

STRESS MANAGEMENT



THE BIRKMAN METHOD® AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

We know that the ability to manage stress has vital consequences in our professional and personal lives. The Stress Management report specifically targets better self-management.

This seven-page report addresses three areas where stress can easily occur. Since few of us take the time to acknowledge or articulate our own needs, we may especially react to unmet needs in these situations:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Schedules and details
- Decision making

This Stress Management report offers information to help you manage your own individual Needs (as described by the Birkman behavioral Components) and to more easily avoid areas of potential Stress.

In each of these areas, the first page identifies some symptoms of Stress that you may express, feel or exhibit in this situation. The report then provides suggestions as to what you can do to prevent or at least minimize those behaviors that might further increase the Stress that you may be feeling. When asterisks also appear next to the title for a particular page, they indicate a greater intensity or priority of the information.

The second page of each section provides information that relates to your motivational Needs. When your Needs are generally met, you can more easily use your Usual Behaviors. This report also helps you understand what may be happening (which Need is not being met) when you do experience symptoms of Stress.

Finally, the report provides suggestions as to how you can proactively manage Stress by taking specific actions to meet your own Needs on an ongoing basis.

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STRESS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS ***

The number of asterisks associated with the Stress scores indicates the intensity of the Stress Behaviors when they occur.

The Stress Behaviors surrounding the area of interpersonal relations relate to the *Self-Consciousness* and *Social Energy* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 79 (*Self-Consciousness*) and 4 (*Social Energy*).

Based upon these scores, when you are feeling stress in this area, we expect you may begin to:

- Spend too much time justifying and explaining your ideas, suggestions or actions.
- Get your feelings hurt easily or get easily embarrassed.
- Take little comments personally and become defensive or hurt.
- Keep to yourself or stay on the fringes of the group at lunches, group sessions or social gatherings.
- Ignore casual conversation and greetings from others, or not speak until spoken to.
- Feel real impatience with group meetings, committee activities or work that involves several persons at once.

When these behaviors occur:

- Take opportunities to meet and mix with new people or casual friends on a regular basis.
- Be more sociable and work to set aside your shyness and those self-conscious feelings.
- Practice speaking up; bring yourself to the attention of others more often.
- Don't hesitate to take center stage when you feel that you have something to say that others need to hear.

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MANAGING NEEDS FOR SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIAL ENERGY

The Stress Behaviors surrounding the area of interpersonal relations relate to the *Self-Consciousness* and *Social Energy* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 79 (*Self-Consciousness*) and 4 (*Social Energy*).

Based upon these scores, it is likely that you need:

- Respected titles and status
- Personalized benefits
- Criticism balanced by praise
- Genuine pats on the back
- Close individual ties
- Freedom from group pressures
- Special time to be alone;
time to be quiet and think
- Individualized benefits
- A few, close, one-on-one friends

In order to build resistance to or avoid stress in this area, we recommend that you:

- Spend more time with that special person who always makes you feel good about yourself (spouse, best friend, parent, etc.).
- Keep a list of your recent successes and re-read it when you feel discouraged.
- Reward yourself by spending a little time doing those things that you always feel good about after you finish.
- Take the time to have casual exchanges with your superiors.
- Set aside quiet time for yourself every day; you need solitude to recharge.
- Take active steps to protect yourself from interruptions when you are working on an important or stressful task.
- Allocate at least one weekend a month just to be alone with that one person who is most important to you. The more difficult this is to do, the more important it is.
- Prepare yourself for big holidays or hectic social periods by spending more time being quiet and alone.

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STRESS OF DEALING WITH SCHEDULES OR DETAIL

The Stress Behaviors surrounding issues dealing with details and schedules relate to the *Insistence* and *Restlessness* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 16 (*Insistence*) and 68 (*Restlessness*).

Based upon these scores, when you are feeling stress in this area, we expect you may begin to:

- Ignore necessary routines or systems, and not follow through on essential detail.
- Wait until time has almost run out before starting a task.
- Feel hemmed-in by ordinary rules and procedures.
- Focus on more interesting projects and ignore or postpone necessary routine.
- Don't organize your plans or inform others in the group about your plans, actions or whereabouts.
- Lack careful follow-through.

