

SOME SYMPTOMS THAT STRESS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TRIGGER IN YOU

Stress has the potential to create a variety of symptoms in us. Look over the symptoms listed below and identify which ones you have experienced in the past year. Also, think about whether there is a connection between the symptoms you have experienced and how much stress there has been in your life (and how you handled it) during that time.

PHYSICAL:

- Frequent illness (colds; flu; often feeling “under the weather”)
- Headaches (tension and migraine)
- Insomnia
- Fatigue (feeling tired most of the time; having little energy or motivation to do things)
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Digestive problems (indigestion; bloating; stomach aches; nausea)
- Ulcers
- Skin problems (rashes; acne)
- Muscular problems (trembling; shakiness; twitches; tics; sore aching muscles; muscle tension)
- Lower back ache or pain
- Neck/shoulder ache or pain
- Chest pain
- Heart problems (heart pounding or racing; heart attack)
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Teeth grinding (including having a sore jaw and TMJ)
- Intestinal problems (constipation; diarrhea; colitis)
- Allergies (developing new ones; having old ones worsen)
- Sinus problems (e.g. congestion)
- Sleeping problems (insomnia; sleeping too much; interrupted sleep; waking up frequently; needing frequent naps)
- Eating or appetite problems (eating too little or too much; losing or gaining weight; eating compulsively; eating at unusual times, e.g. late at night)
- Lowered sex drive/decreased interest in having sex
- Circulatory problems (hands and feet feeling colder than usual)
- Restlessness (finger-drumming; foot-tapping)

BEHAVIORAL:

- Frequent accidents or “mishaps” (being “accident-prone”)
- Increased smoking

- Alcohol and drug abuse (using more chemicals than usual; using chemicals to escape from worries and to feel okay about yourself)
- Explosive, disrespectful, controlling, and abusive behavior toward others
- Compulsive, irresponsible, addictive, and destructive behaviors
 - ...Chemical abuse
 - ...e.g. abusing alcohol and drugs, including nicotine, caffeine, and prescription and over-the-counter medications
 - ...Compulsive behaviors related to food
 - ...e.g. overeating, bulimia, anorexia
 - ...Workaholism
 - ...e.g. focusing on work and your job to the detriment of your relationship with your partner and family or all other aspects of your personal life
 - ...Sexual acting-out
 - ...e.g. compulsive masturbation, extramarital affairs, casual sexual encounters with strangers of the same or opposite sex, going to strip clubs, contact with prostitutes, voyeurism, exhibitionism, compulsive use of pornography
 - ...Spending and saving compulsions
 - ...e.g. shopping, gambling, shoplifting, hoarding
 - ...Compulsive behaviors related to playing video games; the use of the internet and social media, computers, tablets, and cell phones; and watching television and movies
- Isolation/withdrawal from family, friends, and other people
- Procrastination

EMOTIONAL:

- Anxiety (feeling worried, fearful, and apprehensive)
- Depression (feeling negative, pessimistic, cynical, and miserable)
- Increased anger/irritability
- Becoming more easily frustrated and annoyed
- Shame and feelings of powerlessness and worthlessness
- A lack or loss of joy and happiness in your daily living
- Moodiness
- Sadness/crying “spells”
- Unhappiness
- Discouragement
- Loneliness
- Becoming more intense and defensive in your reactions or interactions with other people

MENTALCOGNITIVE:

- Confusion
- Lethargy/a lack of energy and motivation
- A negative attitude and more negative thoughts

- **Worrying/brooding**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Poor memory/forgetfulness**
- **Dulled senses (i.e. feeling “numb”)**
- **Boredom**
- **Difficulty thinking clearly (feeling like you are living your life “in a fog”)**
- **Becoming more compulsive/reactive with other people and situations around you**

RELATIONSHIP:

- **Avoiding and withdrawing from people/feeling isolated**
- **Mistrust of other people (generally “expecting the worst”)**
- **Increased conflict with those around you**
- **Disrespectful and abusive behavior toward others**
- **A blaming attitude**
- **An intolerance for others**
- **Impatience with other people**
- **Decreased touching/hugs/physical affection/sex**
- **Resentment toward others**
- **Envy/jealousy of others**
- **A loss of intimacy/estrangement from others**
- **An increase in profanity/sarcasm/cynical, hostile, and judgmental comments to others**
- **Feeling abandoned/rejected/alone**

SPIRITUAL:

- **Apathy**
- **A sense of powerlessness and helplessness**
- **A loss of purpose and direction in your life**
- **A loss of faith**
- **A loss of a connection with God or a Higher Power (as you define this for yourself)**
- **Cynicism**
- **Emptiness**
- **Self-doubt**
- **A loss of meaning in your life**
- **A sense of pessimism about the present and future**
- **Feeling completely alone/alienated from other people**
- **Feelings of hopelessness**