



Coaching for stress: StressScan

18

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Introduction

The topic of stress is playing an increasing role in both executive and lifestyle modification coaching interventions, as evidenced by the chapter 'Coaching and stress' in *Excellence in Coaching* (Pena and Cooper, 2006). Effectively managing stress and facilitating wellness is important for both the coach and coachee. In this chapter, coaching for stress and health using StressScan, a validated individual stress and health/lifestyle management assessment, will be presented.

The chapter first provides a general overview of an integrative stress and health management model across executive, life, career or health coaching. The theoretical models behind stress and individual behaviour change are then briefly introduced. This is followed by the development and interpretation of StressScan and its link to an online stress management planning system and resource library called Talent Accelerator to help facilitate coachee wellness. This section draws heavily on more extended discussions about StressScan from previous publications (Nowack, 1990, 1991, 1994; Nowack and Pentkowski, 1994). The reader is referred to the manual (Nowack, 1990) for details of the instrument and research, and guidance on scale interpretation. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the use of StressScan with coachees as well as how the concepts behind this assessment can help coaches manage their own work/life stress and avoid job burnout.



Theoretical models of stress

Stress coaching

A number of popular stress models exist to help coaches understand the transactional nature of individual perceptions within organizations. Figure 18.1 provides a synthesis of these models including job-strain/support (Karasek and Theorell, 1990), effort-reward balance (Siegrist, 1996), conservation of resources (Hobfoll, 2001), job demands-resources (Bakker *et al*, 2003), Warr's 'vitamin model' (1987) and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983).

It is common in many coaching engagements to hear coachees share perceptions of work-family balance challenges and work stressors. Perceptions of stress are often quite high, with 40 to 60 per cent of all coachees reporting very high levels caused by both work and home pressures and challenges (Nowack, 2006).

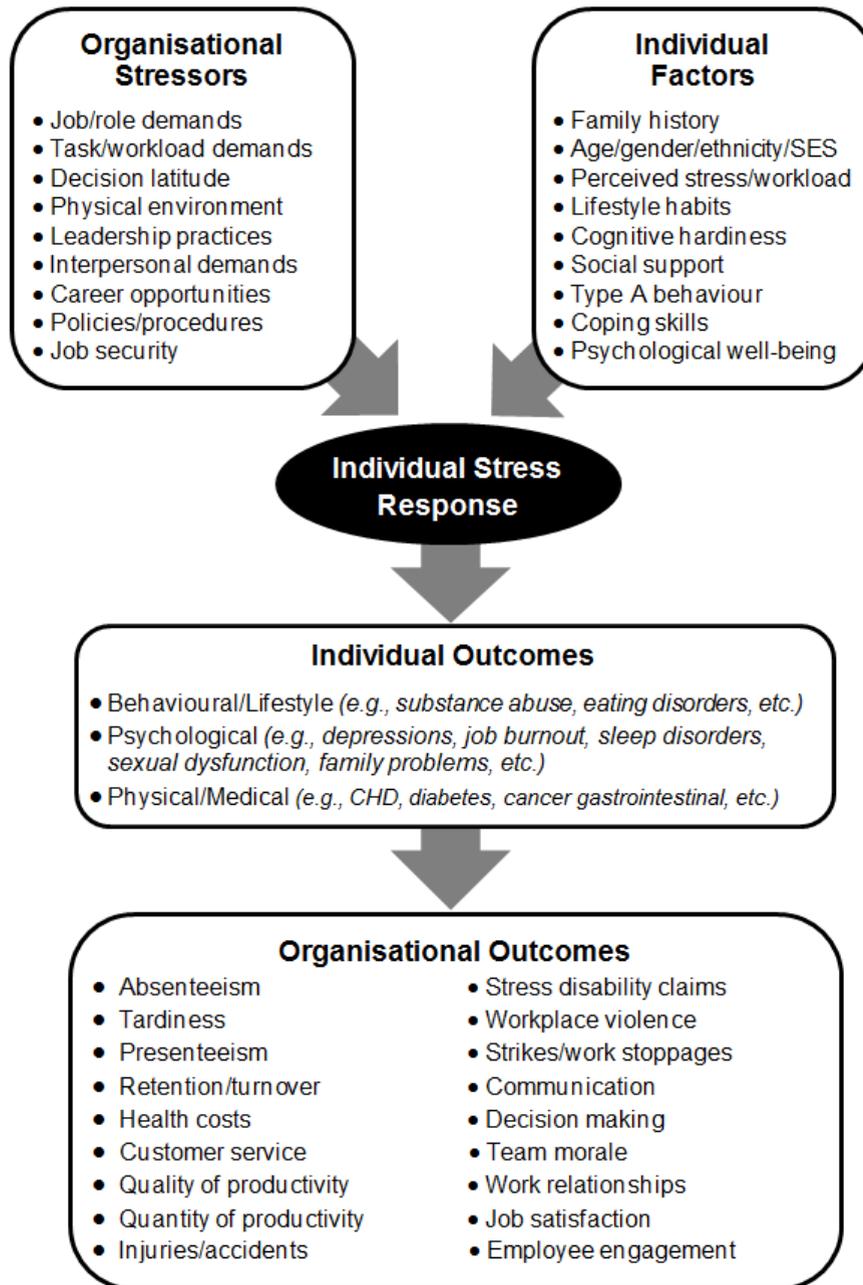
Consultation regarding stress, health and lifestyle behaviours has typically been seen as the domain of physicians, psychologists and other health professionals – not the arena for coaches. It can be argued that helping employees deal more effectively with work and life balance, coping with stress, and facilitating physical and psychological wellbeing can be a major focus in executive, life, career or health coaching (Palmer, 2003). Additionally, the profession of coaching is not immune to occupational stress. Coaches are equally vulnerable to experiencing high levels of stress and job burnout due to heavy workloads, challenging assignments and organizational constraints.

