

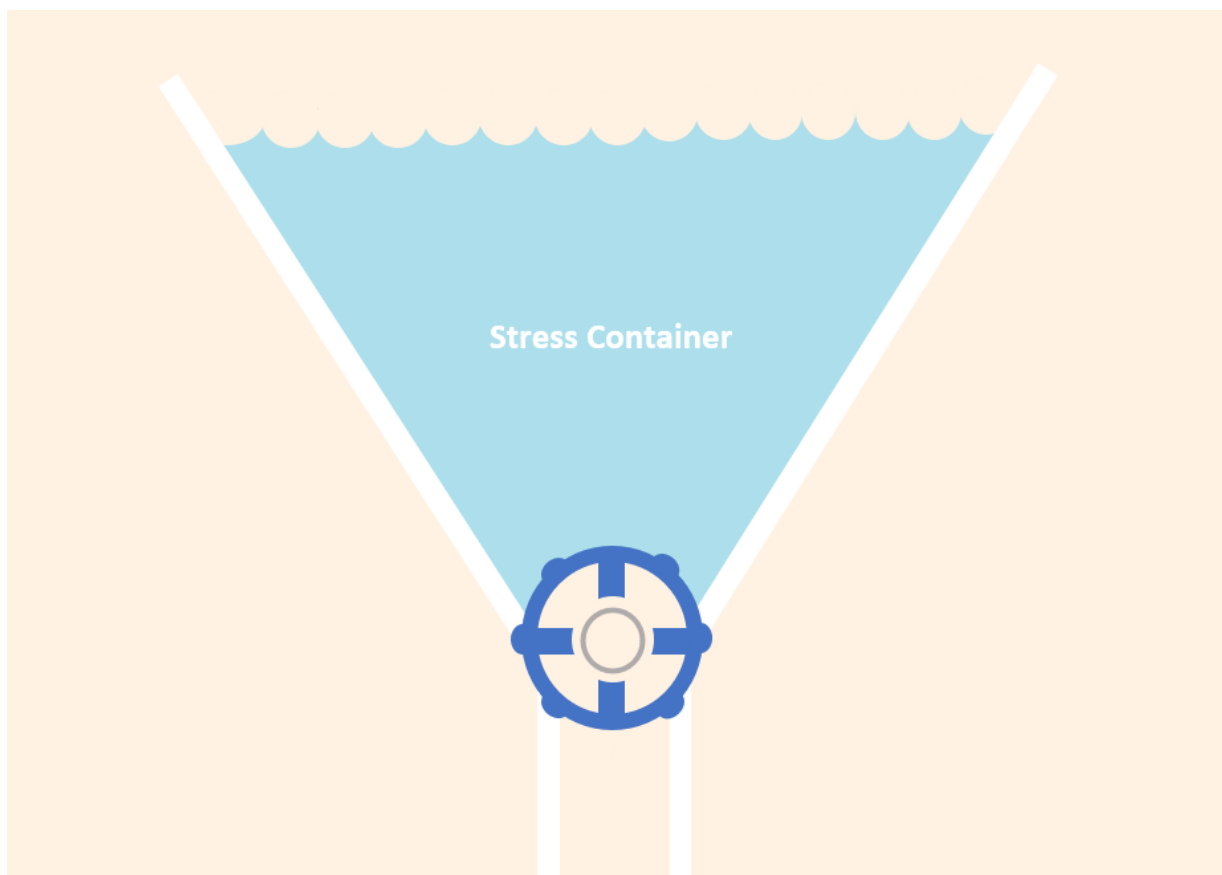
What's In Your Stress Container?

We have plenty of reasons to be stressed now, there's no doubt about that. But how do we recognise our sources of stress and consider how we could manage these more productively.

Stress is the body's natural response when it senses too much danger. We all experience it.

But too much stress left unchecked and for too long can interfere with our lives and have an impact on us physically and emotionally.

