

Life Events Scale

This stress assessment measures the amount of change, using Life Change Units, a person experienced and adjusted to in the previous 12 months. It was designed to predict the likelihood of disease and illness following exposure to stressful life events. Each life event is given a score that indicates the amount of readjustment a person has to make as a result of the event. Not all of the events in the scale are necessarily negative events.

This scale indicates that change in one's life requires an effort to adapt and then an effort to regain stability. Stress and feelings of loss are natural by-products of adapting and trying to regain homeostasis. This assessment considers only the events that occurred, not individual perception of these events in life. Perception is a key part of the total grief and loss experience, so while the Life Events Scale has value in increasing awareness of potential losses and life changing or stressful events, an individual's perception of the event is an important variable which needs to be considered in the overall assessment. For a more complete picture of how loss has affected a person's life consider all the dimensions of health: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social.

Directions

For each event that occurred in your life within the past year, record the corresponding score. If an event occurred more than once, multiply the score for that event by the number of times the event occurred and record that score. Total all the scores:

- Score of 300+: At risk of illness.
- Score of 150-299+: Risk of illness is moderate (reduced by 30% from the above risk).
- Score 150-: Only have a slight risk of illness.

A modified scale has also been developed for students (teenagers and university aged young adults). This scale is included in the handout. Similar to the adult scale, life events are totaled and provide a rough estimate of how life changes may affect health.

Adult

Life Events	Life change units
Death of a spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Imprisonment	63
Death of a close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Dismissal from work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual difficulties	39
Gain a new family member	39
Business readjustment	39
Change in financial state	38
Change in frequency of arguments	35
Major mortgage	32
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
Change in responsibilities at work	29
Child leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse starts or stops work	26
Begin or end school	26
Change in living conditions	25
Revision of personal habits	24
Trouble with boss	23
Change in working hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in recreation	19
Change in church activities	19
Change in social activities	18
Minor mortgage or loan	17
Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family reunions	15
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas alone	12
Minor violation of law	11

Students, Teenagers, Young Adults

Life Event	Life Change Units
Getting married	100
Unwed pregnancy	92
Death of parent	87
Acquiring a visible deformity	81
Divorce of parents	77
Fathering an unwed pregnancy	77
Becoming involved with drugs or alcohol	76
Jail sentence of parent for over one year	75
Marital separation of parents	69
Death of a brother or sister	68
Change in acceptance by peers	67
Pregnancy of unwed sister	64
Discovery of being an adopted child	63
Marriage of parent to step-parent	63
Death of a close friend	63
Having a visible congenital deformity	62
Serious illness requiring hospitalization	58
Failure of a grade in school	56
Not making an extracurricular activity	55
Hospitalization of a parent	55
Jail sentence of parent for over 30 days	53
Breaking up with boyfriend or girlfriend	53
Beginning to date	51
Suspension from school	50
Birth of a brother or sister	50
Increase in arguments between parents	47
Loss of job by parent	46
Outstanding personal achievement	46
Change in parent's financial status	45
Accepted at college of choice	43
Being a senior in high school	42
Hospitalization of a sibling	41
Increased absence of parent from home	38
Brother or sister leaving home	37
Addition of third adult to family	34
Becoming a full fledged member of a church	31
Decrease in arguments between parents	27
Decrease in arguments with parents	26
Mother or father beginning work	26