

Identification of common Stress symptoms and solutions

Common Physical reactions

- ✓ Muscle tension
- ✓ Indigestion
- ✓ Sleep difficulties
- ✓ Rapid uneven or pounding heartbeat
- ✓ Frequent urge to pass urine
- ✓ Fast, shallow breathing
- ✓ Chest discomfort
- ✓ Change in appetite, constipation or diarrhea
- ✓ Backache/headache
- ✓ Cramps

Common Psychological reactions

- ✓ Feeling under pressure, frustration and aggression
- ✓ Feeling mentally drained out
- ✓ Preoccupied, absent minded
- ✓ Symptoms like headaches, fainting spells, vomiting
- ✓ Wanting to be alone
- ✓ Fussy, gloomy or suspicious, being constantly frightened or irritable
- ✓ Inability to concentrate or complete the task
- ✓ Major changes in eating or sleeping habits
- ✓ Lack of attention and concentration; Forgetfulness
- ✓ Inability to complete tasks or make study plans
- ✓ Staying out longer, stop communicating with the parents and have health problems
- ✓ Increased disinterest in studies; Seeing more TV, sleeping more

Psychosomatic Symptoms

These refer to physical symptoms that the student shows but there is no biological basis for them and the root cause is in psychological factors. The biological causes of these symptoms, must be eliminated first to consider these as psychosomatic. The mind body connection must be studied to understand how the anxiety is manifesting in pain. Alternative coping strategies by professionals need to be developed to defocus from the pain.

Symptoms

- Nagging headaches
- Backache
- Fainting spell.
- Diarrhea/gastric trouble
- Asthmatic attacks
- Breathlessness
- Vomiting
- Feeling tensed and unable to relax
- Writing cramps bloomed or
- Absent vision

What not to DO

- ✓ Do not deny the symptoms with statement like “you don’t have any physical problem” or “stop using this as an excuse”. Usually the student is genuinely in trouble and is not pretending pain.
- ✓ Do not encourage symptoms by repeatedly enquiring about them or suggesting remedies for the pain.

Handling Suicide

High Risk Behavior: Substance Abuse, Self Harm, Aggression

Suicide is the most serious manifestation of high risk behavior. A lot many suicides are impulsive while others are well planned. Impulsive students are likely to decide on the spur of the moment.

- ✓ Stress anxiety and depression may sometimes even lead to high risk behavior in students.
- ✓ It is behaviour that is potentially harmful to self or others.
- ✓ Behaviour relating to consumption and abuse of psychotropic drugs or commonly used medicines likes cough syrups, sleeping pills, painkillers, without prescription.
- ✓ Behaviour related to smoking and consumption of alcohol, self-harming behaviour like suicide, wrist slashing, hitting self, starving deliberately.
- ✓ Harm to others in the form of abusive and aggressive behaviour like rash driving or violence to others in any form.

Indicators for increased chance for suicide

- ✓ Withdrawal behavior for few days
- ✓ Mention of suicide repeatedly
- ✓ Suicide note
- ✓ Disinterest in studies
- ✓ Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- ✓ A history of serious psychological problems
- ✓ A history of impulsive, poorly controlled and destructive behavior
- ✓ A history of continuing academic problems and learning difficulties
- ✓ Adjustment difficulties with family, school, peers.

Interventions

- ✓ It is important to buy time.
- ✓ Counselling in such cases is very helpful. Professional help given continuously can reduce the intent of ending life.
- ✓ Long lectures with a moralistic tone are not advised. These make the already depressed student more guilty and his intent stronger.
- ✓ The student should contact a professional counsellor as soon as possible. If not efforts should be made to encourage him/her to meet his/her teachers or school counsellors or talk to his/her parents. The more he/she talks about his/her problems to various people; he/she is more likely to feel better.
- ✓ No medicines should be prescribed without professional advise.

- ✓ Such behavior should be discouraged
- ✓ Communication channels should be kept open
- ✓ The negative and long-term effects should be reasoned out
- ✓ Quick relaxation and breathing techniques should be practiced
- ✓ Anger management is helpful
- ✓ Information must be shared with parents/teachers. The child must understand that monitoring by parents or counsellors is essential for early recovery

- ✓ Do not prescribe medication
- ✓ Do not punish or reprimand harshly
- ✓ Do not moralize or make person feel guilty. Help him/her to think of it as a problem needing help.