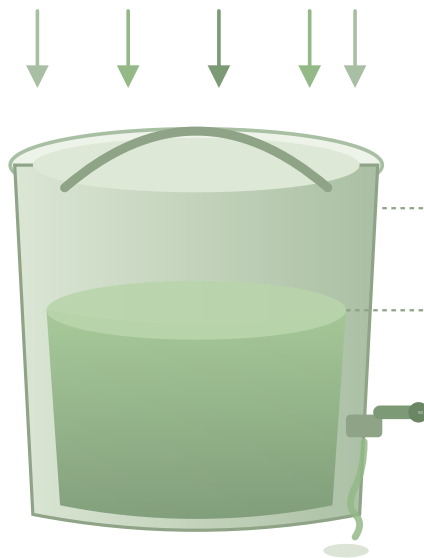


The Stress Bucket

UNDERSTANDING WHAT FILLS YOU UP, AND WHAT HELPS YOU EMPTY OUT

Everyone carries a metaphorical bucket for stress. Daily pressures flow in from the top; healthy coping strategies let stress drain out through a tap. When what flows in outweighs what drains out, the bucket overflows — and that's often when we start to feel overwhelmed.

"It's not about avoiding the rain, but making sure your tap stays open."



OVERFLOW POINT

When stress exceeds your capacity, you may feel overwhelmed.

CURRENT LEVEL

This shows how full your bucket is right now.

COPING STRATEGIES OPEN THE TAP

Healthy coping strategies help the stress level go down.

What Might Fill the Bucket?

Common sources of stress

Work pressure	Poor sleep	Relationship conflict
Financial worry	Health concerns	Big life changes
Caring responsibilities	Loneliness	Unrealistic expectations
Constant busyness	Uncertainty	Negative self-talk

What Might Empty the Bucket?

Helpful ways to reduce stress

Sleep and rest	Talking to someone	Movement or exercise
Time outdoors	Creative activities	Setting boundaries
Professional support	Slowing down	Mindful breathing
Pleasurable activities	Healthy routines	Letting go of what you cannot control

Working With Your Bucket

1 NOTICE THE LEVEL

Check in with yourself. Is your bucket feeling manageable, nearly full, or close to overflowing?

2 IDENTIFY THE TAPS

Which stressors are filling your bucket fastest right now? Some may be reducible; others may not be.

3 OPEN YOUR OUTLET

Choose one or two coping strategies you can build in regularly, not only when the bucket is already full.

The goal isn't an empty bucket — it's knowing your taps, and keeping the outlet open.

SOURCE

Brabban, A. & Turkington, D. (2002). A cognitive approach to understanding and treating stress vulnerability. Adapted for educational use.