

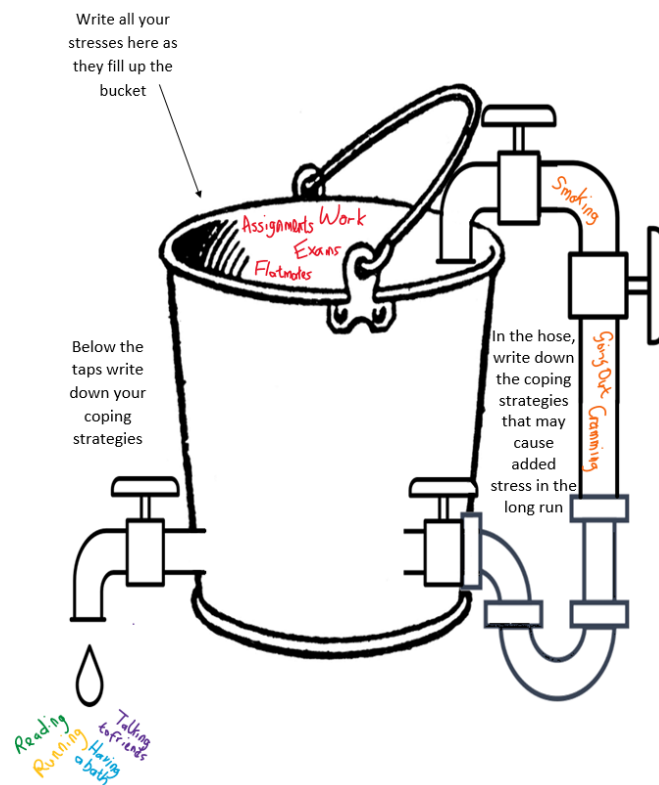
The Stress Bucket Exercise

Aims: to help you to identify sources of stress and different coping mechanisms in your life and how they contribute to your wellbeing. This will make it easier to manage stress and acknowledge when you need to use different techniques or support to maintain your wellbeing.

Your Stress Bucket: Each person has their own unique stress bucket. These are different in size and contents. When your bucket gets so full that it starts to overflow, we get over-stressed and this can have a negative impact on our behaviours, thoughts, feelings, and physical body. There are also taps on the bucket. These make sure that the bucket doesn't overflow, and that you can keep carrying your bucket. There are different numbers of taps for different people and they can be used at different times depending on what is in the bucket. Sometimes the bucket has a hose attached to it – it can temporarily release some of the contents of the bucket but ultimately the contents are put back into the bucket and this causes the bucket to become full again.

Exercise:

- Using the stress bucket overleaf, **write down at the top of the bucket all the things that are causing you stress in your life now.** These are the risk factors for your bucket to fill up (see example).
- Now write down all the coping strategies that you have beside the taps of the bucket.** These can be things like walking the dog, having a cup of tea, or attending a society. These are your coping strategies and can be used to release some of the contents of the bucket so that it does not spill over.
- Sometimes, some coping strategies are not as good as others and have hoses attached to them so that these only temporarily empty the bucket and then cause added stress. These are things like smoking and overeating. These need to be replaced by other coping strategies ideally. **Write down all your coping strategies that are like this inside the hose.**
- Resilience is all about having a good balance of coping strategies to risk factors so that the bucket does not overflow. Once you have worked out why you feel a certain way it is much easier to intervene to make positive changes. These can be through using the tap and avoiding the hose to empty some of the bucket but can also be through stopping the thoughts and saying NO! to them. Having broken down the stress into different parts, it will now be easier to manage. You can address the different aspects and use all the things at the tap that you have identified to do this well. Here is an example bucket. **Now fill in your own bucket over the page and discuss its contents with others.**



My Stress Bucket

Write all your stresses here as they fill up the bucket

