

Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services

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Issue 2
Volume 1



THE WHALE WATCH

"Looking Out for Yourself and Others"

Welcome to the second issue of "The Whale Watch". Our hope is for you to benefit from the information provided in this periodic newsletter.

Did you know...we develop our outreach programming specific to student needs relative to the NEOMED student community. Whether it is through special event planning, speakers, lunch workshops, emails, newsletters, or any other informational resources we send to you, they are all based on our four foundational elements.



Today, we present to you information from our Stress Response and Mindset elements. Read further for our information on "Stress Management Tips and How to Stop Procrastination".

In This Issue

Stress Management Tips

How to Stop Procrastination

Focusing on Foundational Elements of Stress Response and Mindset

We all Have Stress...

Everyone has stress. It is a normal part of life. You can feel stress in your body when you have too much to do or when you haven't slept well. You can also feel stress when you worry about things like your job, money, relationships, or a friend or family member who is ill or in crisis. In response to these strains your body automatically increases blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and blood flow to your muscles. This response is intended to help your body react quickly and effectively to a high-pressure situation. However, when you are constantly reacting to stressful situations without adjusting counter the effects, you will feel stress which can threaten your health and well-being.

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/stress-coping-everyday-problems>

Want more handouts and resources on Stress Management? Visit the Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI) at www.cci.health.wa.gov.au

Stress Less Tips

Stress Management Tips

- 1) **Identify** your stressors and see if there are some things within your control to manage better. Some things will be beyond your control, for example if you work a job that is based on working towards deadlines then you can't change this without changing jobs. But perhaps you can control some aspects, such as scheduling to have at least a short lunch break each day, or to go to bed earlier so that you have more energy to cope with the daytime.

- 2) **Build** regular exercise into your life - as well as being part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle and giving you more energy, many people find that working out at the gym or playing sport helps them to unwind.

- 3) **Ensure** that you eat and sleep well.

- 4) **Take time** out for family, friends and recreational activities. Most of us know that this is important, but we do not all do it. If you find it hard to make time for this, perhaps you need to take deliberate steps to have time out, such as set aside one evening a week where you meet up with friends or enjoy a hobby or set aside one day of the weekend for relaxing at home.

- 5) **Problem-solving** techniques can be a useful way of clarifying the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and then choosing one to put into action after listing the pros and cons of each option.

- 6) **Learn** calming techniques such as controlled breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, to train your mind and body to become more relaxed. These techniques require practice but can be helpful with regular use.

- 7) You may wish to **speak** to a professional about assertiveness training and communication skills which can help you to deal with challenging situations more effectively, thereby reducing stress.

- 8) **Consider** whether there is negative thinking which is contributing to your stress. Negative thinking can make us worry more than is necessary, increasing stress, and generally does not motivate us to take positive actions.

Let's Get Appy



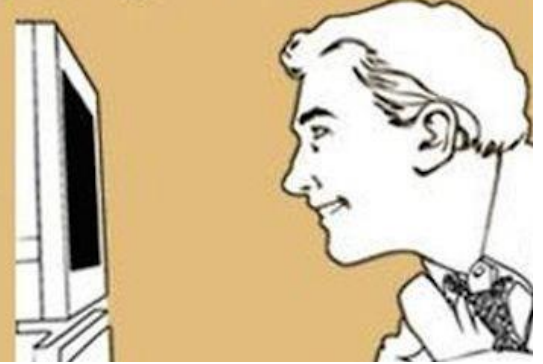
Start Easy
 Break it Down
 Be Nice to Yourself
 Get a Good Why
 Why
 Be Mindful

Dear Self:

Today, I am going to shift into action mode: if I get my studying done now, I can enjoy a good Netflix show later! I'm going to start with making a to-do list then chip away at any big projects by turning them into several smaller projects. I am not going to talk myself out of this. I've got this. I can do it!

Sincerely,
 Me

I'm very busy doing things I don't need to do in order to avoid doing anything I'm actually supposed to be doing.



How to Stop Procrastination

Start easy

Starting is hard, but if you can get over that hump you'll not only have some degree of momentum, but your brain is more likely to pester you to keep working on the task. Why? It's down to a psychological phenomenon called the Zeigarnik effect, which says that unfinished tasks are more likely to get stuck in your memory. (This is also why to-do list items continually pop up in your head until you write them down -- a to-do list calms the Zeigarnik effect.)

Break it down.

Big tasks can be terrifying, so we put them off. By taking that huge job and breaking it down into its first few concrete tasks, you can reduce your fear and help yourself get started. So instead of thinking, I have to finish giant Project X, think, I have to email so-and-so to see if she can meet to discuss the design parameters next Tuesday. The former is scary. The latter is patently doable. Want a handy trick on how to actually accomplish this in practice? Just pay attention to the verbs you use to describe your tasks.

Be nice to yourself

You might assume that to beat procrastination you need to be strict with yourself, but that's not what science says. If you've already procrastinated, you're more likely to get started on time going forward if you show yourself some compassion for your previous slacking rather than beating yourself up about it.

Get a good why

No one would disagree with the common-sense truth that it's easier to get yourself to do something you value, but rarely do most of us connect that simple truism with our anti-procrastination efforts. If you're struggling to get something done, why not spend a few minutes thinking more deeply about exactly why you want to do it.

Be mindful

Perfectionism and fear of failure are at the root of some procrastination. To beat this kind, science suggests you start by listening to your inner monologue and flagging any less than productive thinking. When you catch yourself saying things like, this will be a catastrophe, or I want this to be absolutely perfect! PsyBlog suggests a deceptively simple-sounding intervention to begin taming your anxiety: "Try doubting your doubts. One easy way to do that is by shaking your head while thinking those negative thoughts. It may sound childish, but according to a study, it can help the chronically uncertain."

Contact Us

The Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services is in the Summa Physician Suite behind Ritzman Pharmacy in the NEW Center.

Students seeking non-urgent crisis counseling may call 330.325.6757 or email counseling@neomed.edu for an appointment.

Students seeking immediate crisis counseling may walk in anytime during normal business hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. M-F or call 330.325.6757 and follow the prompts to speak to a counselor.

If you are experiencing an emotional or psychiatric crisis and are unable to reach a NEOMED counselor, please contact local or national Community Crisis Resources:

National Suicide Hotline: 800.273.8255

Crisis Text Line: 741-741

Coleman Professional Services 330.296.3555

The Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services is dedicated to advancing the health and wellness of our students by providing an environment that promotes healthy lifestyles.

We're here to help! Our center provides free and confidential counseling services for stress, depression, sexual assault, time management, suicidal thoughts and a range of other concerns for all NEOMED students.

