

How To - Recognise signs/symptoms of stress

Employees have a duty to take all reasonable steps to promote and protect their own health and wellbeing [How To - Help yourself](#) and at the earliest opportunity, to advise managers of any concerns they have about work-related pressures and stress. However, managers should also be alert for signs/symptoms of stress.

Identifying the signs/symptoms of stress at an early stage increases the possibility of action being taken to control, if not eliminate, the underlying causes. In turn, this will **minimise the risk to an employee's health and wellbeing**, and the potential impact on other team members.

Managers should therefore monitor their area of responsibility for the early signs/symptoms of stress and be prepared to take prompt action to prevent an escalation of the problem and possible absence.

The signs which may indicate that an employee is potentially suffering from stress are as follows:

<p>PSYCHOLOGICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inability to concentrate or make simple decisions ■ Memory lapses ■ Becoming rather vague ■ Easily distracted ■ Less intuitive & creative ■ Worrying ■ Negative thinking ■ Depression & anxiety 	<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tearful ■ Irritable ■ Mood swings ■ Extra sensitive to criticism ■ Defensive ■ Feeling out of control ■ Lack of motivation ■ Angry ■ Frustrated ■ Lack of confidence ■ Lack of self-esteem
<p>PHYSICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aches/pains & muscle tension/grinding teeth ■ Frequent colds/infections ■ Allergies/rashes/skin irritations ■ Constipation/diarrhoea/IBS ■ Weight loss or gain ■ Indigestion/heartburn/ulcers ■ Hyperventilating/lump in the throat/pins & needles ■ Dizziness/palpitations 	<p>BEHAVIOURAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No time for relaxation or pleasurable activities ■ Prone to accidents, forgetfulness ■ Increased reliance on alcohol, smoking, caffeine, recreational or illegal drugs ■ Becoming a workaholic ■ Poor time management and/or poor standards of work ■ Absenteeism

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panic attacks/nausea• Physical tiredness• Menstrual changes/loss of libido/sexual• Heart problems/high blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-neglect/change in appearance• Social withdrawal• Relationship problems• Insomnia or waking tired• Reckless• Aggressive/anger outbursts• Nervous• Uncharacteristically lying
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Displaying any of the above symptoms does not automatically indicate that an employee is suffering from occupational stress and the lists above are not exhaustive.