Managing Stress

Peer Mentor Elective Training
Training and Development

- Onboarding
- Orientation checklist
- Mandatory “core” live webinars (attend these first):
  - The Role of the Peer Mentor
  - Peer Mentoring Do’s and Don’ts
  - Professional Ethics for Peer Mentors
  - Establishing Rapport and Motivating Mentees
- Elective live webinars
  - Questioning and Listening Skills
  - Working with New Students
  - Goal Setting
  - Stress Management
- The full schedule of trainings (including the link to use to attend) is available each quarter is located on the Training and Development tab of the Tutor Excellence Guide (http://guides.rasmussen.edu/tutorexcellence)
Learning Objectives

By the end of this training, you will be able to ...

• List the possible impacts of stress on academic performance (negative & positive)
• Describe methods to cope with stress
• Explain the process of supporting a student who is experiencing too much stress
• Select the best support resources/strategy(ies) for each student
Agenda

1. Mission Connection
2. What are some causes & symptoms of stress?
3. How can stress influence academic performance?
4. What are some strategies to reduce stress?
5. Role Play Scenarios: Selecting support strategies
6. Support Resources
Connecting to our Mission

Q: How does helping a Mentee learn about stress management meet our Mission?

The Mission of Rasmussen College Library and Learning Services
The Rasmussen College Library and Learning Services team is rooted in a tradition of student support and driven by a desire for academic excellence. We are passionate about empowering the college community through programmatic collaboration with faculty and staff.

Through curiosity, innovation, and continuous improvement, we cultivate life-long learners who are prepared to thrive in a diverse and digital society.
Suzie the Mentee

Suzie’s instructor told her to meet with you, so she does.

She’s on the verge of tears. When asked, she tells you the following:

Suzie's week could not have started off any worse. First, her babysitter cancelled after coming down with pink eye. Second, her car would not start, even though it had been running just fine. Third, her instructor sprang a group project on the class that needed to be completed by the end of the week. And the topper for the week was when Suzie realized that she had accidently deleted the assignment due for another course from her flash drive. Suzie started to feel stressed, under pressure, and overwhelmed.

Can you identify with Suzie? What would you say to her?
First Step: Empathy

Have you ever felt this way?

- Take a moment and recall a situation where you felt yourself becoming stressed out.
  - How did it feel emotionally?
  - How did you feel physically?

- Can you identify when you are starting to get stressed? What happens?

- How do you handle stressful situations and cope with the stress that comes along with pursuing a college degree?

The best way to start to empathize is to listen.
What is Stress?

• According to Webster's Dictionary, stress is "a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation."

• What does this mean?
  o Every person experiences stress in a different manner caused by a unique set of symptoms and triggers.

• In order to deal with stress & support others in doing so, you need to be able to first identify the signs.

• Good news! Feeling stress doesn’t always have negative consequences!
Identifying the Signs of Stress

• Stress can affect the body in a variety of ways

• Most people think that stress is only a mental ailment. That is not true.

• Stress can impair a person
  – physically
  – emotionally
  – cognitively
  – behaviorally
Symptoms of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Symptoms</th>
<th>Emotional Symptoms</th>
<th>Cognitive Symptoms</th>
<th>Behavioral Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headaches or backaches</td>
<td>Moodiness</td>
<td>Memory problems</td>
<td>Eating more or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle tension &amp; stiffness</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Indecisiveness</td>
<td>Sleeping too much or too little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea or constipation</td>
<td>Irritability, impatience</td>
<td>Inability to concentrate</td>
<td>Isolating yourself from others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nausea, dizziness</td>
<td>Feeling tense &amp; &quot;on edge&quot;</td>
<td>Trouble thinking clearly</td>
<td>Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
<td>Poor judgment</td>
<td>Nervous habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest pain, rapid heartbeat</td>
<td>Sense of loneliness &amp; isolation</td>
<td>Anxious thoughts</td>
<td>Overreacting to problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight gain or loss</td>
<td>Depression or general unhappiness</td>
<td>Constant worrying</td>
<td>Picking fights with others</td>
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Stress & Academic Performance

Stress can impact academic success in a variety of ways:

• If a student feels miserable long term, the quality of their work may eventually suffer. Plus, their perspective is likely off because they’re ‘in the middle of it’.

• It is harder to concentrate when they have a multitude of other things on their mind and they are feeling a variety of stress symptoms.

• Stress-related symptoms such as memory problems, indecisiveness, inability to concentrate, trouble thinking clearly, and poor judgment can negatively impact students’ coursework.

• Students under stress have an increased tendency to procrastinate.

