

STRESS MANAGEMENT

When we are stressed, our thoughts can take over our minds. Our ability to concentrate is affected, and one small worry feels like a gigantic storm in our brain. To navigate stress, it's important to share your concern (even if that is with a piece of paper) and put actions into place to navigate the stressful event.

To do this, we will practice journalling. Follow the steps below to try out this technique:

Part 1: Identifying stress triggers

Step 1: Reflect on recent experiences.

- Take some time to reflect on situations that have caused stress or anxiety in your life recently. Write down the details of each situation.

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Step 2: Identify common themes.

- Look for common themes or patterns among the stressful situations you've identified. Are there specific people, places, or activities that consistently trigger stress?

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Step 3: Explore your emotional response.

- Describe how you felt emotionally during these situations. Note any physical sensations, thoughts, or behaviours associated with stress.

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Step 4: Rate your stress levels.

Assign a stress level (on a scale of 1 to 10) to each identified trigger. This helps you prioritise and understand the intensity of each stressor.



Part 2: Creating action plans

Step 1: Select one trigger that feels manageable to address.

e.g. I find it difficult to eat out with people as they may comment on what I am eating.

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Step 2: Brainstorm long and short term solutions or coping mechanisms for this trigger.

e.g. Don't eat out (limiting), speak to someone about my concerns beforehand (supportive).

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Step 3: Breakdown the solution into smaller, more manageable steps.

e.g. Message a friend about my concerns when I find a situation difficult to relieve my anxiety.

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Step 4: Define what you want to achieve from this solution to track your progress.

e.g. Be able to navigate the situation positively meaning I can engage and remain with my friends.

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Step 5: Recognise people or resources that could provide support during challenging times.

e.g. The friends I will text.

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Step 6: Implement your solution when a trigger arises, reflect on how this supported you navigating the situation.

e.g. This allowed me to feel confident in going to the meal that I had support if required.

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Step 7: Repeat the process with other triggers and adapt as you need to.