

The Impact of Life Crises

Life crises such as death of a spouse, divorce or bankruptcy can disrupt even the best stress management routine. Different life crises have different impacts. In many cases, however, it may be possible to anticipate crises and prepare for them. It may also be useful to recognize the impact of crises that have occurred so that you can take account of them appropriately.

Some very interesting work in this area has been done by Drs. T.H. Holmes and R.H. Rahe, with the *Social Readjustment Scale*. This allocates a number of 'Life Crises Units' (LCUs) to different events, so that you can evaluate them and take action accordingly. While this approach is obviously a simplification of complex situations, using LCUs can give you a useful start in adjusting to life crises.

Select and total the LCUs you have experienced during the past 2 years.

Event	LCU	Event	LCU
Death of spouse	100	Divorce	73
Separation	65	Jail term	63
Death of a close family member	63	Personal illness or injury	53
Marriage	50	Fired at work	47
Marital reconciliation	45	Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44	Pregnancy	40
Sex difficulties	39	Gaining new family member	39
Business readjustment	38	Change in financial state	38
Death of close friend	37	Change to a different line of work	36
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	A large mortgage or loan	30
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	Change in responsibilities at work	29
Son or daughter leaving home	29	Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28	Spouse begins or stops working	26
Begin or end of school or college	26	Change in living conditions	25
Change in personal habits	24	Trouble with boss	23
Change in work hours or conditions	20	Change in residence	20
Change in school or college	20	Change in recreation	19
Change in church activities	19	Change in social activities	18
A moderate loan or mortgage	17	Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family get-togethers	15	Change in eating habits	15
Holiday	13	Christmas	12
Minor violation of the law	11	GRAND TOTAL	

Scoring:

Total LCUs	Probability of illness
300	80%+
200-299	50%
150-199	33%

When you are in danger of suffering the ill effects of life crises try to minimize other disturbances in your life. If, for example, you have lost someone close to you, try to avoid changing your job.

If you have a high score, or know that you will have a high score in the future, preempt possible health problems by adopting stress management strategies now. ***Look after yourself.***