Stress Bucket explained…

**Academic Stress**
Refers to stress associated with studying, including study load, performance, and conflict with lecturers or tutors.

**Intrapersonal Stress**
Includes stress from your physical health, financial situation, and mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety).

**Interpersonal Stress**
Includes stress from your relationships with your roommates, parents, friends, and boyfriend/girlfriend.

**Environmental Stress**
Refers to things in your work and living environments, including new and unfamiliar situations, or conflict between people you live with such as your parents.

**Intrapersonal Stress**
Refers to stress from your physical health, financial situation, and mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety).

**Problem-focused coping skills**
Refers to strategies that you use to change the source of the problem. These strategies are used when you have some influence over the situation.

**Reused stress from unhelpful coping skills**
Reused stress comes from unhelpful coping skills that provide some short term relief but cause you more trouble in the long run. Examples include avoiding the problem or using alcohol and drugs to cope.

**Buffer zone**
This is the area between our stress level and our overflow point. The more that you are able to lower your stress level, the greater the buffer zone there is.

**Stress level**
Too much stress will cause our stress bucket to overflow. By using our coping skills we can keep our stress levels down.

**Emotion-focused coping skills**
Refers to those strategies that you use to decrease the negative emotions that you experience. These strategies are useful when it is difficult to change the source of the problem.

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This handout is based on the following resources:
A Stress Bucket example

**Academic Stress**
- More assignments
- Disagreement with tutor
- Poor results
- Problems with group assignment

**Intrapersonal Stress**
- Poor diet (living on caffeine)
- Anxiety
- Worrying about money

**Interpersonal Stress**
- Arguments with girlfriends
- Feel lonely
- Only make friends over the Internet, not in person

**Environmental Stress**
- Roommates often argue, I’m caught in the middle and can’t focus on my studies
- Looking for new accommodation

**Problem-focused coping skills**
- Join a social club to make friends
- Learn communication skills to help manage conflict better
- Develop a healthy eating plan
- Learn time management skills

**Emotion-focused coping skills**
- Relaxation and breathing to manage anxiety symptoms
- Talking to a friend over the Internet
- Seeking support from family

Unhelpful coping skills that contribute to recycled stress
- Using alcohol and drugs to take my mind off worries
- Pretending that the problem will go away without doing anything about it

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My Stress Bucket

Academic Stress

Intrapersonal Stress

Interpersonal Stress

Environmental Stress

Unhelpful coping skills that contribute to recycled stress

Problem-focused coping skills

Emotion-focused coping skills

Buffer zone

Stress level

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