

## Balanced Perspective Tool

### Managing your stress, worry or anxiety

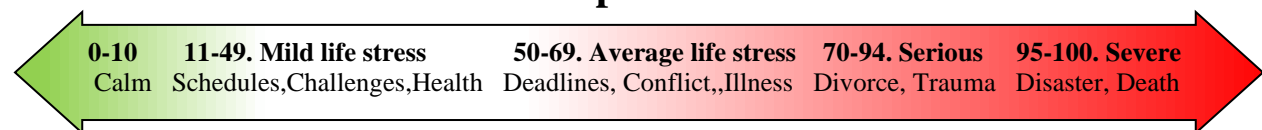
*Check all that apply.*

- Stress/worry/anxiety triggers anxiety → taking things too personally → shame → depression → defeat → “shut down and give-up.”
- Stress/worry/anxiety triggers → blame → anger or fear → can't relax → need for control, → “speed-up until you blow-up.”
- Stress/worry/anxiety presents → mixed emotions → opportunity to learn and grow → self-compassion → self-care → support → coping and problem-solving.

**Score:** If you checked any boxes, your score is human!!!! All 3 responses are human!

Stressful emotions are a human experience. We all have them. Our minds and bodies will experience emotional stress, then when we are able to breathe, pause and physically calm our bodies enough to think, our brain's logic and reasoning skills will allow us to put stress into perspective. Perspective taking is a coping tool for stress, worry, anxiety and depression. Use this “perspective tool” to create a more balanced approach to managing emotions.

## Balanced Perspective Worksheet



**1. Breathe.** Cultivating a balanced perspective to life stress begins with breathing deeply. A calm mind is a wise mind. Use any mindful breathing technique or the breathing meditation located in the Stress Tools section of this site.

**2. Acknowledge your stress.** Write or record the various situations and events in your life that currently cause you to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious or worried. Some life stress will feel more positive—such as relationships, education and employment that offer opportunities and growth. Other stress feels less positive. You may feel more

physically challenged, mentally exhausted or emotionally uncomfortable. As you acknowledge your stress, make sure to inventory only YOUR stress. If a friend is unemployed or getting divorced, how does their stress impact YOU? For example: “My friend owes me money but now I feel awkward asking for it”. “My friend’s divorce means we can’t hang out as couple’s anymore.”

Once your list is complete, read your list aloud so that you can hear yourself validate your own feelings.

**Write your life stress/worry/ anxiety list:**

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**3. Perspective.** Using your above list, now apply perspective by assigning a number to each item on your list. Rank each issue on a 1 to 100 perspective scale. Feel free to modify your numbers or your rating categories according to your own needs.



**Ranking is designed to help you take a broader, more thoughtful, less reactive approach.** If you are not sure how to apply ranking, consider these questions:

1. Reality check— make sure the stress is real and not a story you made up in your head.
2. Does this stress impact your immediate access to resources: food, shelter, clean water, utilities, medical care or physical safety?
3. Does this stress have a solution or an ending? What is the timeline— Days? Months? Years?
4. Is your stress ranked by facts and measurable data, or did you assume, exaggerate or catastrophize?
5. Is this stress something that is statistically normal, a typical human experience that routinely happens to other people? If yes, what is the expected success rate or anticipated outcome?
6. If someone else experienced this stress, how would you rank it?



**(0-10) Stress Free:** Consider your most calm state of mind. When do you feel the most peaceful and stress-free? List examples of when you are the most relaxed and stress free:

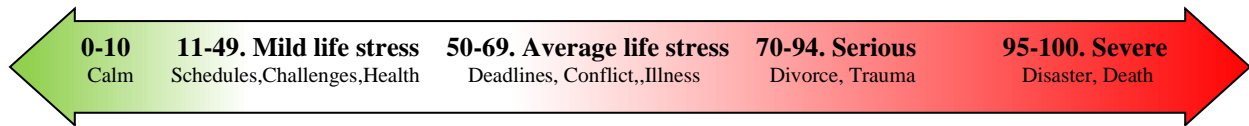
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**(11-49) Mild:** These are the daily stresses everyone has when functioning as an adult in the modern world. This stress does not dramatically alter your life and is forgotten with time. These stressors are related to *schedules, daily choices, logistics, accommodating others, chores, changes, demands, upgrading skills, learning, assimilating new life challenges.* List your “mild” adult life stress here: \_\_\_\_\_



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**(50-69) Average:** These are the stresses related to increased responsibility, pressure, chaos and hardship. (Examples: *competition, performance challenges, birth, parenting, deadlines, finances, conflict, illness, retirement*). List your “average” adult life stress here: \_\_\_\_\_

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**(70-94) Serious:** Reserve this ranking for the series of events impacting and altering your life such as *divorce, job loss, property loss, crime, poverty or bankruptcy, life altering illness of self or loved ones, caregiving of disabled or chronically ill*. List your “serious” stress here: \_\_\_\_\_



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**(95-100) Severe:** This rating is reserved for the tragic and traumatic events that change your life such as *debilitating, disabling or terminal illness, traumatic events related to near death experiences, violent crime, natural disasters, war and actual death*. List your “disaster” stress: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Follow up application:

Congrats on putting your stressful, worried, and anxious emotions into perspective! The next step is to apply your calming, reframing and coping tools.

1. Prioritize your self-care (rest, relaxation, fun, personal hygiene/grooming, exercise, meditation, healthy food and support) to gain your clearest perspective and achieve balance.
2. Ask yourself what you are learning about yourself, your values, needs and priorities as you rank your stress.
3. Notice when you feel your best—what do you absolutely need in your life to maintain that best version of yourself?
4. Notice what takes your perspective away—what triggers you into “give-up” or a “blow-up”?
5. Use all of this knowledge to create a perspective taking maintenance plan.