

What Causes You Stress?

Hans Selye, a renowned stress researcher, defined stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it. A stressor, which is an event that triggers the physiological stress response, can be negative (e.g., a traffic ticket or an exam) or positive (e.g., a first date with someone you really like). Typically, the negative stressors are the ones that cause us distress. The following exercise is aimed at assisting you in identifying stressors in different areas of your life and examining how you cope with those stressors. Be as specific or concrete as you can.

1. Identify two academic or class stressors (e.g., the required use of a computer in class). Be as specific and concrete as possible in your description of the stressors.

How do you currently cope with each of these stressors?

Give some thought as to how you could handle each stressor differently. Develop a specific plan for altering your response to one of these stressors. Explain your plan in detail.

2. Identify two stressors in your personal life, such as in relationships with friends/family, career issues, residence hall living, etc. Be as specific and concrete as possible in your description of the stressors.

How do you currently cope with each of these stressors?

Give some thought as to how you could handle each stressor differently. Develop a specific plan for altering your response to one. Explain your plan in detail.

3. Identify one physical symptom of stress that you experience often. Be as specific and concrete as possible in your description of the stressors.

How do you currently cope with each of these stressors?

Give some thought as to how you could handle each stressor differently. Develop a specific plan for altering your response. Explain your plan in detail.