

## What is Stress and Anxiety? The Difference Between Acute and Chronic Stress

How do you know if you have stress or anxiety? Or perhaps you are wondering if you can have both.

Let's define what stress is first:

Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause, such as starting a new job or a loved ones illness. A stressor can be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or happen repeatedly over a long period of time.

Stress is the body's reaction to harmful situations-whether there real or perceived!

When you feel threatened, a chemical reaction occurs in your body that allows you to act in a way to prevent injury. This reaction is known as "flight or fight" or the stress response.

During a stress response, your heart rate increases, breathing quickens, muscles tighten, and your blood pressure rises.

Stress is different for everyone. What may stress one person, may not stress another person.

Our bodies can handle small doses of stress, but we cannot handle long-term chronic stress.

Stress goes away once the situation is resolved.

Stress can be both positive and negative, such as having a baby or getting married. Sometimes, a small amount of stress can help is to complete tasks and feel more energized. But stress can become a problem when it last for a

long time or feels very intense. In some cases stress can affect our physical, mental, and spiritual health.

#### Acute Stress:

Acute stress happens within a few minutes to a few hours of an event. It lasts for a short period of time, usually less than a few weeks, and is very intense. It can happen after an upsetting or unexpected event. This could be a sudden loss or natural disaster.

Our bodies are good at handling episodes of acute stress. We are designed to recover quickly from short-term stress.

Mental health experts define resilience as how quickly you recover from an acute episode of stress.

#### Chronic Stress:

You may experience this if you are under lots of pressure a lot of the time. You may feel chronic stress if your day-to-day life is difficult.

Our bodies are not so good at handling chronic stress. Over time chronic stress gradually increases your resting heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, and levels of muscle tension so the body now has to work even harder when it's at rest.

Chronic stress creates a "new normal" in your body. This new normal can eventually lead to a host of health problems including cardiovascular disease and chronic pain.

What are the signs and symptoms of stress:

- Irritable, angry, impatient, or wound-up
- Overburden or feel overwhelmed
- Anxious, nervous or afraid
- Racing thoughts that you can't switch off
- Unable to enjoy yourself
- Depression
- Uninterested in life
- A sense of dread
- Worried or tense
- Find it hard to make decisions
- Unable to concentrate
- Unable to remember things
- Constantly worried or feel dread
- Grind your teeth
- Restless
- Feeling bad about yourself
- Excessive shopping, eating, drinking alcohol, or drug use
- Withdraw from those around you

Physical signs of stress:

- Difficulty breathing
- Sleep problems
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Muscle aches and pains
- Chest pain and high blood pressure
- Upset stomach

- Feeling sick, dizzy or fainting
- Sudden weight gain or loss
- Sweating
- Loss of sexual desire
- Hormonal imbalances

Everyone experiences stress, and sometimes stress can feel overwhelming. This is normal, but when the stress turns in chronic stress this needs to be addressed.

The first step to controlling the symptoms of stress is to know the symptoms. However, recognizing the symptoms may be harder than you think. Most of us are used to being stressed, we don't often know we are stressed until we are breaking down.

Stress can cause mental health problems. It can make existing problems worse, if you experience a lot of stress, this might lead you develop mental health problems like anxiety. Chronic stress can not only affect your mental health but contribute to cardiovascular disease, as well as gastrointestinal problems.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

As you reflect on if you have any varying levels of stress, take a moment to reflect on the life that God desires for you, and if you believe your life is on that road?

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10

What would you like to change in your life to have more peace and less stress?

#### NEXT STEPS FOR HEALING YOUR CHRONIC STRESS:

Would you be willing to invest in a coaching program for 8 weeks that will give step by step tips, tools, and practical applications for stress recovery? If you answered yes, than make sure to sign-up for my 8 week coaching course. I will even thrown in 2 extra bonus teachings because I believe so strong that God wants us all to be free of chronic stress.

There is HOPE! Sometimes Jesus heals us instantly, and others times we have to do the work. If you have to do the work to get healed from chronic stress than don't delay your treatment.

I use a holistic approach to healing chronic stress. The mind, the body, and the spirt. I do not treat mental disorders/illnesses or prescribe pharmaceuticals. I will however on one of the bonus classes discuss herbal/vitamin therapies to aid with treating chronic stress.

At the end of the 8 week course you still feel that you need additional support, I offer 1:1 coaching and counseling.

