

# Stress Management Tips 🙌

for the Incredibly Busy OHSU Student

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Here's the deal. If you are stressed out, the following may be going on---

- You may be highly perfectionistic about most if not all things
- You may be comparing yourself to others as harshly and as often as possible
- You may be waiting for and expecting others to take care of your needs and/or read your mind
- You may be reactive and impulsive
- You may be avoiding self care, exercise, medical care, friends, and/or seeking counseling
- You may be living with a “sky is falling” attitude (aka “catastrophizing”)

Let's say some of those are true for you— here are several options to increase your level of self care —

1. Perfectionism? **Use Realism & Moderation**
  - a. Accept reality & focus awareness on the present situation.
  - b. Step back and reflect gently on the problem without judgment.
  - c. Take time to breathe and consider possible alternatives.
  - d. Replace “shoulds” with “I would like to,” “This would likely work for me.”
  - e. Do not entertain “guilt and worry” – instead, stay in the present and treat yourself like you would a good friend who needs loving advice or concern.
2. Comparing? **Attend to Self**
  - a. Focus on your own gifts, strengths and timeline.
  - b. Realize that you literally cannot compare self to others.
  - c. Gently tell yourself – “Comparing isn't useful at this time for me.” Or ask yourself, “In the broader scheme of things.....is what I'm doing helping me feel better? Would I really like to keep doing this?”
3. Waiting for needs to be met by others? **Empower self and use appropriate assertion**
  - a. Come from your adult self when making decisions. Ask yourself “Am I taking a professional, adult role when I respond to or avoid this decision?”
  - b. Take respectful ownership of your actions/clarify needs to self and others.
  - c. Avoid blaming others/avoid a defensive stance/avoid mindreading (*unless you are clairvoyant!*).
  - d. Set small manageable goals of your own and take reasonable actions.
4. Reactive and impulsive? **Use Mindful responsiveness**
  - a. Make decisions from a thoughtful, calm, centered place.
  - b. To soothe self: stop and notice your process/self – notice breathing/heart rate.
  - c. Carefully consider options and how those work for your personal self-care.
5. Avoiding self care? **Utilize resources**
  - a. Internal resources:
    - i. Access relaxing or funny memories to soothe yourself.
    - ii. Develop a “grateful” or nurturing stance toward self and others.
    - iii. Develop a daily balancing ritual (e.g., 120 seconds to meditate, a soothing bath).
  - b. External resources
    - i. Access the gym, counseling, mindfulness workshops, yoga, and/or friends.
    - ii. Go to the park, join a support group, get a massage, go out and play!
6. Catastrophizing? **Assess big picture (larger context)**
  - a. Calm self/assess fear & worst case scenario.
  - b. Ask trusted others to help you view situation more realistically.

## SELF - CARE BOUNDARIES

*To perfect or not to perfect -- that is the question!*

Reserve excellence for work times--

Utilize moderation and fairness of self as often as possible.

*Act from place of self-care rather than from self-harm or self-deprecation*

Act from places of humility, self-care, self-awareness and integrity. One can be an excellent student and provider without being punitive to self. You are learn-ING and need to allow this slower-than-you-might-like- process to happen.

**T**ake time to take time for you

You have many sets of seconds in your day to de-stress.

Use them to help you refuel.

*You are actually wearing the ruby slippers*

Your ability to self-soothe, to reduce comparing, and to enhance self-care is in your hands. You are in control. Just pay attention to your body and thoughts and needs.

**Allow yourself to start your day (mindset) over at any time**

Allow yourself to reset your mind during the day. You do not have to remain stuck in your worries. It absolutely takes work to mentally shift out of an undesired mood, but it can be done by utilizing the tools discussed (e.g., self-soothing, using moderate thinking, meditating for a few seconds, accessing gratefulness list, connecting with supportive others).

**Access supports and allow connection with others**

You have resources to further your life and well-being. Feel free to access support (e.g., therapy, yoga, exercise, friends) to enhance your self-care ---and ultimately patient care.

