

Taking Control of Your Stress

Give yourself a break. What you may be experiencing is a common reaction to a stressful situation.

Increase your physical activity.

Within the first 24-48 hours, periods of exercise (walking, running, aerobics, yard or house work, etc.) alternated with relaxation can alleviate some physical reactions.



Share your stress. Sometimes just talking with a friend or family member helps. Reach out. People do care!

Sleep and diet. The better rested and nourished you are, the better equipped you are to tackle your stress. If sleep and eating difficulties persist, ask for help.



Recognize your limits.

Learn to accept that you are not capable of doing all things all the time. You are healing. At the same time, keep your life as normal as possible.

Get involved. Becoming a participant is a good way to reduce stress. Spend time with others.



Prioritize your time. Write down the things you have to do in the order that they have to be done.



Substance use - either legal or illicit - doesn't help manage stress. It masks symptoms and makes it harder to recover.

Choose activities that typically bring you joy. They can help you feel better.



Give yourself about 6 weeks of healing time before making big decisions or life changes.

This includes relationship or job changes.

Realize those around you are under stress also. Share your feelings with others and check out how they're doing.



Remember - you may experience a variety of common reactions to challenging and crisis situations.



Common Stress Reactions to Difficult Events

Anyone who experiences a stressful event may experience one or more of these common signs and reactions.

These are common reactions to a difficult event, and although painful, they are part of the healing process.

Request a response team
24 hours a day

(888) 522-7228

kccrt.ky.gov

Common Stress Reactions

Everyone reacts differently to stress and difficult events. Some people will have multiple reactions while others may have none or just a few. Life experiences and personal levels of resilience alter how a person may react.

Review this list now. In a few days, look at it again. If you notice you are experiencing some of these reactions, be assured you are not broken. It is common to have reactions.

PHYSICAL/BODY

- fatigue
- muscle tremors/twitches
- nausea
- elevated blood pressure
- thirst
- nonspecific body complaints
- headaches
- change in appetite
- dizziness
- visual difficulties
- rapid heart rate
- grinding of teeth
- chills
- profuse sweating
- fainting



*Indicates need for medical evaluation

- vomiting*
- physical weakness*
- difficulty breathing*
- chest pain*
- shock symptoms*



COGNITIVE/MIND

- blaming someone
- hyper vigilance or increased vigilance/watchfulness
- nightmares or intrusive images
- uncertainty or poor decision-making
- difficulty identifying familiar objects or people
- increased or decreased awareness of surroundings
- disorientation (time, place, and/or person)
- react to criticism as if attacked
- confusion
- poor concentration
- suspiciousness
- memory problems
- poor problem solving
- poor abstract thinking
- disturbed thinking



SPIRITUAL

- doubt
- preoccupation with spiritual meaning
- questioning beliefs or values
- crisis of faith

EMOTIONAL

- anxiety
- guilt
- grief
- panic
- denial
- emotional shock
- fear, uncertainty, or apprehension
- sadness or depression
- feeling overwhelmed
- emotional outbursts or loss of control
- intense anger, irritability or agitation
- feeling numb or cold
- feeling isolated
- intense worry about others



BEHAVIORAL

- change in eating habits
- suspiciousness
- inability to rest/relax
- sleep problems
- less humor
- withdrawal/isolation
- change in sexual functioning
- hyper alert to environment
- change in usual communications/speech
- intensified pacing or erratic movements
- change in socialization or antisocial acts
- increase in alcohol/drug consumption



There are several things you can do to lessen the impact of stressful events. See **Taking Control of Your Stress** on the back panels.