



## Explaining meltdowns

## and what causes them using the stress bucket

In considering stress please watch the 'What causes meltdowns and what can we do?' digital video via the link: <https://www.sitgap.org/understanding-your-child> and complete this sheet.

In reviewing what causes our stress buckets to overflow, we know that it's the big and the little things that fill up our bucket.

### Big things that fill up our stress buckets:

- Covid 19
- Lack of clarity about the future
- Someone we care about being unwell
- Homework
- Exams
- New teachers or changing schools
- Moving house

For the big people this can also include:

- Jobs
- Money worries
- Relationship difficulties

### Little things that sometimes lead to an overflowing stress bucket:

- Forgetting someone's name
- Unable to find our shoes / keys / favourite toy etc
- The hairband / jumper / etc 'just isn't right'
- The food is too hot / cold / lumpy / tastes different
- Can't remember how to do a particular skill e.g. maths, tying shoelaces etc.

We all, irrespective of the size of our bucket, have a tap on the side. When we open that tap, we decrease our stress levels and help prevent meltdowns. Everyone is different however. Have a think about what you can do to open your / your child's tap.

### What things can open our Taps?



**Physically:** some people find that going for a walk, playing an outside game, running up and down the garden or going for a run helps, others find attending a dance or exercise class, or bouncing on a trampoline can also help open their tap.

Having a nice meal, watching a film / comedy, tickling and positive touch (e.g. Pizza Massage) can be helpful.

**Emotionally:** You may find that having a chat with a sympathetic listener and talking about what's filling up your bucket can be useful. Alternatively writing a list of the things that are whizzing around your head, doing something you enjoy e.g. a hobby or playing a musical instrument, or playing a silly game may help.

Getting enough sleep is really important at any age and a lack of sleep can definitely raise your stress levels



We are all different. There are no right and wrong answers, but have a think about what opens your tap and decreases your stress and add them to the sheet below. Some are in green which are physical things that help, others are purple and are emotional things that help you open your / your child's taps.

It can be helpful to place the taps in order of which you find most useful?

Put the completed sheet somewhere you see it frequently such as: on the fridge, in the bathroom, or on your wardrobe door.

Remind yourself regularly to include activities that open your tap and this will help you manage your stress levels.

**What opens my tap and helps me to decrease the level of my stress bucket?**



**Physically:**

A green rounded rectangle containing a green elf character on the right and a vertical column of eight water tap icons on the left.

**Emotionally:**

A purple rounded rectangle containing a purple elf character on the right and a vertical column of eight water tap icons on the left.

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