

## Stress bucket activity

<b>Outcome</b>	Young people better understand the impact of stress and how to use healthy coping strategies to manage their stress levels.
<b>Time</b>	10-20mins
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large goal/bag/bucket that can fit multiple balls in but is not large enough to fit all the balls/beanbags.</li> <li>• Balls or beanbags (varying sizes work well for this activity). Enough objects to fill the goal/bag/bucket.</li> <li>• Cones or chalk to mark out the start line.</li> <li>• Timer, clock or stopwatch.</li> </ul>
<b>Set-up (see example below)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place a bag/bucket or upturned goal at one end of the area.</li> <li>• Create a start line at the other end of the area.</li> <li>• Spread out the different sized balls/beanbags by the start line.</li> </ul>

Instructions	
1)	<b>Explain:</b> The balls/beanbags represent different stresses - things that make us worry (friendships, exams, bullying, social media...). The goal/bag/bucket represents our stress bucket.
2)	<b>Ask:</b> “Is anyone comfortable sharing an example what may fill up their stress bucket?” Participants to take a ball/beanbag as they give examples and stand by the start line. If needed, ask players to help others by providing another example.
3)	<b>Explain:</b> When the timer starts players will take in turns <b>moving</b> (run, hop, walk) to the stress bucket at the other side of the area.  Place your stress ball/beanbag in the bucket/bag/goal.  Then return to the start line to tag the next player.
4)	<b>Time</b> how long it takes for the bucket to overflow. Once no more balls/beanbags can fit in the bucket, stop the clock.  <b>Explain:</b> As our stress bucket fills up, it represents when we feel overwhelmed.
5)	<b>Reset</b> the game.



6)	<p><b>Ask:</b> “What helps you to deal with stress or manage those feelings?”</p> <p>Depending on the group, you could share an example - exercising, talking to someone, pets, mindfulness...</p>
7)	<p>For Round 2, <b>select</b> a player to act as a “healthy coping strategy.”</p> <p><b>Explain:</b> They represent all the positive things that the group shared about how to manage our feeling of stress.</p> <p>They will start at the same line and move (run, hop, walk) to the bucket to let some of the stress out. They can take 1 ball/beanbag at a time and bring it back to the start.</p> <p>The rest of the group will continue to drop the different sized stress balls/beanbags into the bucket.</p>
8)	<p>Start Round 2. <b>Time</b> how long it takes for the stress to overflow OR stop the game if the bucket doesn’t overflow.</p> <p><b>Explain:</b> By using healthy coping strategies, things that help us to manage our stress, our bucket took longer to overflow or didn’t overflow</p>

### Adaptations/extension

**Explain:** We can also adopt unhealthy coping strategies, which don’t help us manage our stress levels (e.g. eating unhealthily, over-exercising, mindless scrolling on social media or not getting enough sleep).

- You could demonstrate this by asking a young person to move to/from the bucket but not to remove any balls from the bucket. Unhealthy coping strategies don’t release stress so our bucket continues to fill up.

### Key messages/ reflection questions

**Explain:**

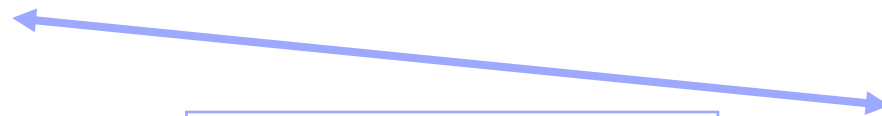
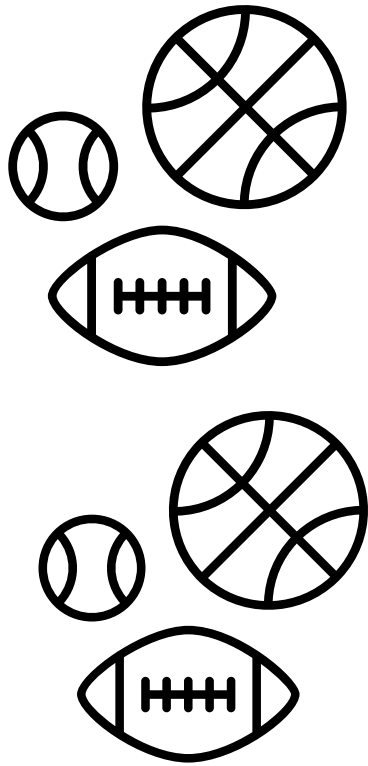
- We all have different sized buckets/containers as our ability to cope with stresses varies.
- We display different signs when we feel stressed. We may feel physical symptoms or change how we behave.
- It is important to think about how we can support ourselves and others to manage stress.



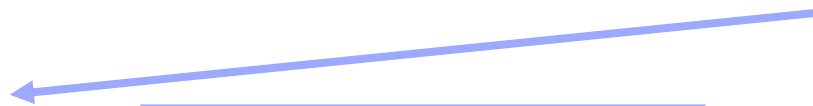
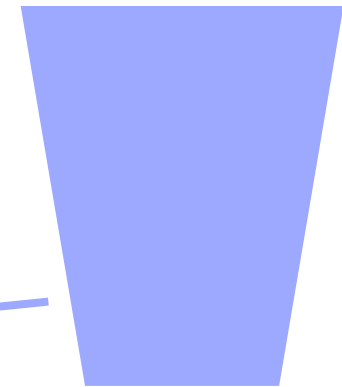
Start each round with the balls behind the line. Get participants to take a ball as they give examples of a stress or something that makes them worry.

Use a start line or create one using cones or chalk.

Use a bucket, bag, or upturned goal.  
Ensure that it is small enough that it will overflow at with all the balls in it.



Players move one at a time to place ball (stress) in the bucket. Run/walk/hop back to tag the next player.



In Round 2, introduce a player who will hop/walk to the bucket to remove a stress and bring it back to the start.