Dealing with Stress, Anger, Depression and Low Self-Esteem

Maya Hill

Dealing with stress, anger, depression, and low self-esteem are problems that most college students come across. It’s important to learn how to deal with these problems because, if neglected, they could turn into serious mental and physical health issues.

Stress is a feeling of tension that can be both emotional and physical. This emotion is no stranger to students. From one time or another students have experienced some form of stress in their life. Whether it comes from a full class load or financial problems, students should learn techniques to manage their stress levels. One stress management technique is positive thinking. Being able to have positive thoughts can always brighten the situation. Turning negative thoughts to positive thoughts is another way to deal with stress. Boggling the mind with negative thoughts can only weigh it down and by turning these thoughts into positives can promote a healthy way of thinking. Always remembering to give yourself a break is another way of dealing with stress. Allowing your mind to rest from studying or getting away from that special someone who clouds your brain can help lower stress levels. Taking a break between studying or having a little vacation time gives your mind and body the time it needs to rest. Setting aside time for rest will allow you to assess the stressful situation with a clear head, being able to turn the negative to positive.

Anger is sometimes overlooked as a major emotional issue. Anger is when a person experiences extreme annoyance. It is an emotion that is caused by a variety of different factors in our life. Dealing with anger frequently is not healthy because it can lead to very serious health problems (e.g., high blood pressure, heart attack). Learning to deal with anger is the only way to avoid these health problems. Attending anger management classes can help. These classes discuss in-depth procedures of learning how to deal with frequent encounters of anger.

Positive Thinking and Positive Attitude

Noemi Orozco

“An attitude is an energy that fuels your thoughts, feelings, and actions based on the difference between your expectations and perceptions (our definition of reality) of a situation. Your thoughts define your state of mind. Happy people are most likely thinking happy thoughts. Conversely, sad or angry people are probably having negative thoughts.”

Applying the Positive Attitude into your life
A positive attitude is verbally communicated with action words in an upbeat, enthusiastic tone of voice. Facial expressions and body language often communicate your attitude more clearly than your words and tone of voice. For example, a smile communicates happiness and a positive attitude.
Dealing with Stress...  (Cont. from Page 1)

Depression and low self-esteem are states of mind that students have a habit of falling into when they first come to college. Overwhelmed with a new environment and new people can force some to feel like outsiders and become depressed or suffer from low self-esteem. Depression can be a serious form of sadness that may cause a variety of physical ailments including, but not limited to, overeating, lack of energy, and insomnia. Depression can be very serious or it can be a temporary feeling. Low self-esteem is not feeling very good about yourself; such emotions of worthlessness sometimes accompany lower levels of self-esteem. Students can help overcome depression and low self-esteem by getting involved with extracurricular activities. Get the most out of your college experience by learning outside the classroom. Log onto www.csulb.edu to find out what activities and clubs are offered that you find interesting. Here on campus we have a range of different groups and organizations students can join. Belonging to these groups can raise self-esteem and erase the feeling of depression and loneliness.

College can bring about several emotions from time to time. Dealing with these negative emotions too frequently can cause a severe breakdown in the mental and physical capacities of the body. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), located in Brotman Hall 226, can help students with any of these problems. They offer a variety of free services, such as stress management classes, for students. You can contact them at (562) 985-4001 or log onto www.csulb.edu/divisions/students/CAPS. Knowing how to assess these different problems can only help and promote a healthier emotional state.

References:
1. www.medlineplus.gov
2. www.encarta.msn.com

Improving Relationships

Improving relationships in your life is a noble endeavor. It is also a lifelong process. In our lives we have many relationships, and at any given time we may have a copious amount of different relationships. Each of our relationships is different in its own unique way. We have impersonal and personal relationships that we experience daily. It is mainly our goal and focus as individuals to strengthen our personal relationships, whether it is with immediate family members, friends, a spouse or lover, etc.

The key to improving these different relationships in our lives is through communication. “Learning how to understand and improve interpersonal communication can improve relationships with family, loved ones, friends, and colleagues and can enhance the quality of physical and emotional health”.1 It is important to realize that in order to improve relationships you have with other people, communication must take place. Families that exhibit a healthy aura and who have successful and healthy relationships communicate. “The sheer quantity of communication depends on family members’ needs, expectations, careers, activities. But the talking extends beyond idle chatter to focus on issues that help the family adapt to change and maintain a sense of cohesiveness”.1

Before you can expect to improve relationships with others through communication, it would behoove you to begin with yourself. Some ideas and tips that you can practice and start implementing into your life to improve relationships are learning to focus on not just your needs, but also the needs of those with whom you are in relationships with. Also, you can practice not holding grudges against those who have ‘wronged’ you, but instead you can try letting go of the past. Acceptance is another valuable key to improving relationships with those in your life. Sometimes you have to accept that a person will always act a certain way, or do certain things, and that there is nothing that you can do to change that.

