Understanding Stress: the first step to management
What do CMU students stress about?

- Difficulty of academics (47.5%)
- Extra-curriculars (33%)
- Time management (33%)
- Too much academic work (42%)
- Feeling isolated or lonely (22%)
- Meeting others’ expectations (32.5%)
- Finances (15%)
What is Stress?

Stress is the body’s response to any demand placed on it; including *real* or *perceived* and *negative* or *positive* demands.

| Stress can help us: Stay focused, energetic and alert, respond to crises, and rise to meet challenges, but may become negative when it interferes with our functioning. |
What happens to the body during stress?

**Sympathetic Nervous System**
prepares body for a response to a threat

**Parasympathetic Nervous System**
regulates calm, restful activities

Source: http://stopbreathethink.org/
Caffeine and Sleep

Tips for Sleeping Better

In order to sleep better at night and reduce daytime sleepiness, try practicing these tips:

- Wake up and go to sleep at the same time each day
- Establish a bedtime routine
- Create a sleep-conducive space (dark, quiet, and cool)
- Use your bed only for sleep and sex
- Don’t eat within 2-3 hours before sleeping
- Exercise regularly but avoid it a few hours before bedtime
- Avoid caffeine close to bedtime
- Don’t smoke — it can lead to poor sleep

How Caffeine Works

Caffeine can have a stimulating effect as soon as 15 minutes after consumed. Once in the body, it takes about 6 hours for one half of the caffeine to be eliminated.

Caffeine cannot replace sleep; it temporarily makes us feel more alert by blocking sleep-inducing chemicals in the brain and increasing adrenaline production.

It has been known to result in:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Rapid heartbeat
- A “caffeine crash”
- Excessive urination
- Sleep disturbance
200-300 milligrams of caffeine per day is considered a moderate amount of caffeine intake.

How does your intake match up?
Managing your study environment can reduce stress while studying.

**Optimize Your Study Space**

**Reduce noises and distractions**
Alert friends that you want a quiet, undisturbed period to study. Turn off music or television or pick a radio station without commercials or use a play list.

**Remove or minimize distractions**
Close a door, if possible. If in the library, consider studying on a quiet floor. Take a break from social media and TV.

**Comfort**
Use a comfortable chair and sit upright, avoid lying or sitting on your bed as you might fall asleep. Study in the same place each time; your brain will associate that place with learning.

**Be prepared**
Have adequate lighting and all of the tools that you need (pencils, pens, calculator).

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Stress Journal

Using a stress journal can help identify patterns and new stressors

**Stressors:**

**Routine** - What stressors occur frequently and predictably?
1) Not enough sleep.

**Unique** - What stressors are unpredictable and infrequent?
2) Fights with boyfriend.

**How do I react to these?**

**Physically**
1) Tired and physically exhausted all the time.
2) Crying, yelling.

**Emotionally**
1) Feel overwhelmed and like I can’t succeed in classes.
2) Feel like a bad partner, not good enough.

**How do I cope with these stressors?**
1) Drink caffeine.
2) Talk to friends.

**What stressors do I frequently experience?**

**Do I want or need to continue experiencing these stressors?**

**How does my body typically react to stressors?**

**How do I typically react emotionally to stressors?**

**Are there coping techniques that I use more than others?**

**Are these techniques working?**

**Are there techniques that I think would be helpful but don’t use?**
Campus resources that can help alleviate stress

**Mindfulness Room**

The Mindfulness Room is located on the ground floor of West Wing and is open 24/7 during fall and Spring semesters. Some of the relaxation features of this room include plants, a soothing waterfall wall, yoga mats, meditation pillows, and comfy seating.  

http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/student-life/enhancing-campus-culture/mindfulness-room.html

**University Health Services**

Located on the 1st floor of Morewood Gardens, E-Tower. Enter through the entrance facing Forbes Avenue. Schedule an appointment for stress management consultation or a massage through HealthConnect.  

http://www.cmu.edu/health-services/

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPs)**

CaPs is located on the 2nd floor of Morewood Gardens, E-Tower. CaPs is one of many support sources on campus available to help CMU students with a range of struggles. CaPs can help you identify what resources are the best fit for your needs. http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/