

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

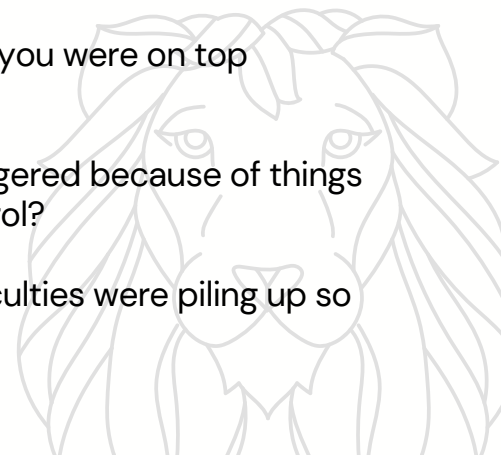
Stress and Your Career

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a classic stress assessment instrument. The tool, while originally developed in 1983, remains a popular choice for helping us understand how different situations affect our feelings and our perceived stress.

The questions in this scale ask about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one 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; rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate.

For each question, write the number that represents how often you felt a certain way.
0-never 1-almost never 2-sometimes 3-fairly often 4-very often

1. _____ In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
2. _____ In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
3. _____ In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?
4. _____ In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
5. _____ In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?
6. _____ In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
7. _____ In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?
8. _____ In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?
9. _____ In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?
10. _____ In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?



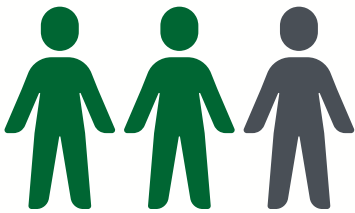
First, reverse your scores for questions 4, 5, 7, & 8: 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, 3=1, 4=0
Now, add up all of your scores. **My total score is** _____

Stress and Your Career

Determining your major and career are hard decisions, but stress can make them even more challenging. The Perceived Stress Scale scores range from 0 to 40.

- Scores ranging from 0–13 would be considered low stress.
- Scores ranging from 14–26 would be considered moderate stress.
- Scores ranging from 27–40 would be considered high perceived stress.

If you scored higher on the perceived stress scale or have had more stress than usual around picking a major or career, know that you're not alone.



Almost **two-thirds** of students feel **overwhelmed** by the process of selecting a major – Ellucian

It's harder to make good decisions under stress, so look to others to help, take small steps to explore possible majors or careers, and find ways to cope with stress.



CONNECT ON CAMPUS

- **University Counseling Center** – Counseling can help you learn when stress becomes unhealthy and how to navigate stress
- **Academic & Career Exploration** – Meet with an ACE coach (Fr/So/Jr) to explore majors
- **Career Services** – Meet with a Career Consultant to explore careers and create a career plan



COPING WITH STRESS WHILE EXPLORING

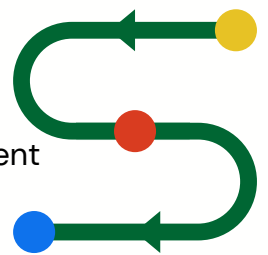
- Take breaks from exploring and researching
- Make time to do some other activities you enjoy
- Talk with people you trust about your feelings about exploring careers
- Keep healthy habits by eating well, exercising, and sleeping regularly
- Take deep breaths, stretch, walk, or meditate – CDC

"Our brains are wired to be more **reactionary under stress**... in tough moments, we reach for premature conclusions rather than **opening ourselves to more and better options.**" – HBR



SMALL STEPS

- Go to 1 student organization meeting related to a major/career of interest
- Find 1 professional in a field of interest to talk to about their job
- Take a career assessment
- Use O*Net to research 2–3 jobs
- Find 1 professional in a field of interest to shadow for one day/a few hours



Sources:

HBR: hbr.org/2017/08/stress-leads-to-bad-decisions-heres-how-to-avoid-them

Ellucian: ellucian.com/assets/en/2019-student-success-survey-results.pdf

CDC: cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/cope-with-stress/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fdaily-life-coping%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html