

## **Jamison: Patient Education and Wellness**

### **HANDOUT 18.3: WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS**

*Are you at risk?*

Life change unit assessment <http://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/tc/interactive-tool-what-is-your-stress-level-what-does-this-tool-measure>

Stress Calculator for Kids [http://www.bam.gov/sub\\_yourlife/yourlife\\_stressometer.html#](http://www.bam.gov/sub_yourlife/yourlife_stressometer.html#)

#### **Check for:**

##### **1. Early signs of physical distress**

Do you have:

- ☐ trembling hands?
- ☐ butterflies in the stomach?
- ☐ tight shoulders, neck, lower back?
- ☐ restlessness: foot tapping, key jiggling, can't relax?
- ☐ an exaggerated startle response?
- ☐ a stutter or speak very fast (fall over your words)?
- ☐ easy fatigue?
- ☐ frequent minor ailments?
  - ☐ sleep problems
  - ☐ hatband headache
  - ☐ back pain
  - ☐ loss of libido
  - ☐ stomach upsets

*The more of the above you regularly experience, the greater your acute stress response.*

##### **2. Evidence of emotional lability**

Are you:

- ☐ tearful?
- ☐ impulsive?
- ☐ irritable, short tempered, edgy?
- ☐ emotional – have outbursts with little provocation?
- ☐ argumentative – experiencing significant interpersonal conflict?

Do you feel:

- ☐ hostile, aggressive?
- ☐ a failure?
- ☐ frustrated?
- ☐ apathetic or agitated?
- ☐ numb, sad, depressed?
- ☐ withdrawn, disinterested?

*The more of the above you regularly experience, the greater your emotional distress.*

**3. Cognitive stress**

Are you:

- ☐ forgetful – have memory problems?
- ☐ indecisiveness?
- ☐ working longer hours, unable to relax, finding no time for enjoyment?

Do you:

- ☐ flit from one idea or activity to another?
- ☐ have a tendency to make mistakes or get muddled?
- ☐ have mental blocks?
- ☐ have foggy, disorganized thinking?
- ☐ procrastinate – find you are unable to plan ahead or manage your time?

*The more of the above you regularly experience, the greater your mental stress.*

See also

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/mentalhealth/stress/167.printerview.html>