

UNIT 5

Back to Basics

There is a lot of stress on our campus and in our world right now. At times like these, taking care of the basics of your physical health and daily activities is critical.

Self-care focused on diet, sleep, and daily activities can give you a sense of grounding and balance during these difficult times and support you in coping with challenges.



Feed Your Body a Forest

When we're under stress, it's common to reach for comfort foods.



This is understandable, and it's important to be gentle on yourself during challenging times. This tool helps you balance the habit of going for the comfort foods with an invitation to include a diversity of fruits and vegetables in your daily diet. These foods are important for a healthy microbiome, keeping your body functioning at its best and helping you manage stress.

The recommendation from Professor Lowry to “feed your body a forest” is a good reminder to seek out fruits and vegetables and try new ones, when possible. Also, when you have limited access to diverse and healthy foods, spending some time in natural environments can be good for your gut health. Time outside in the sun and fresh air, especially if it's combined with movement like walking, hiking, or other exercise is a great way to care for your body, even when social distancing requires you to do so on your own.



Check the resource section on Canvas for additional ideas about nutrition and campus supports.



TOOL 2

Rest and Replenish

Sleep is often the first area of physical functioning that gets disrupted under times of stress.

Unfortunately, sleep deprivation and fragmentation can impact your health, wellness, and learning.

Valuing sleep is critical, even though some sleep disruption when starting college is common (and may be especially the case right now).



This tool invites you to regard sleep as essential for everything else that you are doing, and to practice healthy sleep habits.

Explore the following:

- ✓ Remind yourself why sleep is important with a memo on your phone or a post-it in your room.
- ✓ Create a sleep ritual. (e.g., dim lights, turn off devices, relaxing activity, etc.)
- ✓ Set a reminder on your phone when to start your sleep ritual.
- ✓ Use your bed for sleep only, not activities like studying, watching movies, etc.
- ✓ Get exposure to morning light.
- ✓ Adhere to a consistent sleep schedule. (i.e., use same sleep and wake times each day versus trying to “catch up” on the weekend)
- ✓ Pay attention to and minimize things that can be disruptive to your sleep. (e.g., alcohol, caffeine, exercise close to bedtime)

As you practice with these sleep tools, you may find that you have more energy not only for coping with challenges but also for pursuing the things that are important to you. **If you find that you have ongoing challenges with sleep, check the resource section on Canvas for additional support ideas.**



TOOL 3

Plan Accomplishment, Connecting, or Engaging Activities (ACE)

Another way to support your wellness is to make use of the connections between what you do and how you feel. Small adjustments in daily activities can make a big difference in how you feel. Activities that boost your wellness often fall into one of three categories, which we note with the acronym “ACE.”



Accomplishment activities provide a sense of achievement, mastery, or getting things done.



Certainly, school work falls under this category, but you may have a number of other areas of your life that provide opportunities for accomplishment, too. Keeping a schedule for yourself that includes structured time for getting things done can be helpful. Under times of stress, in particular, it may be useful to break these activities into smaller, more manageable chunks.

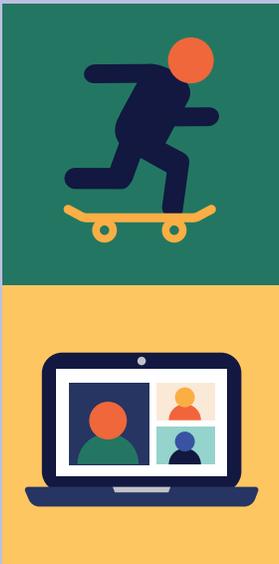
Make a list and start with just one step.

Even spending 15 minutes on a daunting task or assignment can help you get started and develop a good sense of what you’ll need to do to finish or master it.

Connecting activities engage you with other people.

Starting college today is likely to change your social world and access to support in significant ways.

Revisit the Unit 3 and Unit 4 Wellness Workbooks to reflect on some of the people, places, pets, passions, and plants and ideas for connection. Practice making time to connect, especially if you are feeling stressed.



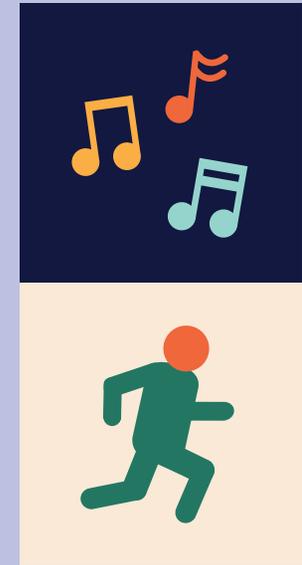
Some ideas from Unit 3 and 4 include: Surprise someone with a small act of kindness, attend office hours, reach out to a classmate, make a phone call to say hello to someone you feel close to, host a virtual game night, or water your plants.



Enjoyment activities provide a sense of pleasure, delight, or fun.

During this time, some of the activities you typically engage in may be unavailable.

Think outside the box and engage in things that bring you enjoyment that may be less social: listen to your favorite music, watch a movie you've enjoyed before, revisit your favorite books, go on a run, bike ride, or hike, or share fun activities and experiences online or by phone with others.



Identify at least one ACE activity that you want to add to your schedule this week. Even though it can be challenging due to social distancing or other restrictions, small steps to do even one ACE activity during your day can help reduce stress and support your wellness.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



What connections do you notice between eating, sleeping, daily activities, and your health, wellness, and learning?



What ideas for ACE activities do you have for this time of social distancing?



Which of the eating or sleeping tools did you use this week? How did it go?



Looking ahead to the next few weeks, how would you like to focus on eating, sleeping, or daily activities to support your wellness?

