

# The Well Student

Life is a Balancing Act: A well student balances all areas of her life...

Chemistry, algebra, French... You're able to juggle a variety of class subjects throughout the day, right? Now all you have to do is balance the different areas of your life. Sounds simple, but this task is probably one of the biggest challenges you will face.

You'll find that you are pulled in many different directions. A successful student is able to switch gears from one subject to the next and then go from studying to having fun. Too much studying may create stress; too much fun will get in the way of your goals. This guide will help you make smart decisions about where to focus your energy in order to be a happier, healthier student.

## The Juggling Act

### Academics

Time management is the key to keeping up with the demands of college. Staying organized with a schedule will free you up to be able to enjoy some stress-free times. Not knowing what is ahead will keep you worrying about what you should be doing.

### Your Social Life

Social connections are healthy, as long as your friends are positive influences in your life. Keep an eye on new friends and dating partners who use up a lot of your valuable time. Allow yourself permission to say "no" and turn down some offers.

### Your Family

Even though family can be a good source of support, there are also times when they create additional stress. It's difficult to focus on school when there is a family crisis at home. Keep in touch with your family but also realize that they are learning to handle some things on their own, too.

### Your Personal Life

You'll need to make time for yourself in order to do things that you enjoy without any expectations or pressure from others. Continue to pursue the interests that you had before college or find new ones to explore. Find ways to develop yourself as a unique, one-of-a-kind person.

# Manage Your Emotions

A well student pays attention to his emotional and mental health...

Positive self-esteem is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself. It is the confidence to know that you are capable of making things happen. No matter what life brings, you will be able to handle it. Tell yourself this over and over again – even if you don't believe it 100%.

- **Recognize your strengths**, identify your weaknesses and give yourself a break. No one is perfect.
- **Acknowledge the positive things that you accomplish** on a daily basis. Share them with a good friend. Resist comparisons to others.
- **Surround yourself with supportive people** who appreciate what you have to offer. Find a role model or a mentor.
- **Overcome your past.** You can continue to make positive changes.
- **Force yourself to take risks.** The more you succeed, the more confident you'll feel.
- **Allow yourself permission to make mistakes.** And learn from them

## Stress 101

Stress is a part of everyone's life. A moderate amount of stress fosters creativity, motivation, and change. Too much stress gets in the way and can become so overwhelming that your body shuts down. Due to the demands of college and our fast-paced lifestyles, it's easy to let stress become unmanageable. Keep a few simple things in mind as you address stress:

- **Stress management is a skill to practice.** You'll get better over time.
- **When you're feeling overwhelmed, force yourself to stop**, and assess the situation. What are the top three things stressing me out?
- **Make a list of things you have to complete and prioritize.** What has to get done today? What can wait until next week?

- **Start tackling the high priority items on your list.** Think about small actions you can take for each item. Cross them off the list.
- **You cannot control all events,** but you can still control most of your responses to unexpected situations.
- **Find ways to take a break,** no matter how much you have to do. Your body needs time to recharge.

### **Stress Less Tips**

- \*Talk to friends
- \*Keep a Journal
- \*Read a good book
- \*Get a massage
- \*Take deep breaths
- \*Take a walk
- \*Listen to music
- \*Dream and laugh
- \*Take things one day at a time
- \*Nourish your spirit
- \*Explore your Creativity
- \*Pursue your passions

## **How Are You Feeling Today?**

Another important part of good mental health is the ability to be clear about your feelings and being able to express these thoughts to others. We all know happy and sad. Other feelings such as anger, hurt, and frustration are more difficult to identify. When you cannot pinpoint what you are feeling, you may feel powerless to make the needed changes in your life.

## **Feeling Frenzy**

Did you know that you can experience hundreds of feelings? The trick is being able to identify them. When you're not feeling right, force yourself to identify at least three things that you are feeling. The more feelings you're able to list, the closer to the root of the problem you'll be. Once you're able to see what's really bothering you, it's easier to take action. Talk with your friend, parent, RA/RD, counselor, campus minister, advisor or someone else who can help you sort things out.

