



## Identifying Stressors: Brain Dump

When we feel overwhelmed, it can be difficult to determine our next course of action. When we identify our sources of stress, we remind ourselves of what we can control and therefore how to proceed.

Writing can be beneficial for our mental health. A brain dump is one type of writing in which we jot down any anxieties, racing thoughts, to-do items, emotions, or anything else that pops into your head. Brain dumps have no rules and are a useful tool when we feel stuck. Use the space below to write, however you like, whatever is going through your mind.

## Finding Clarity

After we dump all of our thoughts onto a page, the next step is to organize them. This can be categorizing them, determining urgency/relevancy, and noting the themes of your thoughts. Are you stressed about a particular aspect of your life or is there a little bit of everything? The purpose here is to simply organize so that you can choose what to focus on first. In the space below, take a couple of minutes to organize your thoughts.

Thought organization space continued...

## Strategies to Turn your Brain Dump into Action

- Take a moment, a brain dump in and of itself is a form of self-care. Taking stock of our thoughts, recognizing how we feel, and putting it onto paper can be the self-care act. Sometimes the perceived need for action is actually a call for us to take a moment to pause and breathe. One thing you can consider is making brain dumps part of your self-care routine. This can act as a weekly (even daily, if you want to be ambitious) reset.
- Make a plan! You've laid out the things that you have on your mind, what are the things you need to do? What are some 'easy' tasks you can start with? Plot your course and follow along. Be sure to take breaks, drink water, and check-in with yourself. It can be easy to overdo it on tasks once we know what we need to do. Pace yourself and give yourself grace if some tasks are too hard to do.
- Find a buddy! Have a lot of errands to run? Make it social by inviting a friend along. We don't have to do everything by ourselves, and if having someone with you makes it easier, by all means! Maybe your friend has things they need from the same place. We can help each other out while we help ourselves.
- Feeling like everything is out of control? Take a second to cross out the things that are not in your control and circle those that are in your control. Allowing yourself to take stock of the controllables can help you focus on those things rather than those that are not in your control and feel a sense of autonomy.
- Is there something from your brain dump that is still in your mind after you wrote it down? That could be your indication to explore it further. A brain dump doesn't guarantee peace of mind, but it can help us to identify themes or pieces of the stress puzzle we are trying to make sense of. Give yourself the space to sit with what's bothering you, whether it's talking it out, writing more down, or engaging in another self-care activity. Taking care of yourself is an ongoing process, you don't have to figure it out all at once!