The signs and symptoms of a nervous, or mental, breakdown...

Part 1, Part 2, Part 3

The signs and symptoms of your nervous breakdown are an indication that you've reached your limit. You may feel you're falling apart, but I promise you - you're not going mad and you're not insane!

You're just at breaking point - completely stressed out and at the end of your tether.

We all have our limits and there's a limit to how much you can cope with too. Maybe life has just thrown too much at you. Your resources - internal and/or external - are no longer enough to deal with all that's on your shoulders. You're exhausted. It's no wonder you feel like you're falling apart.

You may even find it difficult to concentrate on this page (tip: bookmark it now!).

As a counsellor/psychotherapist, I've seen more clients than I can mention who had a breakdown – particularly when I was practising in the work place. So, I know from experience what you're going through.

I hope to help you make sense of what's happening to you, or someone you care about - your partner, perhaps. I'm including this article in my relationship advice site because all too often relationship problems are part and parcel of a breakdown.

I'm aiming above all to reassure you...

You're not really 'broken'. Your body/mind is primed to heal itself. You've found this page, haven't you? Most of you is still working perfectly fine - you're keeping it together enough to know you need more information.

So, read on to learn more and increase your understanding of what's happening to you...

What you'll know by the end of this 3-part article

a) How all that stress led to you feeling unable to cope
b) What a 'nervous breakdown' exactly is
c) How to connect with an online licensed therapist
d) What to do to get over it
e) When to see a doctor immediately (see Part 3)

What you need to know right away is that there's no shame in feeling like a cry-baby, or like you're weak and completely out of control. You may feel like you're going crazy right now, but you will recover. The symptoms of this burnout will disappear. But - it won't happen overnight.

Even before this crisis...

... you're likely to have felt:

- More tired than usual
- Highly strung – everything just got on your nerves
- Easily angered
• Guilty about becoming angry, particularly with your children and your partner or spouse
• *Everything* was just ‘too much’
• Increasingly worried about the future, money, work, security in general

And...

• Keen to avoid stuff you felt was stress-inducing
• More focused on- or obsessed about- things you could control, e.g. food intake, exercise, cleanliness, ‘rules’ at work and/or at home

A nervous breakdown is so much worse than being uncomfortable! However, you have no choice but the make changes, and yes - it absolutely offers the hope and potential for growth. Even though it may take you some time to realise that.

**Always been anxious?**

Chris Bayliss is a health researcher and nutrition expert specialising in the treatment of anxiety. He cured himself from anxiety!

[Discover how his method can help you too...](#)

**Do you recognise these symptoms of a nervous breakdown?**
Maybe you've heard about someone "having a nervous breakdown" and you've asked yourself: what is it? So, let me explain...

First of all - the terms I've used so far to describe what you're going through wouldn't normally be used in a professional setting.

I've used them here because I know that thousands of people a month are searching for them. I want to be sure that I reach everyone who's looking for reliable information - hence the more colloquial language.

You may suspect that you are - or someone you love is - suffering from shattered nerves (another description) and you don't know what to think or do.

This kind of disorder (don't let that word worry you either) may have slowly built up over time. Or you might have suddenly been caught out unexpectedly (though it would have been lurking for some time and I suspect you know that!).

See how many of these symptoms you recognise in yourself (or your loved-one):

12 Common physical nervous breakdown symptoms

1. **Irregular heartbeat**
   You can feel your heart pounding. Or maybe you're aware that your heart is beating really fast. You may be terrified that you're having or have had a heart attack.

2. **Tensed and/or painful muscles**
   No wonder... they're working overtime without you being consciously aware of it. They're at the ready to help you run away from the (imagined) disaster, constantly in fight/flight mode.

3. **Clammy hands and armpits**
   Your body works hard to cool you down. You're worried about having to shake hands and other people noticing how much you're sweating.

4. **Dizziness and lightheadedness**
   Your blood is drawn to the major muscle groups to ensure they're well-fed and can deal with the (imagined) catastrophe.

5. **Trembling or shaking**
   You may feel these are the most embarrassing symptoms - you're convinced other people will notice.

6. **Upset stomach and bowel problems**
   Your body/mind reacts as if your life's in danger. Digestion is secondary to survival - your body wants to get rid of whatever it doesn't immediately need. Diarrhoea, frequently needing to urinate and nausea or vomiting are normal under the circumstances.

7. **Exhaustion**
   All your energy is being used trying to manage or even just cope with this crisis - physically and mentally.

8. **Unexplained aches, pains, cramps and illness**
   Your body/mind is out of balance. Existing health issues appear magnified. You may be convinced you're at death's door!

9. **Coughs and colds**
   You seem to be catching every bug that's floating around. The prolonged stress is lowering your
10. **Tension headaches**  
No wonder with tight muscles, constant worry, stress and anxiety. Mind and body out of balance - you're feeling poorly most of the time.

11. **Unrelenting restlessness**  
You can't seem to sit still long enough to even draw a few long breaths. You're in a constant state of agitation.

12. **Sensitive hearing**  
Normal sounds may feel too harsh, loud or shrill.

It's important that you have a medical checkup!

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12 **Mental symptoms that make you think you're going mad**

1. **Anxiety about everyday things**  
From the sound of the doorbell to going shopping or having to go to work - it's all too much.

2. **Panic attacks and phobias**  
Periods of an out of control fear which, once passed, you may feel is totally 'irrational'.

3. **Inability to cope with the most menial tasks**  
Stuff you wouldn't have thought twice about before are now a major challenge. You can't think straight, have difficulties organising yourself, can't 'lift a finger' and are frightened others will catch on.

4. **Loss of libido**  
you feel 'dead below the waist'! This is often a much-ignored early sign as it's so often blamed on other things.