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Improving Relationships...

It is also important to realize that you cannot change a person, because change needs to come from the inside out, not the outside in. By being empathetic towards those with whom you have relationships with, it is another way of improving your relationship status. Anger management is also something that one should try to keep in check. It is hard to improve and mend personal relationships if you cannot communicate properly because of anger management issues.

Positive Thinking...

Hands, arms, and gestures also communicate your thoughts and feelings. For instance, waving your arms frantically in the air communicates excitement, while shaking a clenched fist communicates hostility.1

Here are some examples of positive language that you can use to change your attitude:
- I can
- I will
- I expect it
- Positively
- I will make time
- I’m sure
- I choose to
- Go1

Positive Thinking

Positive thinking is maintaining focus on the positive.2 Positive thinkers don’t deny problems, they just don’t let those problems dominate their thinking.3 Positive thinking has also been described as having a domino effect from different parts in one person’s life and from person to person. “Each considerable change starts with a minor change. In order to affect our environment positively, we need to start with sorting out our personal life. As we work on overcoming our problems, we become more relaxed with ourselves.”4

The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology reported that in a recent study: “When positive thoughts dominate in response to a message, increasing confidence in those thoughts increases persuasion, but when negative thoughts dominate, increasing confidence decreases persuasion.”5 Positive thinking has been shown to have a positive effect on how cancer patients feel. Rachel Charles, a recovering cancer patient shared her story in Harmony: New Approaches to Cancer and wrote: “Not only has positive thinking helped me to stay healthy, it has added warmth and richness to my life never previously dreamed of.”6

References:

START EXERCISING TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

By Michelle Biba

By adding fitness to your life, you will not only change your physique, but you will improve your attitude, your health, and your body image. Some of the best fitness regimes can be found through CSULB’s intramural sports programs or after-school activities. These after-school sports clubs offer more than just fitness and fun, but also people who are passionate about the same sport, which can lead to valuable friendships. Your local community centers also offer a variety of dance and fitness classes to bring out the new you.
Good Eating and Weight Loss

Beverly A. Castro

Human beings require food to grow, reproduce, and maintain good health. Without food, our bodies could not stay warm, build or repair tissue, or maintain a heartbeat. Eating the right foods can help us avoid certain diseases and improve yourself. Chemical substances in our food called nutrients fuel these and other important functions. Nutrients are classified as essential or nonessential. Nonessential nutrients are manufactured in the body and do not need to be obtained from food. Examples include cholesterol, a fat-like substance present in all animal cells. Essential nutrients must be obtained from food sources, because the body either does not produce them or produces them in amounts too small to maintain growth and health. Essential nutrients include water, carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals.

An individual needs varying amounts of each essential nutrient, depending upon such factors as gender and age. Specific health conditions, such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, illness, or drug use, make unusual demands on the body and increase its need for nutrients. Dietary guidelines, which take many of these factors into account, provide general guidance in meeting daily nutritional needs.¹

Seven nutritional guidelines were developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These guidelines advise Americans, two years of age or older to better their health and lower their chances of getting certain diseases.

THE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS
1. Eat a variety of foods to get the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need for good health.
2. Maintain a healthy weight to reduce your chances of having high blood pressure, heart disease, a stroke, certain cancers, and the most common kind of diabetes.
3. Use sugar only in moderation. A diet with lots of sugars has too many calories and too many nutrients for most people and can contribute to tooth decay.
4. Choose a diet moderate in salt and sodium to reduce your risk of high blood pressure.
5. If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation. Alcoholic beverages supply calories, but little or no nutrients. Drinking alcohol is also the cause of many health problems and accidents and can lead to addiction.
6. Choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits that provide needed vitamins, minerals, fiber, and complex carbohydrates, and can help you lower your intake of fat.
7. Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol to reduce your risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer and to help you maintain a healthy weight.²

Weight Loss

The number of calories you eat and the number of calories you use each day control your body weight. So, to lose weight you need to take in fewer calories than you would use. You can do this by becoming more physically active or by eating less. Following a weight loss program/method that helps you to become more physically active and decrease the amount of calories that you eat is most likely to lead to successful weight loss. The weight loss program should also help you keep the weight off by making changes in your physical activity and eating habits that you will be able to follow for the rest of your life.³

Important considerations when choosing a weight loss method or program include personal food preferences, the desire for structure in the program and the degree of support in the home, workplace, or a chosen group. Logistic details to consider include time, money (for the costs of programs and special diet foods or supplements), transportation, and the ability to integrate the eating pattern of the dieter with others in the home, particularly if the dieter is a primary food preparer. The most important feature of a successful weight loss program is maintenance of stable weight or of reduced weight.⁴