Organizational benefits of having healthy employees

Stress has emotional, cognitive, physiological and behavioural effects on the individual as well as important consequences for an organization, including such outcomes as poor concentration and decision making, fatigue, accidents, injuries, absenteeism, presenteeism, physical illness and psychological distress (Nowack, 1994). Improving the total health of the workforce (physical and psychological) through formal programmes including coaching would appear to be important for increasing productivity and competitive advantage.

A conservative estimate of business benefits derived from the improvements in health status indicate a likely annual return on investment from such a programme to be £3.73 for every £1 spent (Mills, 2005). In the United States, Aldana (2001) reviewed 13 studies that reported average benefit–cost ratios of \$3.48 in reduced health care costs and \$5.82 in lower employee absenteeism costs for each dollar invested, and Pelletier (2001) reports on a total of 120 corporate health promotion studies that consistently show cost savings for the organization as well as productivity and health improvement. Recent evidence strongly supports a sizable and consistent return on investment with lifestyle modification and employee wellness programmes (Chapman, 2005; Goetzel and Ozminkowski, 2008). Although

Figure 18.1 Health and Productivity Management Model



evidence suggests that a focus on individual interventions without addressing the root organizational causes is typically ineffective (Nowack, 2000), the focus of this chapter will be on the impact of coaching on facilitating coachee stress reduction, health, productivity and enhanced wellbeing.

The stress response or ‘fight or flight’ reaction is our body’s rapid and automatic switch into a protective mode. The purpose is to prepare the individual for activity in response to a perceived or real threat. By itself, this response is normal, healthy and adaptive. We know today that continued arousal and activation of our ‘fight or flight’ system can affect almost all of

our body's processes, diminishing the effectiveness of our immune system, increasing risk of obesity, insomnia, digestive problems, heart disease, depression, memory impairment, physical illnesses, and inflammation (Glaser and Kiecolt-Glaser, 2009).

The theoretical model for StressScan

StressScan was designed to be an important assessment in a coaching practitioner's 'tool box' to facilitate increased knowledge, skills and behaviour change efforts aimed at reducing stress, promoting healthy lifestyle/coping habits and quality of life. Together with an integrated online developmental planning/reminder system containing a comprehensive stress/wellness resource library of articles, websites, books, tips and media called Talent Accelerator, the coach can not only help individuals reduce stress and identify wellness resources and risks but also help facilitate the initiation and maintenance of health promoting habits and behaviours. The major conceptual goals of stress, health and lifestyle modification coaching are summarized in Table 18.1.

Using a variety of tools such as motivational interviewing (Passmore and Whybrow, 2007; Rollnick and Miller, 1995), stress/health assessments and cognitive-behavioural techniques, coaches can help coachees move through the core challenges of reaching acceptance with past issues (eg chronic illness), developing strategies to increase self-management skills and healthy lifestyle behaviours, and create a purposefulness and supportive environment for maintenance of key behaviours over time.