When these behaviors occur:

- Work to establish better time-management habits.
- Set up procedures to handle distractions during the most tedious or routine parts of a project.
- Remember that existing priorities must be attended to when accepting the challenge of a new project.
- Identify priorities and critical time needs in a new project or opportunity before planning your actions.
- Become more attentive to detail.
- Practice working projects against a specific time or milestone using intermediate checkpoints and timetables, as well as an overall end date.

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MANAGING NEEDS FOR INSISTENCE AND RESTLESSNESS

The Stress Behaviors surrounding issues dealing with details and schedules relate to the *Insistence* and *Restlessness* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 16 (*Insistence*) and 68 (*Restlessness*).

Based upon these scores, it is likely that you need:

- Freedom from close controls
- A minimum of structured routine
- Direct access to everyone
- Unusual and stimulating tasks
- Flexible rules and policies
- Novelty and change in your day
- Frequent shifts in your activities
- An independent work role
- Varied and complex work activities
- Changes in the group or scenery

In order to build resistance to or avoid stress in this area, we recommend that you:

- Set aside times every week to follow some new interest or satisfy a new curiosity.
- Indulge your sense of adventure whenever possible; use vacations or hobbies to try new activities.
- Create frequent opportunities to discuss future goals, plans and activities with your family and/or co-workers.
- Make schedules that allow you flexibility in executing tasks and plans.
- Build up a stockpile of small, worthwhile projects to work on when you need a break from a boring task.
- Develop schedules and time management habits that allow you to routinely work on or monitor several tasks every day.
- Keep variety and a sense of newness in your hobbies and social life.
- Avoid taking on home projects that will require you to do essentially the same thing every night for months on end.

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STRESS OF MAKING DECISIONS ****

The number of asterisks associated with the Stress scores indicates the intensity of the Stress Behaviors when they occur.

The Stress Behaviors surrounding decision-making issues relate to the *Physical Energy* and *Thought* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 2 (*Physical Energy*) and 92 (*Thought*).

Based upon these scores, when you are feeling stress in this area, we expect you may begin to:

- Feel overwhelmed and weighed down by tasks that require concentration on practical actions or details.
- Become easily worn down or tired when projects require extended action rather than planning and thought.
- Spend too much energy on the big picture or blue sky plans and dreams, and become discouraged when forced to deal with practical limitations.
- Worry about ordinary, everyday decisions and arrangements too much.
- Dwell too much on the negative possibilities when trying to make a choice or decision.
- Feel anxious and insecure about making a mistake when a decision is required, especially when time is short.

When these behaviors occur:

- Accept the need to work through a complex decision process even though significant concentration on practical limitations will be required.
- Spend time planning the implementation steps for a project as well as developing the grand design – don't forget the practical limitations.
- Try to take a more aggressive approach to starting action on a task or project.
- Work to establish firm schedules for coming to a decision and work steadily toward that schedule.
- Build methods of reassessment and change into projects or decisions, and learn to experiment with partial decisions rather than staying committed to a given course come what may.
- Develop an analytic approach to decision making; focus your attention on the pros and cons



MANAGING NEEDS FOR PHYSICAL ENERGY AND THOUGHT

The Stress Behaviors surrounding decision-making issues relate to the *Physical Energy* and *Thought* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 2 (*Physical Energy*) and 92 (*Thought*).

Based upon these scores, it is likely that you need:

- A minimum of prolonged activity
- Stimulation of new ideas
- Friendly, low-key surroundings
- Time for reflection
- Unhurried work conditions
- Time to think decisions through
- Support from others on decisions
- Opportunities to talk out worries
- Offers of assistance and help
- Cautious decision-making by others

In order to build resistance to or avoid stress in this area, we recommend that you:

- Plan schedules and projects so you can stop and think about where you have been and where you are going.
- Give more time to abstract or philosophical thought and activities.
- Avoid taking on too many projects or social obligations when things are getting hectic at work.
- Develop a relaxing, low-key hobby or recreation, and make use of the curative powers of this activity often.
- Build life goals and important plans carefully using thorough discussion with those close to you and advice from knowledgeable advisors.
- Develop close relations with patient and effective advisors who will reflect on your ideas with you and will help you think carefully about important issues.
- Keep abreast of major developments in your work area, so that you are ready to deal with issues when they arise and have a good idea of where to go for assistance or information.
- Remind those close to you that you need careful preparation before making a decision, and elicit their support in developing several options to consider.