

# SIGNS OF STRESS AND POTENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

20% of Australians experience mental health issues each year. 48% in our lifetime. You're not alone.



## General Signs of Mental Health Decline

- Sudden uncharacteristic changes in mood & behaviour
- Decline in performance, functioning and self-care
- Disturbance in sleep, energy levels, appetite, weight and physical health
- Increased mood intensity:
  - depressed/sad;
  - irritable/angry;
  - worried/anxious
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering and decision-making
- Withdrawing or isolating from friends and family
- Increased substance use or addictions
- Difficulty coping with daily hassles and challenges
- Difficulty maintaining relationships with others
- Preoccupations, strange thoughts or odd behaviours
- Suicidal comments and behaviours
- A sense of worthlessness and/or hopelessness about the future

## Signs of Anxiety

- Excessive worries or feelings of guilt
- Physical reactions of:
  - Racing heart, hot/flushed, aches & pains
  - Shaky, dizzy, lightheaded or faint
  - Nauseous or pain in the stomach
  - Feeling numb or tingly
  - Shortness of breath or fast, shallow breathing
- Feeling scared of going crazy
- Obsessive or compulsive behaviours
- Feelings of unreality or detached from yourself
- Difficulties sleeping
- Repetitive thoughts or concerns
- Self-medicating with alcohol or other substances
- Avoiding people or places

## Signs of Depression

- Depressed mood most of the day
- Sleeping difficulties
- Tiredness or loss of energy
- Slowed or agitated movements
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making simple decisions
- Thoughts of death or dying
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Low motivation and/or Less interest in things
- Negative and self-critical thinking
- Thoughts of death or dying
- Feeling hopelessness about the future, the world and oneself

Seek help/recommend help if any of these signs are persisting, worsening or impacting on everyday functioning, performance, relationships or wellbeing

## General Signs of Stress

- Feeling tense (wound up)
- Tired or fatigued
- Poor quality of sleep
- Poor concentration
- Forgetting things
- Feeling low or depressed
- Feeling worried or anxious
- Feeling frustrated or angry
- Impatience with yourself and others
- Lack of appetite or over-eating
- Thinking excessively about something (can't switch off)
- Negative and self-critical thinking
- Avoiding places or people more
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Feeling nauseous (sick in tummy)
- Skin rashes or feeling over-heated
- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Tearfulness and emotional sensitivity
- Increased substance use (or excessive use)

## Signs Observable at Work

- Emotional responses and erratic behaviour— uncharacteristic behaviour which may be overly sensitive, irritable, angry, teary or tense
- Obsession with parts of the job, and neglect of others
- Working longer or fewer hours than usual
- Disengagement and low morale
- Withdrawal behaviour such as reduced participation in work activities
- Increased unplanned absence
- Increase in use of negative language and workplace conflict
- Physical symptoms such as appearing tired, headaches
- Changes in physical appearance such as less attention to personal grooming
- Reduced levels of performance

## Signs of Professional Burnout

- Compassion fatigue
- Emotional exhaustion
- Reduced motivation
- Increased cynicism
- Negativity
- Sense of isolation

## Signs of Potential Trauma

- Flashbacks (intrusive images of past events)
- Bad dreams
- Avoiding certain places or people
- Easily angered or irritated and/or
- Felt on guard or easily startled