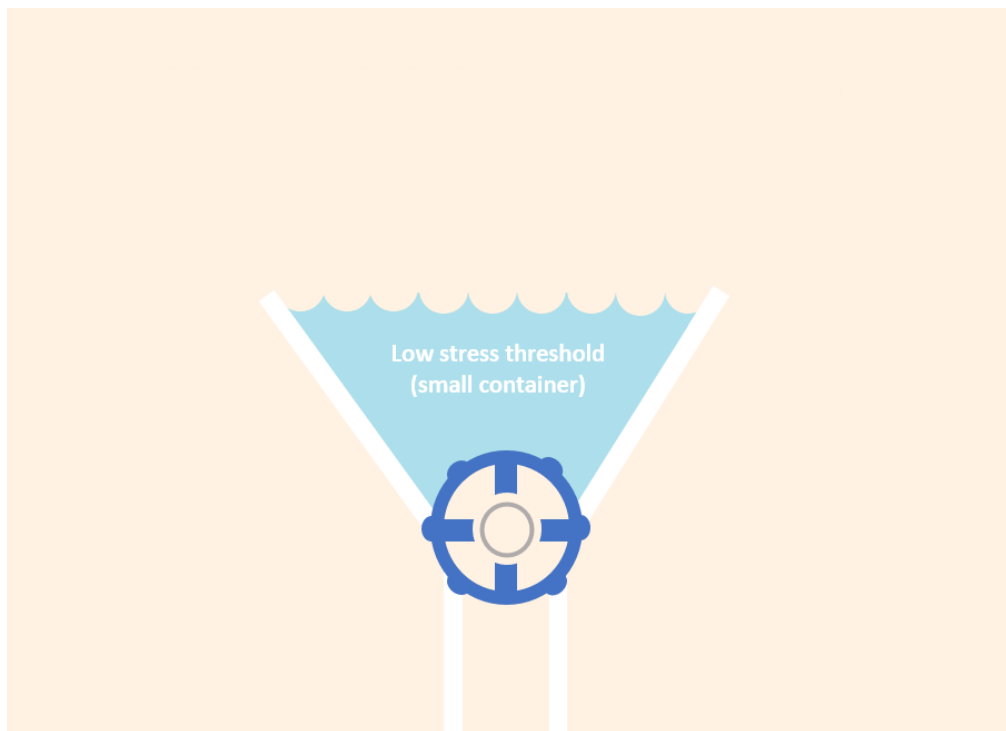
The "Stress Container" exercise can help us understand how we can experience stress and how to address our stress levels.



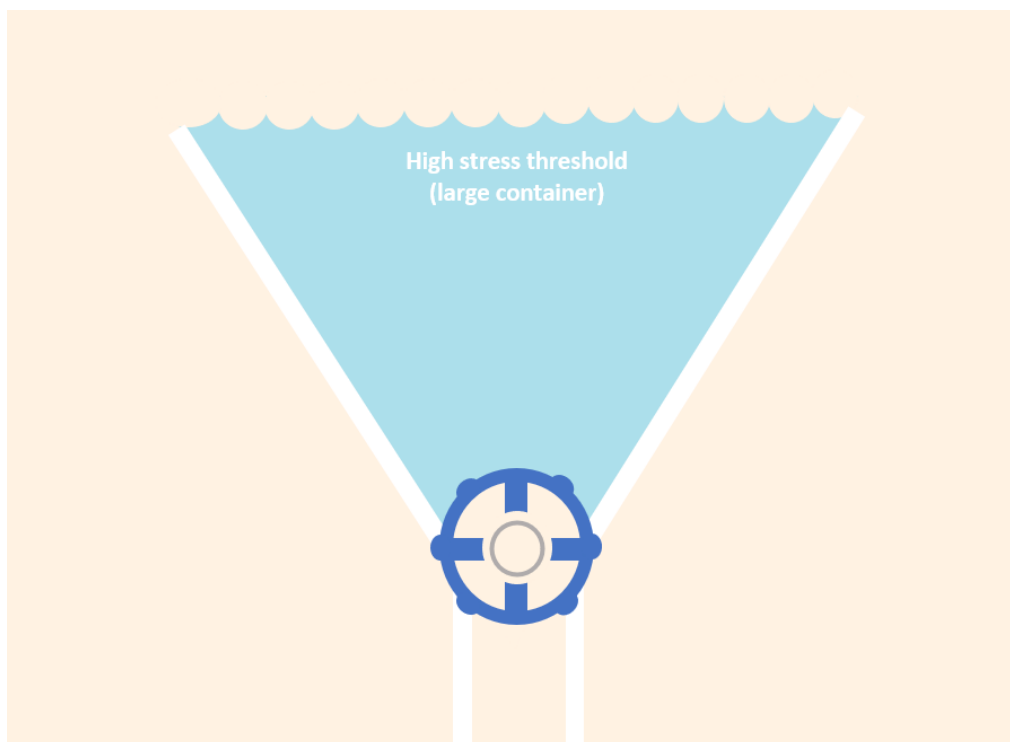
We all experience stress differently.

