

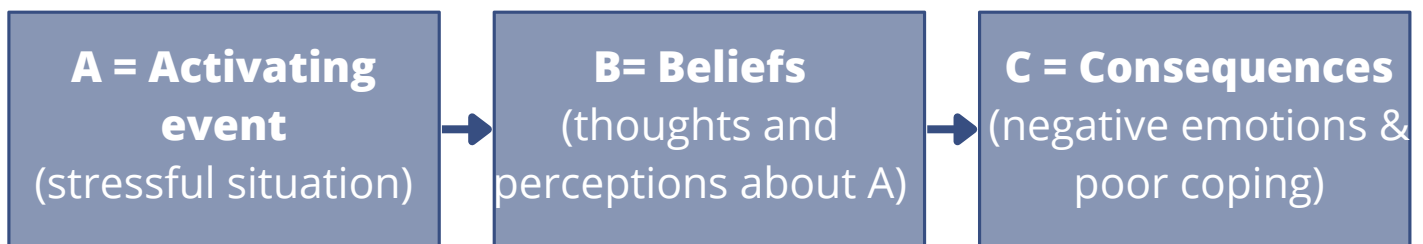
Well-being this Week

FOR EDUCATORS • BY EDUCATORS

What does your stress make you feel?

by Lisa Sanetti, PhD

The last two editions included opportunities to (1) understand what your stressors are (i.e., activating events) and (2) identify your thoughts and perceptions related to your stressors (i.e., beliefs). Often, strong negative emotions result from stressful situations, and those emotions exacerbate stress. In this edition, you'll identify your pattern of negative emotions. Understanding your ABC's will help you make an informed decisions about strategies to help you better cope with stress.



Common Emotional Reactions to Stress (that make stress worse!)

Feeling Anxious

When feeling anxious, you perceive that you're in danger but feel that you can't do anything about it. The threat doesn't have to be real - anxiety results from the *perception* of danger.

Feeling Sad or Depressed

When feeling depressed, you feel down in the dumps more often than not, and are more likely to focus primarily on the negative side of yourself, situations, and the future.

Feeling Angry

When feeling angry, you perceive that you have been purposely mistreated, disrespected, injured, or challenged; or you may have faced an obstacle to meeting a goal.



REMEMBER! We all feel anxious, sad, depressed, and angry. They are all basic human emotions we will experience from time to time. And these emotions can be helpful. Anxiety helps make sure we don't get hit by a bus crossing the road. Sadness can help us come to terms with a difficult situation.

BUT...

When we have **strong** anxious, sad, depressed, or angry reactions to stressful situations, repeatedly, we may be making ourselves feel worse.

**Answer the questions below
to see if your emotional reactions might be making
your experience of stress worse:**

Anxiety / Worry

	Not at all	Only Occasionally	Often	Almost Always
1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Being unable to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
4. Having trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
5. Being so restless it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
7. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3

Total

Add up your point total.

7+ - you are likely experiencing a moderate level of anxiety

15+ you are likely experiencing a significant level of anxiety that may warrant discussion with a healthcare provider.

Depression / Sadness

	Not at all	Only Occasionally	Often	Almost Always
1. I feel hopeless, like I can't do anything right.	0	1	2	3
2. I feel helpless, like the future is bleak.	0	1	2	3
3. I blame myself when things go wrong.	0	1	2	3
4. I feel so unhappy that I feel like crying.	0	1	2	3
5. I can laugh and see the funny side of things.	3	2	1	0
6. I look forward to things I usually enjoy.	3	2	1	0

Total

Add up your point total.

7+ - you are likely experiencing some feelings of depression, guilt, loss, or extreme sadness.

15+ you are likely experiencing a significant level of depression that may warrant discussion with a healthcare provider.

Anger

	Not at all	Only Occasionally	Often	Almost Always
1. I get angry and fly off the handle	0	1	2	3
2. I have heated arguments with people close to me	0	1	2	3
3. I get so tense with anger and frustration I feel like I am going to explode.	0	1	2	3
4. I get angry and blurt out things that I later regret saying	0	1	2	3
5. I become physically violent (toward people or things) because of my temper.	0	1	2	3
6. I have trouble forgiving people who do things I don't like.	0	1	2	3
7. I feel as if I need to get even with someone.	0	1	2	3

Total

Add up your point total.

7+ - your stress-related thinking is leading to anger

15+ you are likely experiencing a significant level of anger that may warrant discussion with a healthcare provider.

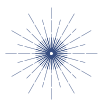
Other Stress-Related Emotional Reactions

The lists above are just examples. Have emotional reactions that commonly occur when you are stressed? List them here:

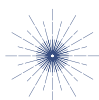
Why does this matter for my well-being?

- Identifying what is causing your stress is the first step toward understanding the ABC's of your stress:
 - A = activating events (those you just identified!)
 - B = beliefs (thoughts and perceptions related to A)
 - **C = consequences (negative emotions & poor coping resulting from AxB)**
- Next issue, we will dive into stress management strategies!

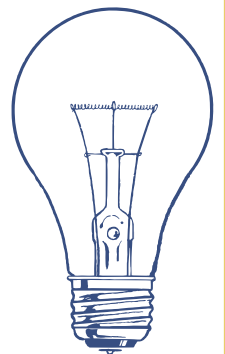
Well-being thisWeek Take-Aways



Your emotional reactions to stress, also contribute to your level of stress!



Learning what your stress-related emotional reactions are is a critical step in being able to identify stress reduction strategies that will be the most effective for you.



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

If you have suggestions for future columns, please email Dr. Sanetti at wellbeingthisweek@gmail.com