



# Counseling Center

## Stress Survival Kit

Tips and resources to cope  
with distress



**UNPLUG:** Limit your consumption of social media and the 24-hour non-stop images. It's important to stay informed, but creating boundaries is important.

**BE PRESENT:** Use reflection to recognize your inner thoughts and feelings. Be curious and non-judgmental and give yourself permission to feel the way you do. Although avoiding can be useful, “stuffing” or ignoring strong emotions can have negative impacts.

**REFUEL:** Focus on restoring yourself with rest and healthy food. Drink water and try to limit caffeine. Move a little every day. Take a walk; look at the sky; be in nature. Journal or meditate. Make art or watch funny videos. Read something fun.

**CONNECT:** Engage with supportive friends and allies. Talk about current issues, if needed, but be aware of when you're feeling overwhelmed. Not everyone will share your perspective, so it's OK to limit your topics and avoid heated conflict. Reach out to supportive services on-campus, including the Counseling Center.

**DO SOMETHING:** Channel what you're feeling into positive, meaningful activity. Be informed and proactive around issues that matter to you. Find ways to engage in your community through advocacy in ways that fit for you.

# UNPLUG

## Technology Fatigue:

Monitor how you feel after using technology for long periods of time. Feeling preoccupied or even fatigued from technology is real. Knowing your limits and unplugging from our phones, TVs, and other screen-based devices can help lower stress.



Consider scheduling a short block of time in the morning and one in the evening to catch up on news without checking for every new update during the day.



*During “digital breaks,” take time to focus on something enjoyable, such as a hobby, exercising, being in nature or spending time with family and friends.*

## Alternative Activities:

1. Journal: Write down your thoughts, feelings, or just an account of your day.
2. Get active: Walk, stretch, do some jumping jacks.
3. Talk: talk face-to-face with someone.



# BE PRESENT

Consider practicing **self-compassion** as you work through challenging or uncertain times.

Try grounding skills. Common grounding skills are diaphragmatic breathing five sense grounding, and progressive muscle relaxation (videos on YouTube)

Grab your phone and your earbuds and head outside for a guided **mindful walk** to de-stress.

## SELF-SOOTHING

Self-soothing is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions.



### Sight

Low lighting  
Soothing colors  
Sleeping masks  
Coloring books  
Pinterest Collages

### Touch

Soft things  
Cuddle things  
Massage  
Hot/cold shower  
Heated/weighted blanket



### Sound

Calming noise  
ASMR videos  
Nature sounds  
Guided meditations  
Binaural beats



### Smell

Aromatherapy  
Fresh air  
Candles/insense  
Comforting smells



### Taste

Strong flavors  
Warm drinks  
Eat slowly  
Nostalgic flavors



[www.blessingmanifesting.com](http://www.blessingmanifesting.com)

## Top Meditation Apps by Downloads in the U.S. for 2018

sensortower.com

### Overall Downloads

- 1  Calm
- 2  Headspace
- 3  Insight Timer
- 4  Aura
- 5  Simple Habit
- 6  Breethe
- 7  10% Happier
- 8  BetterMe
- 9  Pacifica
- 10  Abide



More helpful applications are available on the Florida Southern College counseling center webpage.

The Florida Southern College counseling center also offers weekly webinars on various topics of stress management, time management, and more. You can visit our website for a list of times and topics.

Listen to nature and **soothing Tibetan singing bowls** 



## Grounding



Grounding strategies can help us get in touch with our bodies and surroundings in the present moment. Pause what you are doing and pay attention to what you can see, hear, smell, and touch in your environment.

# REFUEL

## Balance

Focusing on your well-being is more important than ever! Trying to keep a balance in most areas of your life will help you roll through challenging days more smoothly and keep you on the road to wellness!



## Eating and Nutrition

For tips, guidelines, and health information, this is a [great resource!](#)

You can check out **FSC Wellness Programs** and Resources for more information such as [Project Fit](#)



## Sleep

Is your sleep schedule irregular? Are you sleeping more than you want to be? Are you having [trouble falling asleep](#)? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," you may benefit from these sleep hygiene tips and resources!

### [Sleep Hygiene](#)



## Exercise



**FSC Wellness Center** offers a TON of information about their fitness programs for students!

See their website here:

[FSC Wellness Center](#)

Popsugar offers [more resources](#) for healthy habits!

