

Campus Highlight: Stress Relief

Feelings of stress and anxiety are a part of life – especially academic life. Some level of stress can be good for us, as it encourages us toward change and growth. Too much stress over a long period of time, though, can become a burden or even a health risk. It is important to recognize your feelings of stress and anxiety, and learn how to manage them you do not become overwhelmed by them.

College Stress by the Numbers

- **20%** of college students say they feel stressed “most of the time.” [Source: AP]
- **10%** of college students had thoughts of suicide. [Source: AP]
- **34%** of college students report feeling depressed at least one point within the last 90 days [Source: ADAA]
- **13%** of college students have diagnosed with depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions. [Source: ADAA]
- **80%** of college students say they sometimes or often feel stressed [Source: ADAA]
- About half of surveyed college students felt overwhelmed with anxiety at least once within the last **12 months**. [Source: APA]

Academic Demands and Test Anxiety

This is the most common long-term cause of stress for college students. This is, after all, why students go to university – to learn.

Ways to Manage or Reduce Test Anxiety

- **Study as much as you can.** The biggest cause of this anxiety is fear you didn’t study enough. By studying as much you can – you can reduce this fear.
Quiet floors for studying are on some of the 2nd and the 5th floors of Cook Library (Hattiesburg) and the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Gulf Park Library (Gulf Coast). Check out the library’s holiday and extended hours for the end of the Fall 2017 term at http://www.lib.usm.edu/about_us/holidays-and-exceptions.html#7.
- **Try to mimic test taking conditions.** Take practice test or study in the same location as your exam.
- **Learn to study more effectively.** Studying with others either fellow classmates or with tutor can help get through material quicker and more effectively than studying by yourself.
Check out what Academic Help and Tutoring is available at USM on our website at <https://www.usm.edu/oda/academic-help-tutoring>.
- **Find ways to calm down.** Find ways to calm down with breathing techniques, mindless phone games, stress balls, or meditation.
USM’s Student Counseling Services, located in Bond Hall East, now has meditation hours Mondays 12:15 pm to 12:45 pm and Tuesday 5:15 pm to 5:45 pm.

- **Watch your diet.** Eat a well-balanced diet: do not test on an empty stomach and be careful to not consume too much caffeine, as it can exacerbate the physical symptoms of anxiety. *On November 29th, the Fresh Food Company (Thad Cochran, Hattiesburg) will be hosting a **Wellness Pre-Finals Brain Food** event from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.*
- **Get enough sleep.** Research has shown that not getting enough sleep can impair one's memory and reasoning abilities.
- **Exercise Regularly.** Exercise can release tension, and the less tension you feel as you test the better off you will be. Every USM student has a membership to our exercise facilities. *Check out their hours at <https://www.usm.edu/rec-sports/facility-hours>.*

Get Help for Student Stress

- **Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA):** As a student registered with ODA, you may always come to us with an issue you feel you are having – **YOU MAY ALWAYS COME TO US.**
- **Academic Advisor or Professor:** If you are having trouble with any course, feel free to contact your academic advisor and/or the professor of the class. Establishing a relationship with faculty member and letting them know any problems you are having – can often help mediate issues from becoming worse.
- **Student Health Services:** Our campus clinic, the Moffitt Health Center, can provide medical assistance with substance abuse, nutrition, sexual problems, depression/anxiety, or any other health concerns.
- **Student Counseling Services:** The USM Counseling offices can provide clinical assistance with balancing college, stress relief, study skills and anxiety coping, test anxiety, depression, suicide prevention, eating disorders, self-harm, anger management, and conflict resolution.

If you need assistance reaching any of these campus resources, please contact our office for assistance at oda@usm.edu or 601.266.5024.

Reminders

- Open Registration for Spring 2018 Courses Began November 6, 2017. Don't wait to schedule your classes for next semester!
- **FOR STUDENTS WITH TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:** Don't forget to schedule your Final Exams with ODA! The last thing problem needed during finals week is forgetting to schedule your exams with us. Schedule early - the earlier the better.
- Our offices will remain open on Wednesday, November 22, 2017 of the Thanksgiving holiday for our normal business hours of 8 AM to 5 PM. We will be closed Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24, 2017 of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Upcoming Campus Events

- November 15: **USM Cultural Fair** in the Thad Cochran Center Atrium from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
- November 27-December 1: **Stress Less Week** in Shoemaker Square from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm all week all

- November 29: **Wellness Pre-Finals Brain Food** at the Fresh Food Company (Thad Cochran) from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
- November 30: **Lighting the Way** for the Holidays at Southern Miss at the Aubrey K Lucas Administration Building, South Lawn from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

If you need an accommodation to attend or participate in any of the programs or events listed above, please contact our office for assistance at oda@usm.edu or 601-266-5024.

The information in this newsletter was sourced from the Learn Psychology website (<https://www.learnpsychology.org/student-stress-anxiety-guide/>). Please visit their website for more information, quizzes, and resources about stress and anxiety.

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