TABLE 18.1 Stress, health and lifestyle modification coaching goals

| Time | Stress/Health/Lifestyle Coaching Goals | Core Challenge |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| <i>Past</i> | Understanding, acceptance, forgiveness, life satisfaction | Closure |
| <i>Present</i> | Happiness/subjective wellbeing, engagement, social connectedness, manageability, energy, positive explanatory style, self-efficacy, practise of health promoting behaviours | Control |
| <i>Future</i> | Optimism, legacy, meaningfulness, longevity, positive affect, resilience, sustaining of health promoting behaviours | Hope |



Behaviour change theories underlying Talent Accelerator

The goal of StressScan is to facilitate coachee awareness and the goal of Talent Accelerator is to enable successful behaviour change. The design of Talent Accelerator is based on the most often applied theories of individual behaviour change including the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), self-efficacy and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), the Health Belief Model (Becker, 1974), and the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM; Prochaska and Velicer, 1997). Each of these theories should be useful to all coaches who are attempting to facilitate behaviour change.

The various features of Talent Accelerator have been specifically designed and developed to support these individual change theories, including TTM and relapse prevention (Parks and Marlatt, 1999). It was specifically designed to be integrated with StressScan to monitor and track performance on specific stress/wellness goals, being provided with periodic reminder messages about success in completing the coachee's stress/wellness action plan and providing a comprehensive topical resource library for each StressScan scale to facilitate greater understanding, learning and behaviour change.

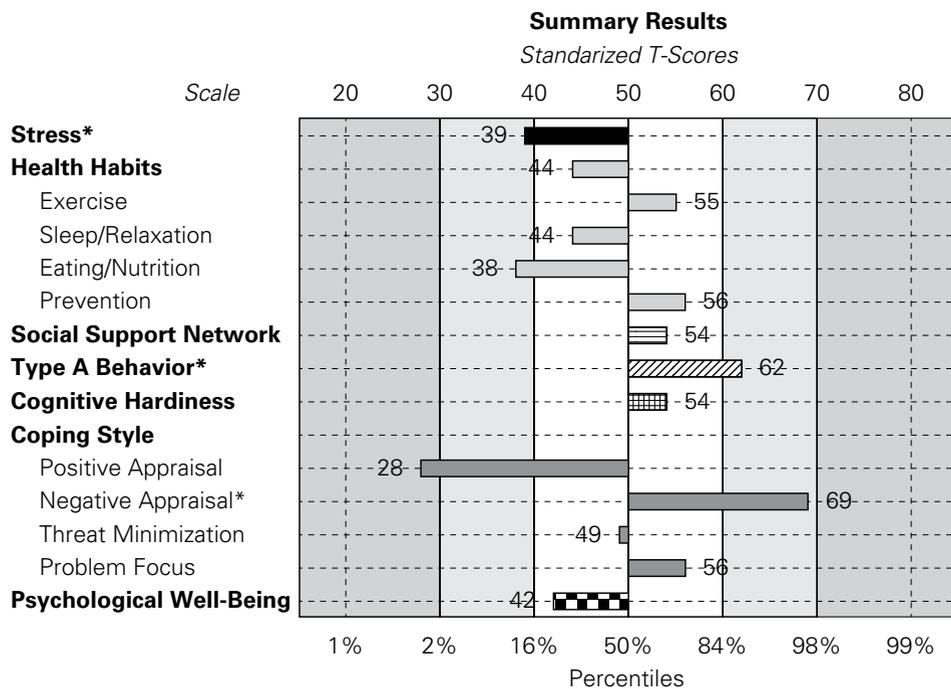
The development of StressScan

StressScan is an assessment to be used by executive, life and health coaches to facilitate stress management and wellness promotion with coachees. The conceptual development of StressScan began in the early 1990s and has been described in detail in several previous publications (Nowack, 1990, 1999). StressScan is an adapted version of the Stress Profile currently published by Western Psychological Services (WPS) in the United States.

StressScan is a 123-item questionnaire that measures important psychosocial factors based on the cognitive-transactional model of stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). It is administered and scored online and takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. A growing and large international database now exists for StressScan, with the assessment translated into several other languages including Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, Danish, Turkish, Hungarian, Japanese, Greek and Lithuanian.

StressScan results in a comprehensive individual feedback report providing an overview of 14 major scales, a summary of wellness risks and wellness resources and integration with the online Talent Accelerator to translate awareness into a personal stress and wellness action plan that can be monitored and tracked over time. StressScan also provides feedback on smoking status and excessive use of substances (alcohol and drugs), and includes a response distortion bias scale to identify possible careless or overly desirable responding patterns.



FIGURE 18.2 StressScan sample report

* High T-scores indicate a health risk. For all other scales, high T-scores indicate strengths, and low T-scores indicate health risks.

This report was generated by Envisia Learning's StressScan software © 2012 Envisia Learning. StressScan is an adapted version of the Stress Profile published by Western Psychological Services (WPS). All Rights Reserved.

