

# Coping with Life Checklist for the Stressed-Out Student

## *Ongoing Life Management*

- Develop failsafe systems for critical tasks**, e. g. put a nail in the wall by the front door and train yourself to always hang your keys there when you come home, get in the habit of making a visual check that you have your keys in your hand before closing the car door, get in the habit of checking the gas gauge every time you get in the car and the lights every time you get out of the car.
- Create and memorize checklists** for morning, bedtime, leaving the house, going to school, going to work, etc. of things you need to have with you or things you need to do and get in the habit of running through your list.
- Develop checklists of recurring chores and schedule when they need to happen**, for example do dishes every day, go to the grocery store every weekend and do laundry once a month.

## *Getting Stuff Done*

- Map the whole semester's class assignments and exams on a paper calendar or planner at the start of the semester.
- Make to-do lists for every week** and then break it out by day to get the work done on time.
- Prioritize tasks and goals** and consistently act on your choices.

## *Caring For Your Body*

- Think of your body as a machine that needs to be maintained.**
- Manage sleep schedule to get 6 hours a day.
- Eat healthy food and drink water regularly throughout the day.
- Limit alcohol/drugs, coffee, energy drinks and sleep aids.
- Schedule regular exercise and stick to it—at least 30 min three times a week.
- Pay strict attention to medication schedules and/or diet for ongoing health issues.

## *Money*

- Every time you get paid, put \$10 in your car glove box for gas (or fill the tank) or put the money in a hiding place in your house.
- Set up online bill pay and automatic paycheck deposit** so that you don't have to spend time on these tasks or risk forgetting.
- Buy food at the grocery store and pack healthy snacks and lunches for yourself.
- Plan ahead** to avoid fines, tickets, late fees, and interest charges.
- Take the Personal Finance class offered at Grossmont for a GE.
- Systematically evaluate your expenses and cut those that you don't really need.

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## Caring For Your Mind

- Learn to recognize self-talk** and attempt to distinguish it from reality.
- Develop positive self-talk** and/or rational self-talk to replace your normal negative/irrational self-talk.
- Practice filling your mind with neutral thoughts, ideas, images and/or music when you are not actively engaged in any particular task.** The white noise of these thoughts can mask negative ones.
- Determine what the specific triggers are for you to feel “stressed”.** Plan ahead to avoid these situations if possible but also think about what you can do to change the situation. Turn the situation into a game (for example, try guessing what other drivers will do ahead of time and award yourself points if you do). Learn skills to help you cope with these situations, like how to change the tire on your car.
- Take a mental break** with activities that absorb your concentration completely so that you are not actively thinking at all—playing a game, sport or reading for example.
- Practice concentrating on tasks with your full attention** and doing every single one to the best of your ability—especially ones you don’t like.

- There is a lot of bad stuff going on in the world. Seek out others to talk to about the things that bother you the most.** Join a campus club that relates to your interests such as SOGI or Empowerment.
- Decide on one cause and take action steps to help it.** For example, if seeing homeless people is stressful to you, decide to volunteer at a homeless shelter once a month so you feel like you are doing something to help.
- Make a point to accomplish small tasks that get you closer to your goals every day.** Every large task can be broken down into small steps. Develop the sense of having control over you life by making progress toward you goals!

## Interacting With Others

- Try to keep the conscious thought in your mind that all people are worthy of your compassion.**
- Find out what experiences, values, and interests you share with people** and focus on those things rather than the differences.
- Think of at least three reasons why someone could be doing something** that is irritating or bothering you besides the one you first assume. Get creative here, such as they are actually an alien being trying to hide their origin.