

Student Counselling Office (Zentrale Studienberatung)

Focusing on your skills (based on S. Signer-Fischer)

An important part of countering stress is becoming aware of your own resources, options, skills strengths and talents. This can open up new options for dealing with stress.

Read through the exercise below, following along in your thoughts:

As you read this exercise, draw on your thoughts and memories to think of something that you can do well, a special skill or ability – be it driving a car, painting, telling jokes, cooking, thinking of stories, entertaining others or something completely different.

You will likely discover various skills and abilities where you think: I can do that well.

If you want, pick one of them and focus on it.

Thinks of a situation in which you were doing this activity or really noticed this ability in yourself. Once you've thought of a situation, go through it in your head again, either all of the details or just some of them, and pay close attention to what it looks like there, what you hear, what you smell – and above all, what it feels like!

It is possible that you can identify what was best about this situation. This highlight can be what helps you notice exactly how good you feel when something goes well.

Pay attention to how you notice what it feels like to be good at something and where in your body you particularly notice this feeling. Some people feel it in their breathing; others experience a feeling of warmth or lightness, or something completely different...

Once you have identified this, pay attention to how this quality feels: warm, fresh, light, solid, like silk, like wool, or like something else. Maybe there's a colour or a melody that fits to it, or a week day or number.

You may also want to make a photo or hold a picture of this bodily sensation in your imagination and then pay attention to how you can strengthen these bodily sensations and, if you want to, create a path in your memory to access it easily.

You can then bring the situation to a close and say goodbye to that time and place, coming back to this time and place.

If you want, you can now make a picture or a sketch that matches this bodily feeling and put it in your pocket, your wallet or your desk drawer. You can use it to remind yourself regularly of this particular ability, and to help you pay attention to how this ability can support you in stressful situations in future.

Student Counselling Office (Zentrale Studienberatung), HAW Hamburg, Stiftstraße 69, 20099 Hamburg

We're here to answer all of your questions about your studies – by email, by phone or in person.

You can find up-to-date contact information and office hours at bit.ly/HAW-ZSB.

For personal use only. Please ask the ZSB's permission before sharing.