



COMMITMENT

Commitment to the relationship is a powerful dynamic for couples. Couples who are more committed to each other are more likely to have vitalized relationships. This scale measures each person's commitment level and their perception of their partner's commitment level.

ABUSE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

This is a broad measure of abuse and substance abuse. These scales provide a good overview of any abuse each person experienced in their relationship with their parents, others, or partner. It is important to know your limitations in working with a couple and when to make a referral to a professional.

PERSONAL STRESS PROFILE

The Personal Stress Profile describes each individual's personal level of stress, and is based on responses to 25 common sources of stress. For engaged couples the stress profile includes 10 items related to wedding planning stress. The top 10 stressors for each individual are listed in the Report.

Key Ideas about Stress

- There is a curvilinear relationship between moderate, short-lived stress and cognitive and mental performance. The right amount of stress can be motivating for people: Too little stress can lead to boredom and too much can cause anxiety.
- Chronic stress, even that which is the result of minor daily hassles, can overexpose the body to stress hormones increasing the risk of numerous health problems.
- Managing stress begins with identifying the sources of stress, assessing ability to control or change the situation, and staying connected to each other as you discuss healthy ways to cope.



COUPLE EXERCISE IDENTIFYING MOST-CRITICAL ISSUES

Commitment

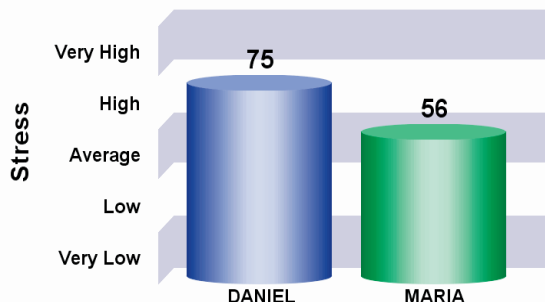
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Daniel</u>		<u>Maria</u>	
I am committed to making our marriage last a lifetime.	Agree		Strongly Agree	
I am willing to doing whatever it takes to improve our relationship.	Agree		Strongly Agree	
I believe my partner is committed to making our marriage last a lifetime.	Strongly Agree		Strongly Agree	
I believe my partner is willing to doing whatever it takes to improve our relationship.	Strongly Agree		Strongly Agree	

Abuse

Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Very Often 5
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Daniel</u>		<u>Maria</u>	
Have your parents ever had problems with alcohol or drug use?	Sometimes		Never	
Have you ever had problems with alcohol or drug use?	Seldom		Never	
Has your partner ever had problems with alcohol or drug use?	Never		Sometimes	
Have you ever observed abuse between your parents?	Sometimes		Never	
Were you ever abused by your parents?	Never		Never	
Have you ever been abused by your current partner?	Never		Never	
Have you ever been abused by anyone else?	Never		Never	
Do you struggle with unhealthy sexual behavior or use of pornography?	Seldom		Never	
Does your partner struggle with unhealthy sexual behavior or use of pornography?	Never		Never	

Personal Stress Profile

The **Personal Stress Profile** examines each individual's personal stress level over the last year. For engaged couples, stress levels are based on responses to 25 common sources of personal and wedding-related stress.



Daniel appears to have a very high level of personal stress, which can create demands on a person's time and energy. The stress may also contribute to problems with physical, relational, and emotional health. It will be helpful to learn and make use of effective coping resources to better manage personal stress.

Maria appears to have a moderate level of frustration or personal stress. Such frustrations and stressors may at times affect attitudes, health, and relationships. It will be helpful to identify effective coping resources so stress does not become overwhelming.

How often have these issues created stress for you?

Never 1 Seldom 2 Sometimes 3 Often 4 Very Often 5

Daniel Top Stressors	Maria Top Stressors
Very Often Decisions about wedding details Your current living arrangement	Very Often Dealing with the wedding party Decisions about wedding details Financial concerns
Often Dealing with your in-laws Lack of exercise Lack of time for fiancé	Often Lack of time for friends Your current living arrangement
Sometimes Emotionally upset/emotional issues Fiancé not getting things done Fiancé stressed by wedding planning Your partner	Sometimes Emotionally upset/emotional issues Lack of time for fiancé Opinions from friends or relatives Your job Your partner

Help this couple compare their lists of top stressors. It is not uncommon for the lists to be somewhat different. Take a moment to help them discuss which stressors are similar and which are different. Key resources for coping with stress include healthy communication, conflict resolution, flexibility, and closeness.

PREPARE/ENRICH Exercises: *Identifying Most Critical Issues, Balancing your Priorities, Wedding Stress*



PERSONAL STRESS PROFILE

"Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference." —Reinhold Niebuhr

IDENTIFYING MOST CRITICAL ISSUES

Do you control stress in your life or does stress control you?

Stressors are events that cause an emotional and/or physical reaction. Stress can be positive (wedding, job promotion) or negative (loss of job, car accident, major illness). But what is important is to be able to manage the many stressors in your life.

One way to manage stress is to prioritize the issues that are most important to you. Another is to decide what issues can be changed or resolved and which ones cannot. This exercise will help you focus on the high priority issues and those that can be changed (Box 1).

COUPLE EXERCISE

1. Select up to **four issues** that are the most stressful for each of you.
2. Review each issue and put it into one of the four cells below. (Box 1 contains the "Most Critical Issues.")

	Able to Change	Difficult to Change
High Priority	Box 1 MOST CRITICAL ISSUES <i>What changes can you each make?</i>	Box 2 <i>How do you plan to cope?</i>
Low Priority	Box 3 <i>Are you spending too much time on low priority issues?</i>	Box 4 LEAST CRITICAL ISSUES <i>Can you accept or forget about these issues?</i>

COUPLE DISCUSSION

- Select one issue from Box 1 that you will work on together as a couple.
- Work together as a team to achieve your goals.
 - Communicate about the issue.
 - Use good conflict resolution skills.
 - Be flexible with one another.

