Stress Bucket explained...

Academic Stress

Refers to stress associated with studying, including study load, performance, and conflict with lecturers or tutors.

Intrapersonal Stress

Includes stress from your physical health, financial situation, and mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety)

Interpersonal Stress

Includes stress from your relationships with your roommates, parents, friends, and boyfriend/girlfriend.

Environmental Stress

Refers to things in your work and living environments, including new and unfamiliar situations, or conflict between people you live with such as your parents.

Recycled stress from unhelpful coping skills

Recycled stress comes from unhelpful coping skills that provide some short term relief but cause you more trouble in the long run. Examples include avoiding the problem or using alcohol and drugs to cope.

Buffer zone

This is the area between our stress level and our overflow point. The more that you are able to lower your stress level, the greater the buffer zone there is.

Stress level

Too much stress will cause our stress bucket to overflow. By using our coping skills we can keep our stress levels down.

Emotion-focused coping skills

Refers to those strategies that you use to decrease the negative emotions that you experience.

These strategies are useful when it is difficult to change the source of the problem.

Problem-focused coping skills

Refers to strategies that you use to change the source of the problem. These strategies are used when you have some influence over the situation.

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This handout is based on the following resources:

Carver, C.S., Scheier, M.F., & Weintraub, J.K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. <u>Journal of</u> Personality and Social Psychology, 56, 267-283.

A Stress Bucket example

Academic Stress

More assignments Disagreement with tutor Poor results

Problems with group assignment

Intrapersonal Stress

Poor diet (living on caffeine) Anxiety Worrying about money

Interpersonal Stress

Arguments with girlfriends Feel lonely Only make friends over the Internet, not in person

Environmental Stress

Roommates often argue, I'm caught in the middle and can't focus on my studies Looking for new accommodation

Unhelpful coping skills that contribute to recycled stress

Using alcohol and drugs to take my mind off worries

Pretending that the problem will go away without doing anything about it

Stress level

Buffer zone

Emotion-focused coping skills

Relaxation and breathing to manage anxiety symptoms

Talking to a friend over the Internet

Seeking support from family

Problem-focused coping skills

Join a social club to make friends Learn communication skills to help manage conflict better Develop a healthy eating plan Learn time management skills

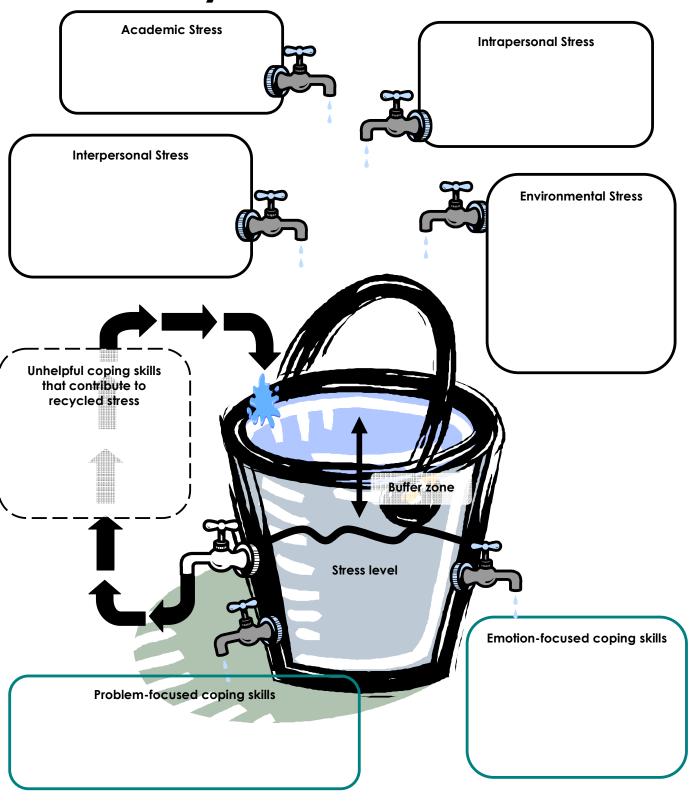
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My Stress Bucket



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Ross, S.E., Niebling, B.C., & Heckert, T.M. (1999). Sources of stress among college students. <u>College Student Journal</u>, 33, 312-317.