



Stress creeping up on you?

When you counsel college students long enough you start to notice themes during certain times of year. Midterms and finals bring an onslaught of phrases like “I’m feeling overwhelmed,” “I’m losing motivation,” and “I’ve just got a lot going on.” These are all common phrases associated with stress and stress is a common condition associated with college students. Good news is if you know some of the signs that you are getting stressed out, then you can do something about it!

So, what are the signs?

- Inability to concentrate
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Difficulty in decision making
- Constant worry
- Forgetfulness
- Frequent crying spells
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Weight gain or loss without a change in diet
- Clenched jaw
- Sweating
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Changes in sleep
- Social withdrawal
- Procrastination
- Defensiveness

Ok, that’s me.....so what do I do about it? Self-care and coping-skills are key factors in managing stress. The Student Health & Counseling Center is one place you can go to talk about your stresses and symptoms. A counselor can talk with you about what’s going on in your life and then see what you are currently doing to take care of yourself and offer you additional ideas to increase your self-care. It’s something we could all use more of! In the meantime, here are some ideas you can start incorporating into your life today:

- Get enough sleep! 7-9 hours of sleep per night is optimal, as is keeping a solid sleep routine. That means going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on the weekends, without your electronics – that means no TV and no phone.

- Get off the couch! It's easy to convince yourself that you're too busy (or it's too cold) to exercise but the adage is true – healthy body, healthy mind. Aim for 30 minutes of activity a day. Try walking, hiking, going to a fitness class, practicing yoga, lifting weights or try out a new sport this winter. It may be hard to get up and go but you'll be glad you did.
- Get some water! Always carry a water bottle with you and stay hydrated. Having enough water is key to feeling energized all day long. You'd be amazed at how many of us are definitely NOT drinking enough water. Challenge yourself to drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily.
- Get organized! Do you have a planner? Do you use it? Map out your week, write down when assignments are due and when midterms occur and work backwards from there to allot time for studying. Write in your other commitments as well (this includes commitments to yourself for good self-care).

Some additional ideas to try:

- Listen to music
- Engage in a hobby you like
- See a good movie (alone or with a friend)
- Read
- Meditate or pray
- Spend quality time with someone you love
- Turn off the news
- Do a random act of kindness
- Get involved with a community event

Stress can feel quite unbearable and can lead to all kinds of somatic symptoms like headaches, digestive issues, breakouts, increased cortisol levels and high blood pressure. Not to mention it can lead to or exacerbate depression and anxiety. We'd like to do what we can to help you cope with the stresses of college life before it gets to that. Give us a call if you'd like some additional tips and a friendly ear, or come to our Stress & Coping group that meets every Tuesday! The group is held in room 210 of the Whittaker Building every Tuesday from 1-2pm. This is an open group and will not count towards your 5 sessions of counseling, so you can come as often as you'd like! Call Stacey Schmitt at 474-7043 for more info.

Student Health & Counseling
Whittaker Building
1788 Yukon Drive
474-7043