Just think of the positive impact you can have as a Peer Mentor with students!
Stress & Academic Performance

Procrastination

• "If I just ignore my problems, then they will just disappear." They don’t.
• Due dates and deadlines can be overwhelming for students.
• Student may want to stop doing the work. Ignore it. Clearly, not a viable option.
• Time management techniques are key.
  – Help them:
    • get organized and minimize your level of stress
    • stay on pace with the syllabi and course schedules

Test taking

• A student can study for hours, but if s/he is under stress, the cognitive functions are not at their sharpest or strongest.
  – As soon as the stress level escalates, the body tries to fight it off. Instead of the mind and body focusing on the exam, it is busy contending with the stress.
Benefits of Stress

Stress can:

• Give a heads up to make an adjustment now, to avoid worse things later on.
• Sharpen memory.
• Boost one’s immune system.
• Keep one accountable for his/her actions.
• Motivate and inspire to perform better.
• Build confidence.
• Make one more resilient (*I can handle that, look what I’ve already conquered!*).
Coping Techniques

1. Figure out what’s stressing you & then problem solve
   • Write through it. Many times it’s not as bad as we think it is.
   • E.g. Not meeting deadlines > Meet with Peer Mentor & get organized

2. Positive thinking & Perspective
   • Stress can start to overwhelm you so that you feel like you are drowning.
   • View the events causing the stress as challenges to be overcome.
   • Positive thinking will definitely take you further than negative thinking.

3. Eat right
   • Cut out fast food.
   • A healthy diet can help fight off illnesses, maintain a healthy weight, and focus better.

4. Stay hydrated
   • Your body needs proper hydration to operate at peak levels. Water is the best option.
   • Avoid overloading on coffee, energy drinks, or soda pop as they can actually rob your body of hydration.

5. Get plenty of rest
   • Get as much sleep as your schedule allows.
   • You can deal with stress more effectively if you’ve had enough sleep.
Coping Techniques

6. Take breaks
   • Breaks and other short rest periods will help with concentration and retention of information.
   • Breathing techniques (breathe in 4, hold 4, exhale 4).

7. Exercise
   • Fit exercise into your schedule (yoga, walking, etc.)
   • A 30 minute walk can do wonders for you mentally and physically.
   • If you have kids, engage in activities where movement is front-and-center.

8. Say "no"
   • You should not feel guilty saying "no" to others so that you can concentrate on your studies.
   • You can’t please everyone. You do need to take care of yourself.
   • Surround yourself with people who support you rather than take away from you.

9. Alone Time
   • Time away from all of the chaos and excitement of the day is essential.
     o listen to music while commuting
     o enjoy a few moments of peace when you get home at the end of the day

10. Remember that feeling stressed is normal and that it can actually benefit you.
    • Connect with other students—they understand.

http://rasmussen.libanswers.com/faq/202399
Locating Additional Resources

• Part of managing stress is feeling a sense of control and minimizing a sense of helplessness.

• You can help a mentee with this by showing how to locate resources (self-help).

• Perform an internet search with the mentee to locate resources/strategies that can help.
Role Play Scenarios

Mentee: freezes up during timed tests and does poorly.

Mentor:

- During your role play, please touch on these points:
  - Describe how stress might be adding to this.
  - What you might tell the Mentee to help with their stress.
  - What specific strategies you’d recommend for the Mentee.
  - What you would say at the close of the session to encourage follow up.
Role Play Scenarios

Mentee: is having difficulty balancing work schedule, school schedule, and family obligations.

Mentor:

- During your role play, please touch on these points:
  - Describe how stress might be adding to this.
  - What you might tell the Mentee to help with their stress.
  - What specific strategies you’d recommend for the Mentee.
  - What you would say at the close of the session to encourage follow up.
Role Play Scenarios

Mentee: just started school (graduated high school 20 years ago) & feels completely overwhelmed. Doesn’t see a way to make this all work.

Mentor:
- During your role play, please touch on these points:
  - Describe how stress might be adding to this.
  - What you might tell the Mentee to help with their stress.
  - What specific strategies you’d recommend for the Mentee.
  - What you would say at the close of the session to encourage follow up.
Role Play Scenarios

Mentee: has decided to stop doing the assignments in one of her classes for now. She’ll catch up later on. She doesn’t think it’s possible otherwise.

Mentor:

- During your role play, please touch on these points:
  - Describe how stress might be adding to this.
  - What you might tell the Mentee to help with their stress.
  - What specific strategies you’d recommend for the Mentee.
  - What you would say at the close of the session to encourage follow up.
Not sure what to do?

Resources available to you:
- Your Learning Services Coordinator (supervisor)
- Librarian team
- LLC@Rasmussen.edu
- Jon.Mladic@Rasmussen.edu
- http://guides.rasmussen.edu/tutorexcellence
- http://rasmussen.libanswers.com
- Your programmatic and/or course Guide
- Advisors
- Career Services

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Cassandra Feidt (LSC) & Katherine Bessey, School of Business
Anna Phan (LSC) & Emily Gilbert (LIB), School of Health Sciences,
Bethany Marson (LSC) and Suzanne Schriefer (LIB), School of Justice Studies
Kristie Keuntjes (LSC) and Ashley Guy (LIB), School of Nursing
Bonnie Ostrand (LSC) and Jan McCartney (LIB), Schools of Technology and Design
Tammy Hopps (LSC) and Cassandra Sampson (LIB), Schools of Education and General Education
Questions?
Assessment

Don’t forget to ...

1. Complete the assessment for this training
   Assessments should be turned into your supervisor and can be found on Peer Mentor tab of the Tutor Excellence Guide: http://guides.rasmussen.edu/tutorexcellence/peermentor

2. Keep track of the trainings/assessments you complete
   Your Peer Mentor Supervisor will also track this but it will help keep you on track towards certification