Reliability

StressScan has been shown to possess adequate internal consistency reliabilities (alpha) ranging from 0.51 to 0.91 across all scales. The test-retest reliability of the scales ranges from 0.76 to 0.86 over a three-month period. A principal component analysis has yielded three major factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1.0 (adaptive cognitive and behavioural behaviours, non-adaptive resources and lifestyle habits) accounting for 57 per cent of variance.

Validity

StressScan has been associated with diverse health and productivity outcomes in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, including immune response, job burnout, depression, absenteeism, physical illness, anxiety, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance (cf Giesser *et al*, 2007; Nowack, 2000; Schwartz *et al*, 1993 among others).



Description of the StressScan scales

Stress (six items)

This scale provides a global index of the appraisal of stress (hassles) over a three-month period and has demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability (alpha) of 0.68. It is conceptually based on a factor analysis of the Hassles scale (Kanner *et al*, 1981; Lazarus, 1984) and measures self-reported hassles in six distinct work and life areas:

- 1 health;
- 2 work;
- 3 personal finances;
- 4 family;
- 5 social obligation; and
- 6 world/environmental concerns.

This provides an overall measure of self-reported stress as well as a ranking of the areas of greatest concern of the respondent, making it very useful for coaching and stress management programmes.

The stress scale has been shown to be associated with immune response as mentioned above, and also seems to be sensitive to changes in specific interventions designed to teach stress management skills to those with a chronic illness (Giesser *et al*, 2007). This finding has important implications in light of several recent studies indicating the impact of stress management interventions on major chronic conditions and illness (Nowack, 2000).

Global health habits (25 items)

Health habits or global lifestyle practices are measured by a 25-item scale assessing the daily practice of specific behaviours hypothesized to be conducive to both physical and psychological wellbeing. This scale is a composite of the four subscales below as well as specific items on smoking and substance use. High scores on the health habits scale suggest the frequent practice of lifestyle habits on a regular basis.

Global health habits – exercise (three items)

The exercise scale measures the frequency of physical activity an employee engages in on a regular basis. The questions focus on aerobic activities, stretching/flexibility, strength and leisure activities involving some level of exercise. This scale has shown internal consistency reliability of 0.79 and association with absenteeism in several employee studies (Nowack and Pentkowski, 1994).



Global health habits – sleep/relaxation (five items)

This scale measures the frequency of obtaining adequate rest/relaxation, quality and quantity of sleep on a regular basis. The sleep scale has shown moderately high internal consistency reliability (alpha) of 0.71 and appears to be independent of clinical measures of fatigue (Giesser *et al*, 2007, 2011). Sleep-deprived, fatigued and tired employees are actually potential liabilities to their organizations, so having a separate self-report measure in StressScan can be quite valuable for coaching interventions.

Global health habits – nutrition/eating (eight items)

This scale measures the frequency of eating well balanced meals and a healthy approach to diet on a daily basis. This scale has shown moderately high internal consistency reliability (alpha) of 0.70. The nutrition/eating scale focuses on facilitating healthy eating rather than weight management (Giesser *et al*, 2011).

Global health habits – prevention (six items)

This scale measures the frequency of employing sound health hygiene behaviours on a daily basis, such as avoiding those who are ill and maintaining preventive practices. This scale has shown moderately high internal consistency reliability (alpha) of 0.70. These types of preventive behaviours are a common focus of organizational risk reduction and health promotion programmes.

Social support (18 items)

Social support is measured using an 18-item scale that separately assesses the availability, utility and satisfaction with five separate support groups available to the respondent – co-workers, supervisor/boss, family, friends, and significant others – based on the work of Sarason *et al* (1983). An overall social support score is calculated across all five groups. This scale has demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability (alpha) of 0.83. High scores on this scale suggest that an employee perceives the availability of social resources at work and home, seeks them out when required and reports a level of satisfaction with the type of support they received (eg emotional, informational, instrumental).

Type A behaviour (10 items)

Type A behaviour is measured in StressScan with a brief 10-item scale conceptually based upon the original Framingham Type A measure (Haynes *et al*, 1980). High scores on the StressScan scale suggest more frequent use



of achievement-striving, hard-driving, competitive, angry and hostile reactions to work and life stressors. This scale has shown adequate internal consistency reliability of 0.82 and convergent validity with both the Jenkins Activity Scale (JAS) and Framingham Type scales (Nowack, 1987, 1990). Elevated scores on this scale suggest a tendency towards cynical mistrust and hostility.

