

# AM I STRESSED Or AM I PSYCHED?

## MANAGING TIME TO PROTECT MENTAL HEALTH

The world is upside down! There is pressure all around! Time is never enough! Registration, online and in – person classes, new faces, new responsibilities! Some people get excited and thrive; some people think “I’m losing my mind!” How can we have such different responses? Some people seem to have a resilience which clicks into gear in adversity. Are they mentally stronger than the rest of us?

**Be happy for  
this moment!  
This moment is  
your life!**

*“Time is the most valuable coin in your life. You and you alone will determine how that coin will be spent. Be careful that you do not let other people spend it for you.” -*

*Carl Sandburg*

Fortunately, this may not be the case. If we get to know how our bodies respond, we would see that it is the same systems that respond to protect us from harm and the same systems that help us enjoy the exhilaration of life experiences.

What we identify as “stress” includes the release of brain chemicals, stress hormones, bodily sensations, our “fight or flight” response and whether we think we have the ability and time to cope with it all. So, we all have the ability to respond positively or not so positively.

So what may in fact be different about us, is not the stress response but the way that we manage challenges and the way we manage time.

Effective time management can significantly reduce our “distress”, the type of stress that is **not** helpful to our physical and mental health.



*Time management* can be one solution to:

1. Reduce stress
2. Increase productivity
3. Help us achieve goals and
4. Give us more time for enjoying the journey, wherever it leads

Here are some time management tips:

1. **Avoid multitasking** – You can realistically only fully attend to one task at a time or the other will not get your full attention and may suffer in quality.



2. **Fight procrastination** – It can result in lost opportunities and mental and physical pressures.

3. Set time bound goals to **work S.M.A.R.T.**– These should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound.

4. Create a **TO DO list** and then prioritize the most important, not so important, not at all important. If you would be distracted by too many tasks, create a smaller list of a few of the highest priority things which you pay attention to first.

5. **Manage interruptions** – Figure out who and what they are. Let people know your available times. Learn to say NO to things you cannot manage at that time. For uncontrollable interruptions give a time



limit and revisit later. Schedule time to indulge in the interruptions that you do enjoy!

If we can manage to use some of these habits, they can make our days more manageable!

But what about our nights?

Do you suddenly awake with the things you forgot to do on your mind? Does the worry interrupt that



important rest time? Keep a notebook and pen nearby. Write it down and get back to sleep. Now you don't have to worry about remembering it tomorrow. Some techies use their phones to create lists, time tables and reminders. However you manage your time could uniquely meet your needs and responsibilities and use your unique skills in order for it to be more YOU centred!

*By Ayana Hypolite*

**The SVGCC Counselling Department: We are here to help!**

**Andrea Gaymes-Mohess, M.Sc. -  
andrea.gaymes@svgcc.vc**

**Ayana Hypolite, M. Ed. - ayana.hypolite@svgcc.vc**