

Stress/ Anxiety Mapping

Stress/ anxiety mapping is a useful way of consciously exploring who or what is causing stress. You can map stressors/ anxiety triggers using a flow chart format. Include key people in your life and/ or at work, as well as things such as having to drive to work, working in a noisy office, operating a new computer or having to do too many things in a short space of time or even having certain beliefs about yourself or the world.

It's useful to use different shapes to represent the men and women in your map, as well as things, e.g. triangles to represent males, circles to represent females and squares to represent things. Represent yourself by a circle or triangle in the centre. You could place your stressors/ anxiety triggers closer or further away from you depending on your relationship with them and/or you could use different sizes.

Connect the shapes by drawing lines between you and the stressors/ anxiety triggers in your life. Vary the lines as follows:

- * straight (unproblematic)
- * slightly wavy (ok/middling)
- * slightly or very zigzagged (stressful)

Stress can be two way, so using a scale from 1 to 10 (10 is extremely high stress, 1 is low), rate the stress you experience in relation to each stressor. For the key people in your life also try to predict the stress they experience in relation to you.

Look at your stress/ anxiety map and write down anything that you learn from it. Start with the obvious and keep going. Do you notice anything that hadn't occurred to you before?

If you could make three changes in relation to this map to reduce some of the numbers, what would those three changes be?