Stress is your body’s way of responding to any kind of demand. It can be caused by both positive and negative experiences. When people feel stressed by something going on around them, their bodies react by releasing chemicals into their blood.

Three simple steps for taking action today:

1. **How are you feeling?**

   Life can be a stressful for anyone working on an academic calendar. So, the next time you catch up with someone ask them, “How are you feeling?” and don’t settle for “Good,” or “Fine.” Find out how they’re feeling about all they have to accomplish and, if relevant, see how you can help.

2. **Schedule a break.**

   Some people mock mental health days and moments, but we think they rock. Burnouts are never productive, so if you or someone you know is especially stressed reach out and suggest a break. Can’t take a day off? No problem! A ten minute dance party or watching a few funny videos on YouTube just might do the trick.

3. **Reach out to a student who needs help.**

   Do you know someone who is easily distracted, excitable, irritable, or strives for perfection to the point they are afraid to turn in assignments? Speak up and reach out to them. Let them know that struggling is normal and encourage them to seek help. A show of support and understanding can go a long way for someone struggling in silence.

Some Wellness Recommendations:

- **Exercise.** Physical activity helps your body and mind. Go to the gym. Take a jog. Do yoga. Play Frisbee. Just get moving!
- **Eat a balanced diet.** Don't skip meals. Try to eat from all of the food groups and try to limit your caffeine (minimize soda or coffee).
- **Limit alcohol and stay away from illegal drugs.** Alcohol and drugs aggravate anxiety and can also cause panic attacks.
- **Get involved.** Being active in the community creates a support network and gives you a break from your everyday stress.
- **Do your BEST instead of trying to be PERFECT.** We all know perfection isn't possible, so be proud of however close you get.
- **Take a time out.** Take a deep breath and count to 10. Stepping back from the problem lets you clear your head. Do yoga. Meditate. Get a massage. Learn relaxation techniques. Listen to music.
- **Put things in perspective.** Think about your situation. Ask yourself whether it's really as bad as you think it is or if you could be blowing it out of proportion.
- **Find out what triggers your anxiety.** Take notes or write in a journal when you're feeling anxious or stressed, and then look for patterns.
- **Talk to someone.** Don’t let things bottle up inside you to the point of explosion. Reach out to anyone you feel connected to, such as a friend, partner or counselor, if you're experiencing stress.

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