

Jamison: Patient Education and Wellness

HANDOUT 7.11: CLINICAL EVIDENCE OF STRESS-INDUCED RESPONSES

Evidence of emotional stress

- ☐ tearfulness
- ☐ impulsive behaviour, agitation
- ☐ irritability, short tempered, edginess, hostility, aggressiveness
- ☐ feeling a failure, frustration
- ☐ feeling apathetic, withdrawn, disinterested
- ☐ feeling numb, sad, depressed
- ☐ emotional outbursts with little provocation
- ☐ marked interpersonal conflict, argumentative

Evidence of cognitive stress

- ☐ memory problems, forgetfulness
- ☐ indecisiveness
- ☐ flitting from one idea/activity to another
- ☐ a tendency to make mistakes, get muddled
- ☐ mental blocks
- ☐ foggy, disorganized thinking
- ☐ procrastinating, unable to manage your time
- ☐ working longer hours, no time for enjoyment

Evidence of physical stress

- ☐ trembling hands
- ☐ butterflies in the stomach
- ☐ tight shoulder, head, lower back
- ☐ restless: foot tapping, key jiggling
- ☐ an exaggerated startle response
- ☐ stuttering or speech very fast
- ☐ sleep problems
- ☐ hatband headache, back pain, stomach upsets
- ☐ loss of libido

Evidence of chronic stress: the Residual Tension Test

A test for residual tension may be performed by:

- holding your arm up
- clasp your fist so firmly that you feel your nails biting into your palm
- holding this position for 1 minute.

Now relax.

Check your hand:

- ☐ the fingers are straight. You have relaxed.
- ☐ the fingers are curled. You have residual tension, i.e. evidence of chronic stress.

Handouts for managing stress and improving coping skills are available in Chapters 14 and 18