

# Stress Management Worksheet

Example

This is an example of the worksheet filled out by Selena, who is a 2nd year student studying biology. She has 2 big exams next week that are causing her stress.

## Step 1: Identify if I am stressed

My signs of stress are:

- *hard time concentrating*
- *poor sleep...hard time to fall asleep*
- *get irritable and even a bit aggressive*
- *asthma is worse*
- *get headaches, which I usually rarely have*

## Step 2: Identify the stressor

The event/situation causing my stress is:

*I have 2 big exams,  
2 weeks from  
now!!!*

## Step 3: Identify the reason for the stressor

### Demands

To successfully address this situation/event I need:

*to study for 2 hours a day*

*to know the material very well*

*to be SMART!!!*

*to pass the exam*

### Resources

To handle this situation I have:

*less than 2 hours a day to study*

*a general understanding of the material, and I don't understand some stuff*

*I am not smart enough!!!*

*I am not confident that I will pass, in fact I think I will fail*

### Why do I see this situation as dangerous?

(remember: Stress is a response to danger: No danger...no stress)

*I don't have enough time to study. I don't know the material well enough. I am not smart enough. I will fail.*

My stressor is:

Real

Self-created

A combination of real and self-created

## Step 4: Identify stress management strategies

### A) Short-term stress management strategies (relaxation strategies) I can use are:

- Breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Massage
- Visualization
- Meditation
- Hot bath, sauna, hot tub

- Exercise *Go for a run/walk. Tape main points of my study notes and listen to them on run/walk.*
- Music appreciation
- Sex
- Hobby *play guitar on study breaks*
- Spend time with loved ones
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*If I can use these other strategies, I will try!!*

## Step 4: Identify stress management strategies, continued

### B) Problem solving strategies that I can use to address the cause of the stress are:

- Use/build my **problem solving skills** to solve problems related to the stressor  
note: \_\_\_\_\_
- Use/build my **decision making skills** to make stress-reducing decisions  
note: \_\_\_\_\_
- Use/build my **critical thinking skills** to think critically about factors related to this stressor  
note: *I can't spend lots of time on this now, but I will certainly start working on this and continue as this will help with future exams.*
- Use/build my **time management skills** to manage my time effectively  
note: *I think that I can find extra time to study over the next few weeks. Some things will have to take lower priority for now.*
- Use/build my **communication skills** to effectively communicate with those involved  
note: \_\_\_\_\_
- Use/build my **budgeting skills** to meet my financial responsibilities  
note: \_\_\_\_\_
- Use/build my **academic skills** to achieve greater academic success  
note: *I will connect with my professor/classmates about material I don't understand. I will check out some study skills websites. I will do mock exams.*

**Other skills I can build/use are:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ note: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ note: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ note: \_\_\_\_\_

### C) Cognitive strategies that I can use to change the way I think about this situation:

#### Cognitive restructuring

What is the stressful event? <i>Upcoming exams</i>
What are my thoughts related to the event? <i>I am not smart enough! I am going to fail!</i>
What is the evidence that supports the thought? <i>My friends get better grades than I do. I have failed a few exams in the past.</i>
What is the evidence that doesn't support the thought? <i>I have not failed every exam I have ever written...only two. I am smart enough to have graduated high school and complete courses at university. Being "smart" is not something that just happens, it requires work and I am working on my critical thinking skills and I am getting help with study skills. Comparing myself to my friends is not helpful. We study differently and have different backgrounds and experiences.</i>
What is an alternative, more helpful way of thinking about this? <i>I have failed a few exams in the past, but that doesn't mean that I will fail this one. I have passed the vast majority of my exams. Plus, I am improving my study skills and finding more time to study so I will be better prepared for these exams.</i>

#### Socratic questioning

- Have I been in similar situations in the past? How did I cope then? What did I learn from that situation that I could use now?
- In the past when I have felt this way, what have I said to myself to feel better
- Am I paying attention to only one aspect of this situation? What if I looked at it from a different angle?
- If a person close to me knew that I was thinking this, what would they say to me?
- What would I say to a friend who said to them self what I am saying to myself?
- When I am not feeling like this, would I think differently about the situation?
- Am I assuming that this is the only way to look at things?
- Do I have any strengths, skills or other positive attributes that I am ignoring?
- Am I making decisions based on my feelings?
- How would I like things to be different?