



Warning Signs

DEPRESSION

Some signs of depression include:

- Overreaction to irritations
- Sleep too much, or sleep too little
- Tiredness or restlessness
- Guilt, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness
- Suicidal thoughts and/or behavior
- Slowed movement, thought and/or speech
- Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- Unexpected loss or gain of weight
- Physical aches and pains that seem to have no other cause
- Inability to concentrate and poor memory
- Withdrawal from relationships, anti-social behavior
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Loss of motivation

Children

- Depression in children is internalized as anger
- Preschool or young elementary age: The child might look serious or vaguely sick. He might be less bouncy or spontaneous. While other children would become tearful or irritable when frustrated, this child may show these states spontaneously. He may say negative things about himself and may be self-destructive.
- Older elementary school through adolescence: The adolescent may present with academic decline, disruptive behavior, and problems with friends. Sometimes one can also see aggressive behavior, irritability and suicidal talk. The parent may say that the adolescent hates himself and everything else.

Teen

- A radical and otherwise unexplained personality change
- Consistently sleeping more or less than usual
- Repeated attempts to run away
- Frequent and lengthy bouts of anger or violent behavior
- Chronic boredom
- Ongoing inability to concentrate, pay attention or think clearly
- Loss of interest in activities formerly enjoyed
- Self-punishing behaviors such as bingeing on food, starving, self-mutilation, etc.
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Abusing drugs
- Sexual promiscuity

ANXIETY

Some signs that a child may be anxious about something may include:

- becoming clingy, impulsive, or distracted
- nervous movements, such as temporary twitches
- problems getting to sleep and/or staying asleep longer than usual
- sweaty hands
- accelerated heart rate and breathing
- nausea
- headaches
- stomachaches

STRESS

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Physical symptoms can be caused by other illnesses, so it is important to have a medical doctor treat conditions such as ulcers, compressed disks, or other physical (cont.) disorders. Remember, however, that the body and mind are not separate entities. The physical problems outlined below may result from or be exacerbated by stress:

- sleep disturbances
- back, shoulder or neck pain
- tension or migraine headaches
- upset or acid stomach, cramps, heartburn, gas, irritable bowel syndrome
- constipation, diarrhea
- weight gain or loss, eating disorders
- hair loss
- muscle tension
- fatigue
- high blood pressure
- irregular heartbeat, palpitations
- asthma or shortness of breath
- chest pain
- sweaty palms or hands
- cold hands or feet
- skin problems (hives, eczema, psoriasis, tics, itching)
- periodontal disease, jaw pain
- reproductive problems
- immune system suppression: more colds, flu, infections
- growth inhibition

Emotional symptoms

Like physical signs, emotional symptoms such as anxiety or depression can mask conditions other than stress. It is important to find out whether they are stress-related or not. In either case, the following emotional symptoms are uncomfortable and can affect your performance at work or play, your physical health, or your relationships with others:

- Nervousness
- anxiety
- depression
- moodiness
- “butterflies”
- irritability
- frustration
- memory problems
- lack of concentration
- trouble thinking clearly
- overreactions
- phobias
- feeling out of control
- substance abuse

Relational symptoms

The antisocial behavior displayed in stressful situations can cause the rapid deterioration of relationships with family, friends, co-workers, or even strangers. A person under stress may manifest signs such as:

- increased arguments
- isolation from social activities
- conflict with co-workers or employers
- frequent job changes
- road rage
- domestic or workplace violence
- overreactions

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Signs of Drugs, Alcohol, and Drug Paraphernalia

- Possession of drug-related paraphernalia, such as rolling papers, syringes, single-edged razors, small butane torches
- Possession of drugs or evidence of drugs such as seeds, pills of unknown origin, small zip-lock plastic bags, especially in clothing pockets
- Strange odors in the bedroom or bathroom, unaccustomed use of room sprays or incense
- Empty alcohol bottles or beer cans lying around
- Notebooks or doodles with drug or satanic images or symbols, notes and references to suicide

Identification with Drug Culture, Alcohol Use

- Clothing styles customarily worn by drug dealers and users in your area
- Hostility in discussing drug or alcohol use

Signs of Physical Deterioration

- Memory lapses, short attention span, difficulty in concentration
- Poor physical coordination, slurred or incoherent speech
- Unhealthy appearance, indifference to hygiene and grooming
- Bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils

Changes in Work or School Performance

- Increased absenteeism, tardiness, or punishments
- Work or school projects not completed or finished late

Changes in Behavior (substance abuse cont.)