The size of your Stress Container reflects how vulnerable you are to stress. Factors like your genes, your unique life experiences and your environment impact how large or small it is.

For example, if you are quite vulnerable to stress you have a smaller Stress Container.



It will overflow more quickly compared to a person with a larger container and low vulnerability to stress.

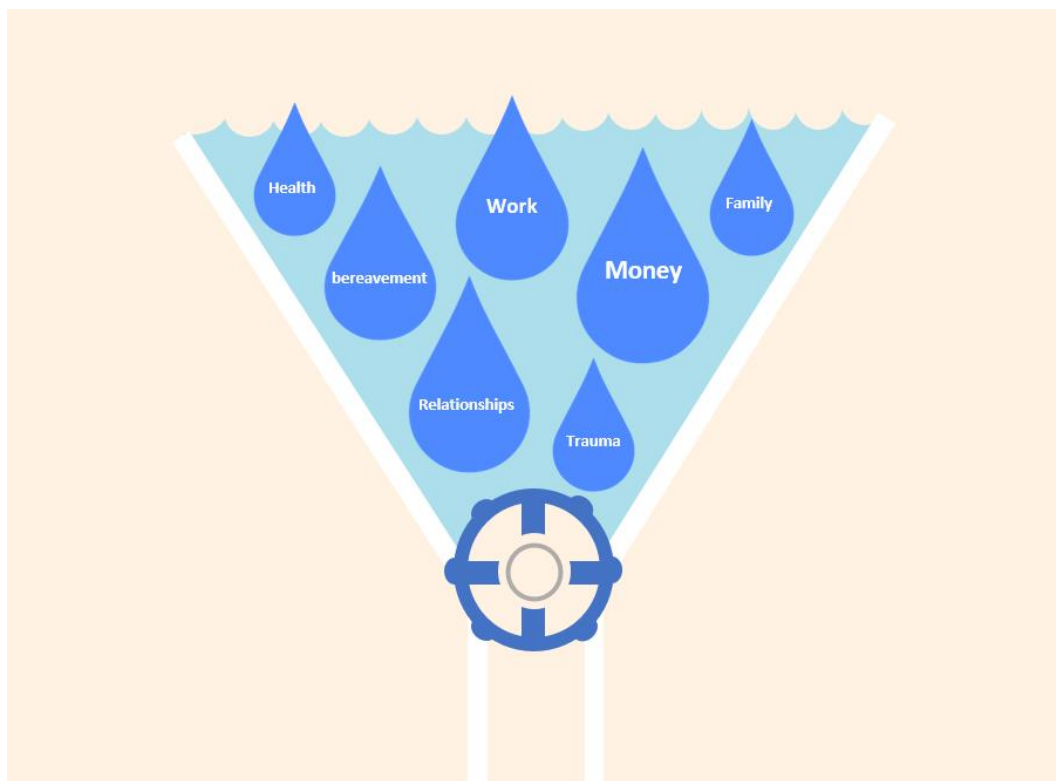


Some Common Sources of Stress

There are many sources of stress ranging from big life factors to factors in our everyday lives. Even positive events like a new job, or a new baby or a new challenge can cause stress.

Our sources of stress can come from:

- Isolation
- Health
- Work
- Relationships
- Money
- Family
- Trauma
- Bereavement



How Stress Fills Your Container

Stress flows into the container. The more stress we are under, the faster our container fills up.

When your stress levels build up, the container overflows and issues develop. This looks different for each person – we all have our unique “stress signature”.

Some common signs our container is overflowing include:

- Irritability
- Tearfulness
- Indecision
- Inability to concentrate
- Consuming more alcohol, caffeine or cigarettes
- Frequent tiredness or lethargy
- Headaches or upset stomach.

