

Adjustment Disorder

What is an Adjustment Disorder?

Adjustment disorder is a short-term condition that occurs when a person has great difficulty coping with, or adjusting to, a particular source of stress, such as a major life change, loss, or event.

Because people with an adjustment disorder often have some of the symptoms of clinical depression, such as tearfulness, feelings of hopelessness, and loss of interest in work or activities, adjustment disorder is sometimes informally called "situational depression."

What causes Adjustment Disorder?

Adjustment disorders can be associated with all varieties of stressors and life changes (e.g., relationship break-up, loss of a job, financial stress, car accident, family tension, becoming a parent, physical illness) and can therefore affect social, interpersonal and occupational functioning, including educational achievement.

Do I have an Adjustment Disorder?

Signs and symptoms of adjustment disorder may affect how you feel and think about yourself or life, including:

- Sadness
- Hopelessness
- Lack of enjoyment
- Crying spells
- Nervousness
- Jitteriness
- Anxiety, which may include separation anxiety
- Worry
- Desperation
- Trouble sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Thoughts of suicide

Behavioural symptoms of adjustment disorders

Signs and symptoms of adjustment disorder may affect your actions or behaviour, such as:

- Fighting
- Reckless driving
- Ignoring bills
- Avoiding family or friends
- Performing poorly in school or at work
- Skipping school
- Vandalizing property

What can I do?

How a psychologist can help:

Given that adjustment disorder is functionally linked to stress, treatment interventions should focus on managing your capacity for coping with the stress, as well as relieving the symptoms of psychological distress and their impact on your functioning.

Treatment is aimed at returning you to some stability or more manageable level of adaptation to a continuing stressor, with consideration of your attribution of the stressor's meaning and any predisposing factors.

Your psychologist may also assist you to access support from your social networks at a time when you feel withdrawn.

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This information was sourced from WebMD www.webmd.com, Mayo Clinic &
the Australian Psychological Society