# CONNECT

## Five ways to build stronger connections

- 01 Write a letter
- 02 Pick up the phone and call
- 03 Ask meaningful questions
- 04 Answer questions with honesty
- 05 Connect via video

COMPASS

Robert Reffkin, Founder & CEO

## Connecting Virtually

Zoom dance party

[Netflix Party](#)  
[House Party](#)

TikTok Challenges

Virtual group workouts

[Amazing support groups](#) for EVERYONE and all topics!

Virtual book clubs

Virtual karaoke on Google Hangouts

## Spiritual Connection

Spirituality can be one way to connect with yourself, others, nature, or a higher power(s).

- [Loving-kindness](#)
- [Meditation](#)



## Why Connect?

- To decrease loneliness, stress, depression, and anxiety
- To acknowledge collective trauma and experience solidarity
- To experiencing love and belonging
- To give and receive care and compassion

## Connecting...connecting.... connecting....

*Zoom fatigue is real*, but sometimes it's our only option. So how do we connect without MORE stress? Try these tips:

- Establish “no screen” blocks of time in your day – times when you don't have classes, meetings, etc. (See “UNPLUG” above)
- While turning off your camera during class can be a relief, make sure you don't do it all the time. Leaving your camera on, even if you can only see your instructor and one other brave student, can help you feel connected and more focused on content.
- Avoid multi-tasking. Even though it can be tempting to use more than one device at a time or check emails and respond to texts while Zooming, focusing on the content of the meeting will actually give your brain a break! And we all need a bit more peace and focus right now!

# DO SOMETHING

It can be challenging to stay motivated when everything around us seems chaotic and scary. But doing something – some action, no matter how small – can lessen some of the uncertainty.

What you do doesn't need to be political – taking a step to stand up for or stand in for a person or a cause or the environment means *we're not powerless*. Check out the ideas on this page!



## Lean on your **STRENGTHS**

Knowing your strengths can help you address problems more effectively and engage in activities that generate confidence and purpose. Try taking the [VIA Character Strengths Survey](#) to identify your strongest traits.



**FSC ENGAGE** are a few ways to promote a sense of empowerment and contribution when we may be feeling helpless.

Want to have a voice in local or national politics? [Check this out](#) for ideas!

Simply want to support a cause that you care about? You can volunteer [locally](#) or for a chapter of a national organization. [Start here!](#)

## CLUBS AND ORGS at FSC!

## Wholeness

Think about what makes you feel whole, grounded, or like *you*. *It can be helpful to consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.*

## Connect with your Values

Identifying what is important to us can be one way to foster motivation. Try one of the values card sorts below and then consider how you can express your values on a daily basis.

[Online values card sort](#)

[Printable version](#)



Image from [simplepsychology.org](http://simplepsychology.org)

# what is mindfulness?



Have you ever noticed that when you are doing quite familiar and repetitive tasks, like driving your car, or vacuuming, that your mind is often miles away thinking about something else? You may be fantasising about going on a vacation, worrying about some upcoming event, or thinking about any number of other things.

In either case you are not focusing on your current experience, and you are not really in touch with the 'here and now.' This way of operating is often referred to as **automatic pilot** mode.

**Mindfulness** is the opposite of automatic pilot mode. It is about experiencing the world that is firmly in the 'here and now.' This mode is referred to as the **being** mode. It offers a way of freeing oneself from automatic and unhelpful ways of thinking and responding.

## Benefits of Mindfulness

By learning to be in mindful mode more often, it is possible to develop a new habit that helps to weaken old, unhelpful and automatic thinking habits. For people with emotional problems, these old habits can involve being overly pre-occupied with thinking about the future, the past, themselves, or their emotions in a negative way. Mindfulness training in this case does not aim to immediately control, remove, or fix this unpleasant experience. Rather, it aims to develop a skill to place you in a better position to break free of or not 'buy into' these unhelpful habits that are causing distress and preventing positive action.

## Core Features of Mindfulness

### Observing

The first major element of mindfulness involves observing your experience in a manner that is more direct and sensual (**sensing mode**), rather than being analytical (**thinking mode**). A natural tendency of the mind is to try and think about something rather than directly experience it. Mindfulness thus aims to shift one's focus of attention away from thinking to simply observing thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (e.g., touch, sight, sound, smell, taste) with a kind and gentle curiosity.

