

Don't Stress Out! Ten Tips to Help you Stress Less

It's hard to admit our stress. We want to show our peers that we have it all under control. But if you take the time to figure out what aspects of your life are causing you to feel anxious, you can take action. Here are ten tips to help you turn your stress around:

TIP #1

Give yourself props! The life of a student *is* stressful. You are juggling heavy workloads and major life decisions. First generation students have even more pressure - major financial stressors, family obligations, and so on. Anyone would be stressed in your shoes! So don't be hard on yourself. Make reducing stress a priority.

TIP #2:

Never compare yourself to others! You don't know what is really happening in someone else's life. That student who seems to be sailing through life is probably just as stressed. Remember, no one posts pics of themselves on Snapchat looking depressed and exhausted.

TIP #3:

Talk! - to other students, family, friends, BCF, a religious figure, etc. about your stress. It helps to hear another student say, "Wow, I always thought this was so easy for you. I feel so stressed too!" Find out how they cope with pressure.

TIP #4:

Examine your past! This is not the first time you have experienced and dealt with stress. High school and preparing for college was also stressful. How did you successfully manage your stress in the past? Did you play a sport? Go for walks and listen to music? Manage your time better? Call a friend? Find time for the things that helped you in the past.

When you are ready to make a change. It is helpful to get to know yourself.

TIP #5:

Recognize how and when you experience stress. How does your mind and body tell you that you are feeling stressed? Do you feel tired and cranky? Do negative thoughts pop into your head like, "This is never going to get better." What situations cause you to feel this way? Pay attention to your body and mind. When these signs start showing up, it's time to do something different.

TIP #6:

Identify all of the sources of your stress. (Refer to *Student Stress Inventory worksheet*) Here are some typical ones that I hear from students:

1. Procrastination – Wanting to go have fun but needing to study. Working on something for hours and getting nothing done.
2. Academics – Fears about upcoming papers, exams, fitting in all the work, failing classes, etc.
3. Not fitting in and wondering if college is right for you
4. Experiencing racism or feeling a need to work harder to prove yourself to challenge stereotypes
5. Negative thoughts and assumptions, e.g. “They don’t like me.” “I’m a terrible procrastinator!”
6. The future – will it all work out?
7. Rejection from your desired major, an internship you applied for, etc.

TIP #7:

Develop a plan to combat stress. (Refer to *Student Stress Action Plan*) There are endless resources on how to combat stress. Refer to *Student Stress Busters handout* for a list of top stress relievers). Using our suggestions and things that you know work for you, create a few goals. Don’t overdo it. Start with one simple goal that you know you can achieve. Work it into your schedule.

TIP#8

Seek help. It is a strength to seek help. Contact BCF, your mentor, a friend, an advisor, or go to your mental health center on campus. You are paying for mental health services. Try them out! It feels great to sit and vent to someone who is impartial and will keep everything you say confidential.

TIP #9

Remember stress can be good! Stress can motivate you to get stuff done! It isn't always a bad thing, if you can keep it in check.

TIP #10

“Focus on the next shot.” My husband is an avid tennis player. When he is playing a match, he sometimes starts to panic about how good the other player is, how tired he feels, and whether he is going to get badly beaten. He gets through it by focusing on the next shot. Block out those other worries and just focus on the next step you have to take. Taking one small step and then another step will immediately make you feel better.

Never looking back or too far in front of me. The present is a gift, and I just wanna BE. – from BE by Common