Adjustment Disorder

Most changes in life can cause stress. Getting used to changes may take a few months or longer. If feelings of stress, hopelessness, or worry continue, you may have an adjustment disorder. This stress-related mental health problem may affect your feelings, thinking and how you act. It occurs in both sexes and happens at any age.

SYMPTOMS

Some of the following problems may be seen and vary from person to person:

- Sadness or depression.
- Loss of enjoyment.
- Thoughts of suicide.
- Fighting.
- Avoiding family and friends.
- Poor school performance.
- Hopelessness, sense of loss.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Vandalism.
- Worry, weight loss or gain.
- Crying spells.
- Anxiety
- Reckless driving.
- Skipping school.
- Poor work performance.
- Nervousness.
- Ignoring bills.
- Poor attitude.

DIAGNOSIS

Your caregiver will ask what has happened in your life and do a physical exam. They will make a diagnosis of an adjustment disorder when they are sure another problem or medical illness causing your feelings does not exist.

TREATMENT

When problems caused by stress interfere with you daily life or last longer than a few months, you may need counseling for an adjustment disorder. Early treatment may diminish problems and help you to better cope with the stressful events in your life. Sometimes medication is necessary. Individual counseling and or support groups can be very helpful.

PROGNOSIS

Adjustment disorders usually last less than 3 to 6 months. The condition may persist if there is long lasting stress. This could include health problems, relationship problems, or job difficulties where you can not easily escape from what is causing the problem.

PREVENTION

Even the most mentally healthy, highly functioning people can suffer from an adjustment disorder given a significant blow from a life-changing event. There is no way to prevent pain and loss. Most people need help from time to time. You are not alone.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

Your feelings or symptoms listed above do not improve or worsen.

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