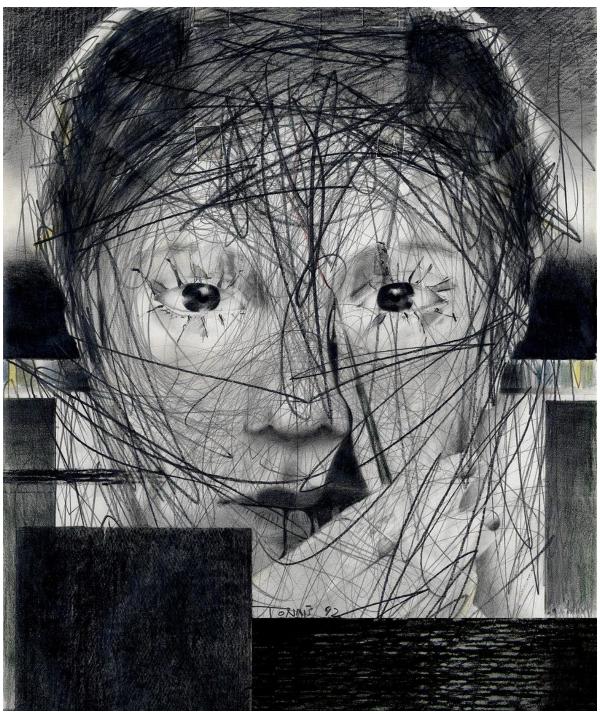# How Can Stress Affect Your Mental Health?

[drawing](#) by Christiaan Tonnis, 1992

If you're wondering, "How can stress affect your mental health?" you're not alone. Millions of people struggle with stress and the mental issues that come with it. In Balance Counseling offers an [intensive outpatient program in Tucson](#) for patients struggling with addiction and mental health issues. We regularly deal with stress.

How Stress Can Affect Your Mental Health

Stress leads to the following mental health conditions.

Stress Causes Insomnia

Sleep rejuvenates the body because the brain replenishes a body in slumber. It does this via biological processes that restore important chemicals and remove toxins. Sleep also allows the brain to generate and sustain memory pathways.

Stress interrupts or prevents sleep and, thus, prevents these processes.

Even one night of poor sleep affects physical and mental function. But when this happens constantly, it affects:

- Long-term job performance
- The ability to perform daily tasks over time
- The evolution of personal relationships

These outcomes compound the stress, so it becomes a vicious cycle.

Stress Causes Mood Swings

It's not unusual for stress to cause irritability. Sleep regulates the brain region that controls mood. Therefore, a lack of sleep generates wild mood swings.

Stress Increases Substance Abuse

Many people under stress abuse substances like alcohol or drugs because they feel like it relaxes them. However, the more they do this, the more they need to feel relaxed, which can lead to addiction. The brain releases stress hormones in response to this cycle.

Stress Provokes Anxiety and Depression

Stress causes physical issues that create pain. For instance, the medical community recognizes clenched jaws and scrunched shoulders as physical manifestations of stress. Some people develop depression over what they view as an unmanageable state of decline because of pain.

Stress creates hypervigilance, too. That level of intensity makes relaxation impossible. Anxiety and depression often result because the mind and body receive no relief from arousal, which creates chemicals that lead to negative emotions.

Stress Leads to Isolation

Because [stress](#) causes poor health, it impairs social connections. When people struggle with anxiety or depression, they're more likely to remove themselves from situations where they feel they have to fake feeling happy. This can lead to devastating loneliness that becomes a permanent state of being.

Answers to, "How can stress affect your mental health?" show that mental health symptoms compile on each other. They connect to physical issues. Therefore, it is hard to experience a condition like stress and only have one area of your life affected.

Contact In Balance Counseling

In Balance Counseling provides emotional, physical, social, and spiritual work for clients who want to develop healthy, all-natural coping mechanisms for stress. We highlight the importance of establishing an awareness and practice of your beliefs and values. Our clients review their behaviors, feelings, life choices, and communication skills.

The review helps them recognize harmful patterns and create strategies to deal with them.

Instead of worrying about the answers to "How can stress affect your mental health?", take positive action to control your stress. Effective behavioral changes and management skills provide the structure to do that. To book your [first therapy session](#), call xxx-xxx-xxxx.