What is your “Stress Signature”?

Consider your individual physical, psychological and behavioural symptoms when you are stressed.

Coping Methods for Stress

Helpful coping methods can act as a tap to let stress out of the container and stop it from overflowing.

On the other hand, unhelpful coping methods can block the tap.

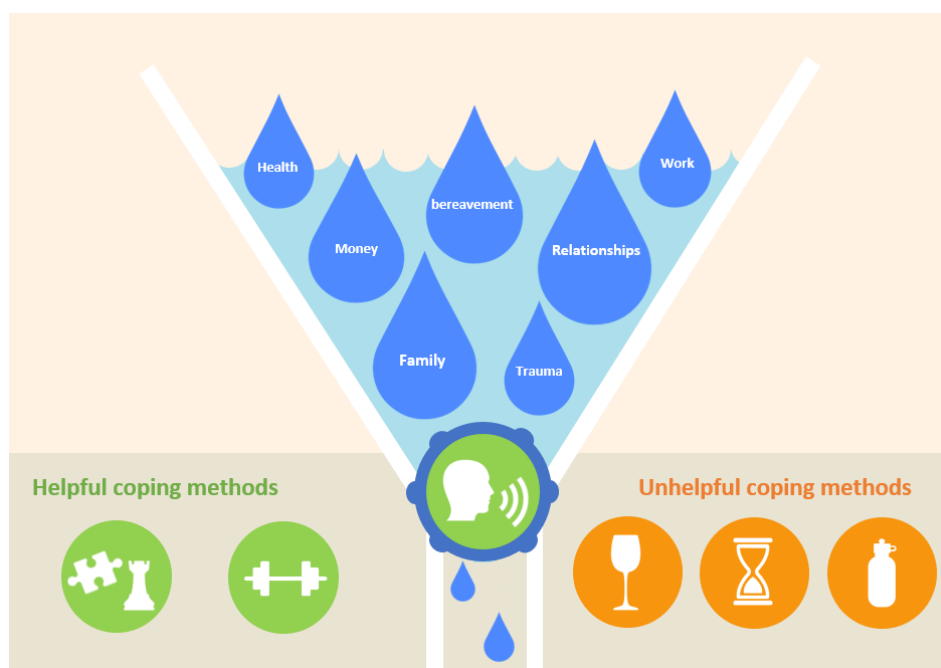
Consider some of the common ways we might choose to relieve stress.

Helpful Methods:

- Being active
- Time for hobbies
- Talk to a friend
- Problem solving

Unhelpful Methods:

- Drinking to excess
- Overworking
- Bottle up feelings
- Withdrawing from others



Blocking The Tap

Unhelpful methods such as overworking or relying too much on caffeine or alcohol can block the tap and prevent stress from flowing out of your container. If we use these strategies too often then our container will fill up and be at risk of overflowing.

We all use unhelpful methods sometimes, but as with any skill we can learn new helpful coping methods to help empty our Stress Container.

Address Your Stress

Consider what are some proactive things you could do to manage your stress more effectively and turn on the tap to your Stress Container and let it flow much more easily.

Try:

- Switching off from distractions
- Relaxation, mindfulness
- Read, play games, work on puzzles
- Recreational activities, hobbies, creative expression
- Get moving and even grooving
- Talk with friends and family about how you feel
- Reframe your thinking
- Set aside time for yourself
- Get enough sleep

