

STRESS SYMPTOMS

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	BEHAVIORAL	SPIRITUAL
Chest pain* Chills Diarrhea Difficulty breathing* Disorientation Dizziness Elevated BP* Equilibrium problems Fainting* Fatigue Grinding of teeth Headaches Insomnia Lower back pain Muscle tremors Nausea Neck & shoulder pain Nightmares Profuse sweating Rapid heart rate* Shock symptoms* Stomach problems Thirst Twitches Uncoordinated feelings Visual difficulties Vomiting Weakness	Blaming Someone Confusion Difficulty identifying familiar objects or people Disturbed Thinking Flashbacks Heightened or Lowered Alertness Hypervigilance Impaired Thinking Increased or decreased awareness of surroundings Intrusive images Loss of time, place or person orientation Memory problems Nightmares Overly critical of others Overly sensitive Poor abstract thinking Poor attention Poor concentration Poor decisions Poor problem solving	Abandonment Agitation Anger Anxiety Apprehension Denial Depression Emotional shock Excessive worry Fear Feeling helpless about life Feeling hopeless Feeling overwhelmed Flat affect—numbness Grief Guilt Inappropriate emotional response or lack of it Intense anger Irritability Loss of emotional control Phobias Rage Resentment Sever panic* (rare) Uncertainty	Alcohol consumption Antisocial acts* Avoiding thoughts, feelings or situations related to the event Changes in activity Changes in sexual functioning Changes in speech patterns Changes in usual communications Emotional outbursts Erratic movements Hyper-alert to environment Inability to relax Inability to rest Loss or increase in appetite Nonspecific bodily complaints Pacing Silence Startle reflex intensified Suspiciousness Withdrawal	Acceptance or rejection of providence Alienation Anger directed to God Awareness of the holy Changes in religious observances Confusion regarding God Deepened spiritual awareness Emphasis on religious rites Hyper-repentance Imposed gratefulness Increased emphasis on religion Isolation Renewed search for meaning Sense of abandonment Sense of betrayal Sense of communion Sense of meaninglessness Sense of vocation in creation and providence

*Requires immediate medical intervention

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FEELING BETTER

Find someone you trust. Find a family or close friend and talk with them about your experience. Don't carry this burden alone; share it with those who care about you. Contact a friend and have someone stay with you for a few hours or a day or so.

Give yourself permission to feel what you are feeling. Express your feelings as they arise. Take time to cry as you need to.

Take care of yourself. Get enough rest and eat regularly. If you are irritable or tense from lack of sleep or if you are not eating correctly, you will have less ability to deal with a stressful situation.

Do make as many daily decisions as possible. This will give you a feeling of control over your life. Know your limits. If the problem is beyond control and cannot be changed at the moment, don't fight the situation. Learn to accept what is—for now—until a time when you can change it.

Practice relaxation and meditation.

Create a quiet scene. You can't always run away, but you can hold a vision in your mind—a quiet country scene or you walking along the beach can temporarily take you out of the turmoil of a stressful situation.

Pay soft background music. At your home and in your office or car, provide a soothing backdrop to the hustle and bustle of office personnel, noisy telephones, traffic or cranky children.

Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.

Take one thing at a time. For people under tension, an ordinary workload can sometimes seem unbearable. The load looks so great that it becomes painful to tackle any part of it. When this happens, remember that it is a temporary condition and that you can work your way out of it...one step at a time.

Allow time for a task. This will help reduce some of your self-imposed time pressure. If you normally plan a half hour to get a job done by rushing through it, schedule 45-minutes or an hour so you can do the job more deliberately and thoughtfully. This can only improve the quality of your work. Corner the urge to be everything to everyone.

Spruce up your surroundings. Keep a beautiful bouquet of fresh flowers at home or in the office. Surround yourself with plants or selected art pieces that you especially like. Make your environment one you enjoy.

Escape for awhile. It can sometimes help to get away from whatever is causing the tension. Lose yourself in a book or a movie. It can help you regain some perspective so you can return more composed to better deal with the situation.

If these coping strategies don't seem to be successful in reducing your stress reactions, please contact your chaplain or qualified mental health professional for additional assistance.