

BODY BUDGETTING

Signals of stress

What effect does stress have on your body, your thoughts/ feelings and your behaviour? Write down below which signals you get both when you are under healthy stress (the bank account), when you are living on reserves (the savings account) and when you are under unhealthy stress (the credit account).
How can you notice the signals in yourself more quickly in the future? How can others help you in this?

	» BANK ACCOUNT ACUTE STRESS	» SAVINGS ACCOUNT RESERVES	» CREDIT ACCOUNT CHRONIC STRESS
BODY	Ex: Energy to perform, not very hungry	Ex: Headache, fatigue, neckpain	Ex: Poor sleep, hypervigilance
THOUGHTS FEELINGS	Ex: Motivated, ruminate about tasks	Ex: Forgetful, less focus, dream/night	Ex: Low self confidence, shame
BEHAVIOUR	Ex: Nail biting, less social but focused	Ex: Agitated, making mistakes	Ex: Isolating

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PREPARATION

Download the ‘**Signals of Stress**’ exercise and show it during a team meeting or one-on-one conversation. Show the **explainer video** to the team/colleague to frame the exercise.

MATERIAL

- ‘Signals of Stress’ exercise
- Pens

OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the 3 phases of work stress in times of high workload and rapid change.
- Knowing the effect of stress on your body, thoughts and behavior.
- Awareness around how everyone experiences and responds to stress.
- Agreements on how the team can hold each other accountable for recognizing the signs.

FORMAT

PHYSICAL: When doing this exercise physically, we recommend you to print the pdf for every individual.

ONLINE: The exercise is an **interactive PDF** in which you can take notes during a digital meeting.

EXPLANATION

With this exercise, we reflect on our stress signals and how they manifest in our **body, thoughts, and behavior**. By discussing these stress signals, it becomes easier to distinguish between healthy (acute) and unhealthy (chronic) work stress. Furthermore, it provides insight into how stress manifests itself in different team members, as everyone responds differently to stress. Making these stress signals discussable, makes it easier to recognize them and take action if necessary.

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1 | Give the team members a few minutes to **individually** read the first page of the exercise about the various stress signals related to body, thoughts, and behavior.

STEP 2 | Ask the team members to write down their stress signals for acute stress in the **first column**. They can use the list of stress signals provided, but they can also add other stress signals they experience.

STEP 3 | Ask the team members to share their behaviors with each other **in group** and, if possible, they can add to each other’s observations regarding potential signs and behaviors they notice in someone.

STEP 4 | Repeat this exercise for the **other two columns** (reserves and chronic stress).

STEP 5 | Encourage them to **share** their behaviors in group and make **agreements** on how the signals can be better recognized in the future and how the team can address and support each other on this matter.