



# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES MANAGEMENT & POLICY

“A COLLECTION OF  
INFORMATION,  
OPINIONS, AND WHAT  
NOT’S FOR YOUR  
READING ENJOYMENT.”

## The Monday Dose

*Prescribed by Students for Students*

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By this time in the semester, your schedule is filling up, assignments are pouring in, and you are struggling with balancing your everyday life. The many tasks of a college student can be extremely difficult to manage, and as we all know, the stress will only increase throughout the semester. This is the time where your ability to manage stress can make all the difference in your life. Whether you are a college student or a professional, learning how to manage stress is vital to staying healthy and being efficient in your tasks. This edition of the Monday Dose focuses on **STRESS MANAGEMENT** and aims to provide you with the necessary techniques to manage your stress.

### “A Few Quotes for Your Thoughts”

*“Stress is the trash of modern life - we all generate it but if you don’t dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life.”*

- Teri Guillemets

*“It is not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it.”*

-Hans Selye









# STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## # 1 Avoid Unnecessary Stress

- Know your limits in your personal and professional life and stick to them.
- Avoid people who stress you out as much as is possible.
- Take control of your environment.
- Avoid hot-button topics.
- Pare down your to-do list.



## # 2 Alter the situation

- Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.
- Be willing to compromise. When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same.
- Be more assertive- Don't take a backseat in your own life.
- Manage your time better.

### Dos

- Say No
- Use a Calendar
- Sleep SAVES time

### Don'ts

- Procrastinate
- Allow distractions
- Skipping class=MORE stress

## # 3 Adapt to the Stressor

- If you can't change the stressor, change yourself.
- You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitudes.
- Look at the big picture and reframe problems e.g., see college as preparation for your future live and career.
- Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress - adjust your standards.
- Focus on the positive - take a moment to reflect on your positive qualities and gifts.

## #4 Accept the things you can't Change

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable, rather focus on the way you choose to react to the uncontrollable.
- Look for the upside, as the saying goes, 'what doesn't kill us makes us stronger.'
- Share your feelings. Talk to trusted friends or make an appointment to see a therapist.
- Learn to forgive. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes.

Source: Smith, M. & Segal, R. (August 2013). Stress Management: How to Reduce, Prevent, and Cope with Stress. [Helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_ping.htm).  
[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress\\_management\\_relief\\_ping.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_ping.htm)



# STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## #5 Make time for fun and relaxation

- Set aside relaxation time in your daily schedule.
- Connect with others for support and enhancement.
- Do something you enjoy every day.
- Keep your sense of humor; laugh at yourself.



## #6 Adopt a healthy lifestyle

- Exercise regularly. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Reduce Caffeine and sugar.
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.

## How Procrastinators CAN master time management !!!

Most of us have procrastinated so much that it has affected our performance on exams. The following tips can help us escape procrastination mode and lessen stress:

- Break large tasks up into bite-sized pieces and estimate how much time each piece will take. Working backwards from your deadline, schedule in each piece of your task.
- Plan in breaks. Every 45 minutes take a 10-minute break to do something totally different that relaxes or invigorates you.
- Know when your peak energy time is. If you are a morning person, don't attempt overwhelming tasks at night and vice versa.
- Study with a friend. Just make sure you choose friends that won't help you procrastinate!



# “ASK THE PROFESSORS”

Our professors have had to deal with stress: they had to deal with the same kinds of stress that we face as students and continue to deal with stress as faculty. There is a lot we can learn from their experiences about how to successfully dealing with stress.



## Question:

“What has been your experience with stress-when you were once a student and now that you are faculty? And what are some of the strategies you have found to be most effective in dealing with stress?”

**Answer:** There was never a time in my graduate training that I did not work full-time. During my doctoral program, I worked full-time during my coursework and then resigned my full-time position to concentrate on my dissertation. That lasted about 2 weeks, and I ended up consulting with the hospital on a full-time basis (a win-win for me and the hospital). So, my perspective of being a graduate student and dealing with stress may not be the norm. Between my school, professional, and family commitments, I had quite a bit of stress. However, I have always been invigorated by the process of learning, whether formally or informally, so that school was often a pleasant diversion from my professional stress. It sounds odd to say that, but I have always enjoyed being a student – maybe the reason I’m in academics!

