



Recognising Stress in Yourself – Signs and Symptoms

Stress is *not* an indication that people are weak - It's our natural reaction to spending a sustained period of time dealing with more pressure than we have the resources to cope with.

At DCHS we want our staff to feel happy, healthy and motivated at work. We know that it is easy when facing a lot of pressure to think that having more bad than good is normal or okay, IT IS NOT!

Recognising that you may not be coping with the pressures you face is the first stage in managing your own well-being and levels of stress. The signs and symptoms of stress will vary greatly from person to person as the experience of stress is very individual – it can show up in unpredictable ways, from sudden bursts of aggression to unexplained illness.

Symptoms may be directly related to a specific stressful event, such as an argument with a colleague, or may be the result of an accumulation of pressures over time. It can be important to identify the source of your stress and what in particular may be causing negative feelings or emotions and changes in behaviour. The first step in finding the source is to identify the specific signs of symptoms that you may be experiencing.

The following checklist details some signs and symptoms to look out for in yourself. This is not exhaustive, as symptoms will vary greatly from person to person. It is not the case that these symptoms are *automatically* indicative of stress, but if they are dramatic or persistent and uncharacteristic then it is advisable you seek some support.

Physical Symptoms		Thinking Based Symptoms	Emotional Symptoms	Behavioural Changes
Dizziness	Racing heart	Constant worry	Anxiety	Bossiness
General aches and pains	Stooped posture	Forgetfulness	Anger	Compulsive eating
Grinding teeth	Shoulder and back pain	Difficulty making decisions	Feeling powerless	Critical attitude of others
Clenched jaws	Sweaty palms	Inability to concentrate	Frequent mood swings	Explosive actions
Headaches	Exhaustion	Lack of creativity	Irritability	Frequent job changes
Indigestion	Trembling	Loss of sense of humour	Frustration	Impulsive actions
Muscle tension	Upset stomach	Lack of openness new approaches	Nervousness	Increased use of alcohol
Difficulty sleeping	More frequent illness	Difficulty in learning new things	Sadness	Withdrawal from social situations



Recognise these feelings in yourself?

So if you recognize some of the symptoms above in yourself, we want you to take action. It can be hard to admit to people that are feeling low or stressed.

If you do then it may be useful to explore and understand more about your emotional well-being. There can be many sources of challenge and pressure in the workplace and identifying the specific sources for you is an important step to improving your emotional well-being.

Think about your possible sources of stress, challenge or pressure and make a note of them here...

At DCHS we want you to spend as much time as possible feeling like you have **POSTIVE WELL-BEING**, if this isn't where you are, take action! Use the toolkits on understanding what is driving your current well-being, building your resilience and conducting a conversation with your manager to take some proactive steps in getting help to change your situation.