



Managing Stress

University of Wisconsin -
Whitewater

Transition Program

Project ASSIST
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College Stress

- Classes designed to challenge students
- Developing independence, responsibility
- Acceptance of peers
- Relationships
- Adjusting to change

Effects of Stress

- **Physical.** Adrenalin is released into the bloodstream. The heart rate and respiration increases. Muscles become tense.
- **Emotional.** Many feel irritability, anxiety, irritability, depression or sadness, or even exhilaration and extreme happiness.

Effects of Stress (cont.)

- **Behavioral.** Some experience stress as a loss of physical coordination and control, loose sleep, or act irrationally.
- **Mentally.** Stress can also reduce one's ability to concentrate, process and store information in memory, and solve mental problems.

Dealing With Stress

- Accept as necessary part of life
- Deal with stress effectively by applying strategies:
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Behavioral
 - Mental

Behavioral Strategies

- Manage time, maintain schedule
- Set priorities
- Realistic, achievable goals
- Balance academic, work, and social demands, activities

Attitude Adjustment

- Healthy thought, beliefs about stress
- Keep things in perspective
- Clarify what one wants out of life
- Re-examine choices we are making

Talk About Stress

- Discuss with friend or counselor
- Good way to start stress management plan
- Speak mind, insights from other person helps
- Talking through problems is important life skill
- Use professional if it helps

Relaxation Techniques

- Stress and relaxation are opposites
- Calming down makes us feel better
- Different things work for different people
- Examples: Find humor, listen to music, practicing musical instrument, meditation, deep muscle relaxation, visualization, hypnosis, etc.

Stress Tips

- Learn To Plan.
 - Disorganization can breed stress
 - Too many projects going simultaneously often leads to confusion, forgetfulness, sense that uncompleted projects are hanging over head.
 - When possible, take on projects one at a time, work on them until completed.

Stress Tips (cont.)

- Recognize And Accept Limits.
 - Most set unreasonable, perfectionist goals
 - We can never be perfect, so we often have sense of failure
 - inadequacy no matter how well we perform.
 - Set achievable goals for yourself.

Stress Tips (cont.)

- Learn To Play
 - You need occasionally to escape from pressures of life, have fun
 - Find pastimes which are absorbing, enjoyable
 - Many options for activities no matter what experience, level of ability is

Stress Tips (cont.)

- Be A Positive Person
 - Avoid Criticizing Others
 - Praise things you like in other
 - Focus on good qualities of others
 - Give yourself credit
 - Appreciate your own good qualities, as well

Stress Tips (cont.)

- Learn To Tolerate And Forgive
 - Intolerance of others leads to frustration and anger
 - Try to understand how other people feel
 - Strive to be accepting of others
 - Accept and forgive yourself too

Stress Tips (cont.)

- **Avoid Unnecessary Competition**
 - There are many competitive situations in life we can't avoid
 - Too much concern with winning in too many areas of life can create excessive tension, anxiety,
 - Make us unnecessarily aggressive

Stress Tips (cont.)

- **Get Regular Physical Exercise**
 - Check with physician before beginning exercise program
 - You will more likely stay with exercise program if you choose one that you enjoy rather than one that feels like hard work, drudgery

Stress Tips (cont.)

- Learn A Systematic, Drug-Free Method Of Relaxing
 - Meditation
 - Yoga
 - Any of a variety of relaxation techniques
 - Can be learned from accredited teachers and licensed psychotherapists

Stress Tips (cont.)

- Talk Out Your Trouble
 - Find a friend, member of the clergy, faculty member, counselor, or psycho-therapist
 - Expressing your "bottled up" tension to a sympathetic ear can be helpful

Stress Tips (cont.)

- Change Your Thinking
 - How we feel emotionally depends on outlook, philosophy of life
 - Changing one's beliefs is a difficult and painstaking process
 - Little practical wisdom in the modern world to guide us
 - No one has all the answers, but many answers are available

Want to Learn More?

Stress Management: More Resources

<http://www.dr-bob.org/vpc/>

- The Unabridged Student Counseling Virtual Pamphlet Collection, huge collection of useful links for a variety of college issues.
- For more information about managing stress, scroll down (or click *Stress* in the index) and look at some of these great resources.