

Help Your Student De-Stress

Most college students experience various kinds of stress; parents may feel stressed too. One problem that many students may encounter is that stress takes them by surprise; they don't anticipate it will become a problem and may have difficulty identifying stress or proactively managing it. Here are some tips on how to help your student manage stress.

- **Anticipate it.** Students who are prepared for the possibility of feeling stressed, will not be surprised when it happens.
- **Identify it.** Stress can be caused by one particular event, or by multiple factors. Help your student name or identify the cause for stress.
- **Normalize it.** A certain amount of stress is inevitable, and may also be helpful for some students. Help your student understand that stress is a normal part of their college experience.
- **Manage it.** There are specific strategies your student can use to manage and lower stress.



The following are some strategies you can share with your student:

- **Get organized.** Manage your time. Make task lists for academic assignments. Keep your desk, room, and workplace uncluttered.
- **Stay healthy.** Exercise regularly. Eat nutritional and healthy meals. Maintain a regular sleep schedule. Avoid or reduce caffeine.
- **Use Relaxation.** Try using meditation, calming music, breathing exercises, visualization or positive imagery. Find some quiet time. Try aromatherapy with lavender or sign up for a mindfulness group.
- **Maintain a balance.** Plan out activities and be careful not to get over-involved. Set limits to avoid burnout. Learn to be assertive in recognizing and prioritizing your needs. Say "I need to think about that" to give yourself time to see if a task is do-able with your existing schedule.
- **Get a change of scene.** Get off campus, go on a hike, visit a friend, go shopping. Involved and active students are often happier and do better academically.
- **Take breaks.** Take breaks in your work to rejuvenate yourself—even 5 minutes helps! Having time to enjoy yourself, pursue a favorite hobby, laugh and feel alive, is just as important as school and work.
- **Practice gratitude.** Take a few moments at the end of the day to reflect on the positive moments. Even when college may seem difficult, there are some parts of your life that are good. Focus on the positive.
- **Love yourself.** Don't beat yourself up when you don't "get it all right." No one can do everything perfectly all the time, and the right balance is different for everyone.
- **Get support.** Talk to friends, family members, or advisors. Consider making an appointment at USF Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for additional support and strategies on how to manage stress.