



WHAT'S STRESS GOT TO DO WITH IT?

EXPLORING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH & LEARNING

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What's going on?

- What are you seeing in your classes?
- What types of mental health concerns are students facing?

Are students more stressed?

- Yes, there is an increase in stress, anxiety & other mental health concerns.
- A 2016 survey conducted by CACUSS reported that 20% of Canadian post-secondary students are depressed, anxious or experiencing some other mental health concern
- 13% of students reported feeling suicidal in the past year
- Increased numbers since last survey in 2013

What's different?

- Uncertainty re: future - world of work is changing
- Financial pressures – more students who have to work
- Lack of skills – time management, learning strategies, stress management
- Sleep deprivation
- Physical health impacts mental health
- Changing expectations about what life should look like – social media representations
- Loneliness & isolation
- Effects of technology

American College Health Association study

- 4 out of 5 main reasons that negatively affected academic performance were related to mental health:
 - Stress
 - Sleep
 - Concern about a family member
 - Anxiety or depression

Calm / Focused	Stressed/ Anxious / Distracted
Able to learn what is being taught	Difficult to follow what is happening
Able to work on the task at hand	Not participating fully in task at hand
Feel comfortable physically & emotionally	Physical discomfort, negative feelings & thoughts
Feel connected to others & to the environment	Feel isolated, apart from others
Feel capable	Self-doubt, not at your best
Present in the moment	Ruminations about past or worries about future possibilities



All circuits are busy!!



I AM FINDING IT DIFFICULT
TO CONCENTRATE BUT I
AM NOT SURE WHY

Technology overload

What are some negative effects ?

- **Social comparison affects mood & self worth**
- **Too much time online means not enough time on task**
- **Lack of sleep – brain doesn't get recovery time, lack of energy for tasks, more reactive so poorer choices**
- **Brain changes – reduced ability to focus, concentrate, remember**

Not enough ...

Quiet,

Stillness,

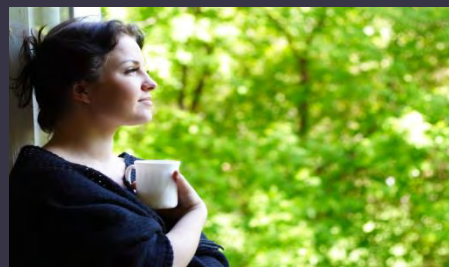
Time for reflection



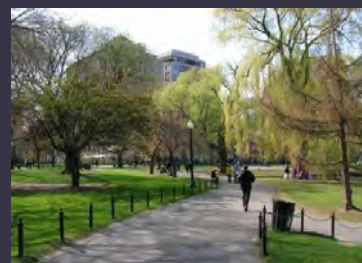
Not enough recovery (recovery rituals)

Recovery rituals

Micro



Mezzo



Macro



Negative coping strategies:

- Withdrawal
- Procrastination
- Anxiety – worry
- Distracting activities – social media, gaming, etc.
- Substance misuse

What we see (how they present)

vs.

what they are experiencing

**How can you support students who are
facing mental health concerns?**

Remember ... they may not let you know what is going on

- Don't want to bother the instructor
- Can't articulate what is happening
- Aren't aware of resources
- The specific mental health concern makes it hard for them to be proactive (e.g. social anxiety)
- Stigma

Strategies for supporting students

- Awareness of mental health as a factor
- Pay attention to early indicators
- Speak to the student - ask & discuss
- Make a referral
- Incorporate information about mental health into your course
- Incorporate strategies that allow students to focus – e.g. mindfulness meditation

Campus resources

- Counsellors
- Learning specialists
- Accessibility Support Services
- First Nations Support Services
- Other???

How can you reduce your own stress?