

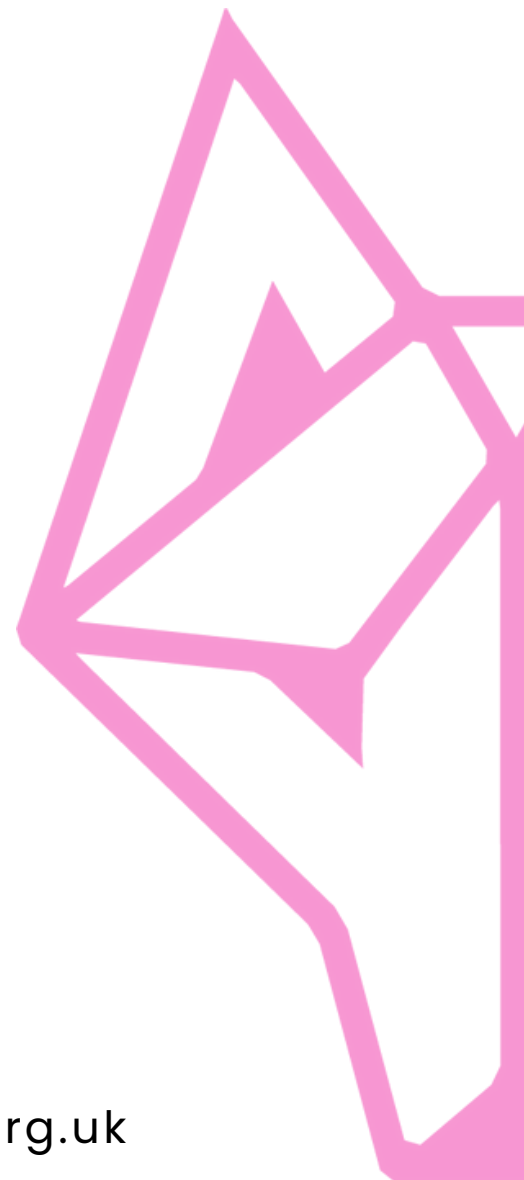


The  
Wolfpack  
Project

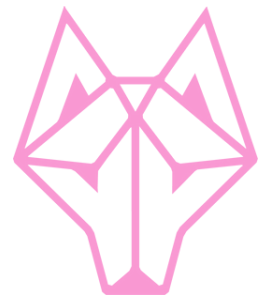
# STRESS TOOLKIT

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- Signs of stress
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- Mental Health Guide



# What is Stress?



We are designed with a stress response that is activated when things in our environment change or something happens to us. Our bodies will prepare to:

**Fight**

**Flight**

**Freeze**

When the situation passes, our bodies will then recover.

However, we live in a world that comes with lots of potential threats, changes, illness etc, so our brains are more actively assessing everything to know how to respond. Over time, this will have an impact on our wellbeing if we don't know how to manage and look after ourselves.

We all can carry a certain amount of stress each day. Some stresses are short-term, like preparing for an exam, deadlines, upcoming rent and bills etc, while others can stick with us for longer. As we start to carry too much stress, we may see some negative side effects. We may feel anxious, irritable, tired, jumpy, achy, and nauseous. Our sleep might and appetite might change, which might make us feel ill.

The best thing we can do with stress is to gradually take out each one from our container and get support where we can. It might not fully get rid of the stress, but it may make it smaller.

# Signs of Stress



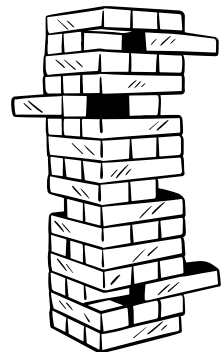
## If you are stressed, you might feel:

- Irritable, angry, impatient or wound up
- Over-burdened or overwhelmed
- Anxious, nervous or afraid
- Like your thoughts are racing and you can't switch off
- Tired from disrupted sleep
- Low in mood or depressed
- Uninterested in life
- Like you've lost your sense of humour

You may not notice the build up of stress straight away. Sometimes our body can cope with stress for a period of time, but gradually it's ability to carry on as usual will start to wane.

Signs may come on gradually, or they may tumble out like when a Jenga tower suddenly falls.

Everyone will be different about how stress shows and what will help best to manage it.



# Managing Stress

## and **stressful situations**



- Learn to recognise how you react to stress and what specifically stresses you out.
- Changing simple things in your life can add up and greatly reduce your overall stress.
- Be realistic, know your limits, and be firm with them.
- Talk with your partner or a close friend, let them know you're working to reduce your stress and ask them for support when you need it.
- Create and utilise strategies in the moment to help calm your mind and body

**And remember, it's always ok to ask for help.**

### **Mental health apps**

There are various apps available that you could use to help yourself day-to-day. But it's hard to know which ones are worth trying.