5. **Impotence**  
...and a sense of shame about that to boot.
6. **Sleep problems**
   From not being able to fall asleep to frequently waking up and not being able to go back to sleep due to racing thoughts, general restlessness, irregular heartbeat and constant worry. Your hormone system is completely out of balance.

7. **Withdrawal from loved ones**
   It's as if you're living in a bubble - incapable of even following a conversation

8. **Irritability and angry outbursts**
   You have no spare capacity and can't meet your own essential needs, let alone even the most minor requests from others, including your children or partner

9. **Inability to concentrate**
   You seem unable even to read and comprehend the headlines. You're probably already exhausted from getting this far on my page!

10. **Depression**
    This is almost a given when your life seems to be unravelling

11. **Excessive dreaming**
    Discover [how dreaming is linked to mental health](#)

12. **A memory like a sieve**
    The part of your brain that (partly) deals with memory is overburdened and burnt out

Is everything getting on your nerves? You are not alone!

**Overactive thyroid?**

If in addition to the symptoms mentioned on this page you're also experiencing unexplained or unexpected weight-loss, you're needing to go to the toilet all too frequently and you're sensitive to heat, do yourself a favour - get yourself checked out by a doctor.

**Other signs of a nervous breakdown you may recognise**

- It's difficult to divert your thoughts away from what's happening - regardless of where you are and what you’re doing
- You're constantly aware that 'you're just not feeling right'
- Even the most menial and normal demands on your time and energy now just feel too much to cope with
- Ordinary family occasions can send you into complete overwhelm
- You either want to run and hide, or you find yourself talking endlessly to people you trust about everything that's bothering you
- You've little capacity to pay attention to anything, or listen to what other people are saying
- You can't handle hearing anything about other people's troubles
- You're too tired to answer the phone, respond to messages, or even say or send a "thank you" - because explaining what's going on takes too much energy
- You feel 'wrung out' and miserable much of the time
- You don't know what to do for the best… being at home makes you depressed, and being at work makes you stressed
You feel completely unable to respond to other people’s expectations

No wonder you’re finding it hard to cope!

In Part 2 and 3 of this article is stuff you must also know including when it becomes essential to have a medical check-up.

If you’re keen to find out right now how to get over a nervous breakdown, consider talking to a qualified counsellor now.

What about your emotional state?

8 Emotional problems common in a mental breakdown

1. Excessive crying
   You can cry seemingly endlessly, at the drop of a hat - whether you're male or female! No need to be embarrassed.

2. Feeling guilty for all kinds of reasons
   For ‘not pulling your weight’, not being there for someone else, not being your 'normal' self, letting the side down, forgetting something important, etc.

3. Feeling desperately alone with it all
   You're embarrassed and don't want to bother anyone. You're scared that no one would understand. Even when you do tell someone, you may not be convinced they really 'get it'.

4. Feeling no joy in anything at all
   You're increasingly withdrawing from all the things you'd normally enjoy - because you can't cope, can't remember, can't think straight, worry that other would notice you're 'not right'.

5. Being/feeling paranoid
   You may feel that people are out to get you and single you out for everything that's 'wrong' with you.

6. Feeling manic
   Or laughing uncontrollably, feeling on top of the world and able to do or achieve anything you like (less common - needing urgent medical attention!).

7. Feeling suicidal
   It may all feel too much to bear. You will need urgent medical attention!

8. Feeling angry all the time
   It would be so easy for you to just 'snap'. You're ratty with just about everybody. It's easy to have a major row about the smallest thing

   When life sucks you under, you can kick against the bottom, find the surface and breathe again”

   Sheryl Sandber, Chief Operating Officer at Facebook

Just in case...

What a nervous breakdown is not...

• You are not a self-obsessed narcissist
You are not being a drama queen
It is not a ‘yuppie’ problem
It hasn't happened because you’re ‘weak’
You are not ‘mad’
You are not ‘defective’ in any way

It's not unusual…

- To feel unable to follow a conversation
- To feel unable to follow a TV programme for longer than 5 minutes
- To be unable to travel
- To be unable to do your shopping
- To be unable to make any sense of anything at all
- To feel like anything and everything is triggering a panic attack

**Should burnout be recognised as a medical condition?**

"The cost-effective evaluation of adrenal hormones via saliva samples by a primary care physician may significantly alter the course of therapy in numerous chronic disease patients."

*The Medical Perspective on Burnout*
Kakiashvili T, Leszek J, Rutkowski K.

It's not surprising that often a nervous or mental breakdown goes hand-in-hand with depression. Let's talk first in [Part 2](#) about what other people might notice and when you need urgent medical help.

Remember though - you will recover!

Part 1, [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#)

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**Don't know what to do anymore? Need help?**
**Connect with a licensed therapist now...**

Your problem is never too small or too big, too silly or too complicated to ask for help from a licensed therapist.
Connect with your therapist as often as you like in confidence (no need even to give your real name).

Get help now in 3 easy steps:

1. **Click** the image below and fill in the three online questionnaires (it takes just a few minutes)
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You won't believe what a breath of fresh air it is to be able to discuss your problems with your own professional. Someone who takes the time to really 'get you' and offer tailored guidance to suit you and your particular circumstances.

**CLICK HERE to start now** or **click the image**...

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**Need help?**

Hello you! :-)

It's me - Elly Prior, I'm the Founder and Author of this site. I'm a 'real' person! I'm hoping to make a positive difference, small or large, to every person who visits my site.

**Do you need some help?** There are licensed therapists waiting to help you right now. You can **connect with your very own therapist** as often as you want on any device, whenever it suits you.

**OR... ask for help here** (please keep it short). I would be delighted to write a few lines to support you. :-)