Navigating Stress

Recognizing Symptoms of Stress, Acute Stress, & PTSD

Stress

In our normal day-to-day lives we all have some stress such as work deadlines, family quarrels, planning functions, or other activities that may cause us to feel

nervous, excited, worried, anxious, or frustrated. While each of us may respond differently to stress, for the most part, our minds and bodies can handle the normal stressors (things that we identify as causing stress). A small amount of stress can even be positive because it can move us into action to address our stressors and move our energy into action.

Acute Stress

In extreme situations, external stressors may cause us to have acute stress. The loss of a loved one, loss of a job, incidents of harassment, discrimination, violent crime, or other situations outside of our control are examples of severe external stressors. After experiencing one or several severe external stressors, it is important to recognize when our mind and body is unable to cope with the higher levels of stress.

The symptoms include:

- Difficulty concentrating can't complete tasks at work, at school, or even follow conversations with families or friends
- Feeling detached from their body it might feel like one is looking at their body from outside of themselves
- Feeling like they are in a dream, that nothing is real
- Difficulty in remembering details of the traumatic event

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD is often associated with veterans who have served in wars and have experienced situations in which their lives have been in danger. PTSD has also been prevalent in survivors of car accidents, survivors of violent crimes, and others who have survived near death situations. The traumatic event can either be one-time or a series of violent incidents. In addition to experiencing some of the symptoms of acute stress, the following additional symptoms occur:

> • Flashback- the dangerous event is experienced over and over - it might feel like the rewind button on a video is playing back the same event and then the event rewinds and starts again

• Your body and emotions respond as they did at the time of the event- racing heart, shortness of breath, feeling fear, anger, helplessness, or other emotions experienced at that moment

- Similar sights or sounds that occurred at the time of the traumatic event cause one to have a flashback
- Avoiding places, people, or situations that remind one of the traumatic event
- Fear of losing friends and family members and not wanting to physically be away from them
- One's body is "on alert" all the time- can't sleep, irritable, poor concentration, always aware of what or who is around you, overreacting to things that startle you or to little things that didn't used to bother you

Physical Symptoms

Scan Me!

In all types of stress, the body can react with increased physical symptoms such as: headaches, stomachaches, tightness in chest, and digestive problems.

If you have any symptoms, questions or concerns, consult with your healthcare provider. If you have a psychiatric or medical emergency, please contact 911 or seek immediate care. This is not medical advice and does not replace care provided to you by your physician. If you need additional support, you may contact 51kh Family Center at 866-732-7392. This educational information may be reproduced or distributed with attribution and without alteration or permission. Additional educational resources are available at saldef.org. The content of this video or document was developed by the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) in partnership with the Sikh Healing Collective (SHC). This project was funded through a grant from The Asian American Foundation (TAAF). Learn more at: saldef.org.



