

# STRESS IN COLLEGE

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Stress is a general term that describes physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. The experience of stress comes from the body's heightened adaptive state in response to external or internal demand. It is when we remain in this heightened state for too long that our bodies become off balance, resulting in adverse physical, mental, and emotional effects.

## POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF STRESS

- Feeling overloaded or overwhelmed.
- Sudden attacks of panic or worry.
- Forgetfulness, disorganization, confusion, or stumbling over words.
- Difficulty making decisions.
- Unintentional weight gain or loss.
- Headaches, chronic pain, frequent colds.
- Depression, irritability, mood swings.

## WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS

- Set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-based) goals.
- Be aware of your support system, and be open to asking for help.
- Use a time management system that includes sleep and time for relaxation.
- Reinforce positive self-statements. e.g. "I can do this;" "I am enough."

## STOP-BREATHE-REFLECT-CHOOSE

The next time you encounter a stressful situation, try the following four easy steps:

### STOP

Just for a few seconds stop what you are doing and stop the negative thoughts.

### BREATHE

Take 3 to 5 deep breaths, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth.

### REFLECT

Ask yourself rational questions about the situation such as: Is this a crisis? Does worrying and becoming tense help to solve it? What action will really serve me in this particular situation?

### CHOOSE

You can make a choice about how you are going to react in a positive manner. You have the power to choose actions and feelings in the face of stress. With practice, you can take control of your reactions.