



# THE WHALE WATCH

*“Looking Out for Yourself and Others”*

Dear Students,

Our team at the **Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services** would like to reach out to all of you and express our thoughts, feelings and concerns related to the whirlpool of change we have all been coping with in this past week and a half. We recognize that we all have been dealing with sudden changes to our daily routine and procedures which can span the emotional continuum of feeling overwhelmed, fearful, grief/loss, and isolated to being creative, humorous, hopeful, or socially connected through a common experience.

We would like to share with you a helpful strategy designed to manage distress within your control despite the external circumstances.

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## In This Issue:

- STOP **mnemonic** device
- SIGNS of distress
- Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services



The **STOP** mnemonic device helps one to remember core skills which can be applied in any distressing circumstance.

**Stop** - Do not just react. Freeze. Your emotions may try to make you act without thinking. Stay in control!

*During times of intense stress, we often act and say things we don't really mean. Be kind to yourself and others and recognize that we are all trying our best but may not be at our best. However, remember to just pause if you feel your feelings getting out of control.*

**Take a step back**- Mindfully take a step back from the situation. Take a break. Let go. Take a deep breath. Do not let your feelings cause you to react impulsively.

*Remove yourself from the situation so that you do not continue to make things worse for yourself or others. Sometimes we can get stuck on one track and struggle to see other pathways, however, by taking a break you can see other pathways open up.*

**Observe** - Notice what is going on inside and outside you. What is the situation? What are your thoughts and feelings? What are others saying or doing?

*Really take a moment to check in with yourself. Sometimes our feelings do not always catch up with our thoughts and they can get detached from each other. Even though it is tempting to put them aside, it is important to check in with your feelings and recognize the complexity and variety of feelings you might be experiencing. Otherwise, they will*

only continue to build up and manifest themselves in negative ways (i.e. headaches, stomach aches, irritability with others). The **feeling wheel** can be a useful tool to help identify those feelings and build your personal insight.

**Proceed mindfully-** Act with awareness. In deciding what to do, consider your thoughts and feelings, the situation, and other people's thoughts and feelings. Think about your goals. Ask yourself which actions will make this situation better or worse?

*Taking in the whole picture of your thoughts, feelings and current situation choose an action that you think is the best plan. Remember to act on those aspects of your problem solving you truly only have control over, not things you wish you had control over.*

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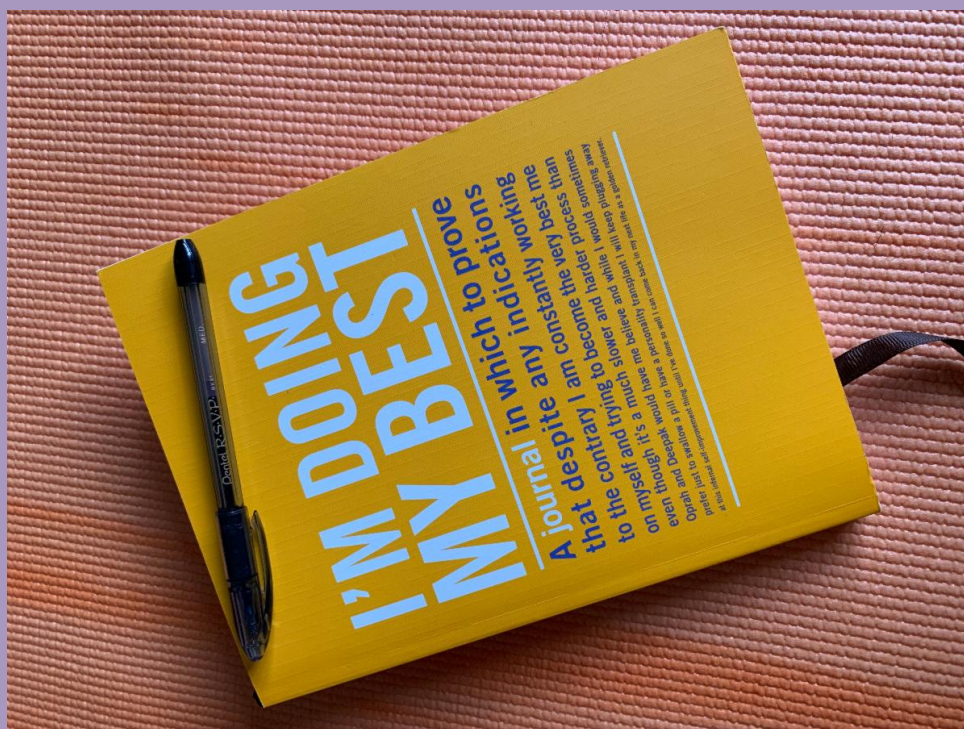
**Here is how the CSWCS team is managing their "mountain" of stress. Please feel free to share with us your ideas for self-care via [counseling@neomed.edu](mailto:counseling@neomed.edu)**



**Dr. Jennifer Dougall is off the grid for her daily run and here is where she ended up!**



Stephanie Orwick is trying to get "swole"



Jessica Lansinger is "doing her best"



Dana (Donna) Whittlesey is having snap chat fun!

## **In the meantime,**

### **Look out for these common signs of distress:**

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Anger or short-temper
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

**Please remember if you are experiencing these types of feelings or behaviors for several days in a row and are unable to carry out normal responsibilities because of them please reach out to our**

office 330.325.6757 or these [local crisis resources.](#)

**Sincerely,**

**The Center for Student Wellness  
and Counseling Services**

**330.325.6757**

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