

Early Warning Signs of Stress

The stress reactions below are presented in categories so that they may be more easily recognized and understood. There is no magic number of the symptoms that suggest difficulty in coping. Rather it is the extent to which the noted reaction is a change (different from a person's normal condition) that makes a reaction potentially important. Further, it is the combined presence of symptoms that determines the degree of the problem. Indicators may be isolated reactions or combinations among the three categories listed below. Finally, it is their duration (how long the symptoms have been present (how long they last), the frequency of such incidents (how often they happen) and the intensity (strength) with which they are present that suggests the severity of the difficulty in coping.

Indicators of Difficulty in Coping

Emotional	Behavioral	Physical
Apathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The "blahs" ■ Recreation no longer pleasurable ■ Sad 	Withdrawal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social isolation ■ Work related withdrawal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reluctance to accept responsibilities ○ Neglecting Responsibilities 	Preoccupation with illness (intolerant of/dwelling on minor ailments) Frequent illness (actually sick) Use of self medication Physical exhaustion
Anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Restless ■ Agitated ■ Insecure ■ Feelings of worthlessness 		Acting Out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Alcohol Abuse ■ Gambling ■ Spending Spree ■ Promiscuity
Irritability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overly sensitive ■ Defensive ■ Arrogant/argumentative ■ Insubordinate/hostile 	Desperate Acting Out (getting attention-cry for help)	
Mental Fatigue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Preoccupied ■ Difficulty concentrating ■ Inflexible 	Administrative Infractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tardy to work ■ Poor appearance ■ Poor personal hygiene ■ Accident prone 	
Overcompensation (denial) Exaggerate/grandiose	Legal Infractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indebtedness ■ Shoplifting ■ Traffic tickets ■ Fights ■ Child/spouse abuse 	
Overworks to exhaustion Denies Problems/symptoms Suspicious/paranoid		