

# **MIDLIFE: AN ADJUSTMENT!**

There are six core ways in which midlife adjustment difficulties may show up. These core indicators include:

- Anxious Mood
- Depressed Mood
- Changes in Social Behavior
  - Physical Complaints
  - Decline in Work Ability
- Mixture of Emotional Symptoms

Any of these can lead to relationship problems, lowering of self-esteem, and reduced confidence. A person's symptoms may reflect an inner sense of confusion or bewilderment, a deep sense of loss and mourning for what is changing, or a determination to "beat the clock." Denying mortality, clinging to what was, or going back to retrieve lost opportunities of the past may also account for symptoms.



**CHECK OUT** the following overview of possible symptoms of midlife adjustment. Identify any that may be true for you at this time. Notice how many checks you have made in a given category. Consider if a symptom has been typical for you or if it is new in your experience.

**NOTE:** This overview is not intended for making a diagnosis; it is to give you a quick *overview* of any emotional or behavioral experiences you are currently having. If you have more than one check in a category or have checked items in several categories, you may want to consider seeking professional help, if you have not done so already.

## **ANXIOUS MOOD**

- Feelings of agitation or confusion
- Nervousness
- Apprehension about the future
- Worry about personal image
- Trouble falling asleep
- Distractibility
- Excessive dependency on others

## **DEPRESSED MOOD**

- Frequent Crying
- Frequent Nervousness
- Frequent Hopelessness
- Frequent Sadness
- Feelings of loss
- Low sexual desire
- Often waking up during the night and not being able to return to sleep
- Suicidal ideation or attempt

## CHANGES IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

### **WITHDRAWAL:**

- A desire to be away from people
- Frequent withdrawal from people and social activities
- Consistently fearful of saying or doing embarrassing, humiliating, or foolish things in front of others
- Need for strong guarantees that I will be liked and accepted in social or intimate relationships
- Have few friends even though I have a strong need for affection and companionship
- Avoid new activities involving any type of personal risk or the potential for anxiety
- Oversensitivity leads to misinterpreting actions or comments of others

### **DISTURBING SOCIAL BEHAVIORS:**

- Reckless behavior; greater risk-taking
- Being late often
- Physical or verbal fights with others; emotional or physical abuse of others
- Disregard for the rights of others
- Disruptive or defiant behaviors

## PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS

- Changes in appetite and weight
- Backaches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Indigestion
- Sexual or reproductive symptoms
- Neurological (nervous system) symptoms
- Shortness of breath
- Amnesia
- More frequent awakenings during the night (due to aging)
- Other pain symptoms, discomfort

## DECLINE IN WORK ABILITY

- Less able to do normal work
- Less able to do typical tasks of daily life

## MIXTURE OF EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

- A combination of the symptoms listed above.