### Describing

This aspect of mindfulness relates to noticing the very fine details of what you are observing. For example, if you are observing something like a tangerine, the aim is to describe what it looks like, what is its shape, colour, and texture. You might place a descriptive name to it, like "orange", "smooth", or "round". The same process also can be applied to emotions (e.g. "heavy", "tense").

### Participating Fully

An aim of mindfulness is to allow yourself to consider the whole of your experience, without excluding anything. Try to notice all aspects of whatever task or activity you are doing, and do it with your full care and attention.

### Being Non-Judgemental

It is important to adopt an accepting stance towards your experience. A significant reason for prolonged emotional distress relates to attempts to avoid or control your experience. When being more mindful, no attempt is made to evaluate experiences or to say that they are good, bad, right, or wrong, and no attempt is made to immediately control or avoid the experience. Accepting all of one's experience is one of the most challenging aspects of mindfulness, and takes time and practice to develop. Bringing a kind and gentle curiosity to one's experience is one way of adopting a non-judgmental stance.



### Focusing on One Thing at a Time

When observing your own experience, a certain level of effort is required to focus your attention on only one thing at a time, from moment to moment. It is natural for distracting thoughts to

emerge while observing, and there is a tendency to follow and 'chase' these thoughts with more thinking. The art of 'being present' is to develop the skill of noticing when you have drifted away from the observing and sensing mode, into thinking mode. When this happens it is not a mistake, but just acknowledge it has happened, and then gently return to observing your experience.

## How to Become Mindful

Mindfulness is a skill that takes time to develop. It is not easy, and like any skill it requires a certain level of effort, time, patience, and ongoing practice.

Mindfulness can be taught in a number of ways. Meditation is one of the key techniques used in mindfulness training, but not the only technique. Contact your mental health professional for further information on mindfulness training and whether it may be suited to your needs.



Centre for  
**CCI** Clinical  
Interventions  
• Psychotherapy • Research • Training

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See website [www.cci.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au) for more handouts and resources.

# 5 Steps to Eliminate Performance Anxiety

## SEE

Notice 5 things that you can SEE and name them out loud.

5



4

## TOUCH

Notice 4 things that you can TOUCH and take the time to actually feel those items.



## HEAR

Next, notice 3 things that you can HEAR and name them out loud.

3



2

## SMELL

Notice 2 things that you can SMELL and name those things out loud.



## TASTE

Finally, notice 1 thing that you can TASTE.

1



[WWW.HOPERIDGECOUNSELING.COM](http://WWW.HOPERIDGECOUNSELING.COM)

## CALM BREATHING

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### What is “calm breathing”?

Calm breathing (sometimes called “diaphragmatic breathing”) is a technique that helps you slow down your breathing when feeling stressed or anxious. Newborn babies naturally breathe this way, and singers, wind instrument players, and yoga practitioners use this type of breathing.

### Why is calm breathing important?

- ◆ Our breathing changes when we are feeling anxious. We tend to take short, quick, shallow breaths, or even hyperventilate; this is called “overbreathing”.
- ◆ It is a good idea to learn techniques for managing “overbreathing”, because this type of breathing can actually make you feel even more anxious (e.g., due to a racing heart, dizziness, or headaches)!
- ◆ Calm breathing is a great portable tool that you can use whenever you are feeling anxious. However, it does require some practice.



**Key point:** Like other anxiety-management skills, the purpose of calm breathing is not to avoid anxiety at all costs, but just to take the edge off or help you “ride out” the feelings.

## How to Do It

Calm breathing involves taking smooth, slow, and regular breaths. Sitting upright is usually better than lying down or slouching, because it can increase the capacity of your lungs to fill with air. It is best to ‘take the weight’ off your shoulders by supporting your arms on the side-arms of a chair, or on your lap.

1. Take a slow breath in through the nose, breathing into your lower belly (for about 4 seconds)
2. Hold your breath for 1 or 2 seconds
3. Exhale slowly through the mouth (for about 4 seconds)
4. Wait a few seconds before taking another breath

# postpone your worry



Worry can occur at any time or place, often without you being aware of its exact triggers. As such, worry can be very interfering when going about your daily life. A strategy to deal with this problem is to postpone your worry to a particular worry period. By learning to postpone your worry, it will be less intrusive in your life and you will be managing your worry effectively, giving you a greater sense of control. The steps to postpone your worry are outlined below. Be prepared to practice this approach over and over again. It does take some time and patience.

