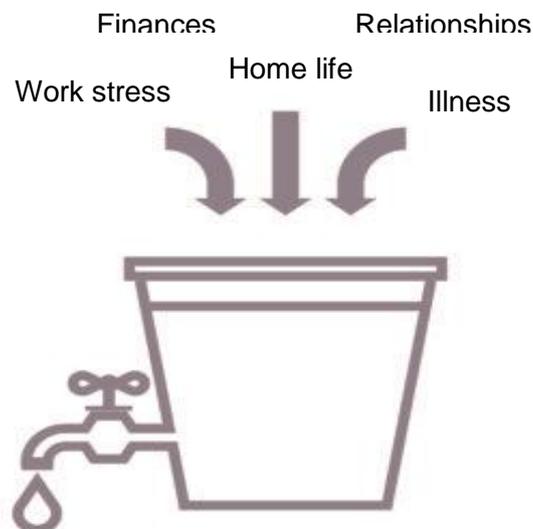


The Stress Bucket – A model for understanding stress

Imagine you have a bucket inside your body which collects all of your stress.

Events and day-to-day things, such as work, home life, illness or finances, add stress into the bucket. Sometimes the bucket might feel relatively empty, and other times it might feel quite full.

We all have stress buckets of different sizes, and so we vary in how much stress we can individually manage. Equally, an event that we find very stressful, someone else might find only slightly stressful or not stressful at all. This is ok – we are all different!



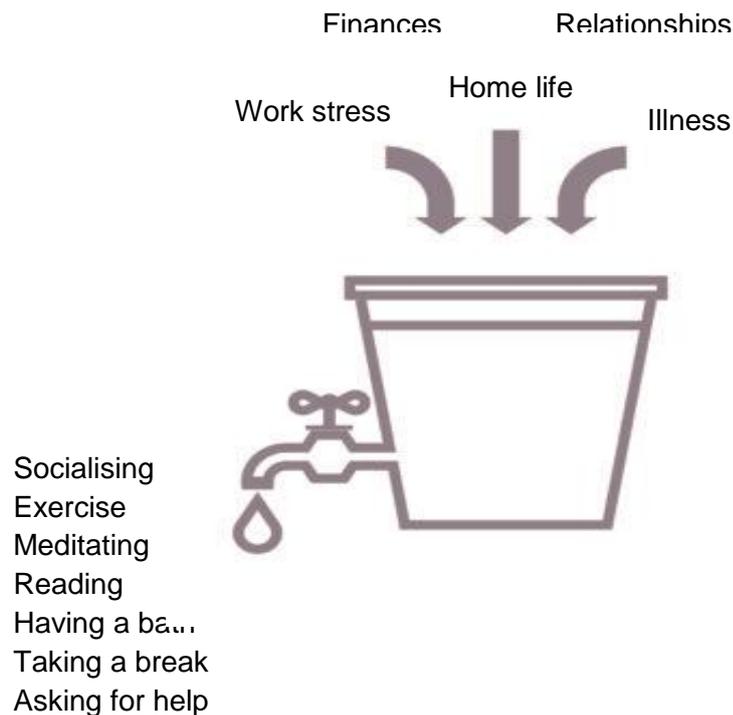
When we are going through a particularly difficult time, it is normal for our bucket to feel full. We might feel like too much stress is pouring into the bucket at any one time, and we can feel like our bucket is overflowing. This will look different for everyone, but common signs of the stress bucket overflowing can include:

- Feeling burnt out,
- Feeling snappy or irritable,
- Feeling anxious,
- Feeling fatigued,
- Feeling low and tearful.



If we notice ourselves feeling like this, like our bucket is overflowing, it is important to try to let some of the stress out.

We can do this by engaging in some positive coping strategies – you might like to think of these as taps in the side of the bucket, which you can turn on to let some of the stress out.



These taps can be anything you find helpful in emptying your bucket – and what works for one person will not necessarily work for another. It can be helpful to start with something you know works for you, or that you've used previously, before jumping into trying something new.

Do what it takes to let the stress out of your bucket.

Try it:

Take five minutes now to reflect on the sorts of 'taps' or positive coping strategies you might already have in your skillset.

It can be helpful to think back to a time when you found something stressful, and reflect on how you coped with this. Often we can underestimate the skills we already have in managing our own stress bucket.