

Dealing with Stress

Being an officer in a student organization can cause a considerable amount of stress. When combined with academic requirements, family expectations, job searches, and other activities, stress can seem overwhelming. Everyone experiences stress, but how you deal with it will help to determine your level of success. Though everyone reacts to stress individually, and different techniques will work with different people, the following tips may help you to deal with stress.

Identify your stress:

The most important step in dealing with stress is to identify it. Realize what you are feeling is an automatic internal response to external situations. If you assign blame or responsibility for your stress on other people or situations, you will not be able to control and decrease your stress level. It is within your power to adjust your life and control your stress levels.

Prioritize and Delegate:

Begin each day by ordering priorities, even if it's just running through a list in your head when you wake up. Structure your time and develop a plan for the most efficient way of completing a project. Delegate, when possible. There are multiple officers and members in each organization who can do work for that organization. Asking them to accomplish tasks can free up some of your time.

Plan ahead:

Schedule more time than you think you will need to accomplish things. This way, if you get done early, you're ahead of schedule instead of behind.

Establish a routine. Especially if you're working with other people in your organization, routine is important. Regular meetings give people automatic deadlines for accomplishing tasks, and keep people accountable.

Anticipate setbacks. Hope for the best, plan for the worst, and understand you'll get something in between.

Make backup copies.

Organize:

Whether you're organizing your information on paper or on a computer, try to keep everything in one place. Use folders to separate information into relevant groups, and reduce the amount of clutter you have. Don't be afraid to throw irrelevant information away and eliminate duplicates.

Establish your zones:

Have a physical place for working, a place for leisure, and a place for sleep. Establishing these 'zones' can help you get in the headspace for those particular activities.

Make your bedroom a work-free zone. Who wants to be stressed in bed?
Find locations to work that are ideal for you. If you work well in complete silence, find a spot on the second floor of the library. If you need some background noise, you could work in the Fisher buildings.

Eliminate Interruptions:

It's hard to buckle down and get work done without distractions. But sometimes it's necessary, and here are some tips to keep yourself focused.

- Put away your phone.
- Don't answer the door. Heck, lock the door if you feel like it. If you do answer, ask visitors to keep their visits brief.
- If you want to listen to music, pick something that is easy to have as a background. Instrumentals or classical music can be good choices, but pick what's right for you.
- If you are itching to get away from your work, walk away for a while. Extreme boredom won't help you be productive, and sometimes your brain just needs a break.

Eat Well:

Eat three meals a day, and establish regular eating patterns.

Increase your intake of whole grains, vegetables, and fruit. Take vitamin supplements, if necessary. Vitamin depletion lowers your ability to cope with stress.

Decrease fats, cholesterol, caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine.

Exercise Regularly:

Participate in exercise that is continuous, rhythmical, and vigorous (walking, running, swimming, bicycling, or aerobics.)

Exercise at least three times a week for thirty minutes each session.

Choose an activity you enjoy with no competition.

Get Proper Sleep:

Don't work out just before going to bed, and avoid caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

Keep your room dark and cool and make sure you have a good mattress.

Establish regular sleeping patterns and get at least six hours of sleep each night.

Avoid afternoon naps: they can make you groggy during the day and unable to sleep at night.

Make an Effort to be Financially Sound:

Avoid spur-of-the-moment purchases.

Cut down to one credit card and use it for emergencies only.

Consolidate debt and work to limit or eliminate it.

Create Time for Yourself Every Day:

Schedule time each day to do something for yourself that you enjoy, and make it a habit.

Spend time by yourself. It's okay to say no to group events if you don't feel like it. Sometimes it's good to just curl up in bed and binge a show

Reward yourself when you complete a task.

Take deep breaths and clear your thoughts when stress gets overwhelming.

Use down time while you are waiting in line or riding the bus to relax. You don't have to be working every second of the day, even though it sometimes feels like that.

Get fresh air regularly.

Talk to close friends or family for additional support. Surround yourself with people that will help you relax, not stress you out more.

Relax however you do it best, be it with humor, music, prayer, positive thinking, long baths, exercise, etc.