



The American College Health Association has found that stress is the most commonly reported health impediment to students' academic performance.

Nevertheless, despite opportunities to participate in both formal and informal programs to reduce stress, students, especially those with compromised mental health, tend to under-utilize on-campus resources; thus leaving elevated stress untreated (Crossman et al., 2015; Downs & Eisenberg, 2012; Garlow et al., 2008). Closer examination of the barriers to accessing resources intended to reduce stress reveals that students prefer to deal with their stress on their own and believe that stress on campus is normative, that their need to reduce stress is not serious enough to warrant seeking help and that they have insufficient time for treatment (Downs & Eisenberg, 2012).

Stress and anxiety is part of living. It is impossible to eliminate it from our life. Anxiety can be motivating. Anxiety can push us to get to class on time, do self-care and accomplish our goals. Too much anxiety can be counterproductive, cause us to function poorly and in some cases actually paralyze us. So how can we keep stress and anxiety in a healthy range?

The first step is to acknowledge it. What are the stressors in our life and how can they be managed so they do not consume us? Sometimes the stressor is obvious – too many tests and assignments due at the same time, not getting along with a friend or partner, money.... Sometimes we are feeling stressed and anxious and the reason is not so obvious. Take an assessment such as this [inventory](#) from NYSUT and this may help you better identify what is causing your stress. Another

strategy is to talk to a friend. I sometimes talk with a close friend who knows me well and together we can identify the cause of my stress or stressors.

If you would like to talk to a counselor about the results of your inventory or the stress you are experiencing you can make an appointment by stopping by the Counseling Center in CA 130 or calling 315 574-4034. If you are in need of immediate assistance you should call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text 741741 to speak to a crisis counselor.

Depending on the stressor there are different approaches to help manage the stress. One approach is to define the stressor and make a plan to address it. For example – too many assignments due and not enough time to complete them. What are my options?

1. Look at your schedule and plug in times that you can work on each of the assignments.
2. Ask a professor for an extension, it may be granted, it may not.
3. Let your family and friends know that you are not available for the next few days so you can work on assignments without being distracted.
4. Ask for assistance with other responsibilities you might have such as childcare, laundry, grocery shopping... What are the tasks you need to complete and who might be able to assist with them?
5. Prioritize and tackle the assignments.
6. If this is ongoing and you are not able to manage your time to meet assignment due dates maybe you should meet with a counselor and discuss other options.

Have a plan for managing unavoidable stress. Try to stay positive and practice stress reduction.

For example - My ride is late picking me up for class.

1. Define the problem – I will be late for class and I have no alternatives. Keep a positive attitude. Maybe I can ask another student who lives closer to give me a ride so I am not as late. Regardless, I did not create this situation and I will do my best to get through it.
2. Take a few slow deep breaths.

3. Make a plan for more reliable transportation in the future or make a plan B if ride is late again.

Sometimes our stress level is so high we can't engage in problem solving. Our thoughts are jumbled and we need to lower our anxiety before we can learn how to manage it. Managing stress is learned – we need to be taught how to adequately manage it. Sometimes we learn early in life – maybe we have good role models – sometimes we need to make an effort to learn stress management. Mental Health America has a web page dedicated to Coping that you might want to check out <https://mhanational.org/deal-better-hard-times> . If you would like to talk to a counselor you can make an appointment by stopping by the Counseling Center in CA 130 or calling 315 574-4034. If you are in need of immediate assistance you should call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text 741741 to speak to a crisis counselor.

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