18

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.

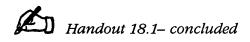
Stress count form

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
Feeling tired much of the time	[]	[]	[]
2. Sleeping difficulties	[]	[]	[]
3. High blood pressure	[]	[]	[]
4. Unexpected periods of crying	[]	[]	[]
5. Overweight	[]	[]	[]
6. Feeling guilty much of the time	[]	. []	[]
7. Worried and anxious	[]	[]	[]
8. Digestive problems	[]	[]	[]
9. Frequent headaches	[]	[]	[]
10. Feeling lonely	[]	[]	[]
11. Little interest or pleasure in sex	[]	[]	[]
12. Feeling inadequate or worthless	[]	[]	[]
13. Feeling sad or depressed	[]	[]	[]
14. Unable to cope	[]	[]	[]
15. Increased irritability	[]	[]	[]
16. Losing too much weight	[]	[]	[]
17. Skin rashes	[]	[]	[]
18. Feeling helpless	[]	[]	[]
19. Unable to think straight	[]	[]	[]
20. Unable to make decisions	[]	[]	[]

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.



Part 2

Stress item

Effects on my life/work group/team