

EXERCISE: SPOTTING MY STRESSES

Area of stress	Stress types/examples	This has affected me recently (in the last 1–2 years)
Stress where I live Feeling safe at home is a basic need for all people. If the place that you live feels threatened it can trigger horrible feelings.	Significant difficulties or disagreements with neighbours or housemates.	
	Problems with the environment – for example, significant leaks; floods; problems with the roof, walls or foundations; infestations of insects/rodents.	

	Not having somewhere reliable to live, including homelessness, temporary accommodation or the possibility of losing where you live.	
	Significant problems with noise, light or other significant, regular disturbances to your ability to do daily tasks, relax and sleep.	
Stress in work/ education	Something significant going wrong at work.	
Modern work and education can be demanding, but things can happen at work that trigger horrible feelings that can feel unmanageable if this continues for a long period.	Going through a complaint, investigation or inquiry.	
	A long period of unmanageable workload or challenges that makes it very hard to switch off and rest after work.	
	Bullying, harassment or serious disagreements with key people at work.	
	Lack of a role, employment or education where people want or need this.	

Stress in relationships, family and friends The people around us can be essential for our wellbeing, but managing the challenges in these relationships is not always easy.	Significant, painful disagreements with someone who matters to you, particularly if this is long-lasting and you feel on your own.	
	Unmanageable caring responsibilities, particularly where these are new or have recently increased.	
	Separations or ending of relationships with people who have been very important to you, including uncertainty about possible separation.	
	Lack of supportive or specific relationships that you feel able to connect with, which might lead to feeling lonely and isolated.	
Life changes There are many changes as we go through different stages in life	Moving away from home.	
	Children moving away from home.	
	Becoming a new parent, guardian or grandparent.	

and adapting to these can be rewarding but for a range of reasons may also be very stressful.	Feeling left behind in life – for example, friends and family making significant life changes that you do not share.	
	Feeling very stuck, unclear or trapped in your life circumstances.	
	Changes in later life, which might be retirement, moving home, changes in the support you might need, and changes in memory or other abilities.	
Loss and bereavement	The death or loss of someone who matters to you, including animals. This can be particularly difficult if you significantly depended on the person, have unresolved feelings about the person, or the circumstances of the death/loss were particularly painful.	
	Practical changes from bereavement and loss, including having to take on overwhelming tasks, changes to your home life (e.g. newly living alone) and financial changes.	

	Stillbirth, miscarriage and problems with conception. This can be incredibly distressing for so many reasons.	
	Loss of a role or a hoped-for future. There are things in life we may dearly wish for, but at key times we realise we might not be able to have them, and this can be very painful.	
Illness and stress on your body	Any type of significant illness, injury or new diagnosis. This can be particularly difficult if it comes with significant symptoms, uncertainty, threat to life, or restrictions on important aspects of your life.	
	Pain – either new or part of a longer-term condition. This can affect sleep, your ability to do important/ enjoyable things, concentration and emotional resilience.	
	A change in your body that you fear could be a sign of something serious.	

	Significant problems meeting physical needs for food, drink, rest and sleep.	
	Hormonal changes (people are often not aware of these).	
	Changes to medications.	
Accidents, disasters and serious events	Accidents, disasters or serious events, where your safety or the safety of others was seriously threatened; people may have been harmed, or you may have feared serious harm at the time.	
	Feeling bad or guilty about your actions during accidents, disasters and serious events is very common.	
Attacks, abuse and betrayals	Physical, sexual or emotional attacks/abuse are extremely distressing and traumatic, and betray your sense of trust and safety.	
	Experiencing a scam. This can happen to anyone – there are scams designed to target the most careful and intelligent people. We need to trust others to survive, and scamming is a horrible breach of trust.	

	Significant betrayals in a relationship with your family, friends or a romantic partner can be very upsetting and have significant life consequences.	
Discrimination, unfairness and inequality It is common that social injustice can affect people over a long period of time (see Chapter 8), but there can be periods where this type of long, painful stress can be a particular trigger.	Discriminatory judgement, abuse and attacks driven by racism, homophobia, transphobia, gender discrimination, ageism, discrimination around ability/disability and other discriminatory beliefs.	
	Being excluded from activities, access and opportunities.	
Money stress	A change in circumstances that means you are now worried about paying bills and are at risk of increasing debt.	

	Other people taking advantage of you financially can make you feel unsafe, upset and angry.	
	The effects of money worries may mean you push yourself to work more hours/days than is manageable. You may not be able to afford important things in life to keep you healthy and safe.	
Doing something that goes against laws or moral codes	Doing something illegal can create significant stress, as you might experience shame, guilt, judgement and the practical consequences of law enforcement.	
	We may act in ways that go against our own sense of right and wrong, or our moral beliefs. It is also common that people can be unfairly harsh and judgemental towards themselves.	

Anniversaries and seasonal events	Anniversaries of upsetting events such as deaths, attacks and accidents can also be triggers. Sometimes, at the time of an event, we don't experience all of the feelings. However these can resurface or show up on the anniversary of it happening.	
	Birthdays or anniversaries of events involving somebody who has died or somebody we are no longer in contact with can further remind us of our loss.	
	Changing of season or annual events/celebrations/festivities can be triggers because they may remind us of difficult times, losses, relationship issues or regrets. The change in daylight hours, weather and seasonal illness can change how we feel and act, and disrupt routines.	

Unexpected thoughts and feelings

Unexpected and unwanted thoughts, feelings or body sensations can occur for no reason from time to time. This is normal and happens to everyone. However, they can be a trigger if someone worries about the meaning of these thoughts/feelings/sensations, or if they take unhelpful actions to check/avoid/manage them.