This is an example of the worksheet filled out by Selena, who is a 2nd year student studying biology. She has 2 big exams next week that are causing her stress.

### Step 1: Identify if I am stressed

My signs of stress are:
- hard time concentrating
- poor sleep...hard time to fall asleep
- get irritable and even a bit aggressive
- asthma is worse
- get headaches, which I usually rarely have

### Step 2: Identify the stressor

The event/situation causing my stress is:

I have 2 big exams, 2 weeks from now!!

### Step 3: Identify the reason for the stressor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demands</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To successfully address this situation/event</td>
<td>To handle this situation I have:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need:</td>
<td>less than 2 hours a day to study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to study for 2 hours a day</td>
<td>a general understanding of the material, and I don’t understand some stuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to know the material very well</td>
<td>I am not smart enough!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to be SMART!!!</td>
<td>I am not confident that I will pass, in fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to pass the exam</td>
<td>I think I will fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do I see this situation as dangerous? (remember: Stress is a response to danger: No danger...no stress)

I don’t have enough time to study. I don’t know the material well enough. I am not smart enough. I will fail.

My stressor is:  
- [ ] Real
- [ ] Self-created
- [✓] A combination of real and self-created

### Step 4: Identify stress management strategies

A) Short-term stress management strategies (relaxation strategies) I can use are:

- [✓] Breathing exercises
- [✓] Progressive muscle relaxation
- [ ] Massage
- [✓] Visualization
- [✓] Meditation
- [✓] Hot bath, sauna, hot tub

- [✓] Exercise
- [✓] Music appreciation
- [✓] Sex
- [✓] Hobby
- [✓] Spend time with loved ones
- [ ] Other: ______________________

If I can use these other strategies, I will try!!

- Go for a run/walk. Tape main points of my study notes and listen to them on run/walk.
- play guitar on study breaks
- Spend time with loved ones

If I can use these other strategies, I will try!!
Step 4: Identify stress management strategies, continued

B) Problem solving strategies that I can use to address the cause of the stress are:

☐ Use/build my problem solving skills to solve problems related to the stressor
   note: ________________________________________________________________

☐ Use/build my decision making skills to make stress-reducing decisions
   note: ________________________________________________________________

☑ Use/build my critical thinking skills to think critically about factors related to this stressor
   note: I can’t spend lots of time on this now, but I will certainly start working on this and continue as this will help with future exams.

☑ Use/build my time management skills to manage my time effectively
   note: I think that I can find extra time to study over the next few weeks. Some things will have to take lower priority for now.

☐ Use/build my communication skills to effectively communicate with those involved
   note: ________________________________________________________________

☐ Use/build my budgeting skills to meet my financial responsibilities
   note: ________________________________________________________________

☑ Use/build my academic skills to achieve greater academic success
   note: I will connect with my professor/classmates about material I don’t understand. I will check out some study skills websites. I will do mock exams.

Other skills I can build/use are:

☐ __________________________  note: ________________________________________________________________

☐ __________________________  note: ________________________________________________________________

☐ __________________________  note: ________________________________________________________________

C) Cognitive strategies that I can use to change the way I think about this situation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive restructuring</th>
<th>Socratic questioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the stressful event?</strong></td>
<td>• Have I been in similar situations in the past? How did I cope then? What did I learn from that situation that I could use now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upcoming exams</strong></td>
<td>• In the past when I have felt this way, what have I said to myself to feel better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are my thoughts related to the event?</strong></td>
<td>• Am I paying attention to only one aspect of this situation? What if I looked at it from a different angle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not smart enough! I am going to fail!</td>
<td>• If a person close to me knew that I was thinking this, what would they say to me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the evidence that supports the thought?</strong></td>
<td>• What would I say to a friend who said to them self what I am saying to myself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends get better grades than I do. I have failed a few exams in the past.</td>
<td>• When I am not feeling like this, would I think differently about the situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the evidence that doesn’t support the thought?</strong></td>
<td>• Am I assuming that this is the only way to look at things?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not failed every exam I have ever written...only two. I am smart enough to have graduated high school and complete courses at university. Being “smart” is not something that just happens, it requires work and I am working on my critical thinking skills and I am getting help with study skills. Comparing myself to my friends is not helpful. We study differently and have different backgrounds and experiences.</td>
<td>• Do I have any strengths, skills or other positive attributes that I am ignoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is an alternative, more helpful way of thinking about this?</strong></td>
<td>• Am I making decisions based on my feelings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have failed a few exams in the past, but that doesn’t mean that I will fail this one. I have passed the vast majority of my exams. Plus, I am improving my study skills and finding more time to study so I will be better prepared for these exams.</td>
<td>• How would I like things to be different?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>