

Monthly Breakdown

Week 1

The 'Where': Lead-o-meter

Week 2

The 'What': Self-Assessment Exercise

Week 3

The 'Why': Research, Science and Information

Week 4

The 'How': Building up your skill

What Stresses You Out?

Complete this month's lead-o-meter.

This week, we continue our theme on getting to know our triggers and stressors, with a simple self-assessment exercise.

So, what stresses you out?

Effective coping starts with identifying your sources of stress and developing strategies to manage them. One way to do this is to make a list of the situations,

concerns or challenges that trigger your stress response.

Think about some of the top stressors you're facing right now. You'll notice that some of your stressors are events that happened to you, while others originate from within you.

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL TRIGGERS

- **Major life changes** (e.g. divorce, death of a loved one)
- **Environment:** input from the world around us (e.g. noises, bright lights, smells)
- **Workplace** (e.g. workload, deadlines, crisis)
- **Social** (e.g. meeting new people)
- **Unpredictable events**
- **Aggressive interactions**
- **News**

EXAMPLES OF INTERNAL TRIGGERS

- **Beliefs:** attitudes, opinions or expectations*
- **Uncertainty**
- **Lack of Control**
- **Fears**
- **Pessimism**
- **Being inflexible** (e.g. all or nothing attitude)
- **Chronic worry**
- **Perfectionism**
- **Unable to forgive**

Source: [Mayo Clinic](#)

** **Let's focus on beliefs.** We rarely identify our beliefs as a source of our stress. However, beliefs are a significant, always present companion we carry with us that can be a regular trigger. You may never have stopped to consider how your beliefs shape your experiences, but these pre-set thoughts often set the stage for our stress. Consider the expectations you put on yourself to create a perfect school event or to advance up the career ladder.*

There's good news and bad news:

Bad News: Our fears, attitudes and expectations have been our companions for a long time, and it takes applied effort and practice to change them.

Good News: We have the ability to control and reframe our thoughts! *You cannot change what you do not know.*



RESOURCES

WATCH: How to Identify Your Triggers by Beth Tuttle

How to Break the Stress Cycle: A Step-by-Step Guide (secondscount.org)

Consider this example: You need to meet with your colleague, Pat, and it causes you stress every time. Instead of quickly jumping to the conclusion that the meetings are stressful because Pat is difficult to deal with, take time to really assess the situation, your own experience and whether there is another root cause that may be causing this reaction (e.g. a belief or expectation).

A good way to get to know yourself better is to keep a stress journal. There are many online, but the ReCharge stress journal below is designed to be simple and to take you through a good thought process. It might be valuable to share your stress journal entries with a coach or counsellor, as they can help you 'unpack' your beliefs, understand the source of stress, and help you make any changes for reducing your stress response.

Try this self-assessment exercise! ReCharge Daily Stress Journal

We've created a daily stress journal to help you track and reflect on the times you felt stressed throughout the day. Start by committing to your stress journal for a week or two. Try to be as detailed as you can!

Tip: Print it out and keep it at your desk so you don't forget to fill it in

ReCharge bcpvpa emerging school leaders		Daily Stress Journal			
Today's Date:		What day of the week is it? (Circle one) S M T W Th F S			
Is this a typical day? (Circle one) Yes No		My stress is (Circle one): More or Less than usual.			
Time of the Day	Stress Intensity (1-5)	Duration of Stress	Situation (Circumstance, Location, People)	Trigger(s) (situation root cause, beliefs or expectations)	Emotional/Behavioural Response (emotions, experiences, where felt in body, your reaction)
EXAMPLE: 4:00pm	4	3 hours	Manager called and asked for detailed report before going home	Stayed at office to finish it, believed I had no choice	• Anger in forehead • Frustration in teeth • Complained to my spouse



How did you like this issue of ReCharge?

We welcome and appreciate your feedback and suggestions! [Fill out our feedback form](#) or contact [Rochelle Morandini](#).



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