

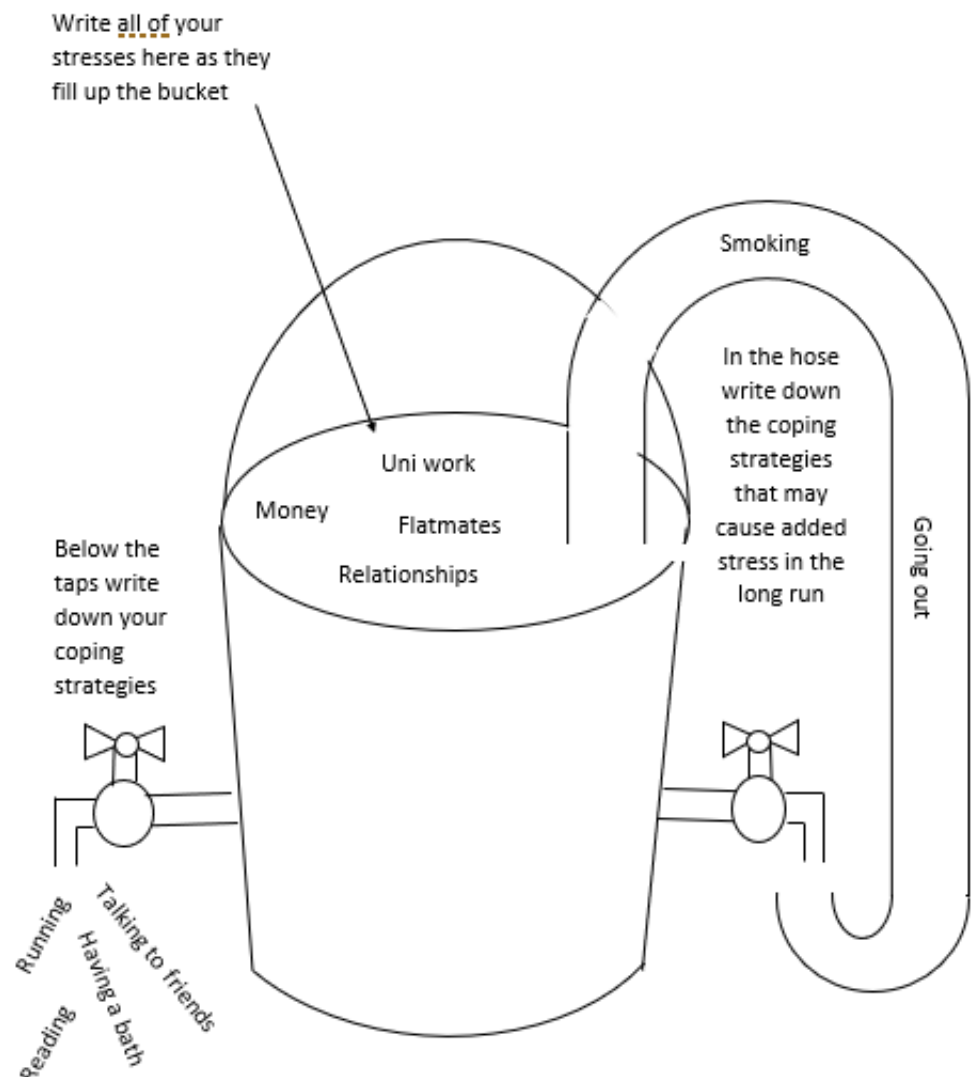
## The Stress Bucket

This exercise aims to help you to identify different aspects of your life and how they contribute to your mental wellbeing. By identifying these aspects it is easier to manage them and to acknowledge when you need to use different techniques or support in order to maintain a good mental wellbeing. Each person has their own unique stress bucket. These are different in size and capacity and everyone has different things that can go into the bucket. There are also taps on the bucket. These make sure that the bucket doesn't overflow, and that the person can still keep on carrying their bucket. There are different numbers of taps for different people and they can be used at different times depending on what is in the bucket. Sometimes the bucket has a hose attached to it – it can temporarily release some of the contents of the bucket but ultimately the contents is put back into the bucket and this causes the bucket to be full again. For this exercise you should discuss the topics that you put in your bucket, at the tap and the hose.

1. Using the stress bucket overleaf, **write down at the top of the bucket all of the things that are causing you stress in your life at the moment.** These are the risk factors for your bucket and are the things that fill the bucket up (you can see an example below)
2. When the bucket gets so full that it starts to overflow, we get overstressed and this can have an impact on our behaviours (people notice these first), our thoughts, our feelings (we notice these first) and our physical body
3. **Now write down all of the coping strategies that you have by the taps of the bucket.** These can be things like walking the dog, having a cup of tea or attending a society. These are the coping strategies and can be used to release some of the contents of the bucket so that it doesn't spill over
4. Sometimes, some of the coping strategies are not as good as some of the others and have hoses attached to them so that these only temporarily empty the bucket and then they cause added stress. These are things like smoking and over eating. These need to be replaced by other coping strategies ideally. **Write down all of your coping strategies that are like this in the hose**
5. Resilience is all about having a good balance of coping strategies to risk factors so that the bucket doesn't overflow

Once you have worked out why you feel a certain way it is much easier to intervene to make positive changes. These can be through using the tap and avoiding the hose to empty some of the bucket but can also be through stopping the thoughts and saying NO! to them. Having broken down the stress into different parts, it will now be easier to manage. You can address the different aspects and use all of the things at the tap that you have identified to do this well.

Here is an example bucket. **Now fill in your own bucket over the page and discuss its contents with others.**



# My Stress Bucket

Write all of your stresses here as they fill up the bucket

Below the taps write down your coping strategies

In the hose write down the coping strategies that may cause added stress in the long run

