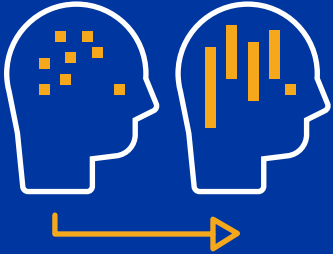


Recognizing Trauma



Chronic stress and trauma can result in strong experiences that affect the way we think, feel and act.

Some people experience these changes and notice that, as time goes on, they decrease and eventually disappear. However, for some people, these changes continue and may even intensify, affecting their ability to function in their usual way. Noticing the persistent changes and connecting those people to appropriate supports can be crucial in helping them get back to a pre-trauma level of functioning.

Please use this information to recognize signs of trauma and recommend appropriate resources.

Trauma Signs

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

Changes that affect interaction with the world

- **Withdrawal from activities**
Withdraw from social connections at work, may be less willing to take on new and different work responsibilities or may begin to call off from work more often.
- **Changes in communication**
Changes in speech (such as talking louder or softer, speaking rapidly), may check in more often or may be less communicative.
- **Hyperalert to environment**
Appear "jumpy" and respond to sounds or changes in the environment.
- **Inability to rest**
Seem more on edge and appear less likely to relax or may check on things more frequently.
- **Loss or increase in appetite**
Difficulty eating meals or may be snacking or eating more than usual.

EMOTIONAL CHANGES

Changes that affect feeling

- **Fear and worry**
Appear afraid to complete typical daily tasks or may display worry about own or other's work performance.
- **Sadness**
Report feeling sad, may appear sad, may be tearful or may not seem to enjoy previously enjoyed activities.
- **Guilt**
Report feeling guilt over situations beyond his or her control.
- **Irritability**
Seem more irritable or angry.
- **Mood swings**
Appear to shift moods or emotions frequently, rapidly or inexplicably.
- **Feeling overwhelmed**
Report feeling overwhelmed, may appear overwhelmed or distracted or may bounce between tasks without completing one.

Trauma Signs

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Changes that affect how the body feels or reacts

- **Tiredness**
Appear more tired, may tire more easily or may report changes in sleep.
- **Difficulty breathing**
Difficulty breathing or may be observed to breathe quickly and shallowly.
- **Aches and pains**
Report an increase in bodily aches and pains, may experience stiff muscles or may report weakness or headaches.
- **Stomach concerns**
Experience upset stomach, nausea, diarrhea or vomiting.
- **Rapid heart**
Report a racing heart or an increase in blood pressure.
- **Sweating**
Appear to be sweating more or may report increased sweating.

COGNITIVE CHANGES

Changes that affect thoughts

- **Intrusive thoughts or images**
Report continued thoughts about work stress and trauma events or may report that images of what happened just appear out of nowhere.
- **Difficulty concentrating**
Appear more distracted or demonstrate an inability to remain on task.
- **Poor memory**
Difficulty remembering what happened or may be unable to remember everyday things.
- **Poor problem solving/abstract thinking**
Need more help with solving problems.
- **Blaming others**
More likely to blame others or may be more suspicious of others.



**When you see signs of trauma,
know that you are not alone.
Please reach out for help.**

**For Mental Health Emergencies, Immediate
Help or Other Resources – Call Crisis Intervention
(800) 673-2496**

**All Employees – Contact EAP (Employee Assistance Program)
(800) 673-2514
Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (EST)
WellSpan.org/EAP**

