

## Stress & Self Care | Getting what you need

Even though it's not always possible to prevent stress, we can respond to stress in ways that take care of ourselves. The first step is to recognize signs of stress in yourself

---

*This semester poses unique challenges in our school and personal lives. It's more important than ever to take care of ourselves.*

---

### RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU'RE STRUGGLING

Here are some things you might notice in yourself if you're struggling with stress or self-care:

- Skipping classes or group meetings
- Feeling unmotivated to study or attend class
- Over-committing to extracurricular activities and having trouble prioritizing
- Overloading your schedule with too much work
- Feeling overwhelmed or anxious about course work
- Having trouble concentrating
- Not finishing your projects or assignments

### TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

#### Know your limits

---

Sometimes students over-commit to tasks because they think they should do a certain amount of work, even when it's unrealistic. Having a good sense of your own workload and mental/emotional bandwidth is crucial.

Map out what you have to do for the week and how much time each thing may take. Keep that in mind before taking on more things.

#### Build your resilience

---

College is a time when many students are figuring out how to balance competing demands and take care of their well-being. Consider ways you can build your own resilience and ability to cope.

Maybe it means making time for exercise, meditation or mindfulness, social connections, getting enough sleep, or avoiding drugs/alcohol. Find what works for you.

#### Know the difference between helpful and harmful stress

---

Exams, quizzes, and other assignments can all bring about stress.

- Sometimes, this stress can motivate us to work and do well.
- Other times, it can feel debilitating and can hurt both our performance and our well-being.

If you feel like your stress reaches a level that hurts your ability to do other things, it might be time to get help. (See resources below.)

## Ask for help when you need it

---

Sometimes we avoid talking about personal struggles due to embarrassment or a sense that others won't understand. This can prevent us from getting the help we need when we're starting to struggle. Although you may think of asking for help as a sign of weakness or admitting defeat, it isn't and there's absolutely nothing wrong with it.

Asking for help can include:

- Reaching out to family and friends
- Talking with classmates or instructors
- Finding support through a therapist or counselor (See resources below)

## Check your syllabus

---

Sometimes, course instructors will include something in their syllabus about student mental health or well-being. They may have policies to help students, including forgiveness for late work or something else to help you when you are going through a tough time.

- If your instructor's syllabus does say something about mental health, take advantage of it if you need to!
- Even if your instructor's syllabus does not say anything about mental health, **it's still worth it to email them and ask for help if you need it.** Professors can be much more understanding than you think. Sometimes, just explaining the situation will result in them giving you some help or accommodations. There's no harm in asking — worst case scenario is that they say no.
- If you don't feel comfortable reaching out directly to the professor, think about other support staff you could talk to such as graduate student instructors or teaching assistants.