

Spotting the Signs of Stress in Individuals

1. **Time Keeping**
Is this person arriving at work later than usual?
Or are they consistently getting in earlier than they did?
Are they leaving earlier... or later

2. **Appearance**
Has their appearance changed for the worse?
Are there signs that their self-care is suffering, or they are giving less attention to their dress or grooming?

3. **Mood**
Are you seeing signs of mood swings, irritability, or tension?
Do they get more easily frustrated?
Or do they seem down for a lot of the time?

4. **Weight loss – or gain**
Significant changes in their weight can indicate that stress is causing them to over- or under-eat.

5. **Fatigue and Tiredness**
Have you noticed that they seem tired a lot of the time?
Do simple tasks seem to take more effort from them?

6. **Over-use of Stimulants**
This may be illicit drugs, but rarely. But are they over-using stimulants like caffeine (too much coffee), alcohol, nicotine (cigarettes), or sugar (sweets)?

7. **Mistakes and Forgetfulness**
Poor concentration is a classic sign of stress.
Are you noticing errors, omissions, missed deadlines, or indecision?

- 8. Agitated Resting State**
Stressed people find it hard to relax. At extremes, this can manifest as heart palpitations, rapid breathing, and perspiration. These can also be early signs of serious medical conditions.
- 9. Posture**
When we get stressed, one of the first things to go is our posture.
Do they look hunched, slumped, or move with a more shuffling gait than usual?

Or do they look tense and stiff, as if they are constantly braced for some form of blow?
Worse still is a combination of hunched and tense.
- 10. Recurrent Illnesses**
Stress reduced our ability to fight off even the lightest infections. So, do they seem overly susceptible to coughs and colds, for example?
And, carrying tension and poor diet can also lead to other illnesses, which often start with headaches.
Do you see them constantly popping over-the-counter pills and remedies?

Spotting the Signs that Your Team is Suffering from Stress

1. **Absence Levels**

Has the level of absences started to increase?
There may be a good reason on a case-by-case basis. But the wider picture may be more sinister.
2. **Staff Turnover**

Have people started leaving your project or, indeed, your organization? There is a normal level of healthy turnover in any staff group. But, once it increases too much, that's a sign that there is something wrong.
3. **Low Productivity**

Are there lots of people busy, but very little seems to be achieved? That's a sign that something is not right.
4. **Poor Atmosphere**

It's hard to define, but you know it when you experience it. Is there something wrong with the mood of your team? Maybe constant anger, frustration, moaning, or just lacking in motivation? It's time to address morale, but not just with some Spot Stress in Your Team speech.
5. **Gossip and Rumour-mongering**

As soon as morale drops, you'll find people gossiping and, worse still, spreading toxic rumours.
6. **Relationships Fraying**

Have you noticed petty squabbles and new grudges? As soon as a team starts feeling stress, relationships come under pressure. They can deteriorate quickly from great to awful almost overnight.

- 7. Complaints**
- I don't mean team members complaining – although that does happen.
Have you started to receive complaints about team members? Maybe from within your organization (or even your team), or perhaps from outside. The mistakes people make, and the emotions that are starting to take hold manifest in poor attitudes, poor service, and poor work.
- 8. Missed Deadlines**
- Under stress, we don't prioritize well, and we don't work in an efficient way. So is your team missing deadlines and milestones?
- 9. Sick Ward**
- Does your office feel more like a minor injuries unit or sick-ward, than it does a place of work? If so, look out!
- 10. Meeting Dynamics**
- A don't care attitude is typical of a stressed team. So, do you notice fewer contributions at team meetings?
and, when you get contributions, are too many of them combative and unnecessarily confrontational? Another sign of stress is a tendency to fight over every detail.