

Personal Stress Response Profile

Factors that cause you stress	Warning signs/symptoms
Negative stress management practices	Positive stress management practices

Just as each of us have a unique fingerprint, we have a unique “stress profile.” In order to design an effective stress management program for ourselves, we need to better understand our own individual stress profile. Briefly review each quadrant:

Factors that cause you stress: typically, those external factors and situations that cause you to feel “stressed out.”

Warning signs of stress overload: what are some of the **first** warning signs you experience? Where do you feel it? How do you experience it? Be as specific as possible.

Negative stress management strategies: those things that we do that we probably know are not so good for us, but we do them anyway – sometimes because they feel good in the moment, sometimes out of habit (e.g., having a few beers, eating too much ice cream, etc.).

Positive stress management strategies: those activities we engage in that help us feel better, and that we also feel good about doing (e.g., taking a walk, talking with a friend, etc.).

It's important to bear in mind that these categories are not fixed, but will change as our circumstances change too. In this sense, the factors that cause us stress in a place like New York or Geneva might be very different than if we were to live and work in Kabul or Juba. Moreover, the kind of coping strategies that would be available for us on each duty station might be significantly different as well.

It would be advisable to do this exercise in the different phases of your deployment, to help you understand better the sources of your stress and the best strategies available for you at each time.