hospital
- Having surgery

5) CHANGES IN PERSONAL HABITS:

- Dressing differently
- Changing the way you act around others (e.g. your manners)
- Changes in grooming or hygiene

6) CHANGES IN YOUR SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Changes in the amount of time you spend doing certain activities
- Doing activities with different people
- Starting to do new activities or no longer doing ones you've done in the past

7) CHANGES IN YOUR FINANCIAL AFFAIRS:

- Having more or less money than you usually do
- Being "hounded" by creditors
- Losing money in the stock market or in other investments you have
- Taking on a mortgage or a loan
- Foreclosure on a mortgage
- Declaring bankruptcy

8) CHANGES IN YOUR RESIDENCE OF LIVING CONDITIONS:

- Building or buying a new home
- Remodeling your home or apartment
- Getting a new roommate or losing an old one
- Adding children to your living space or having children move away
- Going from renting to owning or vice versa
- Moving
- Moving in with a partner or having a partner move out
- Deterioration of your home (projects needing to be done) or your neighborhood (e.g. more crime/problem properties)

9) CHANGES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS/OTHERS:

- Making new friends
- "Feuding" with friends/neighbors
- Friends moving away
- Moving in with a partner, getting married, or having children
- Starting to date a new partner
- Having a friend become ill or die
- Drifting away from or cutting off old friends
- Friends starting a relationship with a new partner or ending their relationship with a current partner
- Your moving away from friends or their moving away from you

10) CHANGES IN YOUR SCHOOLING OR EDUCATION:

- Making a decision to return to school
- Beginning or ending school enrollment
- Doing better or worse than expected in school
- Changing to a different school or a different type of education

11) CHANGES RELATED TO LEGAL ISSUES IN YOUR LIFE:

- Committing and/or being apprehended for minor violations (e.g. shoplifting, speeding, DWI)
- Committing and/or being apprehended for major violations (e.g. burglary, robbery, assault)
- Experiencing a legal proceeding (e.g. OFP or divorce hearing, trial for a criminal offense, having to give a deposition)
- Detention in or release from jail, prison, or some other institution
- Being court-ordered and attending chemical dependency treatment or other therapy
- Being sued or filing a lawsuit against someone else
- Being the victim of a crime

12) CHANGES IN YOUR MOOD OR EMOTIONAL STATE:

- Feeling more or less irritable, bitter, angry, resentful, frustrated, rageful, fearful, anxious, or depressed than usual
- Receiving in-patient or out-patient treatment for emotional issues and/or chemical abuse
- Completing or being terminated from treatment or therapy
- Beginning or ending therapy
- Changing therapists or doctors

13) CHANGES IN YOUR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS:

- More or fewer family visits or gatherings
- Conflict and/or “feuds” with family members, in-laws, or other relatives
- Family members in poor physical (e.g. illness) or mental (e.g. depression) health
- Family members leaving home (e.g. partner separating or divorcing, children moving out)
- Children “acting out” at home or elsewhere
- Getting or giving up pets or having them die
- Births
- Adoptions
- Deaths

14) CHANGES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PARTNER/SPOUSE:

- More or fewer arguments or disagreements
- Beginning to go out with someone
- Trying to get pregnant or becoming pregnant
- Partner or self developing new interests, activities, and/or friends
- Partner or self having an affair
- Divorce from a partner
- Partner or self losing or leaving a job or retiring from workplace
- Partner becoming ill or injured
- Partner dying
- Moving in together or moving apart into separate residences
- Getting engaged/married
- The birth of a child/having children
- Doing more or fewer activities together
- Partner or self beginning or ceasing work or schooling outside the home
- Separation from a partner
- Partner or self having minor or major physical or emotional illness
- Partner or self having legal problems
- Changes in relationship roles (e.g. taking on more childrearing or housekeeping responsibilities)

- Reconciliation with partner

- Partner losing a job/being unemployed

15) CHANGES IN THE WEATHER:

- More or less daylight or sunlight
- More or fewer rainy, snowy, or cloudy days than usual

- Warmer or colder temperatures

16) CHANGES IN YOUR SEX LIFE:

- Changing sexual partners
- More or fewer sexual partners than usual
- Going from one sexual partner to many or vice versa

- More or less sex than usual
- Onset or cessation of sexual difficulties or dysfunction
- Having multiple sexual partners at the same time