

Signs of stress

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Stress can manifest in individuals in many ways, including physical symptoms, changes in normal behaviour and emotions. These symptoms can develop into health conditions including depression and anxiety, heart disease and digestion conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome.

If you notice employees start acting differently it can be a sign that they are stressed.

Signs of stress in teams:

- arguments
- higher staff turnover
- more reports of stress
- more sickness absence
- decreased performance
- more complaints and grievances.

This could have an impact on the delivery of quality care.

Signs of stress in an employee:

A change in the way someone acts can be a sign of stress, for example they may:

- take more time off
- arrive for work later
- be more twitchy or nervous.

A change in the way someone thinks or feels can also be a sign of stress, for example:

- mood swings
- being withdrawn
- loss of motivation, commitment, and confidence

- increased emotional reactions – being more tearful, sensitive, or aggressive.

The NHS lists the following as symptoms of stress:

Physical symptoms

- Headaches or dizziness.
- Muscle tension or pain.
- Stomach problems.
- Chest pain or a faster heartbeat.
- Raised blood pressure.
- Tightness of chest/chest pains.
- Abdominal cramps.
- Nausea.
- Sleep disturbance/tiredness.

Mental symptoms

- Difficulty concentrating.
- Struggling to make decisions.
- Feeling overwhelmed.
- Constantly worrying.
- Being forgetful.

Changes in behaviour

- Being irritable and snappy.
- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Eating too much or too little.

- Avoiding certain places or people.
- Increased alcohol, nicotine, or drug intake.
- Working longer hours – not taking breaks.