While no weight loss method can be guaranteed to work for everyone, there are several things you can do that are considered safe.
1. Write a food diary. This can help you pay attention to the foods you eat.
2. Analyze your intake. Using a 3-5 day dietary recall from your diary, you can analyze your diet online or have it evaluated by a Registered Dietitian.
3. Decrease calories. A deficit of 500-1000 calories per day could result in a reduction of about 1-2 pounds per week.
4. Increase calorie expenditure: exercise at least 3 times per week for at least 30 minutes. Building muscle also increases basal metabolism.
5. Eat more fiber. Adding fiber can increase bulk in the stomach and help you feel full with less food.
6. Decrease fat. One gram of dietary fat has more than twice the calories as one gram of carbohydrate.
7. Reduce stress. Find relaxation methods that work for you to limit excessive eating triggered by stress.
8. Eliminate boredom-eating. Make a list of at least ten things to do when you’re bored and post it on the refrigerator.
9. Eat healthy foods. Fruits and vegetables have fewer calories and more vitamins and minerals than fast foods and processed meals.

Footnotes:
1. USDA and DHHS. 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
Good Eating... (Cont. from Page 4)

10. Eat small, frequent but planned meals. Don’t skip meals which can result in binging.
11. Limit alcohol intake.

References:
1. “Human Nutrition”
5. “How to Lose Weight Safely” http://nutrition.about.com

Counseling Services on Campus

Nhordia Gonzalez

CSULB provides students with a variety of free counseling services that include psychological services, specific ethnic group services, and dating tip assistance. These different services are great for leading students in the right direction in regards to their goals, school, family and friends, and even personal matters.

One such service that should be taken advantage of by all students is Counseling and Psychological services (CAPS). CAPS offers an array of counseling services including group counseling and individual therapy. Group counseling workshops include Stress Management Workshop, Latina Unidas Workshop Group, Dating 101, and Brighter Days for the visually impaired. Those students who are involved in group counseling find it very helpful in that they receive mutual support from others. Students, through their interaction with others, learn from those who have similar concerns. CSULB students may sign up for these services by making one-on-one appointments, group-counseling appointments or by walk-in emergency appointments. Students should keep in mind that all services offered by CAPS are free and confidential.

Another on-campus counseling service is offered at the Women’s Resource Center (WRC). The WRC offers a number of services including educational programs that will alert and inform students of worldly matters. Such programs include seminars, guest speakers, classroom presentations, workshops, and even small group discussions. Any of the above programs may concentrate on topic-related issues such as relationships, sexual harassment, sexism, racism, eating disorders and stress management. The WRC is not just a place where one can go to receive information and useful advice; it is also a place where people can go to just relax!

There is one service that all students are unable to escape from in their college careers. The Academic Advising Center can assist students with general education requirements, academic programming, information about academic probation, remediation strategies and procedures for repeat/delete of courses, and much more. The Center works by appointment basis only, although they can see a limited amount of students on a walk-in basis.

The Career Development Center (CDC) is another one of the many services found on campus. The CDC is committed to training students the skills and techniques they need to meet their career goals. Experienced professionals can provide students with services such as career and vocational assessment tests, choosing a major, planning for their career, the preparations necessary for constructing resumes, and how to develop a job search strategy. The CDC also offers activities to help students who are seeking job fairs, workshops, part or full-time jobs, internships, volunteer experiences and even on-campus interviews. With the help of the CDC, students will be able to make intelligent career decisions.

Finally, students should take advantage of the health-related counseling services provided by Student Health Services. Services consist of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) Prevention Program, HIV Testing and Counseling, and Nutrition Counseling. The ATOD program was designed to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems by

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Counseling Services... (Cont. from Page 5)

offering students assistance in educational strategies and activities through education, prevention and treatments. Another service offered at the Student Health Services is HIV Testing and Counseling. This short counseling session helps the student identify ways to reduce their risk. Students have access to free and confidential HIV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and Chlamydia testing and free counseling advice that emphasizes the importance of practicing safe sex. Finally, Student Health Services also offer students the opportunity to seek assistance with Nutrition Counseling. The purpose of Nutrition Counseling is to provide all students with the opportunity to learn about nourishing foods and appropriate diets suited for their physical well-being, which will enable them to improve their health.

New programs and services are added to the ones already discussed every year. Check out what is available and take advantage of these services to help yourself grow and be healthy, both mentally and physically. See below for locations and telephone numbers of the services mentioned above. For other services visit www.csulb.edu and www.csulb.edu/centers/shc/hrc/.

Counseling Services Directory

• Psychological and Counseling Services (CAPS): BH-226, ext. 54001
• Women’s Resource Center (WRC): LA3-105, ext. 58687
• Academic Advising Center: LIBE-124, ext. 54837
• Career Development Center (CDC): BH 250, ext. 54151
• Student Health Services (SHS): ext. 54771
• Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs: ext. 54771
• HIV Testing and Counseling: ext. 54609
• Nutrition Counseling: ext. 54609

Happy Holidays