

Signals of Distress

Your mind and body are connected. When your mind is healthy, your body can resist illness better. When your body is healthy, your feelings are more positive. Stress is a normal part of living, but when stress becomes chronic and pervasive our health and well-being can be at risk. Common sources of stress are difficulties at home or work that you don't know how to resolve, too much change in your life, or traumatic events like a death or divorce. It is important to know when stress has become detrimental and how to take action.

Physical signals of distress

- Muscle tension
- High blood pressure
- Low energy
- Changes in appetite
- Stomach/digestive problems
- Shortness of breath
- Headaches
- Increase in colds, viruses
- Insomnia

Emotional signals of distress

- Depression
- Irritability
- Anxiety, nervousness
- Apathy
- Impatience
- Lack of feelings, numbness
- Loss of pleasure
- Unexplained crying

Mental signals of distress

- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness
- Negative thinking patterns
- Mental fatigue
- Noise sensitivity
- Obsessive thinking

Relational signals of distress

- Strained relationships
- Withdrawal/isolating
- Intense loneliness
- Increased need for control
- Intense focus on the "other"
- Lack of trust

Spiritual signals of distress

- Emptiness/lack of meaning
- Feeling abandoned
- Lack of peace
- Finding it difficult to pray
- Feeling disconnected from God

If you've experienced several of these "distress signals," you may be suffering from unhealthy stress. You may want to explore some strategies for reducing stress in your life and coping with stress that you can't eliminate. Consult a mental health professional or your doctor for help in addressing unhealthy sources of stress in your life.