Easing Stress: Tips for Achieving Better Mental Health and Well-Being

Stress is often unavoidable and, if you're a student in higher education, it can be especially hard to juggle classes, jobs, and social lives. But it is possible to manage stress levels and improve your mental health and well-being.

What is Stress?

Stress is your body's response to challenging situations. It's a natural process that helps you cope with the demands of life and can help you be more productive and successful. However, if stress stays around too long or becomes too much to handle, it can lead to physical and mental problems.

Causes of Stress in College and University Students

Students in higher education often face a unique set of stressors that can contribute to feelings of stress and anxiety.

Academic pressures, especially for those with multiple classes and assignments, can feel overwhelming. Financial strains can arise, as students struggle to pay both tuition fees and living expenses. Finally, social pressures may also lead to feelings of stress, as students strive to fit in and make new friends.

The Influence of Stress on Well-Being

If your stress levels are too high, you may feel anxious, irritable, or overwhelmed. You may also suffer physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and muscle tension.

Unfortunately, stress can also lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as overeating, smoking, or drug or alcohol use. These short-term coping mechanisms can further exacerbate issues with mental and physical health.

Tips for Achieving Better Mental Health and Well-Being

As important as it is to recognize the signs of stress, you must also take steps to manage it. Here are some tips:

Practice Self-Care

Practicing self-care is one of the most important strategies for managing stress. Taking time for yourself to relax and recharge can help reduce stress levels and improve your overall well-being. Self-care can include activities such as exercising, meditating, or taking time to do something you enjoy.

Develop Healthy Habits

Developing healthy habits is another important part of stress management. These can include eating healthily, getting enough rest, and exercising regularly. But, for your mental health, it's also important to take breaks throughout the day and create boundaries between work and leisure.

Prepare for Stressful Situations

When faced with a stressful situation, it's important to have strategies to help you deal with the stress. Consider taking deep breaths, engaging in relaxation techniques, or talking to a trusted friend or family member. It's OK to take a break from the situation to give yourself time to process and relax.

Get Support When You Need It

Whenever you need help, be aware of how you can reach out. This can include talking to a mental health professional, joining a support group, or seeking out resources on campus. You don't have to go through this alone.

If you need support, our keep.meSAFE program is available 24/7/365 to connect you with a counsellor that speaks your language and understands your unique needs.

Make Learning Easier

It is entirely possible to achieve academic success despite stress. Try setting realistic goals, breaking down tasks into manageable chunks, and seeking help from professors or tutors when needed. And don't forget to take breaks and practice self-care.

Conclusion

Stress doesn't have to control your life. By learning to recognize the signs and taking steps to manage your situation, you can improve your physical and mental health and well-being.

Download the TELUS Health **Student Support app** or call **1-844-451-9700** any time of the day or night for more strategies on managing stress.

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