

# COPING WITH STRESS

## QUICK EXPLANATION

Stress is a normal part of a uni life, due to challenges related to work-life balance, academic pressures, financial stress or external factors. Stress can sometimes become overwhelming due to not having healthy coping mechanisms. This can lead to either poor mental wellbeing or the development of unhealthy coping mechanisms. This task aims to highlight some of the healthy versus unhealthy coping mechanisms, so that you can see what strategies you may be putting in place that are working and what may need challenging.



## AIM

Highlight healthy vs unhealthy coping mechanisms.



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everyone copes with stress in different ways and stress is a normal part of life. There are many kinds of healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with pressure and stress, and it is important to have an awareness of what helps and doesn't help you in the long term.
2. There are healthy ways that help to reduce stress and relieve symptoms, as well as help to build resilience for the future. Unhealthy ways of dealing with stress can mask the symptoms in the short term. They may also introduce new stressors and increase the effects of stress in the future.
3. Think about healthy and unhealthy ways of coping that you do and write them down. Use the worksheet below to help you.
4. If you find yourself listing many unhealthy coping mechanisms, ask yourself is there anything I would like to change or be doing differently. If you believe that your unhealthy coping mechanisms are causing a risk to you, such as substance misuse then refer yourself into the Student Wellbeing Service who will be really happy to help support you.
5. After you have created your lists, reflect on what you do to stay well and how this could positively impact your mental wellbeing and improve your university experience.
6. Ask yourself this question; how do you manage your own stress and how can you incorporate healthy stress management into your life?



## RESOURCES

WORKSHEET

## WORKSHEET: COPING STRATEGIES

If you use any of the unhelpful coping mechanisms below, try and swap this for a new healthy coping mechanism? Make your own list.

Healthy Coping Strategies	Unhealthy Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Healthy eating.</li><li>• Restful night sleep.</li><li>• Exercise.</li><li>• Talking to friends or family.</li><li>• Arts/crafts.</li><li>• Listening to/playing music.</li><li>• Keeping a good balance of work life and home life.</li><li>• Strong support network.</li><li>• Taking regular breaks whilst working.</li><li>• Staying hydrated.</li><li>• Setting goals.</li><li>• Asking for help when needed.</li><li>• Using the resources the university offers such as WISER, financial support, inclusive support, wellbeing support.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reckless behaviour.</li><li>• Over working (long hours).</li><li>• Procrastination.</li><li>• Overeating/under eating.</li><li>• Becoming dehydrated.</li><li>• Not asking for help when needed.</li><li>• Abandoning hobbies.</li><li>• Having little motivation.</li><li>• Smoking.</li><li>• Excessive spending.</li><li>• Withdrawing/isolating yourself.</li><li>• Not trying new things.</li><li>• Taking substances (alcohol/drugs).</li><li>• Aggression.</li></ul>

Healthy Coping Strategies	Unhealthy Coping Strategies