### Common College Counseling Concerns

~Stress ~Anxiety ~Self-Esteem ~Relationships ~Depression ~Alcohol ~Sexual  
identity concerns ~Body image ~Eating disorders ~Violence and trauma  
~Suicidal thoughts

Help is available for all of these concerns and more – right here on campus.

## Stay Healthy

A well student improves his physical health...

### Sweat for Success

A workout is one of the most helpful tools to ward off stress, depression, and illness. Exercise improves sleep, memory, focus, and concentration, to help you succeed! Check out the campus rec center. Or join an intramurals team. These are great places to get fit and meet new people.

### Know Your Nutrition

Hectic schedules make good nutrition a challenge. Follow these tips that promote great health.

- **Find ways to plan healthy meals** into your day, including breakfast.
- **Limit foods and beverages high in sugar, fat, and caffeine.** Most of these foods can give you a quick boost, but then leave you dragging.
- **Take a multi-vitamin.** B vitamins are good for stress.
- **Resist the urge to stop by the vending machines.** They are convenient and cheap, but do not offer healthy choices. Carry healthy snacks. Plan ahead.
- **Educate yourself on good nutrition.** Visit your nutritionist on campus or check out the Internet for more info.

### Eating Disorders 101

If any of these sound familiar, get help for yourself for a friend immediately:

- Anorexia – self-starvation and excessive weight loss
- Bulimia – a secretive cycle of binge eating followed by purging (vomiting)
- Binge Eating – periods of uncontrolled eating beyond the point of feeling full

## The Relationship between Exercise and Prozac?

Did you know that exercise can have the same effect on your brain as an anti-depressant? Exercise affects the chemicals that ward off anxiety and depression. The key is to make sure your workout routine includes cardio exercise that gets your heart rate up for at least twenty minutes several times a week.

## Successful Slumber

Typical college students do not get enough sleep. Yet, a consistent, balanced sleep schedule is one of the *best* things you can do for yourself. Eight hours is the average amount of sleep you need to be healthy – try it.

- **Get a good reliable alarm clock.** Avoid the snooze button
- **Find something to mask outside noise:** an air cleaner, a fan, a noise maker that plays nature sounds.
- **Avoid caffeine after dinner** and eliminate late night meals.
- **Give yourself time to relax before bed.** Read a book. Take a warm bath or shower. Listen to soothing music.

## Be Aware of Alcohol and Other Drugs

A well student makes smart choices about substance abuse...

### Think Before you Drink

Even though some people equate college life with excessive drinking, we know that the majority of college students *don't* engage in high-risk drinking. In fact, the use of alcohol and other drugs can be counterproductive to your goal of being a well student.

- **Resist** the urge to drink to fit in.
- **Find** friends who are supportive of you regardless whether you drink or not.
- **Recognize** that your ability to be in control and make smart decisions is altered while drinking.
- **Work** on positive ways to handle stress and other negative feelings.
- **Know** when to stop. Know when your friends need to stop.

## Deceptive Drugs

- **Prescription medications** can also be abused. Do not take anything that has not been prescribed for you.
- **Dietary supplements and performance enhancing drugs** are just as dangerous
- **Club drugs** (X, G, Roofies, Special K, Meth/Speed, and LSD) can be devastating – especially when combined with alcohol or other drugs. They can produce hallucinations, paranoia, amnesia, and even death.

### Effects of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| -Lower grades and missed classes | -Damaged relationships          |
| -Physical problems and hangovers | -Higher dropout rates           |
| -Poor Judgment                   | -Increased violence and arrests |

A word on

## Date Rape Drugs

The use of specific drugs (Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine) to victimize others is on the rise. Be informed, aware, and take the necessary steps to protect yourself and your friends.

