Algorithm for Approaching Possible Severe Stress

Do you often feel under extreme stress?

Yes

I see you’ve been really stressed out.
Sounds like it’s been rough.

Please tell me about your stress.
How’s this affecting you, your family?
e.g., emotional, physical or behavioral problems, problems with child, partner or work

Are you getting help?
Who/what’s helping?
e.g., talking with family or friend, religious group, counselor, medication

How are you dealing with this?
What else could you try?

Would you like (more) help?

Yes

What kind of help would you consider?
e.g., talking with family or friend, counseling, medication, religious group

No, other reason

No, getting enough help

What might be the benefit of getting help?
Encourage getting help

What makes it hard to get help?
Suggest barriers, address them

What would make it easier to get help?

Reassured
Gave parent handout
F/U
No action needed

Offered help
Gave parent handout
Made referral
in-house or community
F/U

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Severe Stress - Addressing Possible Barriers

Barrier: I don’t know where to get help

Response:

- Yes, it’s often hard to know where to go
- If you’re interested, I can recommend clinics/professionals who’ve helped many parents
- We have someone here who can help. Would you like me to connect you with her/him?
- Here’s a handout with useful info on good helplines, websites and other nearby places that help

Barrier: It will get better with time

Response:

- I hear you that you think you’ll feel better with time
- While some things get better with time, how long would you want to wait before feeling better?
- What do you think about talking with someone to help you feel better sooner?
- I know you want to feel your best for your child; professional help should help you feel better soon

Barrier: I don’t feel that bad

Response:

- I’m glad you don’t feel that bad
- Still, I’d like to help you, and am concerned how this is affecting you and your child
- Would you consider talking with someone, and see how you feel? You may be pleasantly surprised

Barrier: I’d feel embarrassed

Response:

- I see that you’re embarrassed about getting help
- I understand. Lots of people feel that way
- We all need help at times
- Talking with someone may be uncomfortable, especially at first. After a little time, it should get easier. And, counselors keep your info confidential. Would you like me to recommend professionals I think are really good?
- I have helpful info in this handout. Take a look, and please think about this
Barrier: **I don't have the time**

Response:

- I hear you that there’s not the time to deal with this; you’re busy!
- Still, do you think this may be important – for you, your family, your child?
- It’s hard to be a good parent if you’re feeling stressed
- Would you like us to try to find someone who can work with your schedule?

Barrier: **Costs too much**

Response:

- I understand the cost makes this hard
- Do you know that insurance for counseling has gotten better?
- Would you like me to see what you’re eligible for?
- Also, some professionals/clinics accept what you’re able to pay and some offer free care
- This is so important. Would you like me to try to find something you can afford?

Barrier: **I don't think counseling works**

Response:

- A lot of people feel unsure about counseling
- Have you had a bad experience with counseling? I understand that must be discouraging
- Do you think this could be different if you had someone really good?
- Would you like me to recommend professionals I think you’ll find really helpful?

Barrier: **I tried getting help before, but it didn’t work**

Response:

- I see you’re not getting help because it didn’t work before
- I understand not wanting to try again
- But, different professionals work differently
- I know some who are really good and have helped lots of parents

Barrier: **I don't want to be on medication**

Response:

- I understand, lots of people don’t want to take medications
- Often, counselors can help – without medications
- Would you be OK with trying counseling, talking with a professional?
Barrier: I don’t think it’s affecting my child(ren)

Response:

- I hear you that you don’t think it’s hurting your child
- Do you sometimes think that kids pick up on more that we realize?
- It’s hard to be a good parent when you’re feeling stressed. I know you want to be a terrific parent. Talking with someone should help you feel better sooner

Barrier: I don’t have childcare

Response:

- Yes, childcare can be tough to find
- Perhaps family or a friend can provide childcare while you focus on your well-being
- In-home counseling may also be an option – a counselor can come to your home
- What do you think?

Barrier: I don’t have transportation

Response:

- I see transportation is a problem
- Unfortunately, this is so common
- In-home counseling may also be an option – a counselor can come to your home. What do you think?
- Would you like me to see if there’s something close to home or on a bus route?