Cognitive hardiness (30 items)

This scale assesses the possession of specific attitudes and beliefs, based upon the concept of personality hardiness attributed to Kobasa (Kobasa, 1979; Kobasa *et al*, 1981). This scale measures a set of attitudes and beliefs about work and life that are relatively enduring and include:

- *control*: beliefs an individual has self-efficacy and influence over significant outcomes in life;
- *challenge*: attitudes around viewing life changes as empowering and challenging as opposed to inducing helplessness and hopelessness;
- *involvement*: commitment, as opposed to alienation, with work, family, friendships and self;
- *self-confidence/self-esteem*.

Factor analytic analyses in several published and unpublished studies support the uni-dimensional interpretation of this scale (Beasley *et al*, 2003; Nowack, 1999).

The cognitive hardiness scale has demonstrated moderate internal consistency reliability of 0.84 and been shown to predict a variety of physical and psychological health outcomes in a number of studies (eg, Greene and Nowack, 1995; Nowack, 1990, 1991; Beasley *et al*, 2003). Additionally it has shown convergent validity with measures of optimism (Goss, 1994) and overall health and low job stress in a study of 1,925 Australian university staff (Sharpley *et al*, 1999) and was significantly associated with absenteeism and self-reported hospitalization for injury/illness in a three-year longitudinal study of police officers (Greene and Nowack, 1995).

Recent randomized controlled studies with executives, coaches and students with a brief cognitive-behavioural based intervention has demonstrated significant increases in cognitive hardiness and resilience scores (Green *et al*, 2007; Grant, 2008; Grant *et al*, 2009, 2011). Comparison of a 12-week blended learning versus classroom living well intervention also demonstrated significant changes in cognitive hardiness and psychological wellbeing in a recent study (Giesser *et al*, 2011).

Cognitively hardy employees are expected to be more persistent, actively engaged and resilient in the face of work and life challenges. This scale would appear to be a relatively good indicator of coachee success in initiating and maintaining new behaviours, and persisting in the face of work/life obstacles and challenges.



Coping style (20 items)

Coping style is assessed by a 20-item scale composed of four trait coping responses to work and life stressors and challenges. Respondents are asked how frequently they typically use these four techniques to cope with work, family and personal stressors. The four coping style scales are:

- 1 *positive appraisal*: realistically emphasizing the positive side of stressful situations through self-talk and cognitively minimizing the importance of the stressor;
- 2 *negative appraisal*: self-deprecating statements, catastrophic thinking and focusing on the negative aspects of the situation;
- 3 *threat minimization*: actively acknowledging and moving ahead without dwelling excessively on the stressor, and using humour to put things in the proper perspective;
- 4 *problem-focused coping*: behavioural attempts to modify one's behaviour or the environment.

High scores on these independent scales suggest frequent use of these coping styles. The coping scales have shown internal consistency reliabilities ranging from 0.68 to 0.79 in previous studies. In both cross-sectional and prospective studies, each of these coping scales have been associated with diverse outcomes such as physical illness, job burnout, absenteeism and depression (Giesser *et al*, 2007, 2011; Nowack, 1989, 1999). The pattern and use of specific coping strategies assessed in StressScan can help coaches to better understand how coaches approach specific work and life situations that are perceived to be challenging and stressful.

Psychological wellbeing (12 items)

Psychological wellbeing is measured by a 12-item scale assessing overall life satisfaction and absence of psychological distress during the previous three months. High scores suggest low overall distress and emotional negativity (ie greater satisfaction with one's self, greater ability to enjoy life, and feeling happy with family, work, interpersonal relationships and achievements. This scale shows high internal consistency reliability (alpha) of 0.93 and is strongly associated with measures of depression, distress and anxiety (Nowack, 1999).

A three-item Spirituality Index (alpha 0.76) has been derived and validated from this psychological wellbeing scale and it appears sensitive to psychosocial educational interventions with those with chronic illness (Nowack and Roberts, 2006). At present this Spirituality Index is not currently available as a separate scale in StressScan but shows promise as being sensitive to measuring connection to meaningful activities and relationships in one's life for future research and use by coaches (Giesser *et al*, 2011)



Response bias (five items)

This scale assesses the tendency to respond in a manner that might be interpreted as careless, biased or distorted. The items are conceptually based on the Crowne–Marlowe Social Desirability scale (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960). Respondents with high scores on this scale tend to endorse items that would appear uncharacteristic for most individuals, raising the likelihood the respondent was tired, hurried, and careless in reading the items or responding in a manner that could be distorted.

Using StressScan with coachees

StressScan and Talent Accelerator can play an important role in identifying stress/health risks and resources in coaching interventions. This type of individual assessment is well suited for use with coachees complaining of stress, job burnout, challenges with work and family balance, poor health/lifestyle management and ineffective coping.