As you know, life comes with stress in many forms. Whether professional or personal, we all have to navigate the waters of stress, so having a strategy to do so is critical. My focus has always been to find balance between the different demands of life. At times, there are high demands in one area of my life that dictate that I "pull back" on another area of my life. I try to make this practice an exception to the norm, and in general try to maintain as level a balance as possible. Of particular importance to me is maintaining a 'big picture' view through my spiritual life. My own struggles often pale in comparison to those of the vast majority of my fellow man - I have much to be thankful for - and keeping an eye on my blessings can really change my perspective about a less-than-ideal temporary circumstance. I also rely on good friends who know me and can provide wise council, via trusting relationships that allow me to be completely transparent to those friends, when developing action plans for stressful situations.

**Answer:** As I thought about my response to this question, I recalled our recent Monday Dose issue about balancing our personal and professional lives. It should come as no surprise to the reader that my “secret” to stress management lies in this balance. My recipe is “work hard, play hard.” While I am highly dedicated to my work, I take time to enjoy my family and the simple pleasures of life. Over the years, I have worked at several academic institutions. At all of those places, I have contributed 100% effort 100% of the time. On stressful days, I remind myself of how privileged I am to work in a university setting where I get to impact the lives of the many men and women who trust us with their education and, by extension, with their livelihood. Having this approach to my work means that there is no room for stress. Our goal is so noble that no time or effort ought to be wasted on drama, anger, or the like!

I am also grateful to work in an environment where “balance” is important. In fact, the mission statement of our College includes an emphasis on “creating an environment that is personally and professionally rewarding for faculty, staff and students.” Outside work, I wear a different hat while accompanying my kids to soccer games and band concerts and while helping with homework and fixing dinner. Family vacations are also a must, but they don’t have to be elaborate affairs. A day in the park or by the pool can be great fun. My family keeps me grounded, and for that, I am grateful.

I have previously worked in environments where colleagues took anxiety or anti-depressant pills to deal with work stress. No way! If you or someone you know is in a similar situation, then it’s time to quit and look for other work opportunities. No one should have to take pills to manage work stress.

Other ways that I manage stress is making sure that I get plenty sleep and eat a healthy diet. This is how I fuel my energy and can keep a smile on my face around the clock. This does not mean that I don’t enjoy dessert or other treats, because, yes, I love chocolate. It just means that I enjoy those treats in moderation. I also avoid stressors by limiting my interactions with negative people.

I’ll finish by saying that ultimately our attitude determines how we perceive situations and life events. What seems like a huge deal today typically becomes a minor issue tomorrow. Keep the big picture in mind, and see the full half of the cup. Positivity and optimism do work!

**Answer:** With nearly all stressful situations, including those at work (or school), talking with your friends, family and colleagues is often helpful to keep things in perspective, which in turn helps cope with anxiety or stress. Do not think that talking with others is a personal weakness; everyone gets stressed from time to time and most survive it. Remember the Beatles song, “I’ll get by with a little help from my friends.”



# DATES TO REMEMBER

**October 31** – Farmers Market

**October 31** – Special Lecture: Bioterrorism—Implications for Public health, The Forum Room, Culp Center, 12 – 1 pm

**November 1 – 3** -- ETSU Homecoming Celebration

**November 3 – 6** – American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Boston, MA

**November 5** – Breakfast with the Expert, Dr. Tim Ricks and John Shutze, Indian Health Service, Lamb 116, 8:30 am

**November 15** – College of Public Health Gran Rounds, Lamb 116, 12 pm

**November 21** -- Special Lecture: Radiation Emergencies – Implications for Public Health, The Forum Room, Culp Center, 12 – 1 pm

**November 28-29** – Thanksgiving Holiday

