



University of North Carolina Wilmington  
Abrons Student Health Center

## INSTRUCTION SHEET: ANXIETY/STRESS REACTION

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed an anxiety/stress reaction. Your symptoms appear to be caused or increased by anxiety.

Stress and anxiety are a normal part of life. But, if the response to stress is out-of-proportion to what is expected, it can interfere with a person's day-to-day functioning.

Mental stress and anxiety can cause *real* physical symptoms. There is no true separation of mind and body: When the mind is stressed, physical symptoms can result.

Obviously, reducing stress is a helpful long-term approach to overcoming an anxiety/stress reaction. Learning to temper one's reaction to stress is perhaps even more important.

### MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR ANXIETY REACTION:

1. Do your best to relax. Stay calm. Realize your condition is not a serious physical problem, and you will be fine.
2. Attempt to deal with your stress in a constructive manner, rather than keeping your feelings inside. Talk through your problems and feelings with friends, family members, or pastors. Many times, just talking about concerns and frustrations improves one's outlook. You will likely learn that your problems and feelings are not different from others' difficulties.
3. Realize that everyone experiences stress and anxiety, and sometimes one must "make the best of it" and try not to worry too much. Let go of concerns in your life that you can't change, and focus on those concerns that you can do something about. Try to make logical decisions as to what is best for you.
4. Try not to over-commit to school and work. Leave time in your schedule for activities you enjoy.
5. Seek avenues of self-help. Self-help books can help you regain control of your life. Relaxation, meditation and biofeedback programs can help control tension.
6. Regular, dynamic (moving) exercise has been shown to relieve anxiety. Running, jogging, bicycling, swimming, playing tennis, or just walking outdoors are beneficial. Improvement in physical health is an added benefit.
7. Avoid alcohol and drug use. Alcohol or drugs may relax a person short-term, but in the long run they make anxiety worse and cause additional problems.
8. Professional counseling is very helpful in identifying causes of stress, and in helping you deal with stress in a constructive manner. The UNCW Counseling Center provides *confidential* counseling for students. Visit the UNCW Counseling Center as soon as possible. Private psychologists, psychiatrists, or counselors can also provide guidance — the Counseling Center can assist you in making appointments with community providers if needed.
9. Counseling Center providers also may prescribe medication to help control the symptoms of stress/anxiety. Medication can be of significant help, but the above measures are important to continue, even if you decide to take medication.