

The Informed Worker



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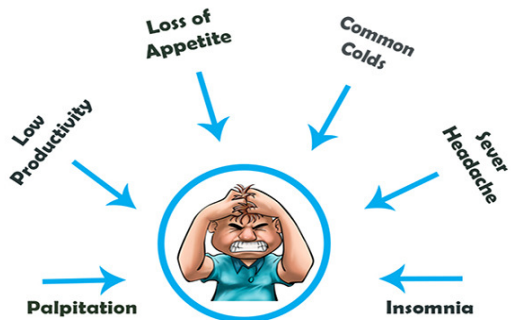
Physical and Mental Signs of Stress

You've heard before that recognizing when you are under stress is the first step in learning how to deal with your stress, but what does that mean? Sometimes we are so used to living with stress, we don't know how to identify it.

Whether you are experiencing immediate or short-term stress or have been experiencing stress for a long time or long-term stress, your body and mind may be showing the effects. Here are some 'warning signs' that stress is affecting your body and mind.

Often occurring in quick 'bursts' in reaction to something in your environment, short-term stress can affect your body in many ways. Some examples include:

- Making your heartbeat and breath faster
- Making you sweat more
- Leaving you with cold hands, feet, or skin
- Making you feel sick to your stomach or giving you 'butterflies'
- Tightening your muscles or making you feel tense
- Leaving your mouth dry
- Making you have to go to the bathroom frequently
- Increasing muscle spasms, headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath



Symptoms of Stress



What are the symptoms of anxiety

While anxiety symptoms vary from person to person, in general the body reacts in a very specific way to anxiety. When you feel anxious, your body goes on high alert, looking for possible danger and activating your fight or flight responses. As a result, some common symptoms of anxiety include:

- nervousness, restlessness, or being tense
- feelings of danger, panic, or dread
- rapid heart rate
- rapid breathing, or hyperventilation
- increased or heavy sweating
- trembling or muscle twitching
- weakness and lethargy
- difficulty focusing or thinking clearly about anything other than the thing you're worried about
- insomnia
- digestive or gastrointestinal problems, such as gas, constipation, or diarrhea
- a strong desire to avoid the things that trigger your anxiety
- obsessions about certain ideas, a sign of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- performing certain behaviors over and over again
- anxiety surrounding a particular life event or experience that has occurred in the past, especially indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



What are the symptoms of depression?

Depression varies from person to person, but there are some common signs and symptoms. It's important to remember that these symptoms can be part of life's normal lows. But the more symptoms you have, the stronger they are, and the longer they've lasted—the more likely it is that you're dealing with depression.

Symptoms of depression include:

- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. A bleak outlook—nothing will ever get better and there's nothing you can do to improve your situation.
- Loss of interest in daily activities. You don't care anymore about former hobbies, pastimes, social activities, or sex. You've lost your ability to feel joy and pleasure.
- Appetite or weight changes. Significant weight loss or weight gain—a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month.
- Sleep changes. Either insomnia, especially waking in the early hours of the morning, or oversleeping.
- Anger or irritability. Feeling agitated, restless, or even violent. Your tolerance level is low, your temper short, and everything and everyone gets on your nerves.
- Loss of energy. Feeling fatigued, sluggish, and physically drained. Your whole body may feel heavy, and even small tasks are exhausting or take longer to complete.

- Self-loathing. Strong feelings of worthlessness or guilt. You harshly criticize yourself for perceived faults and mistakes.
- Reckless behavior. You engage in escapist behavior such as substance abuse, compulsive gambling, reckless driving, or dangerous sports.
- Concentration problems. Trouble focusing, making decisions, or remembering things.
- Unexplained aches and pains. An increase in physical complaints such as headaches, back pain, aching muscles, and stomach pain.

Below are some resources you may find helpful when it comes to understanding depression or helping a loved one on the road to recovery. Mood Disorder Association of Ontario – www.mooddisorders.ca



Helping people help themselves

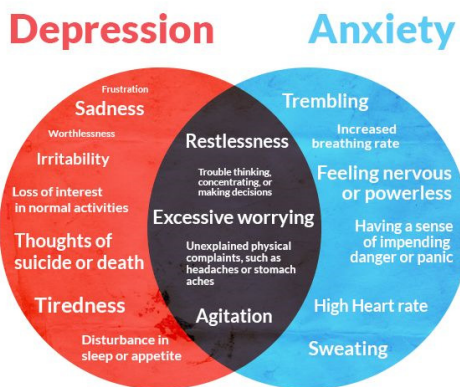
The Mental Health Helpline provides information about mental health services in Ontario. We are funded by the Government of Ontario. Information is the first step. A helpful Information and Referral Specialist will answer your call, email or web chat 24/7. Our service is free and confidential

Mental Health Helpline

1-866-531-2600

The first place to start for help.

The Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatment – www.canmat.org



Anxiety.org
HEALTHCARE BRANDS



Belleville 613-969-1010	Mississauga 905-677-3307
Concord 905-669-4159	Ottawa 613-225-3330
Cambridge 519-622-7788	Woodstock 519-788-2683
Hamilton 905-545-4656	