



Stress Checklist

Stress is a natural part of everyday life. Left unchecked, however, stress can cause physical, emotional and behavioral disorders that can affect your health, vitality and peace-of-mind, and personal and professional relationships.

Everyone handles stress differently, some better than others. If you think you have too much stress in your life, it may be helpful to talk with a doctor, member of the clergy or other caring professional. Because reactions to stress can be a factor in depression, they may suggest that you consult with a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or other qualified counselor.

Here is a checklist of negative reactions to stress and tension:

- Do minor problems and disappointments upset you excessively?
- Do the small pleasures of life fail to satisfy you?
- Are you unable to stop worrying?
- Do you feel inadequate or suffer from self-doubt?
- Are you constantly tired?
- Do you experience flashes of anger over minor problems?
- Have you noticed a change in sleeping or eating patterns?
- Do you suffer from chronic pain, headaches or backaches?

If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, consider the following suggestions for reducing or controlling stress:

- **Be realistic.** If you feel overwhelmed by some activities, learn to say NO!
- **Shed the “superman/woman” urge.** No one is perfect so don’t expect perfection from yourself or others.
- **Relax/Meditate** for 10 to 20 minutes.
- **Visualize** how you can manage a stressful situation more successfully.
- **Take one thing at a time.** Prioritize your tasks and tackle each one separately.
- **Find a hobby** that will give you a break from your worries.
- **Live a healthy lifestyle** with good nutrition, adequate rest, regular exercise, limited caffeine and alcohol, and balanced worked and play.
- **Share your feelings** with family and friends. Don’t try to cope alone.
- **Give in occasionally.** Be flexible.
- **Go easy with criticism.** You may be expecting too much.

For more information, contact Peninsula Community Mental Health Center in Port Angeles at (360) 457-0431, in Sequim at (360) 681-0585, or go to www.pcmhc.org.

