

# WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS

You have been involved in an event that may have produced strong reactions in you. These reactions are not only normal, they are actually part of the process of adjusting to this extreme challenge. These responses can be very different from each other and from what other people are experiencing. And, these responses can happen immediately or they can appear days or weeks after the event.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or a few months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the event. However, with support and understanding from loved ones, stress reactions usually pass more quickly.

Here are some very common signs and signals of a stress reaction:

<b>PHYSICAL CHANGES</b>	<b>COGNITIVE CHANGES</b>	<b>EMOTIONAL CHANGES</b>	<b>BEHAVIORAL CHANGES</b>
Fatigue	Confusion	Anxiety	Nervous laughter
Nausea or vomiting	Poor attention	Quilt	Sleep disturbances
Muscle tremors or muscle twitches	Poor decision making skills	Loss of emotional control	Change in speech patterns
Chest pain*	Poor concentration	Denial	Suspiciousness
Headaches	Memory problems	Fear	Antisocial acts
Chills or profuse sweating	Poor problem solving skills	Inappropriate emotional reactions	Pacing or restlessness
Muffled hearing	Nightmares	Uncertainty	Erratic movements
Rapid heart beat or elevated BP	Difficulty identifying familiar objects or people	Feeling overwhelmed	Isolation or change in communication
Grinding of teeth	Loss of time or place	Apprehension	Startled reflexes
Visual difficulties	Disturbed drinking	Intense anger	Emotional outbursts
Neck and back pains	Poor abstract thinking	Irritability, agitation, etc.	Hypersensitive
Difficulty breathing*	Heightened or lowered alertness	Depression and/or grief	Increased alcohol, drug, or smoking
Dizziness or fainting	Blaming someone		

\* These are definite signs to seek medical attention

Occasionally, the event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the person to manage by himself or herself.

(2/2001)