Coaches interested in using this type of individual stress and health assessment should have a full understanding of the dynamics of individual behaviour change and the implications for coachees of implementing and maintaining new stress management and lifestyle practices.

Figure 18.3 illustrates a comprehensive stress, health and lifestyle coaching model incorporating the latest theories of successful behaviour change (Mashihi and Nowack, 2011; Nowack, 2009). This new model suggests that successful stress, health and lifestyle modification coaching will lead coachees systematically through three distinct stages – each with specific goals and techniques to ensure successful behaviour change efforts.

Stress coaching stages

Stage 1: Enlighten

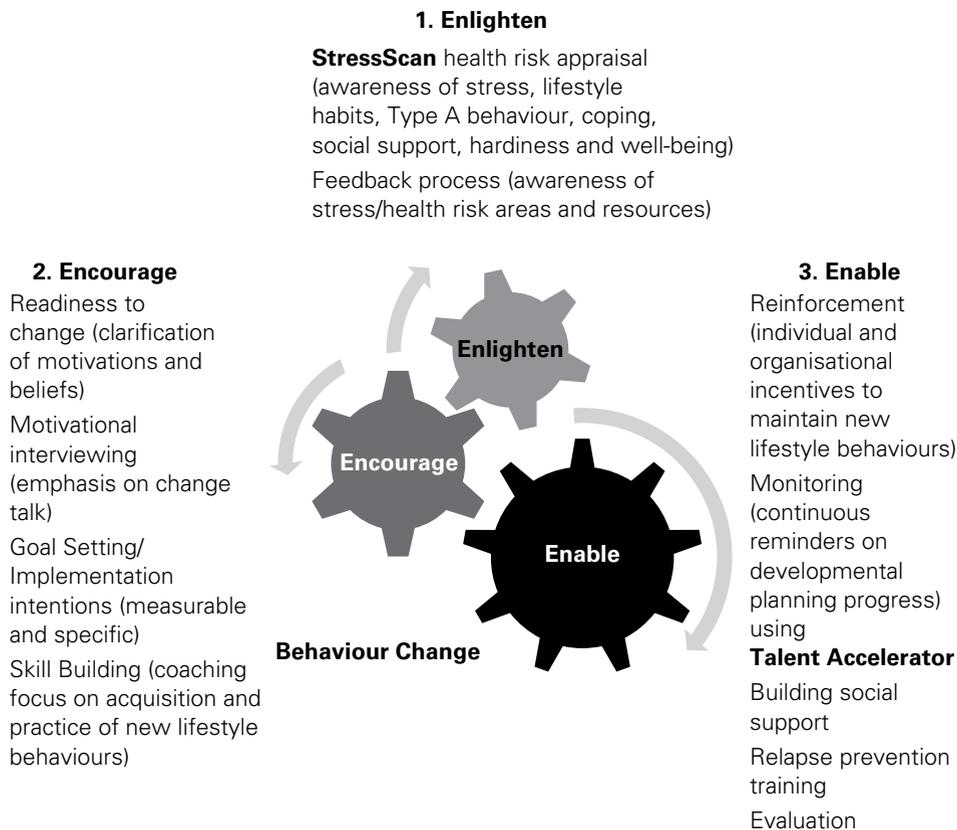
The ‘what’s in it for me’ (WIFM) is a critical leverage point for coaches to be successful in lifestyle modification. Helping coachees to become more aware of personal areas of stress/health risk and resources can be useful to help increase readiness for behaviour change as well as being an important step in successfully setting specific wellness goals.

The use of a personal stress and health assessment like StressScan can be invaluable at this step for coaches to utilize to facilitate awareness and motivation to change behaviour. Such assessments help clarify lifestyle assets and risks that are associated with health, wellbeing and productivity.

Once coaches have some specific data about possible areas of health resources and risks, they can assist coachees to reflect on resistance to change, ambivalence or unrealistic goals that might interfere with lasting behaviour



FIGURE 18.3 Health and productivity management coaching stages



change. Motivational interviewing (MI) is a useful approach for coaches in working with lifestyle change engagements to assist coachees to reflect and target specific lifestyle goals to work on. It is a style that emphasizes the coachee's values, interests and motives and utilizes reflective listening and probing to help the coachee make lasting behaviour changes. MI is a collaborative approach to identifying motivations to change, potential barriers, goal setting and re-appraisal to ensure long-term success without being overly directive with the coachee (Passmore and Whybrow, 2007). The coach must identify the key 'readiness to change' stage from pre-contemplation (no intention to change), contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance, and apply specific strategies and approaches at each stage to help facilitate successful long-term success (Prochaska and Velicer, 1997).

