

Signs of Excessive Stress

Impaired judgment and mental confusion
Uncharacteristic indecisiveness
Aggression - temper tantrums and “short fuse”
Continually argumentative
Increased irritability and anxiety
Increased apathy or denial of problems
Loss of interest in family, friends, and activities
Increased feelings of insecurity with lowered self esteem
Feelings of inadequacy

Warning Signs

1. Sudden changes in behavior, usually uncharacteristic of the person
2. Gradual change in behavior indicative of gradual deterioration
3. Erratic work habits and poor work attitude
4. Increased sick time due to minor problems and frequent colds
5. Inability to concentrate, impaired memory, or impaired reading comprehension
6. Excessive worrying and feelings of inadequacy
7. Excessive use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs
8. Peers, family, & others begin to avoid the person because of attitude/behavior
9. Excessive complaints (negative citizen contact or family member complaints)
10. Not responsive to corrective or supportive feedback
11. Excessive accidents or injuries due to carelessness or preoccupation
12. Energy extremes: no energy or hyperactivity
13. Sexual promiscuity or sexual disinterest
14. Grandiose or paranoid behavior
15. Increased use of sick leave for “mental health days”

Excessive stress can be expressed in physical or psychological symptoms, including:

Muscle tightness/migraine or tension headache
Clenching jaws/grinding teeth or related dental problems
Chronic fatigue/feeling down or experiencing depression
Rapid heartbeat/hypertension
Indigestion/nausea/ulcers/constipation or diarrhea
Unintended weight loss or gain - changes in appetite
Cold and sweaty palms which is not normal for the person
Nervousness and increased feelings of being jittery
Insomnia or sleeping excessively - strange dreams or nightmares
In extreme cases - psychotic reactions/mental disorder

Examples -

1. From cheerful and optimistic to gloomy and pessimistic.
2. Gradually becoming slow and lethargic, increasing depression.
3. Coming to work late, leaving early, sick time abuse.
4. Rambling conversation, difficulty in sticking to a specific subject.
5. Lack of participation in normally enjoyed activities.