

# Stress Management

Everyone feels stress at times, and it is not all bad. It is part of a student's life. A little stress is OK, but too much stress can negatively impact your mood, your relationships and possibly your schoolwork.



## Signs of stress

- Feeling depressed
- Poor sleep or poor eating habits
- Chronic fatigue or exhaustion
- Getting sick more often (increased physical complaints)
- Feeling more anxious or nervous all the time
- Poor concentration and difficulty getting your work done
- Feeling annoyed with others
- Feeling you want to give up

22

The average age when a person will experience anxiety for the first time.

4 out of 10

The number of college students that feel stressed.



46.3%

The percentage of college students who feel completely overwhelmed by their academic responsibilities.

11%

The percentage of students who discussed their stress with a campus counselor.

## A COMPOUNDING FACTOR IMPACTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

According to the American College Health Association, the four factors students felt impacted their GPAs included:

STRESS

ANXIETY

WORK

SLEEP DIFFICULTIES



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## Common causes of stress

- **Finances:** paying for classes, repaying loans, housing, necessities, etc. Students may work part-time while in college to help pay for classes, books and living.
- **Job Outlook:** job searching and applying for jobs, transitioning from school to workforce. Students must consider jobs that will help pay off loans as quickly as possible; not all jobs provide this advantage.
- **Academics:** homework assignments, readings and preparing for exams, clinical hours, research papers, etc. Combine all of these and multiple by four, five or six classes, and it can become overwhelming. Stress can also come from poor time-management or unrealistic pressures on ourselves.
- **Family Relationships:** Families are not perfect, and all the imperfections one's family may have can lead to an overload of stress. Some include divorce, family finances and poor communication.
- **Various Other Pressures:** pressure to engage in unhealthy behaviors, homesickness, personal competition, social anxieties, health issues (sickness), heavy workload, relationships and difficulty trying to balance everything.

## How to manage overwhelming stress

- **Focus on the basics:** Stress can start a harmful cycle where basic needs are neglected, which leads to more stress. Focus on basic needs such as eating well, keeping a healthy sleep schedule, exercise and other forms of self-care.
- **Prioritize your responsibilities:** Focus on completing quick tasks first. Having too many "to-dos" can be stressful, even if none of them are very big. Quickly knocking out the small tasks will clear up your mind to focus on larger responsibilities.
  - Strengthen time-management strategies and avoid procrastination.
- **Talk about your problems, even if they won't be solved:** Talking about stressors can help release hormones in your body that reduce the negative feelings associated with stress. Time spent talking with friends and loved ones is valuable.
- **Don't put all your eggs in one basket:** People who are overinvolved in one aspect of their life often struggle to deal with stress when that area is threatened. Balance your time and energy between several areas, such as career, family, school, friends and personal hobbies.
  - Know what you have control over and what you do not. Learn to accept mistakes. This is a natural part of life and will allow for emotional growth.
- **Keep things in perspective:** In the heat of the moment, little problems can feel bigger than they are. Take a step back and think about how important your stressors are in broader context.
  - Attitude is everything! Start the day with positive thinking and gratitude.
- **Set aside time for yourself:** Personal time usually gets moved to the bottom of the list when things get hectic. However, when personal time is neglected, everything else tends to suffer. Set aside time to relax and have fun without interruptions.
  - Use deep breathing, meditation and other relaxation techniques.