From an MI perspective, coaches would listen carefully to understand professional goals, work/family challenges, self-efficacy, health beliefs and specific attitudes linked to behaviours. As an example, the coach would ask open-ended questions to help the coachee see how one's ability to maintain



high energy, be productive and concentrate could be related to eating/nutrition, sleep and physical activity. The coach would help the coachee reflect on the advantages of maintaining optimal wellness and the readiness to begin to set some specific behavioural goals that could be monitored and evaluated using Talent Accelerator.

Stage 2: Encourage

The key to successful long-term behaviour change is in the planning process. The coach's role is to ensure the stress, health and lifestyle modification plan is realistic, specific and measurable. In helping the coachee translate awareness and motivation into actual behaviour change, the coach can begin to ask some critical questions to facilitate a successful behavioural change plan effort, such as: 'What benefits will there be to managing stress and coping more effectively?'

This is the stage where coaches begin to help the coachee acquire new knowledge and practise new skills to initiate and maintain important lifestyle practices and behaviours. In general, most coachees are more likely to try new behaviours in which they are confident of a successful outcome and feel a sense of mastery in maintaining over time despite some possible setbacks and challenges. If coachees lack confidence in their ability to implement the lifestyle modification plan, the chances that they will maintain it will be low. It is the role of the coach to provide an encouraging and supportive role with coachees and to explore their feelings about the wellness journey through structured emotional expressive writing or by probing for reactions, reflections and insights in each session.

Online tools like StressScan and Talent Accelerator provide a vehicle for developing personal stress and wellness action plans and monitoring progress over time. The coach's role is to ensure the lifestyle modification plan is realistic, specific and measurable. In helping the coachee translate awareness and motivation into actual behaviour change, Talent Accelerator provides an electronic summary of the coachee's StressScan report and has built-in exercises such as a set of reflective questions to help interpret the feedback and facilitate a successful behavioural change plan, including:

- How can I make my behavioural change goal realistic and achievable?
- How can I track and monitor my progress on my behavioural change goal?
- What are some possible barriers to successfully changing my behaviour?
- What actions and steps can I take to anticipate and prevent these barriers from interfering with my successful behaviour change effort?
- How can family members, friends or co-workers help me to successfully change my behaviour?
- How will I reward myself for successfully maintaining my behaviour change goal for 30 days?



- What can I do to continue to motivate myself to keep a high level of commitment to my wellness goal, even if I temporarily slip back into my old habits?

Talent Accelerator also contains a confidential online journal to facilitate reflection and emotional expressive writing. It also contains an extensive library of stress/wellness suggestions, books, articles, websites, media and other resources to facilitate learning and behaviour change.

Stage 3: Enable

This third phase is critical for the long-term success of any health and lifestyle modification programmes and is often overlooked by many coaches. Where possible, coaches should be working during this stage to help the coachee manage lapses, recognize successes, enlist the power of social support systems, focus on progress through structured reminders and evaluate overall success. In fact, once a coachee sets up a personal stress/wellness development plan within Talent Accelerator, it automatically sends out e-mail reminders about progress towards completion at least once a month to help remind, reinforce and facilitate successful behaviour change.

The coach's role is to assist the coachee with re-evaluating the importance of the wellness goals and exploring some relapse-prevention strategies to prepare the coachee for the inevitable lapses that accompany any behaviour change effort. For example, the coach could help the coachee anticipate future unavoidable high-risk situations and prepare in advance for inevitable lapses. Encouraging ways for the coachee to reward sustained behaviour is also something the coach can discuss during follow-up meetings along with an analysis of the coachee's social support network and what role it can play in maintaining new behaviours over time.

The strategy of goal reappraisal should be emphasized during the entire coaching process with a coachee. The coach and coachee should mutually define ways to track, monitor and evaluate progress on the specific lifestyle goals that were set. For example, the coach can review with the coachee these steps to evaluate progress and ensure long-term success. Ideally, continuous reminders can be sent to the coachee to highlight progress and successful performance towards his or her lifestyle modification plan.

Interpreting StressScan results

StressScan provides coaches with a comprehensive individual assessment to measure self-perceptions of coachees' stress, current lifestyle habits, social support network, coping style, resilience and current psychological well-being. The comprehensive report generated by StressScan can be useful for coachees to identify specific stress/health resources and risks. Each coachee's individual feedback report will generate a unique profile that can provide coaches with specific points of intervention based on their unique theoretical orientation, training and experience.

