### How to Recognize and Manage Stress

**Recognizing stress overload:**

College life is full of new experiences and discoveries, deadlines and demands. For many students, this way of life can cause feelings of anxiety and stress, especially during finals time.

Stress isn’t always bad, however. In small doses, it can help motivate you to do your best and perform under pressure. But when you're living in a perpetual state of emergency or worry about the future, your mind and body can pay the price and you can start to feel out of balance.

Stress is cumulative. Your early signs of stress may include headaches, irritability, nervous stomach or disrupted sleep. Once you learn to recognize your own early warning signs, you will know that these symptoms are your body's way of telling you to slow down and find a way to de-stress.

If you do not heed the warning, your stress and anxiety can continue to build and cause serious disruption emotionally, physically, academically and socially. Stress can impact your relationships, your ability to concentrate during remote or in-person classes, and it can have a negative effect on your immune system, making you more prone to illness.

The good news is that you can protect yourself by recognizing the signs and symptoms of stress and taking steps to reduce its harmful effects.

**Stress is the normal physical response that you have when you are faced with a challenge.** This challenge might be a paper deadline coming up, an important speech, or a job interview. Feelings of stress often dissipate after the stressful experience or challenge has ended.

**Common effects of stress:**

Stress affects every aspect of our lives. You may experience mental, behavioral, physical and emotional symptoms. While these symptoms are common during stressful times, people with anxiety disorders may experience them in absence of a stressful experience.

**On your body:** Headache, muscle tension or pain, chest pain, fatigue, change in sex drive, stomach upset, sleep problems, frequent illness

**On your emotions:** Anxiety, restlessness, lack of motivation or focus, irritability or anger, sadness or depression, forgetfulness, feeling overwhelmed, insecurity

**On your behavior:** Over or under eating, angry outbursts, drug/alcohol use, social withdrawal, sleeping too much or too little, relationship conflicts, crying spells, avoidance/procrastination

**Getting help:**

Students often feel as though they should be able to cope with everything. If excessive worry and stress is impacting the quality of your life, it is time to get help. A mental health clinician or a physician can help you identify a variety of treatment options that can help you find relief.

There are a number of resources available on campus that can help you gain a better understanding of the ways stress and anxiety impact you. Contact Purdue University Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) for guidance and recommendations at 765-494-6995.

Reference: https://uhs.umich.edu/stressmajor