



Campus COVID Update

TIPS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF DURING COVID-19

Here are some reminders and ideas for supporting you in your journey through 2020.

Explore! Social support. Social support is a critical component to healthy living. It should be a safe place to share your feelings and can take the form of experiences that are fun, relaxing, or playful. Expressing yourself to a willing listener and/or having a fun experience are effective ways to combat stressors and burnout. Try out some online learning groups or cooperative online games. Explore something new and discuss it with others.

Stop! Doom Scrolling. Make choices about your exposure to the media and social media. If you have the data you need to understand your daily and civic responsibilities, then choose to expose yourself to information that is constructive and makes you feel that your contributions to the world, community, family, and self are valuable.

Move! Every day move your body in ways that raise your heart rate and even get a little sweat on. Endorphins are helpful in stress relief and resistance, so go outside, mask at the ready, and burn off some aggravation. No one ever regrets getting a little exercise.

Write! It's validating to write down what is chasing you around in your thoughts. With expressive journaling, you allow yourself at least 15 minutes to write it down just the way it comes out — no worries about edits or perfectionism. Letter writing can be actual writing of letters and sending them, writing encouraging anonymous letters and just leaving them around to be found by a random person, or letter writing to the parts of you that need to hear from you. Give yourself 15 minutes of conscious exploratory writing and see what happens.

Eat (smart), Drink (more water) and Be Mindful. Food is medicine, so treat what you choose to eat with reverence for its ability to support your emotional well-being. Slow down when you are eating a meal or snacks. Substitute teas and seltzers for cocktails or wines, dried fruit and dark chocolate for muffins, and nuts for munchy carby snacks. Pay attention to the message and timing of your cravings; what

are they telling you about your workload, stress level, and feelings? Ask yourself before you eat or drink something: "What do I really need right now?" Increase your awareness of what you need and want and slowly bring yourself back into alignment.

Breathe, Stretch and Soak. Use tools like online meditations and yoga. Try deep breathing and deep exhaling for 20 rounds. Try just one online chair yoga class. Do not underestimate the value of a hot bath, maybe with some Epsom salts (about a cup per tub of water). Decrease of stimulation is your emotional detoxification as well, so dim the lights and noise and leave your phone on the counter. Try to skip the wine for the full detox-ification experience. Do a footbath if you don't have time for a bath.

Progress Over Perfection. Remind yourself that every day is a chance to support yourself in new ways, to ask for what you need, and get better at life when normal is a moving target. Notice if you are putting unrealistic expectations on yourself or family when you are working from home or on campus. Remind yourself to choose progress in holistic being over rigidity and perfectionism. You are doing the best that you can with what you have. Keep going.

But What If It's Bigger Than That? The long haul of COVID-19 can cause serious strains on relationships and mental and physical well-being. This strain can manifest itself in depression and anxiety, domestic abuse, substance abuse, and feelings of suicidality. Know that there are professionals online and at agencies who have been trained to help with the exact worries and experiences you are having. For us here at SCSU, the Marriage and Family Therapy Program offers teletherapy for free to faculty, staff, and students. For other issues, you can use 211 to get good referrals, or your general practice physician can refer you. Getting help for mental well-being, safety, and substance use is welcomed. You have a right to be healthy and safe.

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