

# what it takes

For All Students

October 20, 2024

## Times of Anxiety and Stress Can Be Healthy

Hi everyone,

Did you know that almost 40% of college students report that they often feel anxious? Maybe you are worried about an upcoming exam, a relationship, whether you will get a good job, or even how you will approach a social situation over the weekend. I want to remind you that experiencing stress is completely normal.

Everyone experiences anxiety—and it can even be a healthy part of life. Anxiety can alert us that something needs our attention, is dangerous, or requires careful thought or planning. Often, when you put some effort into effectively managing whatever is causing your anxiety, it resolves itself on its own.

Other times, anxiety is not so healthy. It overwhelms us and goes from a helpful warning system to something that consumes too much of our time and energy. Successfully managing anxiety is a skill that can be learned.

We have a few tips for you to use when you are feeling particularly stressed or anxious:

- **Use your body.** When your body is tired, your brain is tired, and calmer too. Exercise regularly, and when you are feeling anxious, doing some pushups, jumping jacks, going for a run, or lifting some weights can really help.
- **Practice self-compassion and kindness.** Come up with some phrases that you can repeat to yourself that are encouraging like “I can do hard things,” “This is a rough patch, but I can make it through,” or “I am strong, capable, and resilient.”
- **Practice Mindful Walking.** Walking can be relaxing and meditative. Mindful walking, a practice of deliberately going slowly and noticing how you walk, can also offer relief from anxious thoughts. If you can’t go outside, you can try walking across the room.
- **Practice Dropping Anchor.** This includes 4 simple steps:
  1. *Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings.* Notice what is happening in your inner world. Observe your thoughts, emotions, memories, images, and urges. Be curious and gentle. Just notice, without passing judgment.
  2. *Come back into your body.* Connect with what is going on in your body rather than

back and neck. Take some steady, deep breaths.

3. *Engage with what you are doing.* Notice what is going on around you. Refocus your attention on whatever task or activity you are doing.
4. *Repeat as many times as needed.*

These are just a few of the many ways you can manage typical anxious feelings. Of course, if using these kinds of tips are not helping, or you feel your anxiety is becoming debilitating, reaching out for help is always encouraged.

We want to remind you that we have a Center for Student Counseling right here on campus on the ground floor of Kettler Hall. You can call 260-481-6200 or email [csc@pfw.edu](mailto:csc@pfw.edu) to make an appointment. If you are experiencing a non-life-threatening crisis or have a more immediate need, stop in to see us during our open hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon.

All students are also welcome to use our quiet study space and low-sensory relaxation area with recliners, headphones, weighted blankets, fidgets, and relaxing sights and sounds if you just need to get away from it all.

If you are ever in crisis after hours or are concerned for your own health and safety—or that of others—please proceed to an emergency room, call 911, or contact University Police at 260-481-6827.

Remember, anxiety is normal. You often have the tools you need to manage it on your own, but if you need additional assistance, we are always here to help!

## Positive Practices

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Developing a strong rapport with your instructors can enhance both your academic and personal success. Attend office hours, engage in class discussions, and ask questions. Your professors can serve as mentors, guide you in selecting courses, help you secure internships, and even assist with finding graduate programs or career opportunities.



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