

Lesson 3

Identifying Your Personal Signs of Stress during the COVID-19 Crisis

Beginning

- What were the main points from our last lesson/call/meeting?
- Did you complete any action steps since that lesson/call/meeting?
- If so, how did they go?
- Today's lesson is "Identifying your personal signs of stress during the COVID-19 crisis". Have you been experiencing stress during this crisis?
- Why is this an important topic?
- Today we're going to talk about signs that we are under too much stress, and how to recognize our own stress reactions. Let's begin by discussing some important information.

Important Information

What are signs that we're under too much stress?

When people are under stress, it can affect them physically and emotionally. Each of us show our stress in different ways. Under too much stress a person's thinking, mood, and behavior can also be affected in harmful ways. Some people show mostly physical signs of stress, such as muscular tension, unusual pain, headaches, digestion or sleep problems. Some people mostly have trouble concentrating or feel irritable, anxious, or depressed. Others may pace, bite their nails, use alcohol and/or drugs or overeat.

Being aware of our personal signs of stress can be very helpful, because once we realize we're under stress we can start to do something about it. In this way, we are better prepared to regulate our stress so it doesn't harm our overall health and wellbeing.

Let's Get Personal

Knowing and recognizing our signs of too much stress.

You can use the following checklist to identify your own personal signs of being under stress.

Check all that apply.

SIGNS OF STRESS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Anger and frustration
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Feeling jumpy
- ☐ Breathing problems
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Increased heart rate

- ☐ Feeling restless or “keyed up”
- ☐ Unexplained muscle pain
- ☐ Tearfulness
- ☐ Change in appetite
- ☐ Forgetfulness
- ☐ Difficulty falling asleep
- ☐ Prone to accidents
- ☐ Increased need for sleep
- ☐ Feeling panic
- ☐ Trembling or shaking
- ☐ Wanting to use drugs or alcohol
- ☐ Digestion problems
- ☐ Being suspicious of others
- ☐ Stomach aches
- ☐ Isolating- avoiding opportunities to connect with others
- ☐ Skin problems
- ☐ Dry mouth
- ☐ Mental health and/or substance use problems getting worse
- ☐ Feeling very tired
- ☐ Problems concentrating
- ☐ Other signs _____

Discussion Point

What are your personal signs of stress? Which of these personal signs concern you the most?

Action Step

Knowing your personal signs of stress.

In the next week, be mindful of your personal signs of stress. Please identify up to three signs of stress that come up during the week that concern you most:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

It is best to select a time and place when you will write down this information.

When will you write down these signs? _____

Where? _____

How will you remind yourself to do it? _____

Who could help you complete your Action Step? _____

What might get in the way of completing your Action Step and how can you deal with this?

Ending

- What were the main points of this lesson?
- How do you feel about what we have covered today?
- Consider using this affirmation, or one of your own choosing:

AFFIRMATION: You might find it helpful to affirm (state out loud) your ability and motivation to apply what you have learned to improve your health and wellbeing.

I have the knowledge and determination to use what I learned to recognize my personal signs of stress during this difficult time. I will use this knowledge to make smart decisions to stay safe and healthy during this difficult time. I am a worthwhile person who deserves to have the information I need to stay safe and healthy!