## Stress Symptoms

- General irritability, hyper-excitability, depression
- Pounding of the heart
- Dryness of mouth and throat
- Impulsive behavior, emotional instability
- Overpowering urge to cry or run
- Inability to concentrate, flight of thoughts
- Feelings of unreality, weakness, dizziness, fatigue
- Floating anxiety, being afraid and not knowing why
- Emotional tension and alertness
- Trembling, nervous tics, easily startled
- High-pitched, nervous laughter
- Stuttering, other speech difficulties
- Bruxism, or grinding of teeth
- Insomnia
- Hyperactivity, increased tendency to move about
- Excessive sweating
- Frequent need to urinate
- Diarrhea, indigestion, queasiness, vomiting
- Migraine headaches
- Pain in neck or lower back
- Loss of appetite or excessive appetite
- Increased use of prescribed drugs
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Accident proneness

## STRESSORS

- Emotional letdown
- Restlessness or sleeplessness
- No one understands what I have been through.
- Was my spouse faithful?
- Did my spouse miss me?
- My friends seem different.
- I didn't expect things to change.
- Other people's concerns seem petty.
- I feel like a stranger at home.
- How will the children react?
- Will the role I have filled change?
- Were my children treated well by their guardian?
- Can I make up for lost time?
- Did I handle things the right way?
- When will things feel normal again?
- I am concerned about finances.
- I am concerned about future deployments.
- The children appear confused and uncertain.

## Helpful Hints

- Accept that things may be different.
- Talk about your experiences.
- Go slowly – don't try to make up for lost time.
- Spend quality time with your children.
- Reassure your children. Change often frightens them.
- Reassure your parents and extended family. Change often frightens them.
- Curb your desire to take control or to spend money.
- Accept that your partner my be different.
- Intimate relationships may be awkward at first.
- Take time to get reacquainted
- Forget your fantasies. Reality may be quite different.
- Take time to readjust.
- Communicate with your partner and your family.

# NOTES

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"I learned about stress management from my kids. Every night after work, I drink as much chocolate milk as my stomach will hold, eat handfuls of sugary cereal straight from the box, then run around the house in my underwear squealing like a monkey."

be good to be thinking together about how you could manage conflict and differences more constructively so that you do not damage the great things about your relationship. Skill straining in a marriage workshop may be very helpful

4 to 5 **LOW:** Scores this low indicate that you see little to be concerned with in terms of how the two of you handle conflict. The key for you is to keep it that way, since negatives can do so much damage to the positives in life together. It is always a great time to do preventive work.

## *Positive Bonding Questions*

**Please answer each of the following question by indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with the idea expressed.**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

1 2 3 4 5 We have a lot of fun together

1 2 3 4 5 We regularly have great conversations where we just talk as good friends.

Total up your answers on the two questions above. The highest score is 10 and the lowest score is 2.

9 to 10 **HIGH:** Your score suggests that, at least from your perspective, the two of you are doing a great job keeping the positive connection going between the two of you.

7 to 8 **MEDIUM:** Your score suggests that there might be room for improvement in how often you are taking time to be together in positive ways.

2 to 6 **LOW:** Your score suggest that the two of you are not spending nearly enough time together in these positive ways. You can get by for a time letting this slide, but to really keep you relationship strong you should consider what the two of you can do to rebuild the kinds of positive time you spend together.

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Based on research of Scott Stanley and Howard Markman (and principles in the book "Fighting *for* Your Marriage", 2001, Jossey-Bass, Inc.).

# Marriage "SnapShot" Tool

**<u>This tool is for you only.</u> Your spouse will also have an opportunity to use this tool. It is designed to provide you with a snapshot of where your marriage is today. <u>No one will ask for or collect these scores.</u>**

These are validated questions that researchers have used in many studies on marriage. While no tool such as this should be taken as being something that can predict your future – the questions and your scores are designed to help you evaluate where your marriage is today. Remember, you can choose to change the things that are not working and for things that are going well, you can work on ways to enhance and strengthen your marriage further. A strong and satisfying marriage is your choice.

**If your score indicates a need for change or assistance, please contact your unit chaplain, Family Advocacy Program or Social Work Service for a marriage education workshop or counseling.** Many issues can be resolved by awareness, skills training and personal support. Do not assume your marriage will grow without some thinking and effort on your part. Remember: there are people available to help you.

## *Commitment Questions*

**Please answer each of the following questions by indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with the ideas expressed.**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

1 2 3 4 5 My relationship with my partner is more important to me than almost anything else in my life

1 2 3 4 5 I like to think of my partner and me more in terms of "us" and "we" than "me" and "him/her."

1 2 3 4 5 I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.

Total up your answers on the above three questions. The highest score here is 15 and the lowest is 3. Relative to many others who have responded to the questions, we suggest these ranges for interpretation. Since most people respond at the higher ranges of these questions:

| | |
|---|---|
| 14 to 15 | **High:** You scored high like most of the people who respond to these questions. |
| 12 to 13 | **Medium:** You scored in a range we would call medium, but this is at or below the typical score. |
| 11 & below | **Low:** You scored relatively low on this. The further under 11 you scored, the more it might mean that you are struggling with your desire to be with your partner in the future. If that sounds like you, what does that me to you and your relationship in the present? |

## Confidence Questions

**Answer each questions by indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with the ideas expressed. Circle any number from 1 to 7 to indicate various levels of agreement or disagreement.**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | | | Neither Agree or Disagree | | | Strongly Agree |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | I believe we can handle whatever conflicts will arise in the future. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | I feel good about our prospects to make this relationship work for a lifetime. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | I am very confident when I think of our future together. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | We have the shills a couple needs to make a marriage last. |

Total up your answers on the above four questions. The highest score here is 28 and the lowest is 4.

| | |
|---|---|
| 25 to 28 | **High:** You scored high, suggesting that you have a lot of confidence in the future of your relationship. As much or more than average. |
| 20 to 24 | **Medium:** Your score suggests some confidence, but also some concerns about how well the two of you mange life together. |
| 19 & below | **Low:** You scored relatively low on this measure, which could mean that you are not feeling very confident in the future of your relationship. |

## Conflict Questions

**Answer each statement in terms of how often you and your spouse/partner experience each of the following situations.**

Little arguments escalate into ugly fights with accusations, criticisms, name calling or bringing up past hurts. Does that happen…

1. never or almost never
2. once in a while
3. frequently

My spouse/partner criticizes or belittles my opinions, feelings or desires. Does that happen…

1. never or almost never
2. once in a while
3. frequently

My spouse/partner seems to view my word or actions more negatively than I mean them to be. Does that happen…

1. never or almost never
2. once in a while
3. frequently

When we argue, one of us withdraws… that is, does not want to talk about it anymore, or leaves the scene. Does that happen…

1. never or almost never
2. once in a while
3. frequently

Total up your answers on the four questions above. The highest score possible is 12 and the lowest score possible is 4. On the first two sets of questions, higher scores are usually better. Here, lower scores are better because they indicate less negative communication patterns of a sort that cause difficulties for most couples.

| | |
|---|---|
| 9 to 12 | **HIGH:** Scores in this range indicate a high frequency of conflict patterns that various studies suggest damage relationships over time. If you scored high and that matches your sense that the two of you argue often and in damaging ways, you should both consider developing a plan (or get some outside help) for how you will turn these kinds of negative patterns around – all the more so if you have children at home. |
| 6 to 8 | **MEDIUM:** Scores in this range mean you might be seeing more difficulties in how the two of you handle conflict than is really good for you or your relationship over time. It might |