**Health and Safety Directorate**

**Mental Health First Aid - Stress Container Activity**

In the Stress Container model, the level of vulnerability a person carries is represented by the size of a container into which everyday stress flows. Those who have a low vulnerability are less likely to experience mental health issues as they have large containers.

Stress flows into the container. If the container overflows problems develop. Helpful coping strategies release the stress before it overflows.

1. Empty everything that is in your head concerning work, study and/or home life.
2. Write them down inside your stress container.
3. Answer the questions below.

**What can I change?**

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**What needs my urgent attention?**

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**Resources**

There are resources available at Queen Mary for both staff and students. External Resources include:

* NHS Health & Wellbeing Programmes
* Mind
* Samaritans
* Togetherall
* [Stress and mental health at work - HSE](https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/)
* Wellness Recovery Action Plan

**Who could help me?**

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**Coping strategies**

It is important to remember that we all use unhelpful coping strategies sometimes, and that some unhelpful coping strategies can come about as a result of other vulnerabilities, or difficult, stressful life experiences, including trauma. They may have been helpful to the person in small doses or under different circumstances before becoming problematic or be the only way they know how to cope at the time. However, as with any skill in life, it is possible to develop new coping strategies. Many interventions and supports for mental health will take this approach.

Along with getting a good night's sleep, essentially a coping strategy should be something that brings you joy, peace or a sense of calm. It can be anything from walking home eating from a bag of chips, to an hour in a yoga class or doing absolutely nothing.

**What helpful coping strategies do I use?**

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**What unhelpful coping strategies do I use?**

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**Further thoughts**

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