

MANAGING STRESS

COUNSELING AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

215-898-7021

(including nights/weekends to reach CAPS counselor on call)

3624 MARKET STREET, FIRST FLOOR WEST
Philadelphia, PA 19104

MON | FRI 9 am - 5 pm
TUES | WED | THURS 9 am - 7 pm
SAT 10 am - 3 pm

www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps



What is Stress?

Stress is a set of feelings, thoughts, physical and behavioral symptoms that arise from any situation or event that requires adjustment or change.

College students often say stress represents the biggest threat to their academic performance. Stress is different for every student. Standing up to speak in class can be stressful for some, while tests and personal relationships challenge other students.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Stress can manifest itself in many ways:

FEELINGS:

anxious, annoyed, scared, trapped, irritable, overwhelmed, moody

THOUGHTS:

self-critical, indecisive, forgetful, repetitive, excessive, confusing

BEHAVIORS:

avoiding people/situations, startle reactions, impulsivity, increased use of caffeine, alcohol, tobacco or drugs

PHYSICAL:

tight or aching muscles, insomnia, hyperactivity, loss of appetite, headaches, sweating, rapid heartbeat, dry mouth

SOURCES OF STRESS

College students typically experience four different types of stress: academic, social, environmental, or internal.

ACADEMIC:

Work overload, deadlines, decision-making, career issues

SOCIAL:

Autonomy, living away from home, making new friends, managing relationships, living with roommates

ENVIRONMENTAL:

Limited privacy, weather conditions, pressures of an urban environment, noise, cramped living space.

INTERNAL:

Unreasonably high standards, unrealistic expectations, dwelling on negative, worrying about matters you can't control, competing with, and comparing yourself to, others.

GOOD STRESS / BAD STRESS

Stress can be good! Stress can energize, keep you alert, and improve performance. Good stress increases motivation and concentration. Good stress allows you to feel that you have control over your life.

Bad stress is characterized by disappointment, failure, threat, or embarrassment. Bad stress decreases your ability to perform and can threaten your health and well-being. Bad stress makes you feel helpless.

COPING with STRESS

There are many ways to cope with stress. Some are simple and involve minor adjustments in lifestyle. Others strategies require practice and effort.

Basic stress management strategies include exercising, eating regular meals, following a sleep schedule and avoiding too much caffeine. Exercise will energize the body and release endorphins that can help elevate your mood, so take breaks to work out or even to take a walk.

Understanding and challenging your thinking style can minimize stress. Perfectionism, "all or nothing" thinking, or catastrophizing events can increase stress by reducing options and making things seem worse than they are.

Learning to manage and prioritize your time effectively and learning to say "NO" will help alleviate stress and prevent feelings of being overwhelmed.

Change your thinking patterns by creating a more balanced view of situations. Do reality checks of your own assumptions and stay positive to lower your stress levels. Connect with others and talk about your feelings. Finding support reduces loneliness and helps combat stress.

WHEN TO seek PROFESSIONAL HELP

If your stress and anxieties persist or worsen despite efforts to cope, you may need professional help.

A clinical professional can help you determine the source of stress and help you develop coping mechanisms.

CAPS offers a range of confidential services including individual counseling, group therapy, and referrals to community providers.

CONTACT CAPS

CALL OR STOP BY TO HAVE
AN INITIAL CONSULTATION

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Penn RESOURCES

CAPS

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215-898-7021

OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN

215-898-8456

HELP LINE

215-898-HELP (4357)

RAP LINE

(Reach A Peer, 9PM - 1AM)
215-573-2RAP (2727)

SPECIAL SERVICES

215-898-6600

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE

215-746-3535

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR UNIVERSITY LIFE/ STUDENT INTERVENTION SERVICES

215-898-6081

WEINGARTEN LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

215-573-9235

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