

# 18

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## The stress count

### Purpose

- It is important to take stock of how much stress we may be undergoing:

- 1) Right now
- 2) Over the past 6 months
- 3) Over the last 12 months

This helps us to get both a specific and a 'helicopter' view of ourselves and the effect stress is having on our personal lives and working relationships.

### Materials

- Flip chart
- Pens
- Sufficient copies of Stress Count Form, Handout 18.1, for each participant

### Time

45–60 minutes.

Appropriate for individual counseling and small groups or work teams.

### What to do

1. Introduce the idea of the Stress Count to the group.
2. Explain the items and how the Stress Count should be completed. Clarify any misunderstandings if they arise.
3. Invite the group to complete their Stress Count.

4. Analyze and evaluate the results.
5. You should examine:
  - The number of items checked.
  - The type (e.g. physical/emotional items).
  - The length of time the items have been running.
  - The effects the items have on the individual/work/team relationships.
6. **FEEDBACK/REVIEW.** Discuss the Stress Count and its relevance for individuals, the work group or team. Emphasize the importance of regular stress counting and the effects of stress on health and human performance. Stress counting gives us both a specific idea of what bothers us and also a general picture or 'helicopter' view of how well we are doing.



# Stress count form

## Part 1

Put a tick against those items that are true of you now, or have been true in the past 6–12 months. Check all of those stress items that apply now and over the 6–12 month period.

Stress item	True of me now	Occurred last 6 months	Occurred last 12 months
1. Feeling tired much of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Sleeping difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. High blood pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Unexpected periods of crying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Overweight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Feeling guilty much of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Worried and anxious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Digestive problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Frequent headaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Feeling lonely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Little interest or pleasure in sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Feeling inadequate or worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Unable to cope	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Increased irritability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Losing too much weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Skin rashes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Feeling helpless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Unable to think straight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Unable to make decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Add up your score and discuss stress item. Notice particularly how long you have had this form of stress and what effects it is having on your life/work group/team. Plot each item and its effects on Part 2 of the Stress Count.



*Handout 18.1– concluded*

**Part 2**

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<b>Stress item</b>	<b>Effects on my life/work group/team</b>
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