Wellness Tips for Faculty and Staff

We’ve all been managing significant stressors and change as a result of COVID-19.  Human Resources together with Personal Counseling Services offer the following tips intended to help as you adjust to these changes.

**Know that what you’re feeling is normal and valid**

It’s normal to experience a range of emotions during this time of COVID-19, social distancing, and the transition to working virtually.  You may be experiencing anxiety, fear, sadness, boredom, anger, or other emotions.  Acknowledging emotions can help you to better manage them. Often, counterintuitively, labeling and allowing yourself to feel emotions results in them passing more quickly.

**Limit your media consumption**

Many people are feeling inundated with media coverage around COVID-19 and its impact.  Do your best to limit your media consumption to 1-2 trusted sources.  For reputable health information, stick to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) websites at <https://www.cdc.gov/> and <https://www.who.int/>, respectively.  It’s also important to limit the amount of time you spend watching the news, reading articles, and scrolling on social media.  Consider setting aside device-free times or 30 minutes each day for news consumption (and steering clear of it outside of that time).  You can also adjust your phone settings to alert you when you’ve spent more than your allotted time on social media or news apps.

**Take an inventory of your work day**

Think about what a typical work day looked like for you before you began working virtually.  Did you have “water cooler talk” at a certain time each day?  Did you gather with colleagues for lunch?  Consider how you might still engage in these activities virtually and take steps to initiate them.  Sticking to a routine is also key.  If you would normally have coffee and breakfast before getting ready for the day, continue to do so while working from home.

**Separate work from home**

If you are able to work from home, it is recommended to physically separate your work space from the spaces where you gather with your family, have your free time, or sleep.  Ideally, your work space will also include natural light, inspiring objects, and other calming features.  For those who used to decompress during their commute home, find an alternative way to end your work day, such as taking a 15-minute walk or engaging in a relaxation exercise.

**Engage in self-care**

It’s more important than ever to set aside time to care for yourself.  Prioritize eating lunch, and taking regular breaks.  Consider attending the weekly faculty and staff yoga or a morning meditation sponsored by Personal Counseling Services.  Check the college calendar for details.  Remember that getting sufficient sleep, eating regular meals, and exercising are essential for your overall health and well-being.

**Focus on what you can control**

Though global events are outside of our control, we do have control over our behaviors.  Think about 2-3 things you have at least some control over that you’d like to prioritize, both at work and personally.  Examples include finding new ways of engaging students, colleagues, and family members in the virtual environment, cultivating deeper relationships with others, setting aside time for self-care, or volunteering in your community.

**Give credit to both yourself and others**

We are all focused on our students having a positive experience this semester, albeit virtually.  Make sure you take the time to express gratitude to your colleagues, while also acknowledging your own successes, big or small.

**Additional Resources:**

Employee Assistance Program: <https://edgewood.sharepoint.com/sites/HR-Benefits/SitePages/Employee_Assistance_Program.aspx>

Group Health Cooperative Behavioral Health Program: <https://ghcscw.com/health-care/specialty-care-and-ancillary-services/behavioral-health>

Sanvello (the premium version is free during the COVID-19 pandemic): <https://www.sanvello.com/>

Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>

Managing Stress & Anxiety around COVID-19 Video from Personal Counseling Services: <https://edgewood.webex.com/recordingservice/sites/edgewood/recording/play/6556b10aaef14f579f5bbd93d6495f38>

Stress & Coping During COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>