## 1. Create a worry period:

- To begin, choose a particular time, place, and length of time for worrying. This time, place and duration should be the same each day (e.g. 6pm, study, 20 min)
- Make this place unique and comfortable, free from distractions. It should not be somewhere you go to regularly, like a lounge room chair. Rather somewhere you assign for the worry period only.
  - The time should be convenient so you can regularly follow through with the task, and not close to bed time.



## 2. Postpone your worry:

- As soon as you become aware of a worry, postpone it to the worry period.
- Note your worry briefly on paper (in a couple of words only). Carrying a small notebook with you may be useful.
- **Remind yourself** that you will have time to think about it later, no need to worry about it now; you will be in a better position to deal with the worry in the worry period; and there are more important or pleasant things to attend to right now, rather than worry.
- Turn your focus to the present moment and the activities of the day to help let go of the worry until the worry period has arrived. **Tip:** see the **What is mindfulness?** or use the **Letting go of Worry with Mindfulness** sheets for help in doing this.
- Finally, decide what is the most important and best thing you can practically do for yourself right now. Take immediate action to do something that is either practical, positive, pleasant, active or nurturing.



## 3. Come back to your worries at the designated worry period:

When your worry period comes around, settle yourself down at the place you had planned and take some time to reflect on the worries you had written down from the day. Some points to remember are:

- Only worry about the things you have noted if you feel you **must**.
- If all or some of the worries you wrote down are no longer bothering you or no longer seem relevant, then no further action is required.
- If you do need to worry about some of them, spend no longer than the set amount of time you specified for your worry period. It may also be helpful to write your thoughts on paper rather than worrying in your head. You can do this in whatever way feels right to you.



**Note:** Later on you will learn more specifically what to do with your worries, but for now just focus on the process of postponing your worries throughout the day and only worrying at a set time of the day.

Worry postponement may seem like a strange thing to do, and it may seem like an effort to carry a notepad around to jot down your worries and commit to sitting down and reflecting on the days worries at a set time everyday.

It is important to do this at the start because it is a difficult and new skill you are developing. But with time and practice in this formal way, you will be able to do it effectively more informally. Also, typically people predict that they won't be able to postpone their worrying, but often people are surprised that they are actually able to postpone many of their worries, and experience a greater sense of control.

# Effective Sleep Strategies

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- Before going to bed, practice the same relaxing rituals to train your brain for sleep.
- Eliminate light stimulation for at least 1 hour before bed (including screens).
- Exercise during the day.
- Establish a consistent bedtime and waking time.
- Avoid napping.
- If you have trouble falling asleep, replace activating thoughts with relaxing ones.
- If worries haunt you at bedtime, schedule a worry time during the day.
- Ensure that your sleeping environment is conducive to sleep.
- Use relaxing breathing techniques to prepare for sleep.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods in the late afternoon and evening.
- If you can't fall asleep after 30 minutes in bed, get up and do something relaxing in the dark.

# Additional Resources

## RESOURCES on campus

[Simmons Multicultural Center](#)  
[Center for Student Involvement](#)  
[EngageFSC](#)  
[Campus Safety and Security](#)  
[Community Living](#)  
[Career Center](#)  
[Student Disability Services](#)  
[Student Health Center](#)  
[Wellness Center](#)  
[Student Solutions Center](#)  
[Student Accountability](#)  
[Testing Services](#)  
[Campus Ministries](#)  
[Office of International Students](#)



Check out the Counseling Center website for [Self-Help Resources](#)!

THANK YOU to our colleagues at other institutions for sharing their resources. Some information in this document was adapted from Michigan State University and California State University at Long Beach. ❤️

Visit [FSC Counseling Center](#) webpage

We are offering virtual individual and group webinar services to students

You can reach us M-F 8AM-5PM

→ (863) 680-6236 ←

Follow FSC Counseling Center on social media!



Questions and concerns about mental health? Check out the [JED Foundation's Mental Health Resource Center](#).

## ★ NEED IMMEDIATE SUPPORT?

National Suicide Hotline:  
1.800.273.8255

Campus Safety: 863.680.4305

Peace River Center: 863.519.3744

Trevor Project hotline 866.488.7386.