Table 18.2 provides a brief overview of possible interventions and approaches that could be taken by coaches using StressScan and Talent Accelerator. Coaches using this assessment should be familiar with both community and organizational resources available to the coachee to facilitate successful stress, health and lifestyle management changes.

TABLE 18.2 Examples of StressScan-based coaching interventions

| StressScan Scale | Possible implications of undesirable scores | Examples of coaching interventions |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Stress</i> | Psychological distress; work/family overload; high anxiety and arousal; emotional exhaustion; immune-suppression, exacerbations of existing medical conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily stress journal/emotional expression • Biofeedback • Mental relaxation (eg, visualization, self-hypnosis, breathing) • Physical relation (eg, meditation, mindfulness, yoga) • Fostering spirituality/religious practices |
| <i>Health/Lifestyle Habits</i> | Poor lifestyle and preventive practices; fatigue; eating disorders; obesity and weight management problems; smoking; substance use and abuse; Sleep disorders and rhythm problems; Physical inactivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking cessation • Daily exercise/sleep/eating journal • Fostering exercise/physical activity (eg, strength, flexibility, aerobic) • Referral to dietician/nutritionist • Weight management • Sleep hygiene • Referral to a sleep disorders clinic • Referral to self-help groups • Relapse prevention training • Annual physical exams |
| <i>Social Support</i> | Lonely and isolated; poor support network; socially inhibited and anxious interpersonally | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social network analysis • Personality/style awareness • Forgiveness/compassion exercises • 360-degree feedback • Team building • Community involvement |

TABLE 18.2 *continued*

| StressScan Scale | Possible implications of undesirable scores | Examples of coaching interventions |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Type A Behaviour</i> | Hostile; cynical and mistrusting of others; hard driving; perfectionist; Impatient, possesses hurry sickness; obsessive thoughts; poor behavioural self-control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger management • Conflict management • Communication skills (eg, assertiveness) • Time management • Mindfulness training • Physical relaxation |
| <i>Cognitive Hardiness</i> | Pessimistic; cynical; disengaged; alienated; hopeless; change adverse; negative explanatory style | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying signature strengths • Gratitude exercises • Values clarification exercises • Deploying passions |
| <i>Coping Style</i> | Neurotic; irrational beliefs; self-defeating thoughts; poor problem solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily journal • Practising and using humour • Cognitive restructuring • Problem solving |
| <i>Psychological Wellbeing</i> | Depression; fatigue; suicidal thoughts and tendencies; poor concentration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to employee assistance counselling • Gratitude exercises • Encouraging volunteering |

StressScan and coaches

StressScan can be useful for coaches both personally and professionally. Since coaches are not uniquely immune to stress, anxiety, depression or job burnout, learning to manage work and life pressures and remain healthy is important professionally. Working with coachees can be emotionally draining and interpersonally challenging even to the most competent coaches.

At a personal level, StressScan provides insight and information to coaches about their own approach to coping with stress and about specific lifestyle areas to focus on to enhance physical and psychological wellbeing.



For those experiencing symptoms of job burnout (eg emotional exhaustion and cynicism) this tool can help renew commitment to taking better care of one's own spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing enabling coaches to effectively assist and support coachees.

Professionally, for those doing executive, life, career and health coaching, StressScan can be a useful individual assessment to utilize in one's practice. So many coachees are struggling to find adequate work-life balance or to cope with increasing work and family demands. Today, it is unusual when a coachee does not mention being somewhat fatigued, stretched by multiple demands, burned out or pressured by time within a coaching session. The scales in StressScan provide the coach with specific diagnostic areas to address common coachee work and life pressures and, together with Talent Accelerator, some practical ways to ensure successful stress and health management behaviour changes.

StressScan provides another unique individual assessment to use with coachees that can easily be 'added value' to most coaching interventions. Taken together, StressScan and Talent Accelerator can actually increase the value of the coaching services being offered to coachees or organizations by increasing readiness to change behaviour and facilitating lasting stress and health management action plans.

Summary

The negative impact of stress on absenteeism, injuries, accidents, rising health care costs and productivity is a growing concern for organizations. Additionally, employees are also experiencing greater work-life balance challenges than ever before. Coaches are increasingly being asked to play a role in helping both the individual and organization manage stress more effectively.

This chapter has sought to illustrate how using a validated stress/health risk assessment such as StressScan and an online development system such as Talent Accelerator can help coaches facilitate successful and meaningful lifestyle changes and effectively enhance coping with work/life pressures and challenges. As a result, coaches can address stress issues with specific models and techniques to promote both organizational productivity and individual wellbeing.

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