Boolean Search Techniques

Many databases allow you to combine your main concepts in various ways using the terms AND and OR and NOT.

Expanding your search:
By typing the word OR in between two different words, you retrieve articles containing either stress or anxiety (or both).

Example: stress OR anxiety:

![Venn Diagram](image)

Search Results include: RED, ORANGE and YELLOW areas

Narrowing your search:
By typing the word AND in between two different words, you would retrieve only those articles which included both of these concepts. Example: stress AND anxiety:

![Venn Diagram](image)

Search Results include: PURPLE area only
Limiting your search:
By typing the word NOT in between two different words, you would retrieve articles on stress, but not any that mentioned anxiety. Example: stress NOT anxiety:

Be careful not to create a search strategy that's too complicated; the more concepts you combine the less likely you are to locate many materials. Start with a simple strategy of combining only a few concepts. You can modify it as you go.

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