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- Chronic dishonesty – lying, cheating, stealing
- Trouble with police
- Changes in friends, hanging around with a cheap crowd, evasiveness in talking about new friends
- Unexpected possessions or large amounts of money, or unexplained loss of money or possessions
- Increasing and inappropriate anger, hostility, and irritability
- Reduced motivation, energy, self-discipline, and self-esteem
- Decreased interest in hobbies
- Increased secretiveness
- Anger at family, unwillingness to spend time with family

EATING DISORDERS

-Anorexia Nervosa

-Bulimia

-Binge Eating Disorder

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

Physiological

- Weight-loss often in a short period of time. At least 15% of original weight
- Cessation of menstruation
- Paleness
- Complaints of feeling cold/low body temperature
- Dizziness and fainting spells/low blood pressure
- Bone mineral loss, leading to osteoporosis
- Irregular heart beat which can lead to cardiac arrest
- Loss of muscle and body fat
- Hair loss
- Dry skin

Behavioral

- Restricted eating, severe diets, fasting, “vegetarianism”
- Odd food rituals, food combinations
- Avoidance of social situations where food may be present
- Compulsive exercise
- Dressing in layers to hid weight loss, or keep warm
- Bingeing (may be secretive or infrequent)
- Distortion of body image (seeing self as fat even when emaciated)
- Intense fear of becoming fat, regardless of low weight
- Use of laxatives, enemas, or diuretics
- Interest in cooking and feeding others

Attitude Shifts

- Mood shifts/ depression / anxiety
- Perfectionist attitude
- Insecurities about capabilities regardless of actual performance
- Self-worth is determined by food intake
- Social isolation

BULIMIA

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Physiological

- Person may be under-, over-, or normal weight
- Swollen glands, puffiness in the cheeks, or broken vessels under the eyes
- Sore throat
- Fatigue and muscle ache
- Unexplained tooth decay
- Frequent weight fluctuations
- Electrolyte imbalance which can lead to irregular heartbeat, and in some cases cardiac arrest

Behavioral

- Secretive eating (missing food)
- Avoidance of restaurants, planned meals or social events if food is present
- Self-disgust when too much has been eaten
- Bathroom visits after meals
- The use of diet pills
- Rigid and harsh exercise regimes
- Fear of being fat, regardless of weight
- Bingeing that may alternate with fasting
- Preoccupation/constant talk about food or weight
- Vomiting and laxative use
- Shoplifting (sometimes food or laxatives)

Attitude Shifts

- Mood shifts including depression, sadness, guilt, and self-hate
- Severe self-criticism
- The need for approval
- Self-worth determined by weight
- Feeling out of control

BINGE EATING DISORDER

Physiological

- Compulsive Overeating
- Weight-related hypertension or fatigue
- Weight gain
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease

Behavioral

- Bingeing
- Restriction of activities because of embarrassment about weight
- Going from one diet to the next
- Eating small amounts in public while maintaining a high weight

Attitude Shifts

- Feeling about self based on weight and control of eating
- Fantasizing about being thin
- Depression
- Guilt / shame

SUICIDALITY

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Recognize the Signs Of Depression and Possible Suicide Risk:

- Talking About Dying -- any mention of dying, disappearing, jumping, shooting oneself, or other types of self harm.
- Recent Loss -- through death, divorce, separation, broken relationship, loss of job, money, status, self-confidence, self-esteem, loss of religious faith, loss of interest in friends, sex, hobbies, activities previously enjoyed
- Change in Personality -- sad, withdrawn, irritable, anxious, tired, indecisive, apathetic
- Change in Behavior -- can't concentrate on school, work, routine tasks
- Change in Sleep Patterns -- insomnia, often with early waking or oversleeping, nightmares
- Fear of losing control -- going crazy, harming self or others
- Change in Eating Habits -- loss of appetite and weight, or overeating
- Low self esteem -- feeling worthless, shame, overwhelming guilt, self-hatred, "everyone would be better off without me"
- No hope for the future -- believing things will never get better; that nothing will ever change

Other things to watch for- Suicidal impulses, statements, plans; giving away favorite things; previous suicide attempts, substance abuse, making out wills, arranging for the care of pets, extravagant spending, agitation, hyperactivity, restlessness or lethargy.

REMEMBER: The risk of suicide may be greatest as the depression lifts

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Signs and symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder include:

- sleeplessness
- nightmares
- inability to get along with others, particularly in close relationships
- paranoia and distrust
- unwillingness to discuss or revisit in any way the site of the trauma
- persistent, intense fear and anxiety
- feeling easily irritated or agitated
- having difficulty concentrating
- feeling numb or detached
- no longer finding pleasure in previously enjoyable activities
- feeling helpless or "out of control"
- experiencing intense survivor guilt
- being preoccupied with the traumatic event
- physical symptoms such as headaches, gastrointestinal distress, or dizziness
- suicidal thoughts, plans, or gestures

SELF-INJURIOUS BEHAVIORS

Though most self-injurers try to keep their self-abuse a secret and it could be difficult to tell if someone does self-mutilate, there are some warning signs:

- Fresh or healing wounds or scars (i.e. scratches or cuts on an arm in a precise form or unusual pattern)
- Blood or burn stains on inside of clothing
- Locking them self in the bathroom for long periods of time
- Not wanting to participate in activities where you must change clothes at school or around other people
- Wearing long sleeves or pants even on very hot days
- Becoming very defensive when questioned about wounds or scars

If someone displays most or all of these signs, they *may* be a self-injurer.