- **Alcohol is the drug of choice** for rapists. Drink in moderation or not at all. Stay away from intoxicated people.
- **Use the buddy system.** Never let a friend leave a party alone!
- **Never leave your drink alone.** Take it with you on the dance floor, to the bathroom... wherever you go.
- **Never drink from a common source** (punch bowl).
- **Don't accept drinks from a person you don't know.** If he is truly interested in you, he will respect you for making smart choices.

You'll find that even though alcohol and drugs may seem to provide a "quick fix," the real consequences aren't worth it. Look for healthy ways to deal with stress.

## Friends and Family

A well student maintains healthy relationships and helps others...

Relationships are hard work. Here are some strategies for having good quality relationships with your roommate, family, or friends.

- **Be a positive and supportive person.** You will attract the same.
- **Stay in touch.** During busy times, a quick email or call will work.
- **Make sure your relationships are two-way.** Give *and* receive...
- **Be honest.** Let others trust you.
- **Talk about your concerns.** Use “I statements (“I feel...”).
- **Your friends and family have other commitments.** Don’t take it personally if they seem preoccupied at times.
- **Make sure you are happy and healthy** yourself.

#### Unhealthy Relationship Signs

- \*Control & criticism
- \*Name Calling
- \*Intimidation & manipulation
- \*Physical abuse & threats

Some relationships take too much time or energy and are not healthy. In the same way that you make choices about other areas of your life, put some thought into who you hang out with.

## Be a Friend

You may find times when others in your life begin to behave in unhealthy ways. Many people feel reluctant to reach out for fear of making friends mad at them. When you reach out, though, you show genuine care and concern.

- **State your concerns in a supportive, non-judging way.** Offer to help them find the appropriate resources.
- **Your friend may not be ready to confront some of his challenges.** Know that you did the right thing and continue to be supportive.
- **You may need help finding resources and talking to your friend.** Find a professional who you can talk to about ways to help your friend. Reaching out is the right thing to do.

#### Trouble with Technology?

A word of caution about our fast-paced technological world... The Internet, mp3s, video games, TV, movies, cell phones, and pages can enhance our lives and even help us connect with others as long as the time is LIMITED. Learn to recognize when your live interaction with friends and family is suffering and learn to SET LIMITS on your electronic activity.

# Ask for Help

A well student gets help when needed...

## Problems with Classes?

Talk to your instructor as soon as you start to struggle with a class. Sit near the front. Stay after class. Go to office hours. Find a tutor. Develop a study group. Attend workshops to improve your study skills. You are responsible for getting the help you need.

## Feeling Stressed? Feeling Overwhelmed?

There will be times in your life when you feel out of control and when these feelings interfere with your school success, your physical health, and your relationships.

You may feel better after talking things out with a friend or family member. Other times, finding a connection with faculty or staff on campus is what you need. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

## Still Feel Out of Control?

It may be time to sort things out with a campus counselor. Counseling is a very healthy choice, much like exercise. So, locate the counseling center on campus. Licensed professionals offer confidential counseling for free or a low fee.

## Evaluate Yourself...

- Do you cry frequently
- Have your sleep patterns changed? Are you sleeping more? Less?
- Do you find yourself being less social?
- Have your eating patterns changed? Are you losing or gaining weight?
- Do you find your head filled with constant, negative thoughts?
- Are you less interested in the things that you used to find fun?
- Do you find yourself preoccupied with certain events, behaviors, or thoughts?
- Are your grades slipping? Are you missing classes?
- Do you feel "on edge"?
- Is your drinking, drug use or other behaviors out of your control?
- Do you think about events from the past that you just can't "get over"?
- Do you ever have thoughts to hurt yourself or others?
- Has anyone else expressed concern for you?

A “yes” to any one of these questions may be a sign that you could benefit from talking with a counselor. Remember that taking this step is a positive way to take care of yourself.

Make the choice to add more healthy behaviors to your life. Believe in yourself. Start today! 😊