

# Well-being this Week

## FOR EDUCATORS • BY EDUCATORS

### How stressed are you?

by Lisa Sanetti, PhD

*Peter Principal seems to have it all. He runs a local school, has a terrific family, and lives in a lovely home. Peter is dedicated to his staff and students. He goes to work at the crack of dawn and stays late into the evening. Some days he takes a break for dinner with his family, and then cracks open his laptop to catch up on emails, heads back to school for an event, or both. Some days he eats all his meals at his desk. Despite all the hours he puts in, he never feels like he gets enough done. Increasingly, he has headaches, feels exhausted, and has difficulty concentrating. Nothing seems to make him as happy as it used to.*

Peter is stressed. Peter is not alone. We all experience the feeling of “stress.” It may be the result of daily hassles (deadlines, aggravations, annoyances, interruptions), acute events (an argument with a friend or relative, your car won’t start, you are late for an important meeting, you have a sick child), major life events (separating from a partner, someone you love is very ill or dying), or a combination of the above. Sometimes even joyful events can be stressful (having a baby, starting a new job).

Feelings of stress vary in their intensity from a brief flash, to constant worrying, to all-out panic. For some, stress is so chronic it is a way of life. If you frequently feel tense, overwhelmed, and frazzled, it’s time to take care of yourself. Stress is complex and affects everyone differently.

Managing your stress begins with understanding what it is, how it’s affecting you, and what you can do about it.

**The first step to understanding your stress is completing the Perceived Stress Scale-10.**

Answer  
the PSS-10  
honestly.



Sum  
your score  
the PSS-10.



Interpret  
your PSS-10  
score.

## THE PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE-10

*The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a classic tool for understanding perceived stress.*

*Some of the questions are similar, but there are differences; treat each as a separate question. The best approach is to answer fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way!*

1.	In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0 = never 1= almost never 2=sometimes 3= fairly often 4=very often	<input type="text"/>
2.	In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0 = never 1= almost never 2=sometimes 3= fairly often 4=very often	<input type="text"/>
3.	In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?	0 = never 1= almost never 2=sometimes 3= fairly often 4=very often	<input type="text"/>
4.	In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0 = very often 1= fairly often 2=sometimes 3= almost never 4=never	<input type="text"/>
5.	In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	0 = very often 1= fairly often 2=sometimes 3= almost never 4=never	<input type="text"/>
6.	In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0 = never 1= almost never 2=sometimes 3= fairly often 4=very often	<input type="text"/>
7.	In the last month, how often how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	0 = very often 1= fairly often 2=sometimes 3= almost never 4=never	<input type="text"/>
8.	In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	0 = very often 1= fairly often 2=sometimes 3= almost never 4=never	<input type="text"/>
9.	In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?	0 = never 1= almost never 2=sometimes 3= fairly often 4=very often	<input type="text"/>
10.	In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0 = never 1= almost never 2=sometimes 3= fairly often 4=very often	<input type="text"/>

**SUM:**

## INTERPRETING YOUR TOTAL PSS-10 SCORE

### 0-15 Low perceived stress

Your score suggests either you haven't experienced too many stressors recently or you are managing the hassles, demands, and pressures of daily life well. If so, good for you! The content of this column will help you hone your already strong stress management skills.

### 16-25 Moderate perceived stress

Your score suggests you are likely experiencing some stress in your life. Maybe you successfully manage the stress sometimes, but other times it gets the best of you. The content of this column will help you increase your ability to manage stress consistently and constructively.

### 26+ High perceived stress

Your score suggests you are dealing with a great deal of stress on a daily basis. Maybe there are important unpredictable or uncontrollable events that you struggle to manage. Maybe it's lots of daily hassles and frustrations. You may feel fatigued. You may have a short fuse. Life may be less enjoyable than it has been or could be. The content in this column will help you to gain the upperhand. Work through the content and activities thoughtfully.

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## Well-being thisWeek Take-Aways



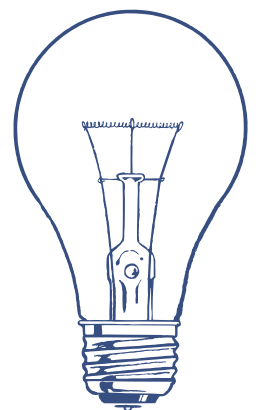
Everyone experiences stress.



Stress can be hard to perceive when in the midst of it.



Understanding our stress is the first step in reducing it.



**Well-being work isn't selfish. It's necessary.**