Mind have put together a library of safe apps that meet our high quality standards, just click the link here:

[Explore mental health apps](#)

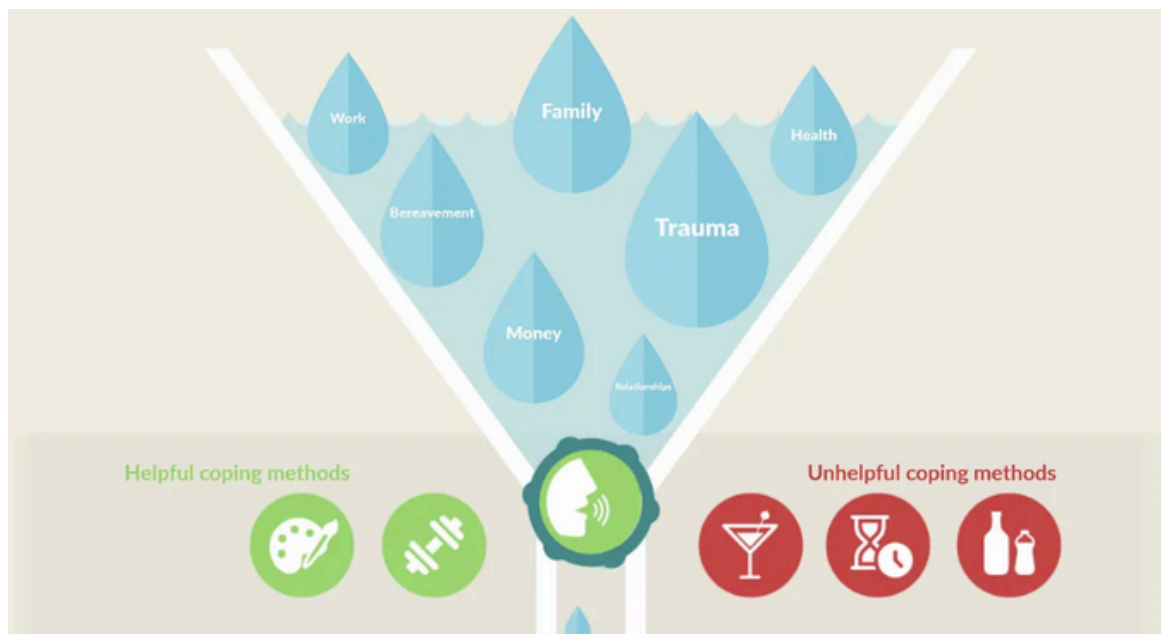
# Stress Container



**When we picture stress, it can be useful to imagine that we carry everything in a container.**

This will slowly fill up when you experience different types of stress. We can reduce the stress level by using a variety of coping strategies, some of which may be helpful, others not.

Here's a graphic from MHFA that shows what may fill up your container:



Think about your container:

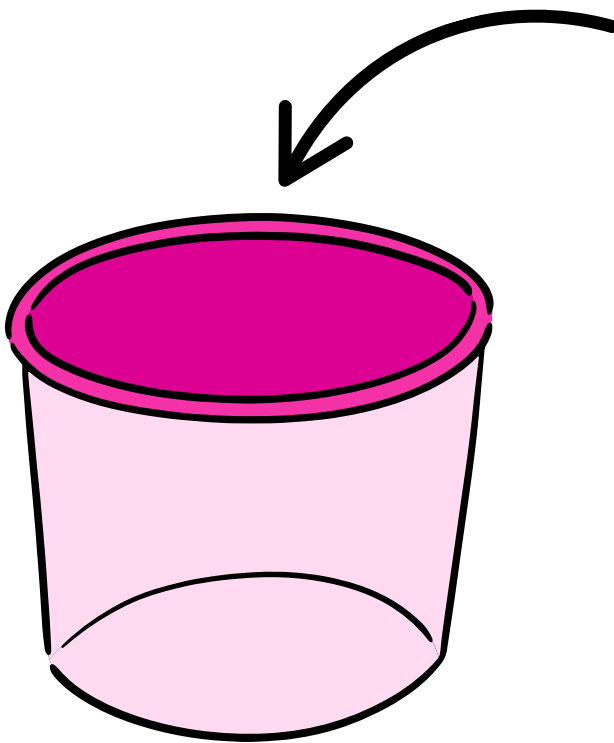
- What size and shape is your stress bucket?
- How full does it feel at the moment?

You may want to find a piece of paper and have a go drawing out your container and what's in it. On the next page are some steps to help you.

# Stress Container



Once you've drawn your container, note the things that cause you stress - anything that comes to mind easily when thinking about your container.



For each stress going into your container, try and break it down into smaller parts.

e.g. University may include:

- Attendance
- Coursework deadlines
- Exams
- Where to live next year
- Career options
- Paying rent

What do you have control over?  
Who could help you?

By looking at what we have control over and who can help, our stress should hopefully feel smaller and more manageable. When we start to feel overwhelmed, come back to these things.

Self-care and having a regular routine in place is important to reducing stress and coping if your container is full. It could be talking to friends, exercise or spending time with pets.

What does this look like for you at the moment?  
Is there something you can add in this week to boost your sense of wellbeing?

# Mental Health Guide



It is normal to feel stress at times.

Some stress can be good, but too much can cause you to feel anxious or depressed, which might affect your sleeping, eating habits and general well-being.

If you need further help with anything in this toolkit or from the Stress Container exercise, do reach out, we're here for you.

As a reminder, here are some quick tips to help you manage your stress and your mental health. Feel free to add your own so you have a toolbox that works for you.



Put yourself first



Keep a journal



Eat a balanced diet



Stay hydrated



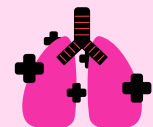
Take a walk



Reflect on the truth



Get some sunshine



Take a deep breath



Chat with a trusted adult



Create a gratitude list



Set bedtime routine



Limit screen time



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