

Everyone Experiences Stress

STRESS is a *normal* response of the body and mind. *Everyone* feels stress when dealing with big events (marriage, births, divorce, deaths, or starting or ending a job), or handling everyday hassles like arguments, financial headaches, deadlines, or traffic.

PHYSICAL signs of stress include:

- feeling tense, jumpy, or excited
- headaches or stomachaches
- feeling fainting or dizzy

EMOTIONAL signs of stress include feeling:

- nervous, scared or worried
- frustrated or angry
- sad or unhappy
- guilty or embarrassed

Stress Can Become a Problem

CHRONIC stress wears down your body. When you feel stressed your body is speeding up – like stepping on a car's accelerator pedal to make it go faster. If you push your car's engine go too fast for too long you will wear out the engine – and that's what stress can do to your body. When you can't relax, you eventually become exhausted.

Signs that stress has become a problem:

- You are easily frustrated or irritable
- You can't sleep and feel exhausted
- You can't get along with family, friends, or other people in your life
- You can't pay attention at work
- You take risks that are dangerous
- You worry too much of the time
- You don't feel you can trust anyone
- You feel confused about how to cope
- You don't enjoy your life



The exclusive provider of the TARGET treatment model

MANAGING STRESS

& RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA

FACTS & RESOURCES
FOR PATIENTS & FAMILIES

Have You Ever ...

- Felt so tense, discouraged, or angry that you were afraid you just couldn't cope?
- Had a very stressful experience you try not to think about but that **still bothers you?**
- Not been able to relax or enjoy life because you felt tense and on-edge and just couldn't stop worrying?
- Had a family member, friend, or co-worker who suffers from these problems?

... if so, this guide is for you

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What is the Difference between Stress and Trauma?

TRAUMA is "super-stress". Events that terrify, stun, and horrify you, and make you feel like your life will never be the same again.

Examples of TRAUMA include having this happen to you or to someone you know:

- A life-threatening physical injury or illness
- Being in a disaster or life-threatening accident
- Being physically assaulted, attacked, beaten, kidnapped, tortured, or threatened with death.
- Being raped or sexually or physically abused
- Living in a home or community where violence is common
- Losing or being completely separated from a loved one such as a parent, spouse, or child.
- Witnessing violence in which other people die or suffer physically or emotionally.

What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder ~ PTSD?

Post means:
After

Traumatic means:
Extreme Danger or Harm

Stress means:
The Body's Alarm System

Disorder means:
Disruption of Normal Living

Facts About *PTSD*

- Everyone has an *alarm in the brain* that is *healthy* – it tells us if we need to pay attention and deal with stress.
- Trauma can cause the brain's alarm system to be *reactive*, as if you're still not safe even when the traumatic event is over.
- People who develop PTSD are not "sick" – they just are **not able to turn down the alarm in their brain**
- Upsetting memories that you can't stop or feeling unable to concentrate, irritable, tense, worried, or shut down emotionally are signs that your brain's alarm is stuck "on"
- The best way to turn down the alarm after a trauma is by *using your brain to think clearly when you feel stressed today*.
- Medicines can help with stress, but medicine doesn't help you to take control of the brain's alarm system.

The *FREEDOM* Steps spell recovery from PTSD

Here are 7 steps you can use to think clearly when you feel stressed. Using these steps can help you to regain control of your brain's alarm system instead of it controlling you.

- *FOCUS* - Slow down, Orient, Self-Check
- *RECOGNIZE* Stress Triggers
- *EMOTION* - One Main Emotion
- *EVALUATE* One Main Thought
- *DEFINE* One Main Personal Goal
- *OPTIONS* to Build On Your Positive Choices
- *MAKE* a Contribution: Make the World a Better Place

