

# The stress bucket

During this time, it is easy to focus on your children's well-being and put yours to the side. However, it is really important to also consider your own well-being during this incredibly challenging time.

One example for considering your own wellbeing is by using the idea of a 'stress bucket'.\*

We all experience stress to some degree. Some stress can be good, it can push us to work hard. But too much stress can make us feel overwhelmed, and prolonged stress can eventually lead to problems. The stress bucket is a way to visualise this. Imagine there's a bucket you carry with you which slowly fills up when you experience different types of stress.



Above the bucket are clouds – the things that cause you stress. These rain into the bucket and gradually fill it up.

In the light of what we are currently experiencing our bucket may fill up quicker than usual. In addition to stresses we may face every day, we may also experience different stresses to normal. These might include:

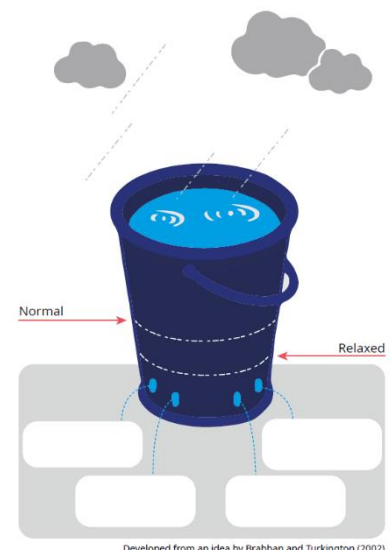
- Being around children 24/7
- Lack of conversation
- Worried about the future
- Concern for our family's health and well-being
- Not feeling in control
- Unsure of when the current restrictions might end
- Not being able to leave the house when we would like
- Financial concerns
- Job insecurity
- Not being able to provide for your family
- Unable to utilise normal support methods

Sometimes you feel strong enough to carry a lot of stress, but it's important to find activities which help you lighten the load. You release the stress by doing things you enjoy or that help you to stress less.

## What helps you reduce stress?

It's important to find time to 'empty the bucket' and do things that help reduce your stress. This will enable you to manage when your bucket starts to fill up again. During this time of lockdown, it might be even harder to carry out activities you would usually do that reduce your stress. Some activities that you might like to consider:

- Having a bath
- Talking to a friend
- Eating a healthy meal
- Taking an online exercise class
- Doing your nails and putting on hand cream
- Practicing deep breathing



- Looking at photos that make you happy
- Playing a board game
- Watching your favourite movie
- Listening to music
- Reading a book
- Keeping your space tidy
- Trying a craft
- Sitting down with a cup of tea / coffee
- Taking a walk
- Writing a letter
- Keeping a journal
- Keeping a gratitude diary
- Giving a hug to those in your household
- Smiling
- Add routine to your day
- Mindfulness

### Things to think about:

What does your bucket look like?

What shape and size it is?

What signs are there that your bucket is getting too full?

Are the taps working?

Do you turn to unhealthy ways to reduce your stress?

Can you think of alternative ways to reduce your stress?

### What happens when your bucket is getting too full?

During this challenging time your bucket might start getting too full. You may be unable to carry out your normal routines for helping to reduce your stress. Or the added pressures of COVID-19 are causing you to become overwhelmed. Recognising that your bucket is starting to overflow is important to then be able to seek additional support. If you are able, reach out and tell a trusted friend or family member that you are struggling. Talking, although it doesn't always take the pressures away, can reduce your anxiety and feelings of loneliness. It may be worth considering making an appointment with your GP.

There are also organisations who can support your emotional well-being at this time.

#### Samaritans



Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

#### Mind



Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

#### Men's Health Forum



24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email.

Website: [www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)

#### Anxiety UK



Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.

Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 10pm; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 8pm)

Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

#### Family Lives



Advice on all aspects of parenting, including dealing with bullying.

Phone: 0808 800 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm and Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 3pm)

Website: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)