

MANAGING STRESS

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Overview

A certain amount of stress is of course is an inevitable part of life. Is all stress bad? NO! Stress gives a little motivation and often times can be a useful part of studying. Stress can help students to work harder at their studies and to be focused, but we certainly do not want to feel like we are losing ourselves due to stress. Balance between studying and not studying is extremely crucial for college students and their wellbeing. Having a balance of non-study activities can help alleviate stressors as well as taking small breaks throughout the day to refresh the mind and get rejuvenated.

This handout is designed to help students develop a rhythm between school and social life, which will help prevent students from becoming too stressed along with helping students to excel in everyday life.

Stress: Occurs when a person believes/feels that “demands exceed the person and social resources the individuals is able to mobilize” (one of the several possible definitions)





Tips

- Keep a list of "things to do" and stay focused on short-term accomplishments.
- Learn to make decisions quickly and let go of the need to over-analyze everything.
- Express your feelings appropriately and don't bottle up your emotions.
- Avoid trying for perfection and don't sweat the small stuff.
- Maintain a positive mental attitude by utilizing affirmative "self-talk".
- Stop worrying so much and look at situations more optimistically.
- Smile and laugh frequently throughout the day, don't take yourself so seriously.
- Mix leisure with work: take breaks and get away when you can.
- Make a point to spend quality time with your friends and family.
- Become more tolerant...don't be overly critical of yourself or others.
- Always be kind and gentle with yourself. Listen to upbeat music or watch your favorite movie.
- Exercise for cardiovascular fitness three to four times a week.
- Set written goals, plan your time and prioritize your activities.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Eat balanced meals and avoid eating junk food. Drink plenty of water and avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine and other stimulants.
- Avoid drinking alcohol in excess.

Resources

Within the University

- ◆ Counseling Center
- ◆ PASS Office
- ◆ Hub Gym
- ◆ Take a Stress Management class
- ◆ Meditation Mondays

Within the Community

- ◆ The Common Man Spa- Offers massage therapy and other spa services
- ◆ Body Solutions Therapy- Offers natural therapies and relaxation services
- ◆ Natural Change- Offers massage therapy and hypnosis
- ◆ Take Time to Heal- Offers Therapeutic Relaxation & Pregnancy Massage



Facts

Not all stress is bad, it's good to have a little stress to motivate ourselves but not so much it overwhelms us. (Schneiderman, Ironson, Siegel, 2010)

Stressors have a major influence upon mood, our sense of well-being, behavior, and health. (Schneiderman, Ironson, Siegel, 2010)

Acute stress responses in young, healthy individuals may be adaptive and typically do not impose a health burden. However, if the threat is unremitting, particularly in older or unhealthy individuals, the long-term effects of stressors can damage health. (Schneiderman, Ironson, Siegel, 2010)

The relationship between psychosocial stressors and disease is affected by the nature, number, and persistence of the stressors as well as by the individual's biological vulnerability (i.e., genetics, constitutional factors), psychosocial resources, and learned patterns of coping. Psychosocial interventions have proven useful for treating stress-related disorders and may influence the course of chronic diseases. (Schneiderman, Ironson, Siegel, 2010)



Stats

- in one study of 13,700 undergraduates, 45% reported having at least two sources of stress, and 26% reported that they were unable to manage their stress (Lust et al., 2010)
- A study done by the National College Health Assessment reported that 42.4% of students experienced more than average stress, while only 7.2% reported having less than average stress within the past 12 months (American College Health Association, 2015).
- Among undergraduates, those who reported higher stress levels were less likely to exercise regularly, less likely to consume fruits and vegetables, and more likely to consume junk food and soft drinks (Flynn, D.M, Macleod, S., 2015).
- In America, young and middle-aged adults report the highest amount of stress (Richardson, C, Rice, K., 2015).
- Previous studies have found that an individual's perception of control in a situation (Locus of Control; LOC) can serve as a protective factor that has physiological and psychological benefits. How well individuals do in stressful situations, such as workplace performance reviews, test-taking, and formal presentations often depend on their perception of control and mastery (Szabo, Chang & Chancellor-Freeland, 2015).
- Daily hassles were identified in 100% of interpersonal sources of stress, 88.2% of environmental stressors, 77.3% of intrapersonal stressors, and 67.2% of academic sources of stress. Results also indicated that the most common sources of stress were intrapersonal sources, and the five most frequent stressors listed were change in sleep habits, vacations or breaks, change in eating habits, new responsibilities, and increased class workload (Holinka, 2015).

Trans-theoretical Model

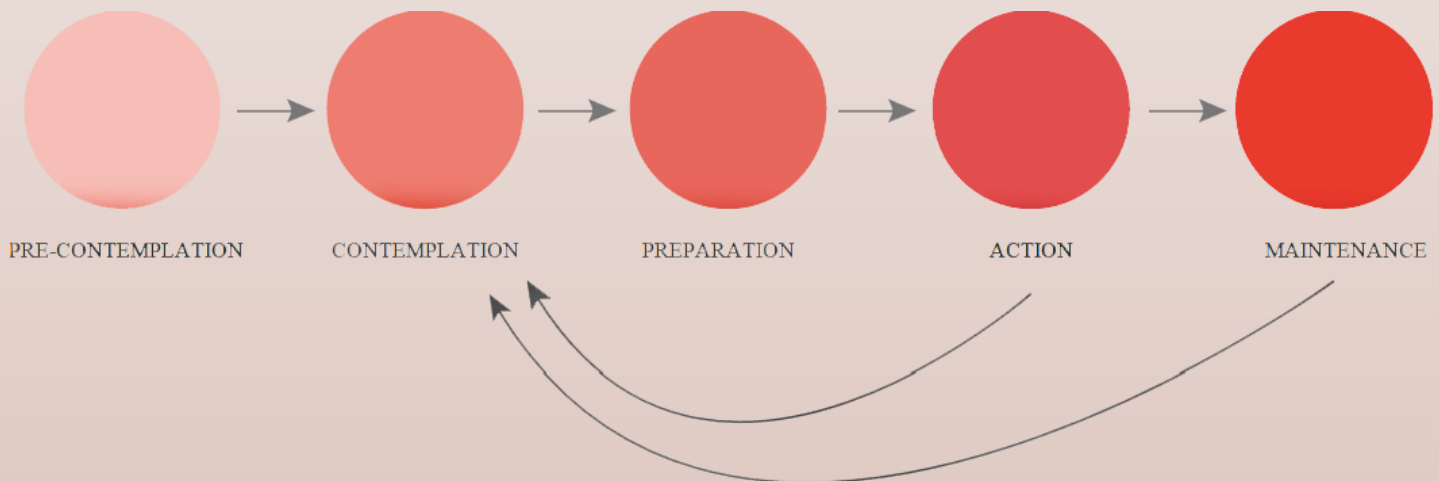
Precontemplation- Students in this stage may not be aware of how stress can negatively affect their health and see no issues with their current behaviors.

Contemplation- Students are becoming more aware of stressors in their life and how it negatively affects all the dimensions of their health. Students may be contemplating on taking steps to reduce their stress levels.

Preparation- Students are beginning to look at resources offered within the campus and community on reducing stress. Set up a daily or weekly schedule to give yourself the time to destress and create a sleeping schedule.

Action- Going to daily meditation/yoga sessions and massages as needed. Focus on decreasing the negative stressors, start a daily journal.

Maintenance- Experience positive changes regarding their sleep patterns and overall mood so they continue with daily yoga session, and add variety by changing up the type of yoga to prevent boredom. Set goals to try new ways to decrease daily stressors.



Resources

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