

# Stressful Situation Activity 1

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*Read the following hypothetical situation to the audience. After you have presented the situation, have the audience offer suggestions about how the woman in the situation could better handle the stress in her life.*

Karen stays up late watching a movie on television. As soon as it is over, she heads for bed knowing that she will have to get up early the next morning for work. Five hours later, Karen hears the sound of her 10-month-old baby crying in the next room. With her eyes half shut, she glares at the alarm clock, which reads 4:38 a.m. As she crawls out of bed, she thinks of how nice it would be if her husband would get up to see about the baby, especially since he sets his own hours at his company and can sleep in.

As soon as Karen gets the baby calmed down, it's time for her other two children to get up for school. As usual, they get up late, and Karen has to rush to fix their breakfast, pack their lunches, and get them out the door. Because the kids are running late, they miss their bus. It's 7:30 a.m., and Karen must be across town at her job by 8:00 a.m. She dumps her full cup of coffee into the sink and quickly loads the kids and baby into the car. They stop first at the babysitter, then move on to school.

Karen finally pulls up at work at 8:05 a.m. Her heart racing, she walks briskly to her office building. As she gets to her office, her boss meets her with a stack of reports that he needs reviewed for a 10 o'clock meeting. She takes the box of reports and places them on top of the other stacks of paper on her desk. She thinks to herself, "Who does he think he is handing me these reports to read at the last minute? I have other urgent projects I'm working on. Now, I'll never get out of here on time to pick up the kids." Karen sits down at her desk, closes her eyes, and puts her head in her hands.

## Stressful Situation Activity 2

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*Read the following hypothetical situation to the audience. After you have presented the situation, have the audience discuss it and offer suggestions for how the couple in the situation could better handle the stress in their life.*

Bill and his wife Penny are excited. Christmas is just a week away and they are planning to drive to Vermont to spend the holidays with their daughter and her family. They have a lot to do in the next 24 hours to get ready for the long drive. Bill has the car to service and errands to run, while Penny has to wash the clothes and bake goodies for the family. On top of that, they haven't begun to pack.

Meanwhile, Bill isn't feeling well. He's tired and run-down so he calls his doctor to schedule a quick check-up. Bill wants to visit the doctor before the trip so that if he is coming down with something, he can treat it during the trip using medicine prescribed by the doctor.

Much to Bill's surprise, the doctor diagnoses him with type 2 diabetes. The doctor tells Bill he is going to need to start managing his blood glucose immediately. Bill and Penny look at each other in disbelief as the doctor tells them about the changes they are going to have to make to manage Bill's disease.

Bill and Penny fear they will never get to Vermont for Christmas now. They were already struggling to get ready, and now this happens. Bill and Penny are so concerned about what needs to be done for the trip that they can't even focus on Bill's diabetes.

# What's Your Score on the Stress Test?

A Self-scoring Social Readjustment Scale by Holmes and Rohe

## Instructions:

- Think of what has happened to you in the past year as you read through the following list of life activities.
- In the right hand column, jot down the point values for events that apply to you; then add up your score.
- The guidelines for interpreting the total score are at the end.

LIFE EVENT	POINT VALUE	YOUR SCORE (Insert values if appropriate)
1. Death of a spouse	100	_____
2. Divorce	73	_____
3. Marital separation	65	_____
4. Jail term	63	_____
5. Death of close family member	63	_____
6. Personal injury or illness	53	_____
7. Marriage	50	_____
8. Fired at work	47	_____
9. Marital reconciliation	45	_____
10. Retirement	45	_____
11. Change in health of family member	39	_____
12. Pregnancy	40	_____
13. Sexual difficulties	39	_____
14. Gain of a new family member	39	_____
15. Business readjustment	39	_____
16. Change in financial state	38	_____
17. Death of a close friend	37	_____
18. Change to a different line of work	36	_____
19. Increase in arguments with spouse	35	_____

<b>LIFE EVENT</b>	<b>POINT VALUE</b>	<b>YOUR SCORE (Insert values if appropriate)</b>
20. Acquiring mortgage over \$10,000	31	_____
21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	_____
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29	_____
23. Son or daughter leaves home	29	_____
24. Trouble with in-laws	29	_____
25. Outstanding personal achievement	29	_____
26. Spouse begins or stops work	28	_____
27. Change in living conditions	26	_____
28. Revision of personal habits	25	_____
29. Trouble with boss	24	_____
30. Change in work hours or conditions	23	_____
31. Change in residence	20	_____
32. Change in recreation	20	_____
33. Change in church activities	19	_____
34. Change in social activities	18	_____
35. Acquiring mortgage or loan less than \$10,000	17	_____
36. Change in sleeping habits	16	_____
37. Change in the number of family get-togethers	15	_____
38. Change in eating habits	15	_____
39. Vacation	13	_____
40. Christmas	12	_____
41. Minor violations of the law	11	_____

**YOUR TOTAL SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

## INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE:

If your total for the year is under 150, you probably won't have any physical problems.

A score of 150-199 indicates a **mild** problem, with a 37-percent chance that you'll feel the impact of stress with physical symptoms.

From 200-299, you qualify as having a **moderate** problem with a 51-percent chance of experiencing a change in your health.

A score of over 300 drives those chances up to 90 percent.