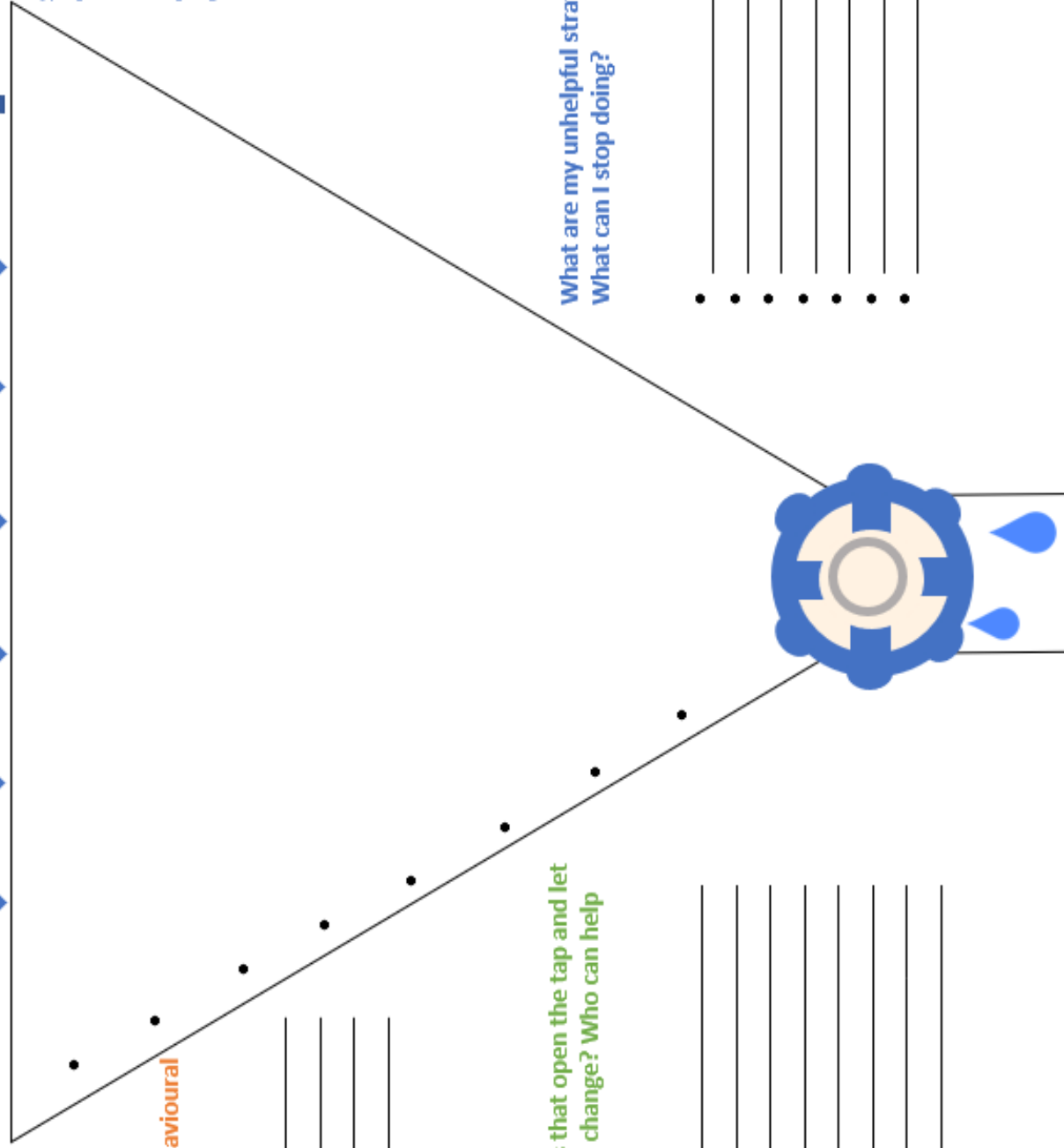
If you would like to consider managing your stress using the Stress Container exercise - use the Worksheet following.

Want to know more about managing your stress more effectively? Contact Michelle on 0412047590 or via email michelle@bakjacconsulting.com

[Michelle Bakjac](#) is an experienced Psychologist, Organisational Consultant, Coach, Speaker and Facilitator. As Director of [Bakjac Consulting](#), she is a credentialed Coach with the International Coach Federation (ICF) and a member of Mental Toughness Partners and an MTQ48 accredited Mental Toughness practitioner. Michelle assists individuals and organisations to develop their [Mental Toughness](#) to improve performance, leadership, behaviour and wellbeing.



What's in My Stress Container



**What is my stress signature?
Physical, Psychological & Behavioural
symptoms of stress**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**What are my helpful strategies that open the tap and let
my stress flow out? What can I change? Who can help
me? What can I do?**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**Stress can overflow from the
container.
If the container overflows we
can experience significant
difficulties**

**What are my unhelpful strategies blocking my tap?
What can I stop doing?**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____